

Mitchell Atkinson III
Toward a Dynamics of Hope in Social Life

The Institute for Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences
Poland
New York University, Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
e-mail: ma7648@nyu.edu

The phenomenological discipline must confront phenomena which seem to exist “beyond” consciousness. A variety of disciplines purport to render competing accounts of the world which do justice to the pre-philosophical understanding of objects or states of affairs which exist and yet to which no person seems to have experiential access. The discussion of hoping acts can lead to an intuitive understanding of the ways in which consciousness intends what is not given as present. For such an intuitive understanding to have philosophical clarity, a phenomenology of hope is required. The present paper uses Husserl’s later work to help us engage with the problem of hope in a philosophical and sociological sense. It contends that hoping acts are not merely future-directed but may be trans-temporal, that a hoping attitude takes a form of bracketing that puts judgments of probability and possibility out of play, and that hopeful bracketing is socioculturally mediated. It also uses a five-part methodology to bring pure phenomenological and sociological concerns into one overarching investigation. The question of hope is bound up with our experience of transcendent entities and states of the world, including especially those associated with religious experience and the capacity to imagine new forms of social life.