



DISCUSSANT RESPONSE

by

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to **Panos Bardis'**

**PERSISTENT FAMILY FUNCTIONS AND SOCIAL HARMONY
THROUGH CREATIVE EDUCATION**

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Theoretically the subject of the paper by Professor Panos Bardis is "Persistent Family Functions and Social Harmony through Creative Education." In practice, however, he has given us a rapid and entertaining romp through history, using both wide-angled and telescopic lens at the same time, sweeping through vast areas of human thought and behaviour with a cavalier dismissal of subjects that need much more profound treatment. The difficulty is that any short rebuttal is bound to be equally if not more superficial. There is material here enough for a three-year study group.

Another difficulty in making a proper evaluation of the paper is that to some extent one has to accept the basic conclusions reached by the professor while rejecting or at least having reservations about every step in the argument. To sum up, he believes, as I do, that the family always has existed, exists today, and always will exist. But isn't that rather like arguing that we will always have weather? What sort of family? what sort of weather? Professor Bardis certainly gives a useful list of thirteen family functions he recognises, and I would have liked some discussion of how many and which of these are essential, and how many and which could be sloughed off still leaving a recognisable institution. I was interested in a suggestion made in another paper that many developments that may seem to constitute an attack on family values, for instance homosexual marriages, can be regarded as an attempt to salvage some at least of the family functions we accept. Instead we have a lightning dismissal of such possible threats

to the family as cohabitation, illegitimacy, homosexuality, abortion, drugs, alcohol, without any real assessment of the effects they may be having, not to mention a far too allusive treatment of whole systems of human activity such as capitalism and communism, summarised in a few paragraphs. I found myself indulging in reservations, rejoinders, objections, denials on every page, and occasionally I felt I was foaming at the mouth.

Specifically, and again with the most superficial brevity, I pick out one or two points, from the dozens I would like to debate with the writer.

In giving nine examples of prominent men forced out of public life by public disapproval of their sex activities, from the many hundreds that could be quoted, Professor Bardis seems to me to be indulging in a very unpleasant form of "outing".

References to "divisive and half-intellectual black studies, women's courses" and the "proliferation of pseudoacademic subjects" are gratuitously insulting. Panos, you can do better than this.

Where is religion in all this? Has it had, will it have, any influence on the family? Mentioned only briefly. Medical diagram omitted.

The educational techniques listed at the end of the paper do not amount to a programme. This section could have been expanded with great value.

If I have appeared unduly critical, let me make amends by a more generous conclusion. Panos is never dull. His arguments should lead to the most creative debate, possibly heated in parts, but always lively. And discussion is the best way forward.