An Exploratory Case Study on Patient Transference and Cultural Sensitivity in the Context of Jinn Perception

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Abstract : Understanding a patient's hallucinations requires a degree of cultural humility when these experiences are consistent with beliefs that are normative to the patient's respective culture and religion, and in this exploratory case study, the treatment history of a 32-year-old female Iranian patient who sought psychoanalytic treatment in Iran is explored, who stated that she had been witnessing jinn since she was fifteen-years-old. She experienced considerable disempowerment and lack of support in her upbringing and curiously believes that the jinn provide her with comfort and power, yet simultaneously create a sense of fear and horror. When her analyst wonders about a possible link between the jinn and the patient's self-object needs and what was denied for her in her youth, the patient becomes resistant to treatment, especially when the possibility of the jinn existing as hallucinations is raised. Throughout the course of therapy, the patient discusses her tumultuous marriage, her strained relationship with her family, and inner conflicts. She also begins to find solace in her relationship with her therapist, satisfying her self-object needs and enabling her to widen her self-awareness and wish for deeper connections with others. In understanding her needs and fears, the role of the jinn in her psychological landscape aims to be understood, with a larger discussion of how to work with patients experiencing supernatural phenomena and how the phenomena serve as an object, whether real or imaginary. The overall aim is to shed light on the intricate interplay between cultural and religious beliefs and psychological manifestations.