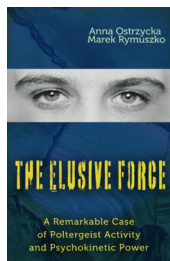


**BOOK AND
MULTIMEDIA
REVIEW**

The Elusive Force: A Remarkable Case of Poltergeist Activity and Psychokinetic Power

Rosemarie Pilkington

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This case is one of the most important I have seen in a long time. It is one of the best-documented and well-investigated examples of Recurrent Spontaneous Psychokinesis (RSPK), also known popularly as “poltergeist” activity that has emerged to date. It adds to and reinforces what we already know, and I hope it will inspire more interest in the study of large-scale physical phenomena.

The book was originally published in Poland in 1989, so it comes about 34 years late to those of us who don’t read Polish, but thanks to Joel Stern’s efforts, we English speakers are finally able to explore and perhaps come closer to understanding the enigma of psi phenomena.

At the center of the activity was a thirteen-year-old Polish girl named Joasia (pronounced Yo-ASH-ia) Gajewski, around whom, following the death of her grandmother in 1982, all manner of disturbances took place.

Like her famous countryman, Franek Kluski, some of these effects were electrical in nature. “Crackling” sounds were often heard around her, and she would become electrically charged—think of shuffling your feet on a fuzzy carpet in dry weather. But although anyone shaking her hand would get a “jolt,” she could not be grounded by touching someone or something.

In an early outbreak, while Joasia was sleeping, plates and glasses hurtled through the air at tremendous speeds, smashing into walls and furniture. When her parents turned the lights on, shards of glass, as if pulled by some strange force, flew at her, some cutting her. Her blanket, charged with electricity, gave off sparks.

As has happened with many other psychokinetic subjects, electrical systems and devices broke down around her, watch batteries and tape recorders malfunctioned, and film taken of her remained unexposed.

Her parents called in help because of the havoc wreaked in their apartment. Cabinets full of glassware and crockery would fly at tremendous speeds, so fast they often could not be seen, crashing against furniture, walls, and people, their shards flying dangerously. Joasia herself, as noted, was often attacked and cut by glass or hit by other flying objects. (Other central figures in RSPK cases, including the Ohio teen Tina Resch, and a young Gilbert Roller, were also “attacked” in this way.) Like Tina, Joasia caused eggs to fly out of the refrigerator through its closed door (Roll & Storey, 2004; Pilkington, 2006).

This remarkable feat of objects passing through solid walls occurred more spectacularly when Dr. Gadula, her physician and the director of a student sanatorium, invited Joasia to spend her vacation there, where she could be cared for and studied.

Before going there, Joasia had had a disappointing appearance on a television show, a humiliating fiasco. She still had not recovered from her embarrassment when she learned of a “rival,” an 11-year old metal-bender who now had the public’s attention. She also heard that people were saying that even if she had possessed some powers, they were now obviously gone. Finally, a government official derided her on the radio as



one who “imagines something is flying around her.”(p.67) She’s described as acting “peevish” as a result. She must have been seething.

Shortly afterward, the sanatorium’s head nurse and the ward attendant were standing in the hall outside the closed double doors of room 309, Joasia’s room. The attendant had been cleaning the lavatory across the hall from 309, and the nurse asked her to wash the mirror there when suddenly they heard a crash and the sound of breaking glass from Joasia’s room. The nurse ran inside and saw glass fragments whirling in the air, then pulled, as though by a magnet, toward her. Her apron was showered with glass. Joasia was seated in a chair.

Although the floor was strewn with glass, the nurse was puzzled to see that the mirror over the sink was intact. At the same time, the attendant in the lavatory saw that the mirror she was to wash had disappeared. It had vanished and ended up almost instantly, shattered on the floor of Joasia’s room, whose door had been closed at the time. Furthermore, the thick fiberboard sheet on which the mirror was mounted, which had been fastened with hooks to the lavatory wall, lay on the floor in 309 among shards of glass.

Two days later, the sound of an explosion came from Joasia’s room. Doctors, nurses, and students rushed there and found the sink on the floor, smashed to pieces, one of its metal supports ripped off the wall, the other buckled, the drainage pipe severed, the thick metal faucet broken and strangely twisted as though hit by a sledgehammer.

I guess she showed them!

Joasia’s case is so rich because not only did she unleash such extremely powerful forces, but also such a variety of phenomena, too numerous to mention here, from spontaneous water appearing on walls to unexplained fires and shattering light bulbs whose filaments glowed long afterwards, to flying objects making right turns in mid-air.

Just about all the men and women we know of who produced physical phenomena reported experiencing such symptoms as fatigue, headaches, and disorientation. Some became severely debilitated with temporary blindness or coughing up blood. Joasia, too, especially after a major outbreak, suffered headaches and a sapping of her energy. Her nurse reported that Joasia felt ill for several hours after every incident, appeared to be drowsy and listless, and had a poor appetite.

What makes Joasia’s case even more important is that Dr. Gadula did what, unfortunately, few researchers have done in other countries: He brought in other physicians, scientists, and researchers for a multi-disciplined study of the teenager. How refreshing it is to know of this very intelligent, enlightened approach by these Polish professionals! They not only verified the reality of the phenomena but also identified physical anomalies as well as psychological factors that might contribute to producing them. For instance, they found Joasia had low levels

of dopamine, which is sometimes found in epileptic seizures. In addition, the examination of her retinal afterimages showed interesting anomalies, some of which are associated with a malfunctioning thyroid gland, although Joasia’s thyroid was normal.

Joasia could consciously control her PK ability to an extent, bending metal, for instance. And like most other psychokinetically gifted people, she demonstrated other psi gifts: she excelled at telepathic tests, and there is a hint about her precognitive abilities when she stated that she usually forgot her dreams upon waking, but “If I do remember one, it means something is about to happen.” (p.109)

The authors report that as Joasia neared the end of her adolescence, the phenomena tapered off. She married and had two children. Regrettably, they have lost contact with her, and her whereabouts are unknown. This is unfortunate: At the time of this writing, Joasia would be 53. It would be beneficial to follow up to find whether some of this force remained and, if so, if she was able to channel it in some way, as e.g., Matthew Manning (see <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/matthew-manning>) has used it to become a healer. In fact, in an interview with her in October 1989, Joasia expressed a desire to become a healing professional saying, “Contact with sick people suits me. I want to help them.” (p.109)

Joasia’s desire for anonymity is understandable: This was an extremely traumatic period in her life in which she felt like a freak. She wanted to live a normal life. It is a great loss to our knowledge, but who can blame her?

The authors also added an extensive appendix featuring their interviews with a variety of scientists involved in this case, discussing various hypotheses that might help us to understand psychokinetic forces and the people who can unleash them. A second, shorter appendix contains the report of an experiment by a nuclear physicist. It is followed by a list of Suggested Readings and an Index.

Kudos to Anna Ostrzycka and Marek Rymuszko for bringing the details of this remarkable and important case to the Polish-speaking public and to Joel Stern for his excellent translation, which is an important addition to the English language literature. Whether you are new to RSPK phenomena or an experienced researcher, you will find much to ponder in these pages.

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