

## Gender Studies

Gender critics explore how ideas about men and women -- what is masculine and what is feminine -- can be regarded as socially constructed by particular cultures. According to some critics, sex is determined by simple biological and anatomical categories of male or female, and gender is determined by a culture's values. Thus, ideas about gender and what constitutes masculine and feminine behavior are created by cultural institutions and conditioning. Gender criticism expands on categories and definitions of what is masculine or feminine and tends to regard sexuality as more complex than merely masculine or feminine.

### Feminist Criticism

Like other forms of sociological criticism, feminist criticism places literature in a social context, and, like those of Marxist criticism, its analyses often have sociopolitical purposes -- explaining, for example, how images of women in literature reflect the patriarchal social forces that have impeded women's efforts to achieve full equality with men.

Feminists have analyzed literature by both men and women in an effort to understand literary representations of women as well as the writers and cultures that create them. Related to concerns about how gender affects the way men and women write about each other is an interest in whether women use language differently from the way men do. Consequently, feminist critics' approach to literature is characterized by the use of a broad range of disciplines, including history, sociology, psychology, and linguistics, to provide a perspective sensitive to feminist issues.

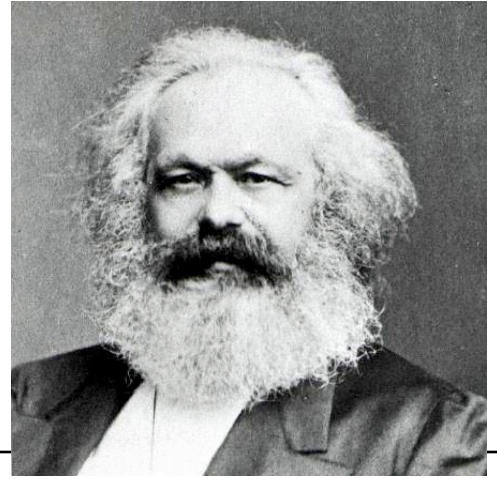
#### Guiding Question:

How are women portrayed in *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*? How could the first 14 minutes of this film be viewed through the literary lens of feminist theory and the gender study of masculine vs. feminine? What does this movie have to say about gender roles and the categorical definitions of masculine and feminine?



## Marxist Criticism

Marxist readings developed from the heightened interest in radical reform during the 1930's, when many critics looked to literature as a means of furthering **proletarian** social and economic goals, based largely on the writings of German philosopher Karl Marx. Marxist critics focus on the **ideological** content of a work -- its explicit and implicit assumptions and values about matters such as culture, race, **class**, and power. Marxist studies typically aim at revealing a clarifying ideological issues and also correcting **social injustices**.



proletarian (proletariat) -

ideological -

class/social injustices -

Some Marxist critics have used literature to describe the competing socioeconomic interests that too often advance capitalist money and power rather than socialist morality and justice. A Marxist reading of literature would see the protagonist's conflict as not only an individual issue but part of a larger class struggle.

### Guiding Question:

In your "reading" of the visual text *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where can you see Marxist theory and ideologies being expressed within the text? Do you see any class struggles or oppression? Do you see the ideology of Capitalism being expressed anywhere in the text? Do you see any representations of competing social or economic values?

