

What is “Real” in Believing in Supernatural Beings?

The Informant’s Cut

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Recent field research into traditional beliefs in supernatural beings (werewolves, fairies, witches, and mòras) among the inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland has shown that such beliefs are still present within certain groups. This fact opens up a possibility of asking present-day informants different kinds of questions, not often asked in folkloristic and ethnological research conducted in these regions. First and foremost, these refer to the question of what the informants themselves think about believing in supernatural beings, why people believe in them and talk about them. Thus in this paper there will be no talk about the nature, doings and names of supernatural beings or narrative forms they occupy, but about the notions and explanations of the very informants. Through informants’ own interpretations and additional data about them were gathered on the basis of a modified questionnaire we will be able to better understand the reality of the informant’s relationship toward believing in supernatural beings.

There are not many subjects coming out of ethnological and anthropological field research that are as delicate and raising as many questions and dilemmas as the belief in anything that has to do with the supernatural. While researching the beliefs in supernatural beings, we intrude on the quite intimate worldview of the holders of these values. To enter such an intimate and closed system, we need special skills, knowledge and techniques, but, more importantly, we also need the help of those who created and who hold such beliefs.

Anthropologists generally consider that the beliefs are propositions about the relations among things to which those who believe have made some kind of commitment for practical or emotional reasons (Goodenough 1990: 597). Such conceptions of belief typically have two elements: “propositionality” (a mental state of conviction in which a doctrine or proposition concerning one’s world-view is affirmed as true as opposed to false) and an assumption that such a “prepositional” relationship to tradition is an “interiorized” one because of its reference to mental states (Tooker 1992: 808).

Precisely because of the “interior-ized” mental states which are “prepositional” in beliefs, in this research I was not interested only in collecting a large body of data concerning the appearance, names and doings of supernatural beings, but I wanted to hear the interpretations of the very informants who are the holders of those traditions.

Therefore, this paper is based on my field research conducted in the Dalmatian hinterland. In past several years I contacted 42 informants from almost every part of the region including the Bukovica region, Ravni Kotari, Zagora, Sinjska and Imotska counties. Hence, for the purpose of the research I developed a questionnaire containing questions

that could be asked about the appearance, origin, activities and protection from supernatural beings such as werewolves, witches, fairies and *mòras*. In addition, I added questions relating to the informant’s history, i.e. his/her education, migration, religious and national belonging, questions about the position of a village, its level of isolation and geographical environment, as well as all those parameters that could be helpful in the research of the informants’ contexts. Additionally, one of the main questions, or intentions, was to find out what the informants thought of the focal issue of my research, i.e. what the informants thought about the existence of supernatural beings. By using these questions my intention was to get the informants to shift from the recounting of data and stories about supernatural beings based on traditional beliefs and to inspire them instead to question the meaning of these stories for themselves and to interpret them individually. Therefore, encouraged by the thought that we should broaden our viewpoints with the ideas of interlocutors classified as non-academics (Briggs 2008: 102), I was particularly interested in the thinking and explanations of the very informants.

Before we engage in further discussion of the informants’ viewpoint let us briefly look at some basic features of supernatural beings that can be found in the beliefs of informants in this region. The most frequent being that every informant mentioned is a *witch*. The person the community would call a witch is stereotyped as an old, ugly, blind (having strange eyes) and unattractive woman, i.e. the one whose appearance deviates from commonly accepted norms. Besides physical appearance, the significant indicator for calling someone a witch is the person’s character, social reputation and marital status. Therefore, whores, promiscuous, widowed and unmarried women are considered witches as well. It is believed that a witch can kill persons and domestic animals or make them ill, mostly using her “evil eye”. She causes storms and hail, destroys crops and can transform into an animal, usually black or nocturnal. A *mòra* has similar abilities as the witch, but the main difference is that the *mòra* is described as a young woman who becomes a witch after marriage. She is mostly seen as a black cat that sucks its victim’s breasts during the sleep/night. Men usually turn into *werewolves*. The respect for social norms is also highlighted in their case, therefore, it is believed that liars, thieves, cheaters, non-baptized, aggressive and extremely evil men will turn into werewolves after death. They rise from the grave as the undead in the form of boneless skin filled with blood; they attack the villagers (mostly neighbors and family) and can kill domestic animals and persons while fighting with them. Finally, the informants from the Dalmatian hinterland often mentioned beliefs in *fairies* describing them as beautiful young women with animal legs (goat’s, cow’s, donkey’s). They emphasize their character, which is usually good but can also be evil or ambivalent. The most important thing about them is that fairies have supernatural powers, which they can use to help good people or to punish the evil ones.¹

At the end of the interview, after they described supernatural beings in the manner just shown, I asked each of my informants the following question: What do you think about the existence of supernatural beings? Their views and explanations can be classified into several groups.

The first group consists of those who did not offer any concrete explanations or express their opinion. Therefore, seven informants said that they did not believe in super-

¹ For a detailed description of the appearance and abilities of supernatural beings from Croatian and South Slavic traditional beliefs cf. eg. Đorđević: 1953, Vukanović: 1989, Šešo: 2007.

natural beings, but that they did know that some older people in the past had believed in them. They were not willing to discuss this topic further and concluded that they could not help me anymore. They justified themselves by having no time and being in a hurry and suggested that I should go to another village where there were more old people who might know something about this. Often they really did give names of people living in other villages, mostly older, who could tell me more about the beliefs in supernatural beings. However, it must be said that after my question, the conversation with almost all of the informants from this group ended and thus it is impossible to conclude with certainty what is their attitude towards supernatural beings. After the question was asked, some of the informants started showing a lack of trust towards the researcher who wanted to get to the bottom of such delicate themes as supernatural beings, while others considered the explanation of such phenomena not worthy of discussion and, although they might have known something or even quite a lot about the issue, they saw no point in further discussion about it.

The largest number of informants (15) forms the next group. They described the appearance of supernatural beings, told about how they come into being, what they do, how to defend oneself from them, what their names are, they told stories about supernatural events, etc. The repertoire which the informants from this group offered seems as if copied from hundred years old descriptions of beliefs that can be found in *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje*² or from the legends that were collected in the same area by Maja Bošković-Stulli a couple of decades ago (cf. Bošković-Stulli 1967/1968: 392–408).

The discourse of narration very much resembled the repertoire, i.e. the informants most often said that they had met such creatures or that some supernatural manifestation had taken place before one of their neighbors, relatives or acquaintances and the informants often gave exact names and locations where those occurrences took place. However, they always emphasized that this happened in some “previous times” and added a refrain “whether this is true or not, I don’t know”. When asked what they thought about the existence of supernatural beings, they always distanced themselves and replied that they personally did not believe in supernatural beings, but they emphasized that there are elements of truth in this that they cannot explain. The usual sentences that we find in their answers are:

I personally never believed in such things, but, still, there is something real about it. (Ivan).³

There is some sort of a force that has control over these people. Everything that has a name should exist. (Josip).

As can be seen, the informants would seldom determinedly say that all of these were “just stories”, and were more likely to say: There are people who still believe in this, but I never believed in any of these things (Pave) or Only women and older folk still believe in

² *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje* is the first Croatian ethnological publication with its first volume published in 1896.

³ The names in brackets are the first names of my informants. The full names, transcripts and other information are stored in the archives of the Institute of Ethnology at the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Zagreb under the signature NZ 195.

this (Nikola), thus creating the impression that the existence of supernatural beings is in fact true. At that, their gesticulation, the expression of their faces and other non-verbal segments would add to the suspense and credibility of their story, and frequently they would switch their narration from the third to the first person and suddenly the *mòra* that attacked their friend would become the *mòra* that the informant once met in his or her sleep.

If we analyze the refrains the informants used and if we take into consideration the verbal components and the emotional tension, we can conclude that these are not semiotic but apophantic testimonies in which the informants leave the possibility that they do not necessarily speak the truth. Such examples in which the informants claim that it was they who saw a fairy, that a *mòra* “harassed” them or that there “is something there”, have a narrative function of creating suspense, intrigue, excitement and are a constitutive element of the genre of mythic tales. Here the listener has the impression that the narrator believes in the delivered content. Also they often use names of real persons who experienced such things, they list localities and dates (Rudan 206: 96). The retelling of someone else’s encounters with the supernatural often turns into the first person narration in order to give a more exciting tone to the story (Bošković-Stulli 1991: 190).

In the third group, 4 informants stated that they did not believe in the existence of supernatural beings, but that they believed that people used to amuse themselves with stories of such (imagined) beings in the moments of boredom. The usual answers to my question were:

All of this was invented, all those stories about the dead, of them rising. Come winter, they’d get bored, so they’d gather and tell these foolish stories. (Marta).

When we would sit around in a house, stories would be told. Some were listened to, others not. Some knew how to tell a story better, they knew how to invent things. (Nikola).

These stories were told around a fireplace. It was important not to spend too much wood, so everyone would gather at one house. People who never moved anywhere, they scared people and would get drunk. (Mare).

As can be seen, even some of the more recent testimonies about the circumstances in which such stories were told showed that in the past the stories about supernatural beings served as a form of entertainment, especially in winter, when people did not have much work. People gathered for company or to save firewood. But, as Bošković-Stulli observes, such circumstances, in which the stories were told in the above-described manner, had almost disappeared already at the time of her own research (1950s and 1960s) because of the migration and changes in the way of life (Bošković-Stulli 1967-68: 311-312). Today the informants covered by this field research also emphasize that those stories were more frequent in the past, while today they do not exist. However, even though the way of life, that is, the social and economic changes that took place in the last fifty years, have considerably changed the circumstances in which the stories were told, they still in a certain form exist even today. During my field research I had no opportunity to participate in evening sit-togethers, corn shucking and similar gatherings where the members of the community

covered by my research talked about supernatural beings, but during my interviews I actually managed to create such situations and raised curiosity with many inhabitants wherever I conducted my interviews. While interviewing some individuals, it often happened that someone “dropped in” or that the neighbor saw me sitting in front of the house with my informant and decided to join us at the table and share his/her story. Also, occasionally some older people from the village were called to come to the house where the interview was taking place in order to participate in it by revealing some of their knowledge about supernatural beings. This led to spontaneous situations in which more inhabitants took part in the interview, such as the situations mentioned by Bošković-Stulli. Perhaps it should be pointed out that at the given moment probably any other topic would provoke curiosity with the villagers who are eager for amusement, socializing and exchanging stories. However, it is significant to notice that almost every “guest” knew something or quite a lot about supernatural beings, often got involved in the narration and in this way contributed to the already-mentioned suspense, drama or mysticism of the stories. So, telling stories about supernatural beings still has or, if induced from the outside, it can have the function of socialization and amusement. Even though various social changes led to the disappearance of fundamental predispositions that in the past stimulated people to gather and tell stories, it is still possible to create situations that take the contours of the previous conditions and in which the stories of supernatural beings play the role of amusement and socialization which is often emphasized by the informants themselves.

In the fourth group we have 4 informants who emphasized that now they no longer believed in supernatural beings, but that they used to believe in them when they were children and that now they believed those stories used to play an important role in the children’s up-bringing.

A werewolf, that’s a devil used to scare the children. If they misbehaved, a werewolf would come and take them away. (Miho).

The elderly made up the stories. The children were scared of these stories. Witches, fairies and werewolves... (Andrija).

On Carnival days, our father would not let us out; he would say: “Tonight we do not open the doors, every freak and every witch is out.” (Mara).

They used fairies to scare children. Fairies were beautiful and nice, but people were afraid as fairies were made out of beautiful girls. (Anka).

The informants’ explanations tell us how the things worked some fifty years ago when they were children. But what is the situation today? Today in the Dalmatian hinterland, unfortunately, we cannot find children sitting around the table listening to their elders’ stories. The first reason is, of course, the demographic picture, which is showing the region’s population decline, that is, the number of children born is decreasing, and the villages are mostly populated by the older population. The children who are born in the region attend schools in larger towns and cities nearby; they often live in student homes because schools in their villages have long closed due to an insufficient number of pupils. Although in the field I was unable to find any children whom I could ask about super-

natural beings, many informants were willing to share experiences from their childhood. Back then at the gatherings the older people of the village also told stories whose intention was, as some informants said, to scare the children. It is thus evident that the stories about supernatural beings provoked fear and intimidation with children, but also with the older people of the village. Such results are in accordance with Lauri Honko's thesis according to which the function of the stories about supernatural beings was to create fear and dread from supernatural beings so that they could function, that is, fulfill their social function as guardians of norms (Honko 1962: 118). The only question is whether such stories were told on purpose in order to educate children and enforce social norms on them through the topic of supernatural beings? According to Marijana Hameršak, the stories told at evening gatherings and other situations were not directed exclusively towards children, but the children happened to hear them (Hameršak 2009: 246). I partially agree with Hameršak and think that the stories filled with authenticity, drama and suspense served to occupy and "teach", but also to amuse all of the participants who, by the way, all held these stories to be somewhat true. However, I also believe that the storytellers were additionally motivated if the children were present during their telling. In those cases, the storytellers most likely chose more frightening examples in order to provoke fear and intimidation in the children. It can be assumed that after such stories children did not leave their homes at night, did not walk in the woods alone, they did not avoid church services, in other words, they tried to behave in accordance with certain social norms in order to avoid an encounter with a supernatural being. Thus these stories were for the good measure intended for the children, and the motivation behind them was to educate the children, to impose certain social norms on them, and to provoke fear that in case the imposed norms were broken the supernatural beings would be called upon those who broke them.

The fifth group consists of several informants who explained that the beliefs in supernatural beings are caused by external material factors such as hard physical work, harsh weather conditions and alcohol:

After working the whole day in the field, the people would get tired, and in the evening they would see different things because of the hard work. (Imelda).

These nightmares might be the result of the pressure in the body, some pressure, when it is hot. (Marko).

Those who got drunk saw the werewolves. (Pave).

As we can see from the examples above, the informants' answers to my questions on the belief in supernatural beings were rather short and the informants refrained from giving lengthy comments. However, we now come to two extremely interesting explanations of the existence of supernatural beings, whereby the informants tried to give a detailed explanation of these beings' existence. This explanation was accompanied by a strong rationalization of the issue. Both explanations were initially given by the informant named Milorad from Bukovica, but in later interviews some other informants expressed similar views.

Milorad explained the belief in supernatural beings as a psychophysical disorder, which is the result of difficult life conditions. He emphasized that he had observed people

and their behavior for years and that he came to the conclusion that werewolves, fairies and other beings always appeared, or were mentioned, after difficult situations in life such as war, drought, hunger, or death. After such events, people are prone to believe that supernatural beings are responsible for their hardships. People encounter them at the precise moment or immediately after some accident happens and start believing that these supernatural beings are responsible for these events. After a catastrophe of some kind, such beings are seen in the whirlwind, in the humming of leaves, in a black cat, sheets being dried outside during the night. So the people are prone to believe that a werewolf has awakened, that fairies are walking through the woods and that mòras or witches are walking through the village.

Then I asked Milorad why he thought people were likely to connect the appearance of supernatural beings to catastrophes and other similar events. Milorad answered that such events often rendered people psychologically instable and prone to believe in unusual things:

People start talking about these things when they get into debt or some other evil befalls them, such as this war that brought misfortune to us all. Then we find ourselves in a specific situation, which makes us nervous, suspicious, and we cannot find a normal answer for why something is happening to us. When this war happened, I started seeing a black cat – a mòra. It was jumping on me in sleep, making me unable to move. I didn't know if it were a dream or if it were for real. I knew that it couldn't be, but I couldn't get rid of the feeling that it was for real. (Milorad).

Based on the conversation with Milorad, it is clear that the people from this region are inclined to see supernatural beings during unusual situations that are hard to accept. As he said, in such situations they see what they are familiar with, i.e. traditional supernatural beings that are by definition able to cause troubles. Similarly, the supernatural beings almost always appear during or after an event as an answer and an unambiguous sign of something inexplicable, something difficult to comprehend and therefore supernatural.

While Milorad's first explanation addresses the connection between the appearance of supernatural beings and difficult life situations, his second explanation sheds light on the background of the whole issue. This second explanation, which is actually an addition to the first one, is expressed in one sentence:

Looking back, every time supernatural beings were mentioned, they were misused for some evil doing. (Milorad).

Hence, we have a second explanation according to which the belief in supernatural beings "exists" so that it can be (illegally) exploited for someone's material benefit. According to Milorad, supernatural beings were used by particular individuals to scare other people and gain material benefit. The mechanism of using supernatural beings for the purpose of intimidation functioned in such a manner that *villains and thieves [...] would find mentally ill individuals and influence them to spread the stories. After 1945 they walked at night in chains inciting the mentally ill to start the rumors.* (Milorad)

The thieves' goal was to start the avalanche in the whole village by intimidating psychologically unstable people. By spreading the story, according to which fairies and werewolves are walking through the village among the inhabitants, fear would spread among the people and keep them locked in their houses at night. Thieves would use this situation to steal from barns and warehouses without fear that anyone would come and check the suspicious sounds. Hence, it seems that one of the explanations for the existence of supernatural beings is their use for criminal purposes such as robberies and thefts.

Another informant from Bukovica discussed the type of resourceful tricks thieves used in order to additionally frighten people and make them believe in supernatural beings. During the entire interview, this informant argued that werewolves were invented precisely for the purpose of stealing and robbing people from the village.

Werewolves are invented. It was done by professional thieves to frighten people, so that they could steal during night as ghosts. They made the dolls and figures people saw themselves, using rags, sheets, quilts. To seem more real, they lit candles. Back then it was not allowed to walk through the graveyard or the narrow streets. Thieves were the people from that village. (Ivan).

The informant from the neighboring region of Ravni Kotari agreed with this last informant. He claimed that a nearby hill had always been the subject of various stories about witches and that these stories were used by thieves to frighten people.

The elderly invented the stories that witches dance on Vrčvo Hill. It was like this. There was no electricity in the village and people could easily be frightened. Some villagers would frighten others so as to steal sheep and goats. When a person died in the village, they told others they saw him resurrect. While the bell rang the Holy Mary, everybody stayed at home, and they stole. There is a tower on Vrčvo hill, one could drive a car on the walls. They would say they had seen a light, while in reality they carried torches and the thieves frightened the people. I looked after sheep at nights and collected grass for oxen. If there were any witches, I would have seen them and they would have taken me. (Mladen).

A similar explanation was offered by the informant from Dalmatinska Zagora who said:

Let me tell you one thing. At first, they said werewolf. Listen: there was no work, and there were many people. There was no place where people could earn a living. There was no work, no factories, nothing. The factory was sold, you couldn't get a job anywhere. And then people would dress in black or white, go behind the graveyard, in the woods, on the road, and scare you. And then people could go nowhere and then they would steal around the village. They would steal sheep or hams or... I know what. And, that's why there were werewolves. (Jakov)

The answer of Janja from Bukovica shortly summarizes the problem:

All that was invented, so that some could steal. (Janja).

Emphasizing the abuse of the belief in supernatural being for dishonest purposes and the search for psychophysical causes for such beliefs are characteristic of the informants we mostly find in Bukovica and the nearby Ravni Kotari. The fact that the informants belong to this region can help us better understand why they show particular inclination toward such strong rationalizations. Namely, unlike other areas covered by the research, this region was strongly hit by the Croatian War of Independence. The mixed population (Croats and Serbs standing on opposite sides) that inhabited Bukovica almost completely escaped or was forced to leave. During the war the inhabitants lived in larger urban centers such as Biograd, Zagreb or Zadar (when the Croats are in question) or in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Subotica (as far as the Serbs are concerned). After the war, one part of the population returned to Bukovica and today the returning Croats and Serbs live there under the motto of peaceful coexistence.

This new, complex ethno-political situation in Bukovica left a mark on the inhabitants' position towards beliefs in supernatural beings. In their testimonies the informants now often use strong self-censorship, which is most evident in the way they end their sentences – *this no longer exists, that's all foolishness or only ill people believed in that* – as well as in the informants' reservation towards the testimonies they give. In this way the informants refrain themselves from saying anything that would compromise their status of peaceful returnees.

Such a position towards the problem of believing in supernatural beings in Bukovica can primarily be explained by the informants' fear from the “intellectual” elite walking about the village and writing down everything that is said. French ethnologist Jeanne Favert-Saada noticed this same position while researching the belief in witches in rural France where people believed that the researchers of traditional beliefs (folklorists and ethnologists) often considered the holders of such beliefs backward and primitive and thus the informants were in “no hurry” to reveal their beliefs so as not to be considered backward (1980: 4). Thus the informants in their testimonies often used self-censorship or rationalized the problem so as not to be brought into connection with such “backward” beliefs. However, when Bukovica is in question, such a position towards believing in supernatural beings is even more prominent because the informants not only do not want to be considered backward or primitive, but, more importantly, they do not want to be considered backward or primitive Croats or Serbs. Similarly, the Bukovica informants strive to demystify traditional beliefs in supernatural beings because, unlike the informants from other regions covered by the research, they do not have a strong feeling of group or local belonging⁴ because of the recent war in which the local population was in conflict with each other. Thus the negation, rationalization and self-censorship of traditional beliefs in supernatural beings that were shared among the population before the war⁵ comes out of the (until recently warring) groups' need to make a distinction between each other. In other words, the Bukovica informants have the need to deconstruct their shared memories and thus their negation, self-censorship and rationalization of such traditions is understandable. Finally, it is worth mentioning that all of the informants covered by the research during the Croatian War of Independence spent a longer period of time in larger urban centers in which they came face to face with rational explanations of “back-

⁴ More about the relationship between the belief in supernatural beings and group affiliation cf. Šešo 2010.

⁵ Older literature and data dealing with the beliefs in supernatural beings in Bukovica shows almost no difference in beliefs between Croats and Serbs (cf. eg. Ardalić, 1899, 1917).

ward" beliefs cherished by the older people from their villages. The confirmation of this came from the informant Milorad who told me that during his exile in Belgrade he had read Erich von Däniken and Carlos Castaneda and realized that the supernatural beings from old people's stories were actually *foolishness*. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the traditional beliefs in supernatural beings in Bukovica are additionally deconstructed and directed at rapid decline due to the storytellers' mass departure to larger urban centers during the Croatian War of Independence, where they acquired detachment from such "backward" beliefs.

Conclusion

By looking at the answers the informants gave to the question of what they themselves thought about supernatural beings, we can conclude that, according to the informants, the belief in supernatural beings was increasing during or immediately after situations of social hardships and catastrophes. Such hardships primarily refer to wars, outbreaks, natural disasters and economic crises. During and immediately after such events, two groups of people appear. The first group is comprised of those who have become psychologically unstable and are inclined to believe in the existence of supernatural beings, which somehow represent either the answer to the hardship or a sign, a climax of that hardship. The second group is simply trying to use this situation for their material profit. In the situation of complete chaos of a village or an individual, the members of the second group reach out to supernatural beings from traditional beliefs, which are strongly rooted in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland. Reproducing various values and symbols ascribed to supernatural beings by traditional beliefs, a group of profiteers wittily uses them, hence managing to manipulate other inhabitants.

However, if we look at the explanations given by some other informants, we can immediately notice that supernatural beings are always mentioned as a tool for the realization of certain goals. They are used as objects of entertainment and socialization, for the purpose of the construction and maintenance of social norms, i.e. the upbringing of children, as an excuse for various hardships of life, drunkenness, etc. In all these segments of human life, supernatural beings with their characteristics, values and symbols provide support. They help us in the world that surrounds us and poses many more questions and creates more obstacles than it provides answers and offers support. One has to find these on one's, sometimes with the support of supernatural beings, or as my last informant said:

Whatever a person believes, it helps him. (Jakov).

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Što je "stvarno" u vjerovanju u nadnaravna bića. Kazivačeva verzija

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Nedavna terenska istraživanja tradicijskih vjerovanja u nadnaravna bića (vukodlake, vile, vještice, more i dr.) među stanovništvom dalmatinskog zaleđa pokazala su još uvijek snažnu prisutnost takvih vjerovanja. Ta činjenica otvara nam mogućnost da današnjim kazivačima postavimo neka pitanja koja se u dosadašnjim folklorističkim i etnološkim bavljenjima ovom temom na ovim prostorima nisu često postavljala. Riječ je prvenstveno o pitanju što sami kazivači misle zašto postoje vjerovanja u nadnaravna bića, zašto ljudi u njih vjeruju i o njima pričaju. Stoga se u ovom radu autor ne bavi izgledom, djelovanjem i nazivljem nadnaravnih bića ili narativnim formama, već u prvom redu razmišljanjima i tumačenjima samih kazivača. Kroz vlastite interpretacije kazivača i dodatne informacije o kazivaču prikupljene uz pomoć modificirane upitnice (koja obuhvaća društveni položaj, profesiju, obrazovanje i migracije kazivača iz dalmatinskog zaleđa) autor nastoji razumjeti stvarnost kazivačeva odnosa prema vjerovanju i pričanju o nadnaravnim bićima.