



Dragons devouring the Tree of Knowledge. Tympanum over door of Llanbadarn church, Radnor.

THE POSSIBLE POLARISATION OF MONSTER PHENOMENA

F. W. Holiday

IF water-monsters of the Loch Ness/Loch Morar type are kindred in nature to some of the apparently material UFO phenomena, as I recently suggested, and as writers such as John Keel already believe, then there can be little doubt about the shape of the ultimate problem. It is the very difficult one of moral polarity.

Morality calls for intelligent awareness and therefore exists in our organic world only at the human level. If powerful external intelligences do indeed inter-penetrate our space/time continuum it is reasonable to suppose that they may be even more strongly polarised towards good or evil than anything found amongst people. If so, great caution is needed.

A water-monster, as an animal, can be neither good nor bad. It must necessarily be a creature governed by instinct and habit. But if it is not an animal but a manifestation then we have something quite different. It could be very evil indeed.

Human tradition should not be shelved overboard too casually. For something like 12,000 years but probably much longer, people believed that water-monsters were evil. On his wall Ivan T. Sanderson has a

Our contributor has been a prominent figure in the investigation of lake-monsters for many years, and gained great distinction in 1968 as author of what is perhaps the best book so far published on the subject: *The Great Orm of Loch Ness*.^{*} This present article follows a remarkable contribution that appeared in the last issue of FSR (September/October 1971) in which Mr. Holiday revealed that after certain personal experiences he had "rejected monsters as normal organic animals and regarded them as manifestations akin to UFOs." In his concluding lines he asked "Are monsters the UFOs' Achilles Heel?"

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^{*} Published by Faber and Faber. Available now as a paperback.

Chinese silk tapestry showing a dragon being stuck full of knives. Similar depictions occur in Sumerian, Egyptian, Bronze Age and early Christian art. If the

monsters were merely animals then the symbolism makes little sense. A rabid wolf or an angry she-bear are far more dangerous than an aquatic that is rarely seen. Or could there be more to it?

For years I struggled with the difficulty of explaining monsters—which I knew existed because I had seen them—in terms of something organic yet reputedly evil. This proved impossible for the simple reason that organic animals below man have not the intelligent awareness to be evil—or good for that matter.

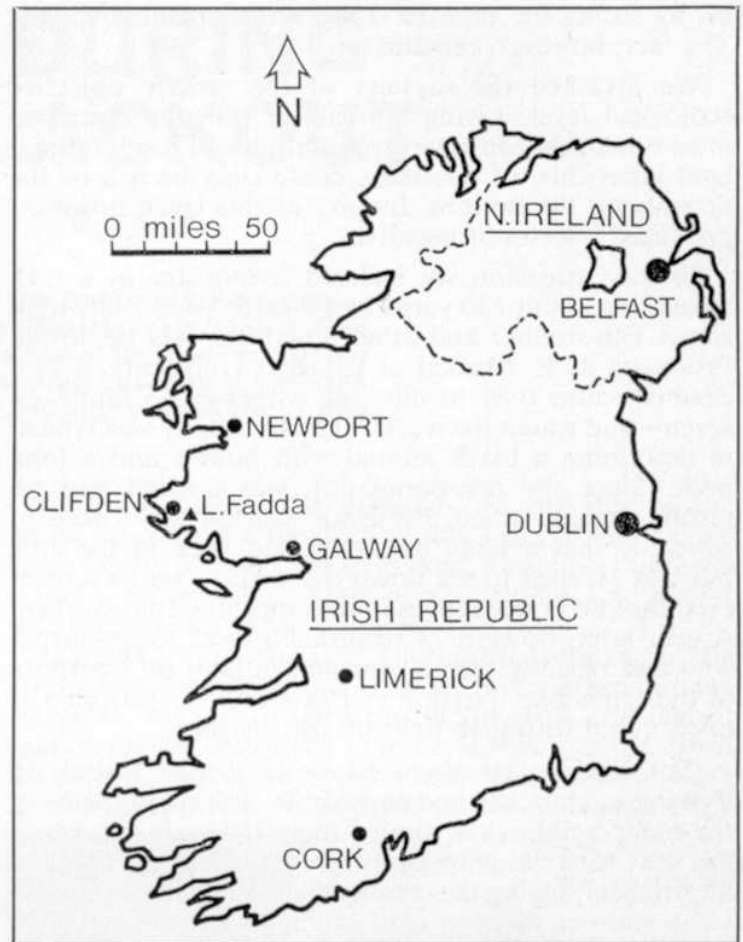
Ireland has more water-monsters than any other part of these islands. Many eye-witnesses have recorded their testimony on my tape-recorder and taken me to lonely places on the bogs where they have seen the weird creatures. The descriptions tallied: a very long black creature with a humped frontal portion somewhat resembling a pony. For three successive years Capt. Lionel Leslie and other friends helped me to net selected lakes. We used 600 feet of net strong enough to hold an elephant. But no monsters were ever captured.

I consulted Dr. David Piggins, chief biologist of The Salmon Research Trust of Ireland. Dr. Piggins runs the Farran Laboratory at Newport, Co. Mayo, and is a world authority on the salmonids. For 20 years he has been engaged in practical fishery work in lakes all over Ireland. No evidence for monsters has ever come his way. Thus it became necessary to face the fact that no organic evidence had been found possibly because there was no organic evidence to find. If so, we are tossed straight into the psychic dream-world described by John Keel in his *Strange Creatures For Time And Space*.

A friend of mine, Georgina Carberry, the public librarian of Clifden, Co. Galway, had a particularly close view of one of the beasts while she was out on the bog with three friends, fishing. This was in 1954 on Lough Fadda, a lake about 1½ miles long. The anglers were having a picnic tea on a beach in the late afternoon. The tape records the following interview:

Georgina Carberry: Well, it was a very long object. We sighted it rising . . . coming out from an island. At first, one of our company thought it was a man swimming in the lake . . . then she said: "Oh, now look at it!" and she was quite right, only it wasn't a man swimming, but a very big object which we watched . . . oh, for a long time coming very leisurely towards us . . . swimming along slowly. So we kept on watching it and eventually, through time, it got very near us. I was the first to move and jumped back and the other three did likewise. And as soon as we moved it just came right around . . . swung right around a rock that was near the shore and dived and we could see these awful big rings in the water as it was sinking. Before two minutes it had gone practically up to the island again when it surfaced. We could distinctly see two big humps showing behind its head out of the water. And the tail we noticed, when it swung around the rock, 'twas a kind of a fork—a Vee-shaped tail. And the mouth which was open when it came in quite close to us at the shore and the eyes and that I can't really remember. But I distinctly remember that the whole body had movement in it.

Interviewer: What do you mean by "movement"?



G.C.: It seemed like . . . wormy. You know—creepy. The body seemed to have movement all over it all the time.¹

Int.: What did the head look like? Was it like anything you've seen before?

G.C.: No, it wasn't. The only thing the mouth resembled, open, was like shark-shaped.

Int.: Did you see teeth? What did the mouth look like?

G.C.: Just . . . oh, a huge great mouth. I can remember the white inside, but as regards teeth and eyes I can't remember what sort of eyes it had because we were so frightened to see such an unusual object.

Int.: How high was it standing out of the water . . . the head and humps you mentioned?

G.C.: Oh, they came right up. As it swam towards us we could see the two humps behind the head very clearly.

Int.: Was there a neck to speak of?

G.C.: There was, yes. It seemed to come up just in one long . . . [curve?].

Int.: Were you affected by this at all?

G.C.: I certainly was! I don't think I went back to that lake for six or seven years after. And when we went back we would never go alone. *Never go alone.*

This witness was badly shocked by her experience and suffered recurring nightmares for several weeks. One of the other anglers was hospitalised for mental treatment but whether this latter sickness was brought

on by seeing the monster I am not competent to say. The fact, however, remains.

We attacked the mystery at the strictly objective ecological level. Living animals of the size described must obviously consume large amounts of food. In bog-land lakes this, of necessity, could only be fish or the detritus on the bottom. Inquiry at this level, however, produced a series of negatives.

On one occasion we isolated a monster in a tarn measuring about 130 yards by 80 yards wide. Nets were set. A fish-stunner and other apparatus was deployed. Professor R. P. Mackal of Chicago University, a biochemist, came over to quiz the witnesses—a family of seven—and watch the work.² The testimony was typical in describing a black animal with humps and a long neck. Since the fish-population was normal and no results were obtained, Professor Mackal was forced to conclude that a large unknown had been in the lake but had escaped to sea down the shallow outlet stream even though brittle sedges in this appeared undisturbed. A year later, however, I recorded a local sheep-farmer who had recently seen a monster on land on the shore of the same lake. Netting and skin-diving, instituted at once, could throw no light on the mystery.

Can wisdom be engraved on a stone? I took to looking at churches and cathedrals. The main theme in the older buildings is almost monotonously repetitive. We see Christ dragging people from a dragon's jaws and St. Michael slaying the creatures. The Caedmont Manuscript shows a monster with gaping jaws swallowing the rebel angels. Mr. B. J. Ashwell, architect to the Dean and Chapter of Gloucester and Worcester, kindly drew my attention to a piece of Saxon sculpture in Southwell Minster which shows not only St. Michael dealing with a dragon, but a thing that looks like one of Keel's horrifying "black dogs".

All of this is put down to poetic imagery by those buffoons whose bottoms never leave the sanctuary of soft chairs. Ignorance not accuracy is the result. It would seem that wisdom can indeed be engraved on a stone; relatively few, however, bother to notice it.

Priests, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have seen monsters and given active help to us in trying to resolve the mystery. However, perhaps it is significant that one of them received a directive from high in the church hierarchy to leave the subject alone.

The original meaning of "Satan" was "adversary" or "opponent". In early Jewish texts Satan was an angel who acted as the accuser of men before God. In Babylonian, Caananite and Egyptian folklore, Satan is equated with the Great Serpent, the dragon. That this is what the Loch Ness and Irish phenomena represent I do not doubt.

Acknowledging a probability, however, makes us no wiser about causation. The phenomenon looks solid and witnesses believe they have seen a fantastic animal. This was my own view until I realised that normal animals cannot possibly behave in the way that monsters behave.

I have tried to interest responsible people over the situation in Ireland in vain. Dr. Piggins approached

the Guinness Trust on our behalf but without result. Mr. Claude Hunt, the Galway Fishery Officer, who has seen a monster, reported it to the Inland Fisheries Trust. Dublin, however, doesn't want to know. London and New York couldn't care less.

Various writers have loosely equated monsters with space-craft. W. Raymond Drake says: "... the picturesque dragon materialises into a space-ship."³ John Michell talks of the "Serpent in the sky."⁴ And in the Gwarchan of Maelderw by Taliessin, a 6th century Welsh poem, we read:

"On the ruddy dragon, the palladium of Pharaon,
Which will in the air accompany the people."

In support of this concept, the Chinese parade model dragons through the streets preceded by a red ball described as "the precious pearl" or "the pearl that grants all desires."⁵

I am an optimist about all of this. The material universe appears to be unified and the psychic universe likewise. The contrast—light and dark, good and evil—seems to be built into the system as a matter of policy. If so, the shadows have their right and proper place. Thus one should remember that Di Visser quotes Kwoh P'oh as writing:

"Enlightener is a dragon; he enlightens the nine yin (darknesses)."⁶ And Yih lin said: "A black dragon vomits light and makes yin (darkness) turn into yang (light)."

The objective investigator cannot comment on these remarks. But the fact that biologists, limnologists, engineers and scholars from almost every nation on earth have been unable to explain the phenomenon of lake monsters should be a matter of concern to us all.

References

- ¹ This is of particular interest. The dragon used to be known in medieval times as the "Great Worm" or the "Loathly Worm". The Worm of Sexhow, the Pollard Worm and the Lambton Worm have found their way into English folklore. From the much-extended original tape-interview the witness seemed to be describing the peristaltic action of an annelid.
In Scandinavian mythology it is worth noting that *Grimnismal*, 35 (written about 930 A.D.) contains the lines:
More wriggling worms
Writhe under Yggdrasill
Than any stupid ape would suppose.
Yggdrasill was Odin's horse and was the world-tree binding together heaven, earth and hell. It was made up of the words *ygg* = oddin and *drasil* = a horse. Investigation tends to support this unlikely description. So far, the phenomenon refuses to be firmly fitted either into this world or any other.
- ² Others present included Georgina Carberry, the Rev. Edward C. Alston, David James, M.P., and Norman Collins of I.T.A.
- ³ *Spacemen In The Ancient East*. Neville Spearman: London.
- ⁴ *The Flying Saucer Vision*. Sidgwick and Jackson: London.
- ⁵ G. Elliot Smith (1919). *The Evolution Of The Dragon*. Longmans, Green & Co.: Manchester.
- ⁶ *The Dragon In China And Japan* (1913), Amsterdam.

UFO OBSERVED DURING CALIFORNIAN BLACKOUT

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THE events described in this report took place in the early hours of Friday, June 18, 1971, near Ben Lomond, California. The witnesses were Mr. W. C. "Tom" Thompson (aged 77), who saw the UFO, Mrs. Minna Thompson and Mr. Leonard R. Clark who both observed the electrical disturbances, and myself who observed both the electrical disturbances and the UFO. All the witnesses reside at 7900 Harvard Drive, Ben Lomond.

12.55 a.m.: I was sitting up late doing some paperwork when an unusual electrical disturbance began. The electric lights and the television set started dimming, or fading in and out in a continuous, but irregular, pattern. It resembled the dot-dash impulses of a code. I glanced at the clock and noted the time. Unexpectedly I sneezed twice and my nose watered so much I rushed downstairs for a kleenex tissue. I stood in the kitchen a few minutes watching the odd pulsing of the lights before going back upstairs.

Expecting a power failure any second, I set aside the papers on which I had been working. Since 10 minutes had gone by and the strange disturbance was still going on, I thought I would go outside to see if anything strange was around that may be causing the interference.

The night was still, clear, and warm, probably in the mid-fifties, and my husband, Leonard, was already asleep on the porch deck. As I reached to open the sliding glass door leading to the deck from the dining room I received a fair-sized shock and saw a spark jump. We have nylon carpeting and I am used to getting "tickled" from static electricity, but this was a sharp bite and I pulled my hand back quickly.

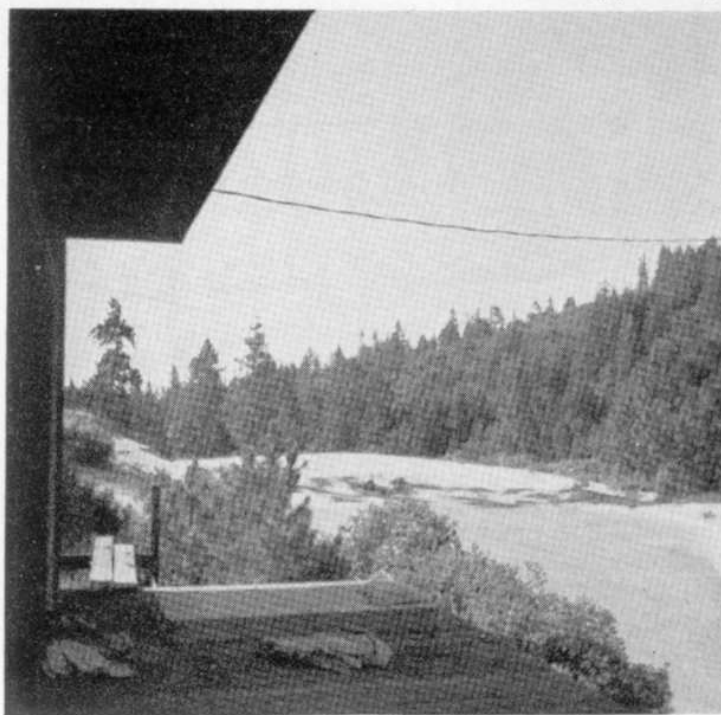
As soon as I stepped outside I could hear the television antenna snapping and buzzing in time with the dimming of the lights: it is secured to the fireplace chimney and is not grounded in any way. The area from the south to the east which reflected the city glow from Felton and Scotts Valley was pulsing in time to our house lights. The power lines across the street were also snapping and buzzing in the same manner as the television antenna.

Through the trees I could see a large star-like object which was bright orange in colour. "Probably Mars," I thought, but decided that coupled with the electrical disturbance it was interesting enough to wake Len.

We went inside the house and I picked up my camera and woke my Dad. My Mother (another night owl) joined me and we went outside together.

1.15 a.m.: From the driveway on the side of the house we could see the orange object in the eastern sky quite clearly between the trees, and, although I felt sure it was a planet (either Mars or Venus rising), to play it safe I took a couple of pictures.

1.20 a.m.: My Dad, Tom Thompson, came out of the house and, not knowing that we were down on the driveway, walked to the front of the deck. He leaned against the corner of the house and was looking down the valley to the south in the general direction of Felton and Santa Cruz. He stood there a while then apparently



View from the porch "deck" of Mrs. Clark's house

became aware that I was calling him, and called out that he was going in to get his glasses and would be right back.

When he joined me on the drive, he asked me if I noticed the smell of ozone in the air. I merely noticed a dryness and told him of my strange sneezing bout. He decided to get his voltmeter to check the voltage variations. I walked up to the cul-de-sac for another look around and noted that the whole area from Felton and Scotts Valley to the south, as well as Ben Lomond and beyond, towards Boulder Creek in the valley