

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA AND THE VITAL FORCE:
 HEREWARD CARRINGTON ON
 “VITAL ENERGY AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA”

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ABSTRACT

Excerpts from an article by Hereward Carrington, entitled “Vital Energy and Psychical Phenomena”, and published in 1921 in the *Psychic Research Quarterly*, are reprinted. The article is discussed in the context of previous and later publications on ‘vital forces’. Carrington argued that metabolic processes, and life itself, were produced by a vital force that did not depend on the body for its production: this force could be projected from the body and cause physical phenomena, such as movement of objects and materializations. Carrington continued to speculate along similar lines in later years. While his views are in some ways inconsistent with the non-physical ideas developed by later parapsychologists such as J. B. Rhine, they remain a valuable window to past aspects of parapsychological theory.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout time there have been different names to refer to forces thought to emanate from the human body to produce psychic phenomena. Such concepts of force were prevalent in mesmerism, spiritualism, and psychical research,¹ and were preceded by ancient ideas such as those of prana and ki. The purpose of the present article is to illustrate aspects of this past conceptual tradition to remind contemporary readers of the existence of somewhat forgotten ideas relevant to the development of both psychical research and vitalism. Such ideas are similar in many ways to those concepts presented by recent writers (e.g. Benor, 2004; Oschman, 2000). But while these ideas are prevalent today among those interested in auras, healing and other topics, some of the past history of the topic is generally neglected. To help bring some aspects of this past to the attention of current students of the topic we are presenting an excerpt from the writings of the well-known psychical researcher, Hereward Carrington (1880–1958). In this article Carrington (1921) propounded a vitalistic view of psychic phenomena that included the idea of a biological force projected from the human body.

THE CONTEXT OF CARRINGTON’S PAPER:

IDEAS OF ANIMAL MAGNETISM, MEDIUMISTIC FORCES AND VITALISM

The so-called mesmeric trance, with many other phenomena such as the transposition of the senses (e.g. seeing with the pit of the stomach) and healing, was attributed by many to “animal magnetism”. In his famous “propositions” about animal magnetism, published in *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal*, Franz Anton Mesmer (1779) postulated a universally distributed and continuous fluid that could be received, stored and propagated by organisms, and affirmed that this principle was able to cure nervous and

¹ One of us has reviewed ideas about forces in a previous paper (Alvarado, 2006).

other disorders. Years later, J. H. D. Petetin (1808) referred to this concept as “animal electricity”. In addition to explaining what were later referred to as psychic phenomena, from the beginning the magnetic force was postulated to be related to bodily functions.

In his book, *Essai sur le théorie du somnambulisme magnétique*, Tardy de Montravel (1785, p.32) described the magnetic force as a fluid circulating inside the human body and providing it with life and the power to act. Another mesmerist wrote about a magnetic fluid “that sustains life in us” (Deleuze, 1836, p.6—this, and other translations, are ours). Esdaile (1852) referred to a vital force akin to the nervous fluid. Such a principle, as well as being involved in mesmeric phenomena, also “animates both our voluntary and involuntary organs,” obeying the “will to enable us to perform acts of volition” (p.234). Ideas of this sort continued in later years, as seen in Alexandre Baréty’s (1887) work, who wrote about a “neuric force” as the principle behind induction of trance and several medical conditions such as hysteria, and as having internal physical properties in the body such as heat.

In Austria, German-born Baron Karl Reichenbach (1849/1851) studied a universal force which he called “Od”. In his view this force was not only generated by the human body, but also by magnetism, crystals, light (including sunlight and moonlight), heat, friction, chemical processes and electricity, among other causes. In the human body processes such as digestion and respiration produced Od. Sensitive persons were able to perceive this force in different ways, such as visually (e.g. as lights and auras around magnets, crystals, plants, and individuals), and as sensations of temperature and discomfort. In his discussion of the properties of Od, von Reichenbach stated: “it is conductible through all other bodies; it is capable of being either directly accumulated on, or transferred by distribution to, other bodies; it disappears from them in a short time; . . . it is arranged in a polar manner in animal bodies” (von Reichenbach, 1849/1851, p.116).

The early literature of spiritualism and psychical research is full of writings that assume the “existence in the human body of a force similar to electricity and capable of projecting itself out of it” (De Rochas, 1887, p.387). These writings, focusing to a great extent on agents believed to cause physical phenomena such as movement of objects, include Rogers’ *Philosophy of Mysterious Agents* (1853), and De Gasparin’s *Des tables tournantes* (1854).

Similarly, Allan Kardec (1863) reformulated older concepts of a fluidic body — what he called the perispirit — that was believed to serve as the bridge between the physical body and the spirit, and that discarnate entities could use to produce phenomena such as movement of objects and visible apparitions. Gabriel Delanne (1897) developed the concept further, relating the perispirit to bodily functions such as metabolic processes, memory, and reflex actions of the nervous system. In his view this principle served as the “model through which matter is organized” (p.47), a sort of a blueprint guiding the development of the physical body from the embryo.

Later psychical researchers—as seen in European treatises such as Enrico Morselli’s *Psicologia e “Spiritismo”* (1908), and René Sudre’s *Introduction à la métapsychique humaine* (1926)—continued using and developing further a variety of concepts of force to explain many of the phenomena of psychical

research, particularly physical phenomena. These concepts of force were supported by research and observations conducted with physical mediums who produced table levitations, materializations and the like.

An important line of research during the twentieth century consisted of W. J. Crawford's studies described in *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena* (1916), *Experiments in Psychical Science* (1919), and *The Psychic Structures of the Goligher Circle* (1921). These studies — conducted with medium Kathleen Goligher and her family mediumistic circle—did much to support, restate, and publicize the idea that phenomena such as table levitations depended on forces coming from the medium's body and from the body of the sitters. Crawford argued this by showing, for example, that in some cases the weight of the medium increased when a table levitation was produced. This led him to suggest, as De Gasparin (1854) and others had suggested before, that a projection of force from the medium's body (and from the sitters) was responsible for the table levitations. In addition, many other researchers contributed to this idea through their studies of mediums (e.g. Schrenck-Notzing, 1920/1925).

Other lines of research also supported belief in these forces. Many claimed that these radiations could be "detected" in different ways. Photographic detection was probably the most influential example, as seen in the pictures published by Baraduc (1897) of fluidic emanations invisible to the naked eye. Also influential were the photographs of medium Eva C's ectoplasmic emanations (Schrenck-Notzing, 1920).

Apart from animal magnetism, spiritualism and psychical research, concepts of vital or nervous forces were also developed in the context of speculative psychopathology in early psychiatry (Leibbrand & Wettley, 1961) as well as in the life sciences and in medicine (Driesch, 1914). These concepts were subsumed under the term 'vitalism'. In general, vitalism can be defined as a school of thought in which organisms are regarded as possessing a fundamental capacity of autonomous self-regulation by which they are distinguished from inanimate matter. In other words, vitalists maintain that the functioning of organisms cannot be explained solely by laws of physics and (bio-)chemistry, and that an additional vital force or principle must be assumed (Driesch, 1914; Hartmann, 1906). Whereas the early proponents of vitalism often regarded the postulated vital principle that was thought to guide and regulate biological processes as a quantitative force with quasi-electrical or quasi-physical properties (e.g. Müller, 1833), later authors stressed the non-physical and immaterial quality of this assumed principle (e.g. Driesch, 1908).

In contrast to most of the authors who proposed vital forces or principles in the context of animal magnetism, spiritualism, or psychical research, many vitalists occupied notable academic positions. Some of them recognized the potential importance of the findings of psychical research that seemed to support their own theories (e.g. Bergson, 1914; Driesch, 1924/1925, 1932/1933; McDougall, 1911). Around the time Carrington published his ideas of vital forces, vitalism had gained considerable influence in academic biology and philosophy² as well as in parapsychology.

² For example, the noted journal for developmental biology *Wilhelm Roux's Archiv für*

HEREWARD CARRINGTON AND VITAL FORCES

Carrington's text reprinted here consists of parts of a paper entitled "Vital Energy and Psychical Phenomena" (Carrington, 1921). Carrington, born in St. Saviour, Jersey, Channel Islands, was one of the most prolific popularisers in the history of psychical research.³ This is clear in numerous books—including *The Coming Science* (1908b), *Modern Psychical Phenomena* (1919), and *The Story of Psychic Science* (1930). In addition, Carrington published a myriad of articles about many varied topics, such as the mediumship of Eusapia Palladino (Carrington, 1909b), psychic fraud (Carrington, 1924), and poltergeists (Carrington, 1958). However, Carrington was more than a populariser, contributing to psychical research in other ways. He was a well-known exposé of fraud in mediums (Carrington, 1908b) and publicly discussed many of their tricks (Carrington, 1920b). He also contributed to research efforts using instruments to measure physical phenomena of different kinds (Carrington, n.d. b). In addition, he conducted influential studies of mental (Carrington, n.d. a) and physical mediums (Feilding, Baggally & Carrington, 1909), and out-of-body experiences (Muldoon & Carrington, 1951).

"Vital Energy and Psychical Phenomena," published in the *Psychic Research Quarterly* in 1921, sets out one of the recurrent ideas from throughout Carrington's career: the concept of a vital force related to the workings of the human body and psychic phenomena.⁴ One of Carrington's early discussions of the topic concerned a medium who had been very important for his career as a psychical researcher, the Italian Eusapia Palladino (Carrington (1909a; Feilding, Baggally & Carrington, 1909).⁵ In his book, *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*, Carrington (1909a) discussed the concept of exteriorization of bodily forces and argued that the vitality of the body was independent of chemical and metabolic aspects and could account for some of Palladino's phenomena. In his words (1909a, p.297):—

. . . now, if we grant that this vitality is a separate force, capable of controlling the nervous mechanism under certain conditions, and acting as the intermediary between it and the mind, it is evident that this vital force is more detachable from the organism—more a thing, an entity—than we have been in the habit of supposing.

Following previous authors, such as Morselli (1908), Carrington accepted the possibility that this force could project beyond the periphery of Palladino's body and be "under the subconscious control of the medium, and might even pass slightly under the control of her voluntary mind, and be directed by her" (Carrington, 1909a, p.298). However, he argued that this could not explain more complex manifestations indicating purpose and intelligence. For phenomena such as materializations that conveyed veridical information and a sense of identity he believed that the spirits of the dead could be involved in the manipulation of these forces, which was virtually the same concept as that of previous writers (e.g. Kardec, 1863).

Entwicklungsmechanik der Organismen dedicated its entire two-volume edition of 1927 to Driesch.

³ For biographical information see L. A. Dale (1959), and Tabori (1972, pp. 24-60)

⁴ This is evident in many publications (Carrington, 1909a, 1919, 1922, n.d. b).

⁵ Palladino was the focus of much theoretical speculation about biophysical forces (e.g. Morselli, 1908), as discussed in a previous study (Alvarado, 1993).

In the selections from his paper reprinted here, Carrington restated some aspects of his early ideas. He argued that mediums could exteriorize a nervous energy that usually stayed in the body, to produce movement of objects and materializations. Regarding the latter, Carrington mentioned the work conducted by Bisson (1921), Crawford (1921) and by Schrenck-Notzing (1920). In his view these materializations represented the condensation of this usually invisible force, what many referred to as ectoplasm.⁶ This phenomenon, Gustave Geley (1924/1927) wrote, consisted of an “anatomy-biologic decentralisation in the medium’s body and an externalisation of the decentralised factors in an amorphous state, solid, liquid, or vaporous” (p.358).

Carrington was clearly a vitalist, believing that human beings had a force or principle in them that defined life, independent of the workings of the body. In fact, Carrington (1911), citing a variety of authors (e.g. Thomson, 1909; Wilson, 1911), stated that “the distinct tendency of modern biology is towards an acceptance of the doctrine of vitalism and a teleological system in nature.” These interesting ideas have been linked to psychic phenomena by several writers.⁷

In the text reprinted here, Carrington wrote about a vital power that explained some psychic phenomena. He linked the concept to that of bodily movement and to volition, something he had done before (Carrington, 1909a). The issue of bodily movements and volition has been related to telekinesis by others who wrote both before and after him (Alvarado, 1981). In the present context it is interesting to trace some of Carrington’s vitalistic ideas, because he was interested in more than a force emanating from the body.

In an early book — *Vitality, Fasting, and Nutrition* (1908c) — Carrington argued that normal body chemistry and nutrition processes did not constitute life. Instead, he believed in a life force independent of bodily functions and independent of nutrition and other metabolic processes. This force, Carrington suggested in *The Coming Science* (1908a, pp.111–113), was electrical in nature.⁸ As he wrote later, “the body is the transmitter or transformer of energy or life —this merely manifesting through the body. Life is a power separate, distinct, *per se*, capable of existing outside the body and independent of it” (Carrington, 1919, p.49).

In a paper presented at the First International Congress of Psychological Research, held in Copenhagen in 1921, Carrington (1922) discussed such phenomena as psychometry, haunted houses, auras and materializations, stating that “their subsequent interpretations depend upon the central fact of the externalization, beyond the periphery of the body, of some form of vital energy” (p.127). In addition, in this paper he argued that poltergeist cases may

⁶ On the concept of ectoplasm see Dingwall (1921), Quevedo (1971, Vol.1, Chapter 9), and Sudre (1956/1960, Chapter 8).

⁷ Carrington (1925) later claimed he had priority over Driesch (1924/1925) and Geley (1919/1920) for relating psychic phenomena to vital processes of the body such as metabolic functions. But there were similar ideas that preceded Carrington, as seen in our brief discussion of some of the mesmerists and of von Reichenbach in the introduction to this paper. See also Myers’s (1903, Vol. 2, pp.505–554) “Scheme of a Vital Faculty,” which one of us has discussed elsewhere (Alvarado, 2004).

⁸ Ideas of electricity and life were widely discussed much before Carrington’s speculations (Brazier, 1984; Morus, 1998).

depend on the abnormal exteriorization of sexual energies from the body of young people going through the process of puberty. Both in this paper, and in other writings, Carrington was aware of the connections drawn between kundalini yoga and these subtle forces (e.g. Carrington, 1920a, Chapter 11).

CARRINGTON'S "VITAL ENERGY AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA"

In what follows we cite selected parts of Carrington's (1921) paper.

The close relationship which 'occultists', followers of Yoga philosophy, and many Psychical Researchers, believe to exist between the vital energies of the body and psychical phenomena, has, I believe, never been duly appreciated by the majority of psychic investigators. Yet it is very evident that a large number of these phenomena depend to a very great extent upon the exercise of some vital life power for their production; and it may be said that practically all of them depend upon the presence of *life*, or of a living person, for their manifestation . . .

The nature and operation of the life force within the body is, of course, mysterious in itself. We know nothing as to its innermost 'essence' or character; we merely observe its phenomena or manifestations. When the little finger is moved, for example, in obedience to a direct and conscious volitional act, we have here at least two problems which are as yet unsolved: (1) the precise nature of the nervous impulse itself; and (2) the connection between the psychic act of volition and the origin of the motor, nervous impulse . . . I may add that the nature of the volitional act itself is still a mystery, and that if an act of will represents an expression or liberation of a *real energy*, as many of us believe, this is also a problem of enormous interest, and yet totally unsolved by any of the schools of orthodox psychology.

All this, however, is part of the problem included within the normal sphere of psycho-physiology. Beyond this, we come to the more definitely 'psychical' phenomena. In the normal human being, this motor nervous current theoretically terminates at the periphery, but in 'mediums' it is apparently *externalised*, or projected outwards into space beyond the limits of the medium's body. It is this energy which moves material objects in the immediate vicinity of the medium (*telekinesis*), and is capable of being moulded or manipulated into hands, heads, and phantasmal forms, by means of the subconscious mind of the medium, or by the mind of some external entity (materialization). It is evident, however, that we have in such cases an externalisation of more than a mere energy: we have in addition to this a form of matter which is also externalised, and which at times can be sufficiently condensed or solidified to enable it to be seen, felt, and photographed. In the latter case, it must of course be of sufficient density to reflect light-waves. The recent researches of Baron von Schrenck-Notzing, Madame Bisson, and others, with Eva C., and those of Dr. W. J. Crawford, with Miss Goligher, have served to establish this fact with certitude—*viz.*, that we have here cases of externalisation, not only of vital energy, but also of some actual constituents of the body itself beyond the limits of that body . . .

Whatever their ultimate nature may prove to be . . . it is certain, to my mind at least, that exteriorisation of neuric force takes place, and that in these materialisations, in addition to the matter itself, we have an actual externalisation of some form of life-energy, more or less sentient, and capable of controlling and manipulating this matter—as we have in cases of 'telekinesis'.

Were the orthodox teachings true, however, such 'exteriorisations' would be not only impossible but an utter absurdity. Obviously there can be no nervous current where there are no nerves! If life be bound up with the body—and, in fact a mere *product* of the body functioning—the existence of life or vitality outside the limits of that body would be inconceivable; and this is what physiology teaches us. Vital energy,

we are told, is the mere product of chemical combustion going on within the body—the result of the combustion of food . . .

My own belief is that the body resembles, not so much the steam-engine as the *electric motor*, which is recharged by energy from an external source. The human body, similarly, is recharged during the hours of rest and sleep—the nervous mechanism being the medium through or by means of which this ‘recharging’ process takes place. This energy is, of course, expended in the usual ways (muscular exertion, etc.) during the waking hours . . .

To one another fact in this connection I must, however, draw the reader’s attention. Physiology tells us that the mental energies are merely one aspect of the general energy of the body—utilised as thought instead of as muscular activity. This (usual) theory does not, however, explain to us how it is that this particular energy can be transformed into consciousness and intelligence, while none of the other energy in the body is so transformed . . . The doctrine of the conservation of energy tells us that all energies can be transmuted or transformed one into another, and also re-converted; but if such be true of mental energies, we would have something ‘left over’ in our equation; for, in this case, we would have energy *plus something* (thought), and the ‘plus something’ would be unaccounted for, and in turn would be lost when the energy of thought was re-transformed into some other mode of energy! This fact has never been fully taken into account by orthodox physiology, but it is a very important point which can by no means be overlooked . . .

Such a view of the facts . . . enables us to account for all observed physiological phenomena, while at the same time enabling us to account for these obscure and otherwise unaccountable facts of Psychological Research . . . For, if life exists apart from the body, and merely manifests *through* it, using it as an instrument for the purposes of such manifestation, then we can readily see how life may manifest, at times, outside or beyond the legitimate confines of the body. This view, in short, represents merely an extension of William James’ “Transmissive” Theory of Consciousness . . .⁹ to the *whole* of our life and vital energies. And if life be an energy, separate and apart from the body, merely utilising it, or manifesting through it, for the purposes of its phenomenal expression, then we may readily conceive that this life-force might exist quite apart from the physical body—not only in this life, but in some other sphere of activity, after the permanent destruction of the physical body itself.

IDEAS OF “VITAL ENERGY” AFTER CARRINGTON’S PAPER

From the early days, ideas such as those expressed by Carrington in the paper reprinted here were not without their critics. One has only to be aware of the extensive criticism that ‘animal magnetism’ and its variants received during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Gauld, 1992).

In later publications Carrington continued to maintain that radiations from the human body accounted for the physical phenomena of mediumship. This was clear in his books, *The Story of Psychic Science* (1930) and *Laboratory Investigations into Psychic Phenomena* (n.d. b, ca 1939). In the first of these

⁹ William James (1898) suggested that the brain did not produce or create consciousness, but that it allowed for an independent and pre-existing principle to manifest through it. He argued that the phenomena of psychical research—such as veridical mediumistic communications and apparitions—were particularly difficult to explain following the production model in which the brain created consciousness: “on the production-theory one does not see from what sensations such odd bits of knowledge are produced. On the transmission-theory, they don’t have to be ‘produced’,—they exist ready-made in the transcendental world, and all that is needed is an abnormal lowering of the brain-threshold to let them through” (James, 1898, pp. 26–27).

books Carrington discussed again the vitalistic assumptions of the 1921 paper reprinted here. In the second book, published around 1939, he discussed aspects of the literature on attempts to detect forces and reported the negative results of his own experiments with a variety of instruments.

Carrington (1908c) had defined life as “a species of vibration” (p.334) and later speculated that death ensued when the rate of such vibration was either too high or too low (Carrington & Meader, 1911, chapter 9). Writing in a short pamphlet entitled *Life: Its Origin and Nature*, Carrington (1923) restated his previous beliefs in the idea that the vital force did not come from food sources (Carrington, 1908e, 1914, 1921).

In one of his last publications on the topic, Carrington (1952–53) did not discuss the vitalistic ideas in detail but he was still thinking in vitalistic terms. As he wrote:–

All such speculations are . . . useless as long as we restrict the concepts of life and mind to mechanistic physiology and regard them merely as resultants of bodily functioning . . . Assuming the correctness of this vitalistic theory, we must now think of Life as an interlocking energy, capable of playing upon and influencing matter in the ordinary course of events, but also capable of manifesting itself, under certain unusual conditions, in unusual ways—even beyond the periphery of the subject’s body
[p. 107]

Later in the paper he stated that this vital principle could be a connecting link “between the material and non-material worlds”, and, echoing his earlier writings (Carrington, 1909a), “possibly . . . capable of being utilized by entities on either side of the Great Divide” (p. 109).

Many other individuals writing after Carrington’s 1921 paper continued the discussion of forces. For example, Raoul Montandon presented an overview of the topic in *Les radiations humaines* (1927).

Concepts of unorthodox or paranormal biophysical forces have continued well into our time. Ostrander and Schroeder’s (1970) discussion of parapsychological studies “behind the [former] Iron Curtain” did much to popularize the concept of ‘bioplasma’ and its supposed detection using the controversial electro-photographic technique known as Kirlian photography (Krippner & Rubin, 1974). In addition, these forces are central in discussions and beliefs about energy medicine (Oschman, 2000) that have continued till our days. Researchers such as Grad (1989) and Tiller (1997) still take the concept seriously, and some research still is guided by such idea, as seen in work conducted both in China (Zha & McConnell, 1991) and Japan (Kokubo & Kasahara, 2000), and in writings about auras and biophysical fields (Korotkov, 2004). However, even a casual reading of this material brings one to question whether Carrington’s conception of ‘vital energy’ is the same as that found in more recent publications. The current use of the term ‘subtle energy’ seems to group all kinds of ideas, from vital-body-related forces such as Carrington’s, to more conventional fields and physical effects that still seem anomalous to current science.

Closer to Carrington’s concern about the nature of life is work published after his 1921 paper, such as Lakhovsky’s *Le secret de la vie* (1925), Crile’s *The Phenomena of Life* (1936), Pressman’s *Electromagnetic Fields and Life* (1968/1970), and Burr’s *Blueprint for Immortality* (1972). Ideas like the ones we

are discussing are constantly revised and reformulated in different ways, as seen in Sheldrake's *A New Science of Life* (1981).¹⁰ More recent discussions of vitalistic ideas include the papers in Savva's (2007) anthology.

But regardless of all this interest, the fact is that many contemporary parapsychological researchers, particularly most of those associated with the experimental study of ESP and psychokinesis (PK), seem to think that these ideas of vital forces or fields assuming some degree of physicality are a thing of the past, with little relevance to contemporary concerns. The rise of J. B. Rhine's influence, and his redefining of PK and ESP as non-physical phenomena (e.g. Rhine, 1947), pushed back even further, among the small community of parapsychologists, the idea of biophysical principles to account for psychic phenomena.¹¹

Contemporary researchers also remind us that many of the phenomena of experimental parapsychology do not seem to be affected by physical variables such as barriers and distance (e.g. Braud & Schlitz, 1991, p.36), something that presents an obstacle to the acceptance of parts of the 'vital energy' paradigm discussed by Carrington. In addition, the externalization of a force from the body that pushes, pulls, grabs objects, becomes visible or affects biological matter to induce growth and healing, may seem too simple to some in the light of the development of quantum physics, and of other concepts such as the idea that psi is a goal-directed process (e.g. Varvoglis, 1986), or evidence for the action of a non-physical or non-local mind (see also Alvarado, 2006, pp.151–152).

None the less, Carrington's ideas are representative of the thought of a particular period, and of some workers active in past psychical research. Unfortunately this past is often forgotten by many researchers in parapsychology today. And regardless of the scientific validity of the concepts discussed in this paper, we need to remember that they are part of the history of ideas contributing to the development of parapsychological theory and vitalism.

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¹⁰ Wilhelm Reich's (1942) ideas of 'orgone' are of historical interest. Another vitalistic concept is Andrade's (1958, 1983) model of an organizing principle regulating both biological functions and parapsychological phenomena. Better known in Brazil than in English-speaking countries, the model is to some extent an updated version of the spiritist concept of the perispirit (Delanne, 1897; Kardec, 1863).

¹¹ We say 'physicality' because Carrington clearly believed in a biophysical force to explain physical mediumship. But he also believed in a non-physical vital principle independent from the body and interacting with it. As he wrote in his book *Vitality, Fasting and Nutrition*: "the fact that we do not derive our strength and energy from food alone ... enable us to see that a purely materialistic scheme of this universe is probably insufficient to explain all the facts it presents for our consideration" (Carrington, 1908c, p.580). This is consistent with many other theorists of the past who have postulated the action of principles capable of interacting with the physical world that are directed by spiritual principles, among them Baraduc (1897) and Kardec (1863).

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