**“Marxist critiques of family life in modern capitalist
societies are correct.” Do you agree with this view? (15 marks)**

The Marxist perspective argues that the family is used to support capitalism; that the bourgeoisie use the family for their own gain in order to keep themselves rich and the proletariat poor. However, other sociological perspectives would disagree with their view on the family.

Marxist sociologists such as Zaretsky claim that the nature of modern family life is shaped by the demands of capitalism. For example, one argument is that the family is used to shield its members from the negative impacts of capitalism (e.g. stress, loss of free-time) whilst serving capitalism through the production of future workers. Marxists argue that the Nuclear family functions to benefit capitalism by ensuring that the proletariat keep coming to work; this is the argument that Marxists put forward.

A functionalist sociologist might respond that family life serves important functions within society. One of the main functions of the family is primary socialisation: instilling functional norms and values in children, for example respect. Functionalists would argue that the Nuclear family is very positive within society, and they would argue that the Marxist critique is ignoring all the positive roles that family plays in society. Therefore, Functionalists would disagree with the statement.

A feminist sociologist might agree with Marxism that the family is negative, however they would put forward their own critique. For example, sociologist Oakley suggested that women in the family complete a ‘Triple Shift’ of housework, paid work, and emotional labour. Rather than capitalism being the issue, feminists would argue it’s the result of living in a patriarchal society where men have power over women, especially within the Nuclear family. Therefore, Feminists would put forward their own critique of the family, not just agree with Marxists.

In conclusion, it seems there are different views on the Marxist critique of the family. However, overall while Functionalists see the family as positive, both Marxists and Feminists highlight the issues that can be found within the family unit. The extent to which you agree with the statement would depend on which theoretical perspective you are coming from.