

2B What Is Phenomenology? A Reply to OG Rose
By Thomas Jockin

[Video Commentary can be found here](#)

In this video OG rose makes a robust argument for the utility of phenomenology in a Philosophy of Glimpses. For a quick summary, Phenomenology prevents the reductionist behavior to reduce all experience to observable compositional material matter otherwise known as materialism. I very much agree with OG Rose's argument here and I would like to build on his encouragement to use statements of "*X is like Y*" as opposed to "*X is Y*".

What I like about "*X is like Y*" statements is that together with the affirmative similarity, there is also a dissimilar statement bundled together. X may indeed be like Y, but also X is not like Y. Richard may indeed be brave like a lion, but Richard is clearly not a lion. This presence of dissimilarity prevents the kind of reductionist tendencies we find in propositional statements. In the rush to achieve the identity "*X is Y*", mental models apply violence to reality like a procrustean bed to fit the schema. Phenomenological statements like "*X is like Y*" are safeguarded from such reductionist violence.

But is there a way to bridge particular experience into universal knowledge using statements of "*X is like Y*"? I believe so in a *Ladder of Analogy*. At the lowest level of the ladder there are statements of attribution similarity between two different objects. Take my example before "Richard is brave like a lion." This is the weakest kind of analogy because the dissimilarity seems much more obvious than the similarity. Contrast "Richard is brave like a lion" to "Juliet is the Sun" from Shakespeare. The commonality between Richard and a lion was the attribute of bravery, whereas an identity statement is made between Juliet and the Sun. Clearly, Juliet is not a star at the center of the Solar System, but rather it is the *substantial form held* in common between Juliet and the Sun to permit the use of the copula "is" rather than "like". This use of the copula "is" in the case of Juliet and the Sun points to a transparent and nonviolent apprehension in the reader of an essentially common form despite the ever present dissimilarity; It's just that the similarity is *more* present than the dissimilarity for Juliet and the Sun compared to Richard and a lion. This Ladder of Analogy is a relatively fresh idea for me that I need to spend much more time flushing out, but I offer the model as a complement to OG Rose's argument for Phenomenology because such a Ladder of Analogy may perhaps be a *Liminal Oregon* we need for this intellectual venture.