

Colloque CLIMAF

Berlin 26 – 27 January 2019

Table 1 B, Stefanie Kurzyrna,
Minutes of the Berlin Colloquium 2019

Subject 1, Alterity – Research of Otherness

Table 1 B

First of all, we ensured a good communication throughout the group thanks to Sisters who kindly agreed to serve as translators as five different languages were spoken. Then, the subject and its challenges were clarified.

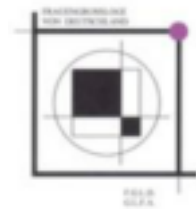
The definition of alterity in general and the difference between positive and negative alterity were explored. We used cards to classify the ideas.

In order to have a clear view, the different sheets were posted on the wall and further discussed in detail.

Our discussions generated the following Ideas :

Alterity in Latin: the other, "otherness".

- All people are born equal, but differences arise through varying contexts (family, social roots, homeland etc.)
- This conditioning framework is given but can be modified e.g. by training, etc.
- Often one doesn't leave one's "comfort zone". One stays in the same group, profession, language, social position, etc.
- The goal must be a society that accepts diversity - people are not the same, but of equal value.
- Otherness as Masonic concept means "to accept the other". It exceeds tolerance....
- Recognize and accept the other leads to mutual responsibility. This should be applied to all living beings, plants and the planet (e.g. climate change)
- Opening to different cultures.
- Otherness in itself is neutral, but it opens up an interplay between things and boundaries
- Differences should be overcome or accepted with empathy and dialogue
- Tolerate other opinions, perceptions and attitudes ("open up")
- If I want to stick to my own identity, I still must respect the others.
- Stand out to know one's own identity
- Meeting others with respect, growing through differences and by doing so improve oneself.
- Otherness implies "understanding" the other.



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- Tolerate diversity and avoid prejudice
- Accept complexity
- Individual differences are natural differences
- Resist stereotyping.
- The danger of setting boundaries with regard to the other, is that the other can feel diminished, for example: rich vs poor, graduates vs craftsmen. Boundaries prevent the development of a dialogue between "equals"....
- "Negative" alterity, called discrimination is created by a lack of tolerance and it can lead to individual assessments that can be either negative or positive.
- The strength is in the difference, not in "sameness" or similarity. Likeness pushes us together. Differences, however, provide us with opportunities that are mutually inspiring.