

# SOE5 - On Attestations

Post by "Hiram" of December 30, 2019 at 10:04 AM

In reply to [Cassius](#) ' feedback:

Quote

**SOE5: Our words and their meanings must be clear, and conform to the attestations that nature has presented to our faculties.**

Objection to SOE5: Of course we should be as clear as possible in using words. The issue is what is meant by clarity, and how we go about being clear. The issue that I detect in this tenet is that it carries the implication that nature has "testified" ("attested") some particular abstract truth that is the same for everyone. No, nature has not done that. Nature has simply provided us a set of faculties, including the ability to form abstractions (including words) and it is entirely up to us to convey meaning through the use of words or other methods that have been established in the past by agreement to be assignable to certain observations. Nature has not attested to anyone the meaning of "yellow." Nature has simply set up circumstances in a particular time and place that most humans visualize in a similar way under similar conditions, and to these conditions certain people have assigned the word "yellow" while certain others in other languages have assigned other totally different words. The point that Epicurus was making about clarity, and avoiding going on infinitely without reaching any conclusions, is tied totally to the fundamental that observations are contextual and that different people experience things differently. Clarity comes through examples, not by connection with some abstraction made by supernatural gods, ideal forms, etc.

An attestation is not "an abstract truth that is the same for everyone", it's a particular instance of direct perception of something.

This term, together with epíbole (most usually translated as "focusing") and a few others are mentioned.

The source here for attestations is Epicurus' "Against Empty Words" (we also made a video about it)

<http://societyofepicurus.com/reasonings-abo...of-empty-words/>