What is a medium? “Medium” is, first and foremost a Latin word. It has a relatively clear etymology and an extensive word history already in classical Latin. Lexicographically, we identify it as the neuter of “medius, a, um (altind. ádhya-h, greek μέσος, μέσος, gothic midjis, OHG mitti = NHG middle), which functions as an adjective and a noun. Medius, just like the Messos Greek, means “the middle one, located in the middle,” i.e. “mediam locavit, he gave her the middle place, “but also in the partitive phrase” in ponere via media “, right in the path ‘. Temporary registers the countless Lexicography Expressions such as “medio tempore, in the interim, or” in medios dormire dies, — and finally connects with “medium” of the figurative expression as in the middle “Cum inter bellum et pacem nihil intersit medium” or in the quotation from Livy: “Ferme fugiendo in media ruitur fata “, in German: He who flees, runs his fate in the midst of arms.

A lexicographic word etymology and history fails here to clarify the concept. It is not the classical Latin that helps here. It is more the Ciceronian way of dealing with the Latin Language that characterizes its historical semantics. Cicero and those following him, the Latinized scientific elites of the West have always been reluctant to latinize Greek terms. Leo Spitzer shows in his famous work on historical semantics show how Cicero avoids to speak of Mathematicians as mathematicians (just a Greek word) but instead calls them “qui mathematici vocantur” or “qui grammatici vocantur”, when he speaks of the so-called grammarians, mathematicians. Cicero, when translating the Greek term qualitas into Latin made us today speak of the quality of a thing and not of his poiotik.

Cicero thus avoided to translate a central concept of Aristotle’s philosophy, namely the periechon – the Ambient, Encircling the room, the ambiance, the air, Sheltered, the bulk, – It has since then in Latin as many words there, and later also in German. Spitzer tracks this down because he wants to come to terms with Milieu and ambiance.

If there is a surrounding area of sensitivity, an topomnetisches or atmosphere, so it is not a periechon condition, but an environments or atmosphere. Reading Spitzer’s analysis exactly, systemtheory’s attempt to explain to us that each environment is always just environment within a system looks outdated. The first major non constructivist systems in the West, namely Aristotle’s system developed in the concept of the periechon a conception of space, environment, air, ambiance and protection which is not reducible to the physical realm.

All this has much to do with our socratic question about the medium, Seitter Walter, whom I really miss in this circle, has made it recently clear: The history of the term medium, we are on the trail, begins with Thomas Aquinas and his attempt to translate those passages of the Aristotelian text which deals with the physiological-perceptual theories of vision, of seeing, hearing, of touch, Tasting and smelling (Πεπτυμένη). Here Aquinas interpolated, as I will show, with some embarrassment in a Greek text the word medium where it is not found. This leads to large and prolonged irritation in the discussion on optics in the early modern period, especially in Kepler, then goes over into the first mechanistic interpretations of Descartes and
flows into the clean and sober mathematical relationships of the medium-term in Newton. They in turn clash in German Romanticism into an intense, classically motivated resistance and motivated to take on the great speculative ways in dealing with the concept of the medium in Schelling and Hegel. Highly charged with exuberant romantic speculation the concept of the medium gets into the clutches of the telegraph, radio and film – the amplifying and multiplying apparatuses of the 19th century. And they do so with far reaching consequences.

With the romantic password of the medium are the cognitive, affective and conative effects of these techniques at least tangible. This leads to interactions with the spiritualist phenomenons, namely, the media of the intercommunicative mediumistic Spiritualism on the one hand and the training of the conceptual apparatuses of the empirical Psychologies on the other. The latter which is essentially the result of this unsuccessful confrontation between the medium with its new cultural application. As product of this unsuccessful confrontation we see Pierre Janet, William James and Sigmund Freud concepts such as psychic automatism, the Unconscious, the transfer, the streams of consciousness, differentiations of mental instances of the self, all that cast their shadows far into the 20th century. There it amalgamated with what would amend a seperate meeting, namely the concept of mass, id est: The mass medium.

Acknowledging the fact to which Walter Seitter also refers, namely that the term was injected into an Aristotelian text where it does not appear in the original. The arestotelian doctrine of perception did not know the concept of the medium.

The corresponding Corpus Peri Psyche was typically, and up to the threshold of 19th century, just under its Latin title “De anima” known based on translations of the 12th Century, shortly after the Corpus Aristotelicum in Europe was once again fully arrived. From 1268 it is Thomas Aquinas’ translations of and comments on “De Anima”, which from now on for centuries the canon of all theology and philosophy of education, the latter of which, as we all know, down to the 19th centuries where Mandatory course for all science was physics. All western elites up until then studied the latin translations of “De Anima”.

In the second paper Sentencia Libri de Anima alone, the term medium is used more than 100 times. In the thirty chapters following it, even more often. There is no doubt that it was Thomas von Aquin, who first realized the full meaning of the single text devoted to what we are calling today an empirical or analytical psychology. But in the second Paper Sentencia Libri de Anima is the medium term much more than 100 times, and the 30 chapters of which appeared a little later, “Quaestiones de Anima” still much more frequently. No question: It is Thomas Aquinas, who was the first the importance Aristotle recognizes this single text, which is devoted to what we are today calling an empirical or analytical psychology would be reflected.

I do not want to bore you with philological details, but it is clear that among aristotles many many writings, these books “about the soul” account as the most densely texts written by him. Olof Gigon, a famous Hellenist writes that “given the confusion of the various dispositions, terminology and doctrines (…)It is hard to imagine that Aristotle himself can be credited for its creation.” Olof Gigon writes of disparate and superficial gathering together of the materials in this text and explains this fact with its incompleteness. Alleged De Anima is the appendix of a lost Aristotle’s dialogue – Eudemos. Which, if at all, can only be interpolated from secondary sources.

But all this does not need to interest us. But it explains a little bit the historic-semantic
findings and how it happened that the concept of the medium got implanted under the pretext
to smooth out uncertainties of a given text corpus. Only as to become itself the medium for
the construction and transmission of a new philosophy, namely a catholic. An immortal,
because, in principle, divine soul of man – or so at least in Thomas Aquinas understanding.
He who seek to unite secular monarchies with papacy with his attempt to unite the notions of a
divine will and the new work ethics of his day. No other reasoning than to reach sovereignty
over the siege by the Arab and oriental forces that he fears threatens western thought.

Back to Aristotle, who undertakes an empirical exploration of the soul in his work on Peri
Psyches. The result is a truly staccato tour de France of roughing together sensory physiology
and epistemology terminology. Only in the modern era (1460-Now) was his attempt to think
them together again in a rational psychology – a science of perception and of thinking on the
basis of natural philosophy – accomplished.

Reading this text today, in addition with the palimpsest of a smuggled concept of a medium,
is not an easy undertaking. At the forefront there is to note what A.C. Crombie in his work on
the theories of classical optics recalls: “The striking difference between Greek and later
medieval and modern optical theory is the absence of any conception of the Greek eye itself
as an image-forming optical instrument and hence of any analysis of its dioptical function.
“(Crombie 1990.608)

Aristotle knows from the ear as an organ nothing. The voice is created for him in the
windpipe. And from the eye as the organ of sight in Aristotle’s perception theory is nothing in
the text. Incidentally, no beams fire, as in Plato and some pre-Socratics philosophers also.
Aristotle’s system has no eye beams of fire, but describes the sensory perception, i.e., seeing,
hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, as an ontological unity of complex functions of the soul,
the Psychâ.

What Aristotle presupposes is the validity of his teaching of the four elements and
their modal qualities hot, cold, wet and dry. Hence there are four possible combinations:

1. Dry-warm, was realized in Fire
2. Warm-wet, was realized in Air
3. Damp-cold, was realized in Water
4. Cold-Dry, was realized in Earth

Based on their observation of nature, the ancient people found these expressions realized in
Fire, Air, Water and Earth – the four elements. “(P2031, 14). Added the so-called Five
Element theory, “The weight of each body is thought of lying between ideal limits. There is
something absolutely Heavy and relatively heavy. Similarly, there is something “relatively
easy and something completely lightweight and finally something that is neither heavy nor
light and yet has weight, the imponderable or quinta essentia.”(13).

The distinctiveness in Aristotle’s teaching between Potential and Actuality is important in his
differentiation between dynamis on one hand and entelecheia oder energia on the other. The
theory of Potentiality and Actuality is one of the central themes of Aristotle’s philosophy and
metaphysics. With these two notions, Aristotle intends to provide a structure for the
comprehension of reality.

It can be shown where the concept of the medium has been interpolated by Aquinas into
Aristotle’s work. It happens in the second book of Peri Psyche, where Aristotle tries to give a
detailed description of the five senses in relation to their perceptual function. Hearing is comparative simple. In the Aristotelian system their is air, which must be struck in a manner with matter so that contracted air reaches the ear and instantiate the sensation. Ein Ton entsteht, \(\text{"wenn die geschlagene Luft zusammenbleibt und sich nicht wieder verflüchtigen kann. Deshalb ertönt sie, wenn sie schnell und heftig geschlagen wird."}(106)\) Echo entsteht, wenn diese wie in einem Gefäß eingeschlossene Luft an etwas Hartem „apprallt wie ein Ball“(107). Hearing “happens” in the element Air – which has not changed since Aristotle. Smell and Taste “happen” for Aristotle in the elements Air and Water. Aristotle knows that fish do have a highly sensitive sense of smell and that one can only smell something that is wet. Major problems, however, appear for A’s sensory physiology, when it comes to vision is.

“Οὐ μὲν οὖν ἐστιν ἡ ὄψις, τούτ’ ἐστιν ὅρατόν.”
“What now the sense of sight is directed, this is the visible. “(417, a25)

It still seems clear, clear. Next sentence:

“ὅρατόν δ’ ἐστὶ χρῶμα μὲν, καὶ δ’ ἔναρθρο ἐστιν εἰπεῖν, ἀνώνυμον δὲ τυγχάνει ὁν.”
“Visibility is the color and that which can be described but has no designation.”

Thus begin the fundamental difficulties in Aristotle’s text. Although the color is the visible, it is also visible in something that is different from its kind. What is visible for the sense of sight is the colour of the things in the world around it. This is the world of the periechon – the surrounding atmosphere, das umgebende. But there is more. Here start the inconsistency problems in Aristotles text. Only a few paragraphs later the term for “that which can be described but has no designation” is stated: ἢστι δὴ τι διαφανές - “There is something Transparent.” Gigon nennt diesen Begriff, diaphanes, nicht umsonst „sehr schwer zu fassen“(244). What does transparency mean?

“διαφανες δε λέγω ἢ στι μὲν ὅρατόν, οὐ καθ’ αὐτο δὲ ὅρατόν ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, ἀλλὰ δι’ ἄλλοτριον χρῶμα.”
“I call transparent, what is visible, but not to be visible as such, but by the alien suit.”

Aristotle (or whoever the text may have written) wants to make a distinction which is not so easy to succeed. What is visible are the colours. But not as colors are they visible, only in the transparency in which contains them.

“Ἀχρουν δ’ ἐστί το διαφανές”
“The Transparent itself is colorless”

“Toiouton δε ἐστιν ἀὴρ και ὕδωρ και πολλα των στερεων
“Such are air, water and many solids. Thus colorless.

“Οὐ γαρ ἦ ὕδωρ οὐδ’ ἦ ἀηρ, διαφανες, ἀλλ’ δι’ ἐστι φύσις ὑπάρχουσα ἢ αὐτῇ ἐν τούτοις ἀμφοτέροις καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄδιῳ τῷ ἀνω σώματι. “
“Such “, ie the Transparent (Diaphanes), which is the transparent, “is not transparent as water or air, but because in these two is the same nature present as in the (invisible) upper body (the ether).”

At this point, Walter Seitter prompted a speculation, namely that Aristotle defined the medium of light, because it is the medium of color, as ether. Such as to justify such implication for the ether physic in the 19th century. The ether physic tried to describe the
phenomenon electromagnetism as the result of vibrations and disturbance waves of the ether. But this is simply not the case when one reads Aristotle's text.

To which the Aristotelian text in his second, the empirical Perceptual functions, narrows down, is the attempt to make a distinction between the elements of perception, including air, water and humidity, and their function of perception. Hearing in Aristotle is not noticed in the air that penetrates the ear, but something that is of a nature such as the anomic, that is through the ether, which fills also the space between circling planets and stars. The sense of touch penetrates the moisture—the flesh on the fingers or the skin—but even here it is not the element of moisture that generates its perception. But what is it? A medium?

Again, Aristotle did not use this term. The sense of sight operates with Colors in the visible, in the transparent body. More is not said. That Light plays a crucial role is clear.

διο και ο σχ ορισται άνευ φωτός
“Therefore the color will not be seen without light “

, but the light is in the A system not an element.

Rather: ἥ δ ὑπ Εντελέχεια του διάφανου ϕως εστίν.
“The completion of the Transparent is the light.

Entelecheia is the antonym of Dynamon, the potential. All things, including the ether are in these two modes possible. And as the light updates the Diaphanes, the transperant, it instantiates color but differs from it in that the light is the time passed by between the fullfilment of Entelecheia in Dynamon. Because of this, the diaphanes can be the Skotos, the Darkness. In this sense it is for Aristotle the Diaphanes in the light of its dynamon, that is to say in its possibility.

With this understanding Aristotle arrives at the core of his thought. Now Demokrit enters the scene proclaiming that one could see an ant in the sky if

“έρ γένοιτο κενόν τό μεταξύ” if the Intermediate would be empty. But this does not work.
“Εαν γαρ τις θη το έχον χρώμα επ ʻαντήν την όψιν, ουκ οφείλεται “
Because if you put a colored think squarely on the eye, we see nothing.

Τὸ μεταξύ. The in-between. There must be some intermediary, otherwise perception is impossible. τὸ μεταξύ is now truly not an element, and can be either be found in the three, nor four, nor Aristotles’ doctrine of the Five Elements. To say metaxy.

There has to be always a gap in perception – a distance of a distance – or unmarked space. This anonymous, diaphantisches – both transparent and opaque typed. A distinction which produces as a byproduct a rest. To make the Metaxy clearer one is tempted to argue with constructionist terms: If perception also means to make a distinction, than that what is seperated is by definition a product of the distinction made in perception with an unmarked space as byproduct.

[Constructivists argue: If perception would be, a distinction to to make a distinction, then yes is always a distinction in each of these unmarked area, an unmarked space left. So one can doubt To metaxy to understand: as the distance, when the ex-project, which, as any distinction his unmarked remainder produced.] google translation
Aristotle is certainly far from being a constructivist. He surely lacks the romantik ability to live in a world full of paradoxes. For Aristotle metaxy is a word borrowed by Demokrit from his mouth. He uses it to demonstrate the point he tries to make throughout his text. The term stays explicitly nonconceptually and as a loanword from Democritus vocabulary. Why he uses it has an almost mechanical reason. He needs the product created by the metaxy that in turn allows him to construct a theory of perception as he did in his one. He depends on this distance created by the metaxy which makes perception at all possible.

“πασχοντος γάρ τι του αίσθητικοῦ γίνεται το οραν”
“The sense of sight happens in that which sees suffers”

But this is the point of Aristotle’s theory of perception. The Soul is well known, and yet unmoved mover of all the physicality. But she cannot move of itself. As much as the tradition starting with Aquinas until Hegel like to see. But the point is clear in Aristotle. Empirically, the soul is in the exercise as it is triggered. She must be triggered.

υπ αύτου μεν ουν τον ορομένου χρώματος αδύνατον
“Impossible itself but by the visible color”

The colour cannot move the soul, as cannot do air or water.

λείπεται δη ύπο του μεταξύ, ωστ’ άναγκαιόν τι εϊναι μεταξύ
So it remains that it is done by something inbetween, in the middle ground.

Now here is the latest, is the use of Aquinas modifications in the Aristotelian text visible. Already in the place where Democritus speaks of the ant in the sky, the concept of Medium is interpolated.

“Non enim hoc bene dicit Democritus, opinatus, ‘si esset quod vacuum medium, prospici utique certe, si esset et formica in celo. Hoc enim imposibile est.”

Democritus did not really talk about, when he says, that if the Space would be empty, we would see more clearly an ant in the heavens. But this is impossible.

Paciente sensitiuo fit ipsum enim aliquid videre,
Denn das Sehen vollzieht sich dadurch, daß das Empfindungsfähige etwas erleidet,
For the vision accomplished the fact that the sentient something suffers,

ab ipso igitur videtur qui est colore inpossibile
aber unmöglich von der gesehenen Farbe
but impossible by the color seen

relinquitur autem quod a medio,
da nichts anderes übrigbleibt, vom Medium.
but since nothing else is left over from Medium.

quare necess est esse aliquod medium.
Infolgedessen ist das Medium eine Notwendigkeit.
Consequently, the medium is a Necessity.
Vacua autem facto, l non certe aliquid, nihil omnino set videbitur.
Wäre der Zwischenraum leer, so würde nicht nur nicht deutlich, sondern überhaupt gar nichts
gesehen.
If the space is empty, it would not only not be unclear, but in general nothing can be seen.

Propter quam causam quidem igitur necesse est in lumine colorem videri, dictum est.
Damit ist gesagt, aus was für einem Grund die Farbe notwendig nur bei Licht gesehen wird.
That is to say by what reason the color only when necessary Light is seen.

A further close reading is not necessary. It should be noted that Thomas Aquinas did not
understand Greek. He supposedly uses a existing translation and draws heavily from it in his
extensive commentaries. I only want to draw the attention to an error Aquinas makes in his
translation that leads him tempted to say to the complet blunder:

quare necesse est esse aliquod medium
Consequently, the medium is a necessity.

From λείπεται he starts to insert his own greek “interpretation” and does so by conducts the
error of translating τι εϊναι μεταξύ – given an in-between. He refers to a former sentence and
missleadingly translates the terms given.
What got lost with the induced “medium” in Aristotles’ empirical theory of perception, that
avoided to speak of any ontological medium of perception, was its fragility. The air, water,
moisture, the transparent – everything became in Aquin’s text to this one, all-encompassing
medium. Wheras Aristotle avoided this to emphazise the natural philosophical realism of his
psychology. It is not the same, whether we get sound through the air to our ear, or smells in
the nose, or saltywater on the tongue or an image into our eyes. It made no sense for Aristotle
to put all into one pot of the medial. With Thomas Aquinas and its canonical translation of De
anima did the term media became ontological. And it did so as contraband of a text which
ever since every university student had to study up until the modern period.

On the one hand Aquinas medium term remains abstract enough to give the necessary impetus
[in the early modern period which lead, in the 16th century] which lead to the generalization
in the optics. [in the law of refraction by Willebrorod Snellius] And also to Newton’s
indifference of any provision in relation to media content.

On the other hand it stays ontological enough – because the medium is indeed being and itself
the content of the being – to mediate a true magic of being. Thus Lichtenberg speaks of “the
medium of fashion” and Kant of the time as the “Medium of all synthetic judgments“.
In Herders’ work the world is multiplied in the media in unknown quantities. “There may be
more media in the creation of which we know nothing at all, because we have no organ for
them” states in Ideas on the Philosophy of History of Humanity. “Indeed, there must be many
[media] because we see their effects on almost all creatures which we cannot explain out of
our own organisation” [ja es müssen derselben [Medien] viel sein, da wir fast bei jedem
Geschöpf Wirkungen sehen, die wir uns aus unsrer Organisation nicht zu erklären vermögen].

It is clear what was meant with it in the 18th century of the Levden jar. It goes on: “How
many things once unknown are beeing discovered in the medium of air. The electrical matter
and magnetic current, the flammable and acid air, chilling salt crystals and maybe light parts
which are only stimulated by the sun: All in all mighty princibles of nature on earth, and how
many others will be discovered!” – “In the deepest depths of becoming, where we see
budding life, will we be aware of the unexplored, and so effective element that we relate to the Names imperfect light, ether, life, warmth and perhaps identify the sensorium of Allerschaffenden is, therefore everything he maketh alive, everything warms.”

[In den tiefsten Abgründen des Werdens, wo wir keimendes Leben sehen, werden wir das unerforschte und so wirksame Element gewahr, das wir mit den unvollkommenen Namen Licht, Äther, Lebenswärme benennen und das vielleicht das Sensorium des Allerschaffenden ist, dadurch er alles belebet, alles erwärmet.]

How much a term that proves itself as an ontological contraband effects scientific thought can be demonstrated in the ether-physics of the 18th and 19th century. Herder and later Schelling and Hegel treat it in the idealistic and transcendental dialectic physics. From now on, the medium turns into a mediated being, which is directly penetrated by ether and is thus coupled to perception itself. “Therfore nobody will understand nature” wrote Novalis in the apprentices at Sais, “who has no organ, … who not, in and of itself recognises nature in everything … in intimate relationship with all varied bodies, through which the medium of sensation, with all creatures of nature is mixed, which equally feeds into itself.

„der kein Naturorgan … hat, der nicht, wie von selbst, überall die Natur an allem erkennt … in inniger mannichfaltiger Verwandtschaft mit allen Körpenn,durch das Medium der Empfindung, sich mit allen Naturwesen vermischt, sich gleichsam in sie hineinfühlt.“

This seduced Hegel in his Phenomenology of Spirit, where it swarms from media phrases, to a mediumistic epistomy directed against Newton and his prism experiment: “If the test of knowledge”. Hegel writes, “That we have to imagine as a medium, teaches us the laws of its refraction, it is of no use to deduce it from the result; for not the breaking of the beam, but the beam itself which touches us is the truth, and to deduce it, would be known to us only as the pure direction or the empty place”.

[„Wenn die Prüfung des Erkennens“, schreibt Hegel, „das wir als ein Medium uns vorstellen, uns das Gesetz seiner Strahlenbrechung kennen lehrt, so nützt es ebenso nichts, sie im Resultate abzuziehen; denn nicht das Brechen des Strahls, sondern der Strahl selbst, wodurch die Wahrheit uns berührt, ist das Erkennen, und dieses abgezogen, wäre uns nur die reine Richtung oder der leere Ort bezeichnet worden.“]

For Schopenhauer, “the intellect is the medium of motives, because it increases our susceptibility to it best.” And in Rilke’s eulogy to Worpswede it is stated: “It is not the last, and perhaps the most characteristic value of art, that it is the medium in which man and landscape, figure, and the world find and meet. “

Long before the technical media of the 20th century where dawning, the media as a concept had already its message. It is overloaded with all the impacts of the Christian Western ontology. Wittgenstein, Hussler and Heidegger perceived the crisis of ontology early in the first real media century, the twentieth, and undertook a deconstruction of its western, christian tradition.

The media is a big conception used to enforce a christian oriental metaphysic. Analytically, therefore caution should be exercised, or better distance, or, as Aristotle says: metaxy. The distance, which Aristotle situated in the perceptual function, is certainly not a medium, but inconceivable without a cultural technology for it to exist. That such distance is so unthinkable, unnamable and so insignificant determined, that it needs a cultural technology as analogy to be even concieved.
Aristotle asks how suffering, that causes perception, comes into thinking? How does Perception enter thinking? How do they interact?

Or that in the past, suffering because of something common, was the reason, the intelligible in possibility – but not in reality unless it was detected. Reason must be like a blackboard on which nothing has been written. The metaxy, or the unnamed space in perception, is also the spacing of the letters, its exterior, which will remain invisible visible as long as nothing is written.

[Oder hinsichtlich des Erleidens aufgrund von etwas Gemeinsamem ist früher unterschieden worden, daß die Vernunft das Intelligible gewissermaßen in Möglichkeit ist, aber nicht in Wirklichkeit, bevor sie es erfaßt. Es muß sich so verhalten wie bei einer Schreibtafel, auf der noch nichts in Wirklichkeit geschrieben steht, was bei der Vernunft zutrifft. Das Metaxy, oder das Dazwischen in jeder Wahrnehmung, ist eben auch der Abstand der Buchstaben, ihre Aussenseite, die solange unsichtbar sichtbar bleibt, wie nichts geschrieben steht.]