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Trends. Young Dr. Assad: Seeing is Believing, the Child is Father to the Man, or the Father of the Child is the Father to the Man?

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There are a number of handy aphorisms to guide an analyst in predicting the future of Syria's new official leader: Bashar al-Assad. If seeing is believing, then what he sees is what he believes and, perhaps, what he believes dictates how he will act. Of course, what we see is what we believe and may dictate our actions towards the leader. An intriguing note for the new leader (who, with training as an ophthalmologist, is an expert on the physical and biological aspects of seeing) is that believing has much to do with what one sees--especially in the social world. One can only surmise what he and we believe and see.

Many psychological theories suggest that one rarely breaks free from early psychological challenges and modes of response. The leader only may be fated to recapitulate both on the grand political stage. The fates through the death of an older brother--Basil--may provide Bashar leader a fate already writ large based on childhood history.

Still other psychological and social theorists ascribe the father as father to the child regardless of how much the child ages. Dynamics may include the child's quests to surpass the father, to measure up to him, to malign or reify him, to navigate a playing field rampant with pre-positioned threats and opportunities, and to deal with others who see the father in the child or don't--and take appropriate action.

So, predictions of a long and fruitful rule, of a puppet dancing on a string, of a coup and house arrest, and of imminent assassination continue to Issue forth and illustrate the fragility and speciousness of much that passes for the social and behavioral sciences. (See Adeleke, T. (1997). African and Pan-Africanism: Betrayal of a historical cause. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 21, 106-116; Renshon, S.A. (2000). Political leadership as social capital: Governing in a divided national culture. *Political Psychology*, 21, 199-226; Sachs, S. (June 14, 2000). The shy young doctor at Syria's helm. *The New York Times*, p. A15; Samuels, A. (2000). The erotic leader. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 10, 277-280; Simonton, D. K. (1998). Political leadership across the life span: Chronological versus career age in the British monarchy. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9, 309-320.) (Keywords: Bashar al-Assad, Syria.)