Summary of Text 30: "Miscellaneous".

Text 30, entitled "Miscellaneous", constitutes a diverse collection of articles and reflections in which philosophical, social, scientific and paranormal themes are analyzed. The text successively addresses: the psychiatric and social phenomenon of hearing voices, a philosophical critique of modernity and the fragmentation of the sciences, the redefinition of the concepts of science and religion, the historical origins of concentration camps, and finally a medical-religious exploration of the phenomenon of stigmatization.

1. Theory and Understanding-Based Help: The Phenomenon of 'Hearing Voices'

The text opens with a discussion of research conducted by Professor Romme and Sandra Escher of the University of Limburg into people who hear voices (published by I. De Bie in Humo). Scientific research indicates that approximately two per cent of all people hear voices, and that only a small minority of them are actually mentally ill or disturbed.

Professor Romme criticizes established psychiatry, which has traditionally automatically defined hearing voices as a symptom of mental illness or as a form of hallucination and imagination. However, approximately eighty per cent of the voice hearers surveyed are convinced that the voices do not originate from within themselves, but from an external source or entity. Romme and Escher argue that imposing an academic explanatory theory-for example, that the voices are merely the person's own repressed thoughts-does not help the patient in practice. Modern rationalism often constructs theories based on thinkers who have no direct, first-hand experience of the phenomenon in question, whereas a genuinely understanding approach must start from the actual phenomenon and the experience of the person concerned.

2. Modernity, Fragmentation and the Redefinition of Philosophy

The second and third sections of the text offer a philosophical analysis of modernity, based on the work of A. Braeckman (who builds on Hegel, Schelling, Immanuel Kant and the sociologist Niklas Luhmann).

The essence of 'modernity' is defined as functional differentiation: a form of social organization in which the division of labor and specialization constitute the guiding principles. As a result, a culture breaks down into independent, separate subdomains, such as art, morality, religion, science and law, each managed by its own specialists. This leads to what is called *Zerstückelung* (fragmentation) in German philosophy. Every cultural product

must remain 'pure' within its own field (pure art, pure morality, pure science), meaning that specialists in one domain are no longer permitted to pass judgement on another without overstepping their boundaries.

The direct consequence is that philosophy loses its traditional, overarching role. In the past, philosophy functioned as a 'metaphysics' at the center of culture, serving as an 'Archimedean point' or a 'heavenly canopy' from which universal norms and definitions of essence could be prescribed. Comprehensive worldviews or encyclopedic metaphysical systems-such as Hegel's all-encompassing system of historical *Vernunft* (reason), Marx's economic reason, Sartre's human freedom or the Vienna Circle-have become impossible in modern times. The cause is the enormous explosion of information and the far-reaching hyper-specialization that prevent any individual from surveying the totality of knowledge of an era.

Following Kant's conception, Braeckman redefines the role of philosophy: it is no longer a normative theory of everything, but a practice of critical reflection on the conditions of possibility and the limits of our knowledge.

3. Science and Religion: The Realistic View of Science

In the fourth section, the text discusses J.P. Van Bendegem's work *Tot in der Eindigheid* (*On to Finitude*). Van Bendegem criticizes the classical 'standard view' of science-the passive collection of facts and the straightforward formulation of universal laws-and describes it as an illusion and a distortion.

Instead, he proposes a realistic view of science with seven central characteristics:

- Science is a form of targeted problem-solving.
- Science involves devising testable predictions.
- Science answers specific why-questions.
- Science is characterized by plurality (multiple theories may apply to the same problem).
- Scientific progress is not linear.
- Science always contains an implicit metaphysics (questions concerning which entities, such as atoms or mental states, actually exist).
- Science is embedded in society and culture.

Van Bendegem then compares this realistic view of science with religion. He defines religion as a theoretical system that claims to be comprehensive, operates on a metaphysical level and assumes the existence of at least one metaphysical entity, such as a deity.

The text critically observes that, although this comparison is illuminating, Van Bendegem reduces religion too strongly to a purely rational system of beliefs expressed in language, thereby neglecting religion's broader, non-verbal and experiential dimension.

4. Historical Origins and Evolution of Concentration Camps

The fifth section outlines the historical origins of the concentration camp, defined as an enclosed area in which a society confines 'enemies' or specific population groups.

Historically, the first concentration camps were established by the British during the Boer War in South Africa. The concept was subsequently developed by the Russian communists under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky.

In June 1918, Trotsky was the first to demand the confinement of Czechoslovaks, civilians and officers refusing military service in concentration camps, after which he extended the scope of its application to agitators and saboteurs.

In August 1918, Lenin ordered the introduction of mass terror and the confinement of 'kulaks' (wealthy peasants) and Orthodox priests in concentration camps outside the cities.

Finally, the National Socialist model emerged: the Shoah, or the systematic genocide of the Jews in the Nazi *Konzentrationslager*, which today receives the greatest attention in the media and historical scholarship.

5. Stigmatization: The Mystical-Medical Enigma of Padre Pio

The final section of Text 30 examines the phenomenon of stigmatization in connection with the beatification of Padre Pio (Francesco Forgione) in 1999.

In 1918, Padre Pio received the stigmata (bleeding wounds on his hands, feet and side corresponding to Christ's crucifixion wounds) and lost approximately a cupful of blood every day for fifty years.

The Vatican was initially extremely suspicious of him; popes such as John XXIII kept their distance and sent medical commissions to investigate. Medical examinations nevertheless indicated that the wounds could not be feigned and would not close with any medication. Various attempts at scientific explanation emerged:

- Neurological explanations (abnormalities in the blood vessels).
- Psychological explanations (auto-suggestion or hetero-suggestion).
- Psychiatric explanations (neurosis or psychosis).
- Recognition that the phenomenon was radically inexplicable in medical terms.

Statistically, stigmatization appears remarkably often among women: of the 321 documented cases since Francis of Assisi, 280 involved women and only 41 involved men.

Regarding the Church's assessment, the text emphasizes, with reference among others to Pope Benedict XIV, that the Catholic Church does not declare people blessed or saints because of paranormal phenomena or stigmata, but solely on the basis of their heroic virtue and conscientious conduct.

Benedict XIV nevertheless described stigmata as supernatural signs that may be willed by God. The text concludes with parapsychological and occult hypotheses, such as that of R. Ambelain, who interprets stigmata as a form of subtle-material 'vampirism' or the bodily materialization of an excess of energetic life force.