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Review Article

Social Conditioning, History, Leadership, and the example of Mr. Trump

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Abstract

Social conditioning to perform in expected ways is a permanent aspect of psychological, economic, and political life, present throughout time and history. Yet every society, in transitions, loses the memory of some of its previous social conditioning even when exercised for a very long time. The loss of historical memory about socially conditioned psychological, economic, and political behaviours permeates every society and as such prevents a deeper understanding of current behaviours that have their origin in social conditioning of centuries or millennia ago. This article focuses on foundational structures of economics and politics in order to provide a deeper understanding of the significance of social conditioning in human societies. Utilizing a foundational view, the example of Mr. Trump and his ardent followers is used to demonstrate a specific instance of historical social conditioning, hidden yet present in today's economic and political behaviour.

Introduction

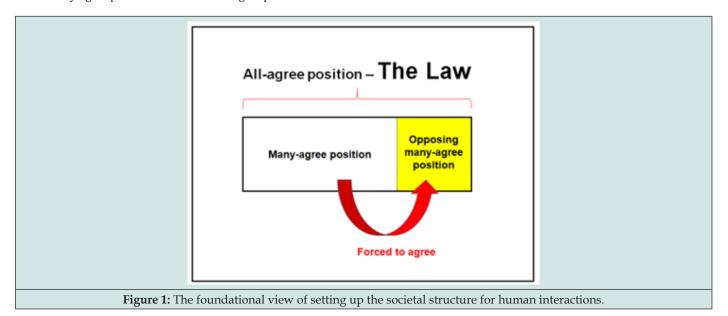
To understand Mr. Trump and his followers, we must first develop a deep understanding of the society's foundations. Otherwise, it would be a journey in darkness that leads nowhere. A deep understanding of economics and politics is possible through knowing what a society is and how it comes to be. On the surface, a society is a grouping of individuals. Yet, in this grouping, it is often missed that, without exception, *every individual* in the society *is unique*. Every individual is unique in behaviour and capabilities. No two humans are alike. How does a society form and manage its economic and political structures when at its core it is created out of a large number of deeply unique individuals?

We will follow the unique individual's path in forming and maintaining the society. Then we consider the social conditioning and societal structure that surrounds Mr. Trump and his followers. If you are not interested in societal foundations and only interested in what this paper says about Mr. Trump and his followers, you can jump to the section "Understanding Mr. Trump and His Followers" at the end of the paper.

Managing Uniqueness

Every unique individual expresses his or her existence in the form of a complex structure made of "few-agree positions." These are like opinions, views, perceptions, and constraints that each individual develops about self, others, and the world. In every fewagree position, the unique individual demands an exclusive right to make decisions and judgments on anything and everything, firmly believing that all such decisions and judgments are right [1]. As such, the few-agree positions are the essence of the unique individual's life and existence. Yet, for a society to exist, especially as a stable and functional economic and political structure, humans have to turn some few-agree positions into "many-agree positions" and then judiciously pick a number of many-agree positions and turn them into "all-agree positions," the laws. The many-agree positions come with all sorts of labels. The most popular are norms, traditions, and ethics and morality. The all-agree positions are characterized as rules, laws, and regulations. The value and function of the many-agree and all-agree positions is in bounding the society's vast ocean of few-agree positions in order to make human interactions constructive in economic and political domains. Through millennia of experience, to have a stable and functional society, the only possibility has been through a well-designed matrix of many-agree and all-agree positions. In every society, the formation of all-agree positions is most challenging and exasperating because while humans can create many-agree positions through alignment of few-agree positions, they can never do the same to create an all-agree position. Human uniqueness and the immense diversity of few-agree positions preclude it. That is why the creation of every all-agree position requires the application of societal concentrated brute force (SCBF). The conversion of a many-agree position to an all-agree position is a force-based process. A many-agree position has to be backed by the societal concentrated brute force so that it would be forced on everyone that normally would oppose it. That is how a many-agree position becomes an all-agree position. The forc-

ing mechanism is the societal concentrated brute force that takes shape as police and armed forces in a process managed by the legislature and the courts. That is how the all-agree positions become the "law" to be obeyed by everyone. All those who do not align with an all-agree position—do not obey the law—would face the wrath of the societal concentrated brute force in the form of police and armed forces. From a foundational point of view, the laws are force-backed many-agree positions and the many-agree positions originate at alignments of the few-agree positions of unique individuals. Do Mr. Trump, his followers, and his opponents recognize the complexity of managing the society's sea of many-agree positions and the choice of backing some many-agree positions with societal concentrated brute force to turn them into laws that everyone would obey? (Figure 1)



Given that every society is a collection of often opposing many-agree positions, how should the society manage the collective of many-agree and all-agree positions so that the society would remain in balance psychologically, economically and politically when serving each individual's few-agree positions? With the vast ocean of few-agree positions, the management of many-agree positions and the creation of all-agree positions is most difficult. Many societies cannot manage it and as a result fall into the abyss of force-based confrontations, killing each other in the hope that someday someone will show up to manage the many-agree and all-agree positions in ways that would preclude killing one another in daily interactions. When many-agree and all-agree positions cannot constructively bound the society's ocean of few-agree positions, the only alternative for unique humans for managing economics and politics is through concentrated brute force. Inherently, the few-agree positions are always confrontational and the only way of managing them is either directly through concentrated brute force or through formation and management of many-agree and all-agree positions that are backed by concentrated brute force. Historically no other

alternative has presented itself to humans and their societies.

Sharing Human Capabilities

A most overlooked fact is that in human life, every human must take the resources of earth and others in order to satisfy personal needs in daily life. No human would survive if one ceased to act as a taker of resources from earth and others. Every human, by nature, is a "resource taker." That is why the societal all-agree positions, by purposeful design, direct every human toward "voluntary exchange of resources" as preferred method of taking the resources of others. That is how economics takes shape as voluntary exchanges of goods and services according to market's many-agree and all-agree positions. One needs bread, the other needs shoes. The voluntary exchange-based resource taking, operating within the society's matrix of all-agree positions, allows getting bread from the baker as the baker takes an extra resource, the profit, from the bread buyer. The same happens to shoes and all other goods and services. They all come with their own profit tag-resources to be taken by the makers from users, voluntarily. No one is forced to make or buy. No one is

directly exposed to brute force in order to submit to resource taking by others. The voluntary exchange-based resource taking creates equilibrium in the "society of resource takers." While this reality is universally accepted for goods and services, it is not the same for many-agree positions. Mr. Trump's followers and opponents, both try to force the other side to accept a many-agree position that is abhorrent to them. Such adversarial positioning than engaging in a dialogue has its origin at both sides not understanding human life as a balanced sea of many-agree positions. A related problem of the sea of many-agree positions is the sharing of human capabilities. Each unique individual possesses unique capabilities. The voluntary, exchange-based resource taking would not be possible without "sharing of capabilities." Every voluntary exchange of goods and services is also a voluntary sharing of capabilities. The result-every economic and political system takes shape and exists within the societal capability sharing system. Nothing can exist outside of the network of humans developing and sharing their capabilities in order to provide for the daily needs of everyone.

Consider the water bottle as a simple outcome of the societal capability sharing system. The question is a simple one: What is the number of humans whose capabilities are shared in order to create one bottle of water for human needing it? Intuitively the answer would be in the range of a few to a few hundred depending on one's view of the number of workers at the bottling plant and those at the grocery store stocking and selling the bottled water. That, however, is the wrong answer. If asked who provides the "machinery" at the bottling plant, clearly the ones making the machinery have part of their capabilities flowing into the bottled water. The machinery is made of metal, therefore uncounted humans in the mining industry and metal processing have part of their capabilities flowing into the bottle of water. The bottled water produced at the plant has to be transported to the grocery store in a truck. Thus, part of the capabilities of humans in auto manufacturing also flows into the bottle of water. Without fuel, the truck cannot deliver the bottled water to the grocery store, thus the whole oil industry, the refineries and the gas stations share in capabilities that flow to the bottled water. The truck could not function without roads, thus the capabilities of road builders and constructors flow into the bottled water. The bottling plant cannot operate without electricity and natural gas, thus part of capabilities of all those in electric power plants, transmission and distribution lines and natural gas pipelines flows into the bottle of water. All the people so far identified sharing their capabilities to create the bottled water have to be fed if they are to be capable of sharing. So, part of the capabilities of all farmers and ranchers flow into the bottled water. Then, they all have to be sheltered, educated, and taken care of when sick. Thus, part of the capabilities of doctors, home builders, and teachers flows into the bottled water. On top of that, today, the extent of such capability sharing has gone from local, regional, and national to global. In short, millions of unique humans have to share their capabilities so that an individual would satisfy the need for one bottled water.

What is most important in this analysis is that it could have started with anything that humans make and use. Instead of the

water bottle one could start with an automobile, a roll of toilette paper, or even a thought, and the answer is the same. To create anything for the human individual, the capabilities of millions must be developed and shared. Without such capability sharing, the human individual ceases to exist. The recognition of this foundational condition is not something new. About two hundred years ago Adam Smith made the same observation: Every part of his cloathing, utensils, and food has been produced by the joint labour of an infinite number of hands [2]. He used the terminology of "joint labor" instead of "capability sharing" and in place of "millions" used "infinite number of hands," but the message is the same. Yet the information on that key societal foundation was ignored and not recognized then, as it has been ignored and not recognized today. Instead, human individual suffers from the illusion that every human is an independent agent, that whatever one gets in life is because of what the individual has done standing on one's two feet and applying one's own capabilities. Occasionally, one might force oneself to thank one's mother, spouse, or teacher, but that is the extent of recognition of the role of the societally shared capabilities. Within current illusory view of societal life, another overlooked psychological, economic, and political fact is that the most difficult form of resource taking happens through voluntary exchanges of goods and services. It requires the difficult task of organizing the capabilities of others in order to make goods and services, presenting what is made for exchange with those that need them, and doing so in competition with other resource takers who work equally hard at taking the resources of others through voluntary exchanges. The only reason that humans engage in this most difficult form of resource taking is because the society's all-agree positions direct human activities toward exchange-based resource taking. Anyone not doing so will face the wrath of the societal concentrated brute force. Such design of the all-agree positions is driven by the fact that the exchange-based resource taking is most beneficial in serving everyone's needs in life. Yet, because of its inherent difficulties in creating and exchanging goods and services, some look for easier ways of resource taking, especially ways that would not involve any production and voluntary exchange of goods and services. What are examples? Top of the list, the easiest way of taking the resources of others is through application of brute force. In small scale it is called theft and robbery. In large scale it is called "war." Many get harmed in such acts of resource taking because when applied to the human, brute force and harm are inseparable twins.

Unaware of unique human's foundations of societal life, there is the prevailing illusion that an individual's life is primarily defined by that individual and not by actions of others. The water bottle example declares that illusion false. Every human exists by the grace of capabilities shared by millions of others. It is true that the human individual must develop and share one's capabilities in that process, but that is just a very small part of the story. Consider the situation of the lone human, existing solely based on what the individual can do without any capabilities shared by others. How would that lone individual compare to the societal capability sharing system? Can the lone individual achieve the same level of well-being

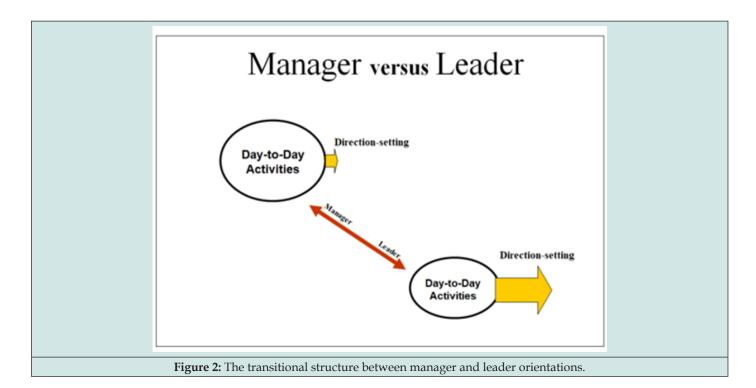
as that provided by the societal capability sharing system? Adam Smith offers an instructive comparison of the two options using the example of pin making. According to Adam Smith, an individual, by himself, doing all the work of finding the metal ore, digging it out, separating the metal, forging it to create small rods, spinning those rods into wires and finally making pins out of the wire would, on average, produce a few pins per year. Yet, eighteen men sharing their capabilities, each specializing in certain aspect of pin making can produce tens of thousands of pins per day [3]. Which one, the lone individual or the shared capabilities offers the greatest possibility of well-being for the masses? Adam Smith's answer is clear. Capability sharing always wins. And its effect and presence is multidimensional. It is not just one item like the pin in Adam Smith's example, it is food, house, computer, medicine, and many more that the lone human would not have any possibility of providing for oneself without the shared capabilities of others. From the perspective of the societal capability sharing system, the prime purpose of the collective of all-agree positions-basically the network of laws-is twofold. First to distance the human individual from the destructive brute force confrontations if each unique human is left to one's own few-agree positions and second, to focus everyone's attention on producing and distributing goods and services for others and not fighting one another. Yet this critical foundational fact has remained least understood and as a result, in almost every difficult situation, the individual and the society tend toward resorting to brute force as solution provider. The overwhelming historical evidence, that individuals and nations continue to kill one another, signals that the use of brute force remains a norm in human interactions. Either because of a shortcoming in human mind, or an outcome of social conditioning, human individual persistently remains incapable of recognizing the high value of many-agree and all-agree positions and capability sharing to push the brute force into the background of human existence. Such lack of awareness of foundational aspects of human life is the continual source for human exposure to brute force of others and thus the continual presence of harm in human societies and individual life.

Manager-Managed Duality

Whether it is the management of the few-agree, many-agree, and all-agree positions, or the shared capabilities, or any other aspect of the society, every society, without exception, throughout history, is built on the basis of *manager-managed duality*, where a small group of "managers" would manage the affairs of the masses of "managed." Thus, the CEO manages the business and workers, the teacher manages the classroom and students, and the President manages the nation and citizens. Even though humankind has had thousands of years of experience in manager-managed duality, it knows of no other way of managing the society's shared capabilities. The society's capability sharing system through which the society manages the psychological state of individuals, the political force, and the economic production of goods and services can only exist based on manager-managed duality. The prime purpose of manager-managed duality is to effectively serve the economic and

political needs of the masses. And that would only happen if both sides of the manager-managed duality were active at managing it. If the masses of managed lose the duality's sense of purpose, the managers would often turn into self-serving tyrants. In the dysfunctional manager-managed duality, often, the manager becomes the "master" whose wishes must be addressed and provided by the masses before any consideration of satisfying the needs of the individual of the masses. The concentrated brute force that the managers control does not allow any other arrangement for societal behaviour. With the individual of the masses not aware of manager-managed duality and only rarely involved in it, as in occasional voting to elect a politician, the focus of human societies has veered away from understanding manager-managed duality and keeping it functional, and instead has remained occupied with personal characteristics of the individual that becomes the "manager," especially when the manager is designated as the "leader." It is often not understood that the difference between the manager and the leader is one of the degrees of emphasis on direction setting in comparison to routine day-to-day activities. When an individual does little direction setting and lots of day-to-day routine activities, that person is a "manager." When an individual does lots of direction setting and little routine day-to-day activities, that person becomes a "leader." Since all acts of direction setting eventually transform into day-today routine activities, a good manager is the one that can perform both of the manager and leader tasks well (Figure 2).

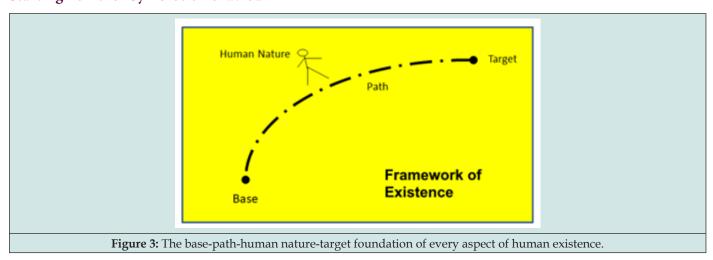
But for a society to be functional, the full understanding of the manager's role as "balancer of direction setting and day-to-day activities" must equally exist among the individuals of the managed. Otherwise, the manager-managed duality will become a deficient and dysfunctional structure that alienates the masses of managed and only primarily serves the personal needs and desires of the managers. That every society suffers from dysfunctional manager-manage duality is reflected in the abundance of theories solely focused on the "leader." In effect, the current theories of leadership shine light on what is absent, namely a functional manager-managed duality, as every theory only vaguely attempts to define the word "leader." For example, the trait theories of leadership seek to remedy the vagueness by searching for "attributes" that would characterize the leader and they regularly fail when it comes to using the traits to search and identify the "leader." The Behavioral theories of leadership take the position that, however one may choose to characterize the "leader," the society can train humans to behave in that manner. Yet, the manner of behaviour of the leader remains a mystery. The contingency theories of leadership take the view that whatever the societal view of the "leader" might be, the society can match the followers to the leader. The charismatic theories of leadership totally succumb to the vagueness as they define the leader as the one that the followers would love to follow because of the compelling charm that the leader displays personally. The theoretical vagueness finally ends with the wishful "servant theory of leadership" which uses the vague word "servant" to declare the leader as the one inclined to serve the interests and needs of the masses of managed.



The problem with all these theories is that they are missing the manager-managed duality. Human life is not built upon the "manager" that acts as "leader" but on both the manager and the managed. When this foundational relationship is not known, or known and ignored, the emphasis inevitably returns to the manager who, in theory, is in charge of managing the affairs and resources of the masses, especially in how their capabilities are shared and applied

to everyone's daily needs. Yet, historically, in every society, the manager-focused dysfunctional manager-managed duality settles into a structure of psychology, economics, and politics that primarily serves the few-agree positions of the managers. Returning the focus back to manager-managed duality remains a continual challenge in every society.

Starting Point for Symbiotic Behaviour



How can a society improve its understanding of the psychological, economic, and political behaviour of manager and managed so that the manager-managed duality can move closer to functional symbiosis? A foundational way of understanding any situation is through the "framework" model, shown in Figure 3. The frame-

work model explicitly raises the question of the "starting point" for the historical knowledge that should be included in assessment of any situation. The framework, a foundational model of human existence, informs that anything and everything that humans make and do in economics, politics, any psychological view they adopt, or any other aspect of human life, they all begin from a *base* and moves along a *path* toward a specific *target*, affected by personal attributes as *human nature* [4] (Figure 3).

The base is the starting point for any and every human action. In addition to knowledge, the base can include the machinery, factories, buildings, language, culture, religion, social institutions, and traditions, whether put together at present or some centuries or millennia ago. In planning a path toward the target, humans tend to segment the available historical knowledge and only consider one piece as "base," ignoring the rest. Such segmentation originates at "ease" and "efficiency" considerations. For example, in terms of resources deployed and used, it is easiest, and in appearance most efficient, if the past is completely ignored, paying attention only to today's flow of knowledge. That is the reason why such behaviour has become the prevailing pattern in every society today in the process of constructing the society's psychological stance and the economic and political system. A simple physical example of the negative effect of parsing the base comes from planting the seed of a large tree in a small pot. Instead of growing to become a large tree, it only grows to become a small plant, no more than a foot or two tall. Restricted to the pot, the seed's base would no longer be the whole earth. Starting from the pot as the base, the path of becoming a large tree would no longer be available, even though the seed does possess the same nature as the one that grows elsewhere to become a large tree.

Understanding Mr. Trump and his Followers

What can one learn about manager-managed duality from Mr. Trump and his ardent followers? Consider understanding Mr. Trump's followers within the context of the Roman Empire where, for centuries, every human was socially conditioned to behave in certain manners. A unique feature of the Roman Empire was the social conditioning of every individual to see the emperor as divine. This behaviour was not unique to Roman Empire and had deeper historical roots. For thousands of years, the Pharaohs were considered divine while living or when dead. Along the same line of behaviour, Alexander the Great was worshipped as a divinity. In the Roman Empire, for centuries, the same pattern continued with emperors. Did human societies propagate and transmit this socially conditioned behaviour to current times? Humans can readily comprehend the transmission question if it were about language or religion. They would readily understand that language and religion are many-agree positions that have been transmitted for centuries and millennia by humans socially conditioned to propagate such positions. But there are many other transmitted positions that are hidden and harder to understand. In the Roman Empire, the social conditioning for emperor worship had its roots at the common people. They were the ones most convinced of the emperor's divinity. The Roman Senate followed the will of the people and formally declared the emperor god and ordered the construction of temples to worship him. The emergence of Christianity as imperial religion did not interrupt the creation and worship of imperial deities. It only modified it slightly by reducing animal sacrifices. Otherwise,

the rituals of emperor worship continued as in previous times. The Roman emperor remained a god-like figure. Looking back, while using today's standards, the masses of the Roman Empire can be characterized as uneducated. In seeing the emperor as God, they could never engage in knowledge processing-education-that would alter the base of their societal knowledge. One segment of the Roman masses, the Christians, was even more enamoured with the emperor. They loved the emperor even more because the emperor, through a divine command, had declared Christianity the religion of the empire and had forced everyone in the Roman Empire to become Christian. This had happened when Christians were just a small percentage of the population, and the deliverer of this immense victory was the emperor. Do Mr. Trump's followers, people that have generationally been affected by the Roman Empire's social conditioning, recognize the origin of their current urge for imperial worship? To the average Roman, the distinguishing character of the divine emperor was "power." H. F. Burton observes that "wisdom and morality in the highest sense hardly entered" the Roman citizen's notion of God. Instead of morality and wisdom, it was the power wielded by the emperor that made the masses worship him as an equal to any god [5].

The power did not emanate from the divine status given to the emperor by the Roman Senate but from the evident, superhuman ability of emperor to provide "benefactions" to the masses. It was through delivering benefactions-impressive benefits-to the masses that the emperor could maintain his divine status. One can argue that such pattern of behaviour is the same as the one observed today in the United States. The followers of Mr. Trump have little interest in Mr. Trump's morality or intelligence. No different than the imperial benefaction that Christianized the whole Roman Empire, Mr. Trump's benefactions have been in the form of appointments of justices and judges that would mold the judicial structure in the image that his followers wish the society should have. This is the shaping of the many-agree positions of a group into the society's all-agree positions, thus forcing that group's views on all. The idea of Mr. Trump, as if a divine emperor, being worshipped by the poorly educated and devout Christians would disappear and become irrelevant if the followers remain ignorant of the Roman Empire's social conditioning and its transmission to current times. But if the followers seriously consider the transmission of the Roman Empire's social conditioning-the conditioning that sees the emperor as God-then the behaviour of Mr. Trump and the way the followers treat Mr. Trump become clearer. By reconsidering the historical influences, one can observe that the behaviours of the poorly educated and devout Christian groups follow the pattern of socially conditioned behaviours that pervaded the Roman Empire. The change in the historical base also allows to see another important feature, namely the behaviours of members of Congress. Under today's conditions, one can say that the majority of senators and representatives are educated and not necessarily devout Christians. So, why do the Republican senators and representatives behave the same as the poorly educated and devout Christian groups in relation to Mr. Trump? Are they replicating the behaviour of the Roman senators in bowing to the wishes of the common people? Clearly, the behaviours of the Republican members of Congress resembles the behaviour of the Roman Senate that formally declared the emperor to be a god. Using the framework model with a base that includes the Roman Empire's social conditioning, one can argue that the majority of today's Republican senators and representatives behave almost exactly as the Roman senators did centuries ago. They are copying the many-agree positions that were set up centuries ago in Roman Empire's social conditioning processes.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to create "foundation awareness." It does not seek assignment of good and bad labels to certain behaviours. In fact, even today, there is no problem with the US society switching from a president to an emperor. Both are societal methodologies for selecting the top leader. The society can choose one or the other. Both have positive and negative attributes. The purpose of the foundation awareness is not to assign the good or bad label to the current situation of Mr. Trump and his followers, but to inform it. There is nothing wrong with a large segment of current population treating Mr. Trump as if an emperor. But the understanding of that choice will improve if its historical basis is known and understood. If they recognize the origin of social conditioning that permeates today's many-agree positions, the followers of Mr. Trump will develop a better understanding of what they do and why they do it. Armed with deeper knowledge, they can better understand their own behaviour and the behaviour of others and that, in aggregate, means creating a better and more efficient structure for management of the society's many-agree and all-agree positions and thus a better and more efficient psychological, economic, and political structure for the society. Of those reading this article, would a plurality see the significance of the foundational factors in human life and the importance of transmission of socially conditioned behaviours from centuries ago? That is a hard question to answer. Human societies have always tended toward throwing out the century-old, millennia-old, parts of their societal knowledge. They are prone to declaring a current slice of the societal knowledge as the only "base" that counts. In a sense, humans are good at

using a pot when deploying a tree seed, and then declaring that tiny plant as the only relevant fact and all that there is to be considered.

Perhaps the "pot" reflects the difficulty of learning. Learning history is knowledge processing, and knowledge processing is hard work, as everyone knows from the experience of taking any course in any educational institution. In general, humans find not learning to be much easier than enduring the pain of learning, especially learning about their societal leader, themselves, and manager-managed duality. From this viewpoint, one can argue that it is also the ease which characterizes the behaviour of Mr. Trump's ardent followers. Unaware of their centuries-old social conditioning, they only see a divine emperor. They want their divine emperor to win at any cost so they would receive great benefits. It is so much easier living a in a world where a divine emperor rules, and everyone obeys a single individual's commands and wishes. It is so much easier to use brute force to destroy the opponents of the divine emperor and even being destroyed in the process of serving the divine emperor. Perhaps no one wants a society with a type of leadership in which no one gets killed and everyone has a life in balance with others, namely a functional, symbiotic manager-managed duality serving the society's sea of many-agree positions.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement

None.

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