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Trends. Dead souls: Comment on the Luxor Murders

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(IBPP Note: Mr. Steven Cornell, a student in Embry-Riddle University's Science, Technology, and Globalization Program, provided significant research for this analysis.)

At the time of this writing at least 58 people--Egyptians, Germans, Swiss, Japanese, Britons, a Bulgarian, a Colombian, and a French citizen--were murdered on Monday, November 17, at the Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor, Egypt--with the Islamic Group claiming responsibility. Accounts of the violence also cite the kidnapping of women as well as the mutilation of corpses by Islamic Group members. The site of the murders suggests a macabre Jungian synchronicity, a convergence of isomorphic phenomena across time and space.

The Temple of Hatshepsut is a monument to a woman, Hatshepsut, who was a daughter of Thutmose I, ruler of the 18th Dynasty. After his death and after the deaths of her two brothers and sister, Hatshepsut married her half-brother, Thutmose II--the latter becoming the new ruler even though Hatshepsut may have been designated as heir by her father. Upon the death of Thutmose II, she became the regent for her stepson, Thutmose III, and then appropriated his right to rule over Egypt. Her own rule was eventually followed by that of her stepson who desecrated her temple--destroying much of the relief work that depicted events of Hatshepsut's rule, scratching off depictions of her face whenever possible, and replacing her cartouches with his. There seems to be no consensus on how the transfer of power occurred and what became of Hatshepsut. Violence seems to be most often posited as a factor.

Now over 3400 years later there is another desecration of the temple--another desecration fueled by political conflict over who should rule Egypt and how it should be ruled. This is because a primary goal of the Islamic Group is to turn Egypt into an Islamic theocracy ruled by an Islamic elite. As Hatshepsut wore a ceremonial beard and took the Title of "King" during her reign, as Thutmose III was forced to be a pretender to power, as the Islamic Group professes to be one of the only entities knowing the Islamic Way and claims to have planned to only take hostages and not commit murder, the disparities between what is real and ideal, true and false, good and bad continue to breed death and destruction.

As is apparent from similar disparities in Gogol's Dead Souls--involving the scam of buying dead serfs and mortgaging them to acquire funds to buy an estate--the living become better known through the dead. And what we know of the living often cannot stand the light of day. (See Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom. <http://www.uni.uiuc.edu>; Atlas, J. (1996). Sources of political anger. *Journal of Psychohistory*, 23, 276-285; Callender, V. G. Queen Hatshepsut. <http://hsc.csu.edu.au>; deMause, L. (1996). Restaging early traumas in war and social violence. *Journal of Psychohistory*, 23, 344-392; Gogol, N. (1983/1842). Dead souls. Amereon Ltd.; Gnepp, E.H. (1977). Radicals, revolution, psychology, and society. *Psychology*, 14, 46-53; Jehl, D. (November 19, 1997). At ancient site along the Nile, modern horror. *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Moerk, E.L. (1997). Socialism and pacifism: Historical relations, value homologies, and implications of recent political developments, or the return of history. *Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 3, 59-79; Pihl, R.O. (1995). Violent behavior. *Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience*, 2, 101-103.)

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