

Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red and The Tower of London: Contested sacred space or renewal of a historical landmark?

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The subject of this paper is the Armistice Day Poppy installation, *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, at the Tower of London. This is a contemporary cultural project, a human-made, temporary construction on a previously constructed monument. The installation will be examined from the perspective of sacred space, asking the following questions: a) can the Tower and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* be considered sacred? If so, have they been built intentionally as such or have they become sacred because of their use by humans? b) If they are sacred, are they 'divine' or 'horrendous' or both (Thorley)? c) Assuming sacrality, is *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* itself a contested sacred space because it is temporary and on the sacred site of the Tower of London or is this an example of the renewal of sacred space? The research is of interest because it will compare the definition of sacred space in a contemporary, temporary, intentionally-built site to the historical, permanent, intentionally-built site. Also, in comparing contested sacred space with the renewal of sacred space, it may become apparent that sacred space can be renovated and rejuvenated through intentional human interaction.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the idea of sacred space as a human construct. By examining the theoretical arguments proposed by academics and applying them to the practical experience of participants in a sacred space, it may be possible to determine how sacred space is defined through both mental concepts and practical interaction. By analysing the theories related to sacred space as a human construct and proceeding to evaluate how those theories apply to the actual lived experience of academically-determined sacred space, it may be possible to decide if the understanding of *sacred* truly is a human construct or if it can be seen to be inherent to human experience. The terms sacred and sacred space will be investigated with reference to the ideas of Emile Durkheim, Mircea Eliade, and Anthony Thorley and Celia Gunn, as well as the idea of contested space as presented by Barbara Bender. Phenomenological theory, as viewed by Christopher Tilley and Tim Ingold, will be examined to arrive at an idea of how to evaluate the lived experiences of others. In order to

apply the terms effectively, a real-life example, the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* memorial at the Tower of London (figure 1), will be investigated theoretically and compared to others' personal experiences of the site. It is suggested that these interactive exchanges may encourage a rejuvenating and renewing effect on sacred space. It is considered that, academically, sacred space is a human construct, however, sensory, on-site experience may reveal something different.



Figure 1: The Tower of London and Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, November 11, 2014. Courtesy of SplashNews.

An analysis of sacred space can be approached, initially, through the works of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). Both Durkheim and Eliade consider the sacred to be an experience of heterogeneity which differentiates it from the profane. Durkheim posits that 'there is nothing left with which to characterize the sacred in its relation to the profane except their heterogeneity...it is absolute.'¹ Eliade also remarks on the dichotomy of

¹ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1964 [1915], p.38.

sacred and profane and extends it by explaining that the sacred becomes known through its 'hierophany' or manifestation of the sacred.² Eliade elaborates further when he describes the conditions necessary to identify a sacred place which include a heterogeneous interruption of space, creating a connection between worlds identified by a central symbol (*axis mundi*) and representing the 'navel of the earth...the Center of the World'.³ The purpose of generating sacred space is to experience the original manifestation of the cosmos as the gods fashioned it and to conquer the forces of chaos.⁴ This vanquishing and reclaiming is a repetitive event which maintains the safety of the world and keeps chaos at bay.⁵ According to Karen Fields, one of Durkheim's translators, Durkheim also posits that the sacred needs to be consecrated regularly as 'it is inherently impermanent and so must be added to the object again and again, just as it was originally: by collective human doing'.⁶ Durkheim suggests that it is by 'collective human doing' that the sacred becomes and remains sacred because 'religion is something eminently social'.⁷ Religions create social arenas, rules and structures within whose boundaries people feel safe and accepted and, therefore, feel encouraged to cooperate with the group in order to maintain the structure of the sacred.⁸

While Durkheim's and Eliade's definitions intertwine, there are two significant differences between their views which affect the application of sacred space to the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*. In Durkheim's view, time and space are both categories of understanding.⁹ These categories relate to a universal idea of consciousness, underlie perceptions of the world and are the 'skeleton of thought' which influence and are influenced by religion.¹⁰ The individual in society is dependent upon the community for safety and security and, therefore, these categories of

² Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask, (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1987[1957]), p. 10-11.

³ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 37.

⁴ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 47-8.

⁵ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 49.

⁶ Karen Fields, 'Translator's Introduction', *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields, (New York: The Free Press, 1995 [1912]), p.xliv.

⁷ Durkheim, *Forms*, Swain, p.10.

⁸ Fields, *Introduction*, p. xix.

⁹ Durkheim, *Forms*, Fields, p. 8.

¹⁰ Durkheim, *Forms*, Fields, p. 9.

understanding are accepted and adhered to by all. Eliade, however, views sacred time as similar to sacred space, both of which are heterogeneous experiences.¹¹ Just as sacred space is a repetition of the creation of the world by the gods, sacred time is circular ‘*a primordial mythical time made present*’.¹² It is always available to religious man and may express itself through festivals, rituals and services.¹³ As sacred space is renewed through repetition of the acts of the gods, sacred time is renewed through similar acts.¹⁴ For Eliade, whether considering sacred time or sacred space, ‘the sacred is equivalent to a *power*, and, in the last analysis, to *reality*’.¹⁵ This power of which Eliade speaks can also be applied to objects which are considered sacred. Eliade considers that ‘By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes *something else*, yet it continues to remain *itself*, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu’.¹⁶ Eliade points out that a sacred rock is only sacred to one who recognizes it as such and, to that person, it holds power and meaning.¹⁷ To anyone else, the rock remains profane and meaningless. Durkheim, on the other hand, believes that ‘The impressions produced in us by the physical world can, by definition, contain nothing that surpasses this world.’¹⁸ A rock is merely a rock, regardless of what is done to it unless it is divided ‘into an ideal and transcendental world, while the material world is left in full possession of the others.’¹⁹ While Durkheim and Eliade approach the sacred from different perspectives, each underscores a value which can be applied to sacred spaces in its own way.

According to these theories, both the Tower of London and *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* can be viewed as sacred, using either or both Durkheim’s and Eliade’s definitions. The Tower of London was built primarily as a fortress by William, Duke of Normandy, in the 1070s after he conquered England.²⁰ It

¹¹ Eliade, *Sacred*, p.

¹² Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 68.

¹³ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 71-72.

¹⁴ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 77.

¹⁵ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 12.

¹⁶ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 12.

¹⁷ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 12.

¹⁸ Durkheim, *Forms*, Swain, p 225.

¹⁹ Durkheim, *Forms*, Swain, p. 39.

²⁰ Historic Royal Palaces, ‘The Normans’, in *The Tower of London: History and Stories: A Building History*, <http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/sightsandstories/buildinghistory/normanbeginnings> [accessed January 9, 2015].

has had many uses over the centuries, including royal residence, menagerie, home of the Crown Jewels and Royal Mint, prison, executioner's grounds, and tourist attraction.²¹ In 1988, the Tower of London was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its 'outstanding universal value'.²² In relation to Durkheim's and Eliade's definitions of sacred, the Tower of London satisfies their requirements. The Tower is a heterogeneous break in space and was the tallest building on the landscape when it was built, a 'navel' and central point.²³ According to The Tower of London History 'The Normans', 'the Tower's primary function was as a fortress-stronghold, a role that remained unchanged right up until the late 19th century' indicating that it had been intentionally built to keep out intruders, to protect the cosmos from chaos (in Eliadian terms) and to declare itself and its order on the landscape and, hence, on the population.²⁴ It represents a social site which is revered, attracting more than two million visitors per year and hosting public and private meetings and conferences.²⁵ It symbolizes a unique strata of society, the Royalty, the Monarch being God's earthly representative, and, therefore, is the highest connection to the gods, reflecting aspects of both Durkheim's social and Eliade's esoteric sacredness.

In comparison, the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* is both temporary and intentional, created in 2014, by ceramic artist, Paul Cummins, and theatre set designer, Tom Piper, to honour the British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in World War I on the 100th anniversary of Britain joining the war in 1914.²⁶ It was designed to represent a connection between those who died in World War I, and, implicitly their spirits, in order to commune with them and honour

²¹ Historic Royal Palaces, 'Events Timeline' in The Tower of London: History and Stories, <http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/stories/timeline> [accessed January 9, 2015].

²² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, The Tower of London, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/488> [accessed January 9, 2015].

²³ Historic Royal Palaces, 'The Normans', [accessed January 9, 2015].

²⁴ Historic Royal Palaces, 'The Normans', [accessed August 12, 2016].

²⁵ Historic Royal Palaces, 'Conferences and Meetings', The Tower of London: Hire a Venue, <http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/hirevenue/conferences-meetings> [accessed January 9, 2015].

²⁶ Historic Royal Palaces, 'About the Installation' in The Tower of London: Visit Us: Top Things to See and Do: The Tower of London Remembers, <http://poppies.hrp.org.uk/about-the-installation> [accessed January 9, 2015] [hereafter Historic Royal Palaces, 'Installation'].

them.²⁷ The poppies themselves, arranged in the hundreds of thousands throughout the Tower of London's moat, are symbols of the soldiers.²⁸ The object, Eliade's 'rock' – the poppies – have become the sacred dead.²⁹ The memorial creates a hierophany because it stands out as something unique in the Tower's moat. It occupies heterogeneous time and space because it is temporary and, therefore, interrupts the regular flow of time and the normal aspect of space within the Tower grounds. While the poppy installation is present, here and now, it symbolizes the eternal qualities of time and space and re-creates the time of victory over chaos (World War I). This victory was celebrated every evening of the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation by the reading of a roll of 180 dead soldiers recited by a Yeoman (Figure 2). This ritual symbolizes the repetition of sanctification. Both the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* satisfy the theoretical definitions of sacred according to Durkheim and Eliade.



Figure 2: Yeoman Warder reading from the roll of honour alongside a bugler who will sound the 'Last Post' among ceramic poppies in the temporary art installation, Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, at the Tower of London. Photograph by Oosoom, October 17, 2014. With permission from Wikimedia Commons.

Another consideration is the definition of *sacred* itself. Anthony Thorley and Celia Gunn explore its etymology and comment that sacred 'carries a fascinating admixture of meanings which make up its derivation: rite, custom, safe, whole, accursed, horrible, divine destruction, divine presence'.³⁰

²⁷ Historic Royal Palaces, 'The Installation', [accessed August 12, 2016].

²⁸ Historic Royal Palaces, 'The Installation'[accessed August 12, 2016].

²⁹ Eliade, *Sacred*, p. 17.

³⁰ Thorley and Gunn, *Sacred Sites*, p. 22.

According to Thorley and Gunn, sacred sites can be natural sites already present in the landscape, sites which have been adapted in some ways by human interaction and/or sites which have been purposefully built by human beings to serve a particular function.³¹ The two sites in question, The Tower of London and *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, both fit the definition presented and can also be considered divine and accursed. The Tower, as divine presence, has housed the Crown Jewels and, as divine destruction, has housed prisoners who were tortured and, sometimes, executed. The *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* is repugnant as it commemorates the history of a brutal and blood-filled war and it is also divine presence because it honours those who sacrificed themselves. Both sites satisfy the sacred dichotomy presented by Thorley and Gunn and, therefore, theoretically, can be considered sacred. In these examples, the actions of human beings have made the space sacred and it can be hypothesized that, in this particular definition and application, therefore, sacred space is a human construct, as suggested by Durkheim. However, it can also be theorized that Eliade is correct because, in their horror, it is evident that both sites have battled to combat chaos by creating an *axis mundi* from which the divine can communicate.

The theory of contested space relates to the topic of sacred space as a human construct because it reflects the uses of the space by various people. Barbara Bender uses this term to define a site that is subject to opposition by different parties.³² Bender explores the history of Stonehenge, commenting on the influences the site has experienced through different agencies since medieval times. As she points out, these influences have been expressed through 'a multitude of voices and landscapes'.³³ Each voice represents a different perspective on Stonehenge and each competes with the others. They interact although, often, they disagree. As such, the voices interpret the site in different ways, some believing the area to be sacred, others not. The landscape becomes the site of expressions of power and reflections on the influence, or lack thereof, of various societal groups.³⁴ As such, the place becomes an important echo of voices, past and present.

³¹ Thorley and Gunn, *Sacred Sites*, p. 76-77.

³² Barbara Bender, 'Contested Landscapes: Medieval to Present Day', *Stonehenge: Making Space*, (Oxford: Berg, 1998), (PDF), p.

³³ Bender, 'Landscapes', p. 131.

³⁴ Bender, 'Landscapes', p. 131.

There can be little doubt that the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* is a contested sacred space as is the Tower of London itself. The Tower of London is traditionally one of the Royal palaces, closely associated with the monarchy of England, and is one of five sites managed by 'Historic Royal Palaces' which is an independent charity under the domain of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, although it receives neither governmental nor Crown funding.³⁵ On January 6, 2015, *The Independent* newspaper ran a headline reading 'The "crass insensitivity" of Tower's luxury dinner for arms dealers, days after poppy display'.³⁶ In considering the situation of the Tower of London as a central meeting place and conference centre, as well as an independent charity, regardless of the other voices who may be involved with it, it remains a charity which needs to make money. The £240 per person (£3000 per table) dinner provided funds which are necessary to support the charity.³⁷ However, the irony of the situation of arms being sold while a memorial for dead soldiers is in place is obvious. This is an indication of how voices conflict and places become contested spaces.

Conflicting voices can also be heard at the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*. The parties involved include Historic Royal Palaces who manage the Tower, the British government, the creators of *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, the shareholders, volunteers, visitors, charities receiving funds and more. 888,246 ceramic poppies were created, each representing one dead soldier (Figure 3).³⁸ They were planted by 17,500 volunteers from July 17th to November 11th, 2014 in the moat of the Tower.³⁹ The estimated cost of creating

³⁵ Historic Royal Palaces, 'History' in About Us: Who We Are, <http://www.hrp.org.uk/aboutus/whoweare/history> [accessed January 9, 2015].

³⁶ Cahal Milmo, 'The 'crass insensitivity' of Tower's luxury dinner for arms dealers, days after poppy display' in *The Independent*, 27-11-2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/the-crass-insensitivity-of-towers-luxury-dinner-for-arms-dealers-days-after-poppy-display-9888507.html> [accessed January 9, 2015] [hereafter Milmo, 'Insensitivity'].

³⁷ Milmo, 'Insensitivity', [accessed January 9, 2015].

³⁸ Historic Royal Palaces, Tower of London Remembers, <http://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/tower-of-london-remembers/>, [accessed August 16, 2016]

³⁹ BBC News London, 'Tower of London poppies: Final poppy is 'planted' in BBC News London, 11-11-14, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-30001177> [accessed January 9, 2015] [hereafter BBC News London, 'Final Poppy'].

each poppy was £2-3.⁴⁰ While admission to the installation was free, the poppies were sold individually for £25 with 10% of each sale and of the total net proceeds going to six different service charities.⁴¹ In September 2014, *The Daily Mail* newspaper reported that £8.75 per poppy will be divided amongst the charities, leaving £12.08 for overhead and costs.⁴² It was suggested that a financial investor, who supplied one million pounds sterling as capital, will receive well over a million pounds sterling from the memorial, above and beyond the amount loaned.⁴³ At the same time, the British government suspended VAT payment on the individual sale of the poppies, amounting to approximately £1.1 million.⁴⁴ While the government seemed to be expressing support for the instalment, as were the charities involved and the volunteers who freely donated their time, there were also voices in the background demanding financial compensation. It is questionable that those receiving profit from the installation consider the site to be sacred. From the examples cited above, it is evident that both the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* are contested sacred spaces and that the voices are conflicting and, potentially, contentious. These voices affect the impact of the site and may create the impression that this sacred space is a human construct, at least partially, in this case, created to profit some people.

⁴⁰Sam Greenhill, 'Just a third of Tower poppy cash is going to help our heroes: So who WILL be pocketing the rest?' in *The Daily Mail*, 13-09-14, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2754319/Just-Tower-poppy-cash-going-help-heroes-So-WILL-pocketing-rest.html> [accessed January 9, 2015] [hereafter Greenhill, 'Cash'].

⁴¹Harriet Arkell, 'Military charities set to receive millions as 100,000 people buy £25 ceramic flowers from Tower of London's sea of poppies in just two days' in *The Daily Mail*, 07-08-14, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2718744/Charities-set-receive-millions-100-000-people-buy-25-ceramic-flowers-Tower-London-s-sea-poppies-display-memory-WWI-dead.html> [accessed January 9, 2015].

⁴² Greenhill, 'Cash'.

⁴³ Greenhill, 'Cash'.

⁴⁴ BBC News London, 'Tower of London poppies: Thousands to go on tour' in BBC News London, 09-11-14, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29965477> [accessed January 9, 2015].



Figure 3: Individual poppies at the temporary art installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* at the Tower of London. Photograph by Oosoom, September 24, 2014. With permission from Wikimedia Commons.

In application, however, sacred space may be an experience of an event or place that is conditional on the lived interaction of the individual and, therefore, it is actually a human experience and interpretation.⁴⁵ To investigate this idea, the voices of those who interact with the site personally must be heard. As Christopher Tilley explains, much academic literature is thought about rather than acted out.⁴⁶ Implying that sites cannot be fully understood and experienced unless physically interacted with, he says ‘Bodies remain at the desk rather than in the field’.⁴⁷ Since I live in Canada and cannot visit the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* personally, I must rely upon Internet reports to interpret the data. I am like one of Tilley’s academics, stuck behind my desk, thinking and examining others’ words and images. However, images are static and frozen in time so I cannot experience the full sensory effect of the real life instalment. Instead, I must rely upon the reported personal experience of others, and even that is not reliable for my personal interpretation because I, as an individual, am not them. However, I can present their reflections here as an example of the impact the memorial has had. By listening to the reactions of these people, an idea can be garnered about whether sacredness is inherent or whether it has been created through human action. In applying the ideas of others to a particular site, the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* for example, the theoretical models can be tested and a conclusion can be arrived at which indicates that sacred space is, or is not, a human construct since the theories were created by people. However, by examining the installation from a

⁴⁵ Christopher Tilley, *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology*: 1, (New York: Berg, 2004). (PDF), p. 27.

⁴⁶ Tilley, *Stone*, p.27.

⁴⁷ Tilley, *Stone*, p.27.

phenomenological perspective, and taking into account the on-site experiences of others, a different perspective may be revealed.

According to Tilley, phenomenology approaches the subject of experience through sensation.⁴⁸ As he points out, 'first-person experiences can be used to gain access to the experiences of other persons because of the incarnate and sensuous opening out of the 'primal' embodied subject to the world'.⁴⁹ Phenomenology, by definition, examines the activity of living, being, and experiencing from a fully physical and human perspective.⁵⁰ In discussing their reactions to *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, people are expressing their phenomenological experiences. They derive meaning by taking part in the site and, through this, they understand both themselves and the landscape in different ways.⁵¹ Therefore, the lived experience of an event or site is what constitutes its meaning and impact on individuals. If the memorial at the Tower of London created spontaneous, emotional reactions in participants, it can be considered inherently sacred and independent of human construction.

Temporality is an important aspect to consider when applying phenomenological insights onto the sites of the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*. Tim Ingold explains that the landscape provides an opportunity to interact with and to remember which 'is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past'.⁵² Ingold points out that the past, present, and future merge within the experience of the participant and that all combine to create understanding, similar to the eternity of time according to Eliade.⁵³ People interact with their mutually shared environments and their experience and perceptions are affected by these interactions. In his article, 'The Temporality of the Landscape', Ingold examines the painting *The Harvesters*, created in 1565 by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.⁵⁴ Within this image, there is a church which, for Ingold, represents the present *and* the historical experience of the image, not only for those viewing it, but also for the figures

⁴⁸ Tilley, Stone, p. 29-31.

⁴⁹ Tilley, Stone, p. 30.

⁵⁰ Tilley, Stone, p29-31.

⁵¹ Tilley, Stone, p. 24.

⁵² Tim Ingold, 'The Temporality of the Landscape', *World Archaeology*, 25.2, 1993, p.

⁵³ Ingold, 'Temporality', p. 159.

⁵⁴ Ingold, 'Temporality', p. 164.

within it.⁵⁵ The church represents the past, present, and future and emphasizes the continuity of history. This is temporality resonating through time and space and indicates that human construct does not, in and of itself, create sacred space, but that the experience is subject to personal interpretation. In this particular instance, *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* is to the Tower of London what the church is to the complete 'taskscape' of Bruegel the Elder's *The Harvesters*.

Referring to *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* from my desk in Canada, it is evident that the installation was not originally considered sacred. Tom Piper, one of the creators, said

When it got to a point where it started to become a sort of pilgrimage, it felt familiar in a way that I was not comfortable with...[I was] slightly perturbed by the frenetic, obsessive surge of emotionalism that the installation invoked.⁵⁶

The idea of pilgrimage, that people were making a special and intentional journey to *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, indicates that the site evoked and invoked an emotional response in many people's encounters with it, although it had not been intentionally planned to do so, because they purposefully travelled to see the installation. Elizabeth II, Queen of England, during her visit, commented that 'the only possible reaction to walking among them [the poppies] was silence.'⁵⁷ In the image below, the Queen appears reverential and reflective (figure 4). Her reaction is reminiscent of the effect of a sacred service.

She is taking part in Ingold's 'taskscape', interacting mutually with the landscape and all that it contains, including other beings.⁵⁸ It seems reasonable to suggest that the Queen was interrelating personally with *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, in her memories, thoughts, physical reactions, and interpretations and that she was having a spontaneous sacred experience.

⁵⁵ Ingold, 'Temporality', p. 170.

⁵⁶ ITV, 'Tower of London poppies artist 'perturbed' by public reaction' in ITV Report, 07-01-15, <http://www.itv.com/news/2015-01-07/tower-of-london-poppies-artist-perturbed-by-public-reaction/> [accessed January 9, 2015].

⁵⁷ The Scotsman, 'Poppy monument reaction 'disturbed' designer' in The Scotsman, 07-01-15, <http://www.scotsman.com/news/uk/poppy-monument-reaction-disturbed-designer-1-3653348>, [accessed January 9, 2015].

⁵⁸ Ingold, 'Temporality', p. 162-3.



Figure 4: Queen Elizabeth II visits the Tower of London's Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red installation, November 6, 2014. Courtesy of SplashNews.

Another indication that the site had a powerful impact on people was the demand that the installation remains *in situ* even after its scheduled run. While the installation was scheduled from July 17 to November 11, 2015, it was extended until the end of November and, following its dismantling, two significant pieces, 'The Wave' and 'The Weeping Window' (figures 5 and 6, respectively), will tour the U.K. until 2018 after which they will be installed at the Imperial War Museums in London and Manchester.⁵⁹ There are several Facebook pages dedicated to *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* in which people share their reactions and interactions with the site. Even eBay has become involved on because it will not allow people to sell the ceramic poppies on its website.⁶⁰ According to eBay spokespeople, this decision was made in order to

⁵⁹ BBC News London, 'Final Poppy'.

⁶⁰ Georgia Graham and Peter Dominiczak, 'Key sections of poppy memorial to stay at Tower of London for three weeks' in *The Independent*, 07-11-14 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/11217457/Key-sections-of-poppy-memorial-to-stay-at-Tower-of-London-for-three-weeks.html> [accessed January 9, 2015] [hereafter Graham, 'Sections'].

honour the 'significance of each individual poppy as a memorial to an individual British military fatality'.⁶¹ The public input regarding the installation indicates that people recognized something special and unique at the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, a spontaneous hierophany and heterogeneous experience of time and place, as Eliade suggested.



*Figure 5: "The Wave"
from Blood Swept Lands
and Seas of Red,
November, 2014.
Courtesy of Tom Piper.*

⁶¹ Graham, 'Sections'.



Figure 6: “The Weeping Window”. Photograph by M J Mercer, October 14, 2014. With permission from WikimediaCommons

The similarity between Eliade’s eternity and Ingold’s temporality is evident in the Tower of London itself and in *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*. The experience and interaction of temporality is evidenced by the perpetuity of The Tower which is similar to Bruegel the Elder’s church. All three landmarks, the church, The Tower of London, and the installation represent the past, present, and future and the enduring influence and impact of place. The Tower of London is a reminder, potent with history, emphasized by the installation which is also reminiscent of the past. Together, the Tower and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* represent an experience of past, present, and future and the old is rejuvenated in the present, reflecting Eliade’s position of the eternal qualities of space and time. *Blood Swept Lands and Sea of Red* recreates the memory of World War I which repeats the history of the Tower as a dungeon and fortress and the resonance is felt, bringing the past and the future (as World War I would have been to those who built the Tower) into the present moment. This is a renewal of the Tower as sacred space, its history echoing through time to this current moment. As Thorley and Gunn point out ‘it is possible for new narratives in modern times to generate new stories, history and legend leading

to new consecration and the creation or adoption of new sacred space and sacred sites'.⁶² This seems to be exactly what the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* has done for the Tower of London, allowing its history to be relived and renewed.

In conclusion, academic theory leads to thoughtful insights which can be applied, in practice, to personal experience. While theoretical work is valuable and promotes deeper contemplations about the world, practical hands-on experience leads to a holistic experience that consumes the whole being. The theory is the story, the interpretation, of the event, while the phenomenological experience is the detail and meaning underlying the story, something like Ingold's examination of Bruegel the Elder's painting, *The Harvesters*. By analysing the theory related to sacred space through the works of Durkheim, Eliade, Thorley and Gunn, and Bender in relation to the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, it has become evident that sacred space is a human construct which can be defined and employed by people and related to specific sites as posited by Durkheim, and, it is also eternal and differs from the profane through its hierophany as Eliade indicated. Sacred space is both intentionally and implicitly evocative. Phenomenology, as expressed by Tilley and Ingold, supports this evaluation by demonstrating that sacred space is independent of human construction because it is manifest in the world through experience and collaboration. This interpretation can be applied to sacred space to demonstrate that the human experience of the sacred is internal and natural, fully resonating with the whole person. The interactions of the people and the place influence each other, communicating a powerful and intense experience. While the sites investigated, the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, were constructed intentionally, they were not necessarily designed to be considered sacred, merely functional and creative. The true measure of sacredness is in the interactions of site and people as Ingold asserts, to perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past. To be sure, the rules and methods of engagement employed respectively by the native dweller and the archaeologist will differ, as will the stories they

⁶² Thorley and Gunn, *Sacred Sites*, p. 28.

tell, nevertheless - in so far as both seek the past in the landscape - they are engaged in projects of fundamentally the same kind.⁶³

Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red on the Tower of London site has activated the emotions, interpretations and perceptions – the engagement – of people from all walks of life through its connections with the eternal nature of time and space in the sacred, phenomenologically activating unexpected and unpredicted reactions. When this is taken into account, it can be seen that sacred space is potentially identifiable anywhere and to anyone in the world, if one is open and willing to holistically experience the full impact of their environment. This interchange resonates throughout the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* through the participants' interactions and reactions and, thus, renews and rejuvenates the whole landscape, the Tower of London. In whichever way sacred space is created, the Tower of London and the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* together represent an impressive example of the sacred in the mundane and suggest that sacred space is a complex and powerful inspiration.

⁶³ Ingold, 'Temporality', pp. 152-153.

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