PHANTASY, IMAGE CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MEMORY (1898–1925)
EDMUND HUSSERL
COLLECTED WORKS
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VOLUME XI
PHANTASY, IMAGE CONSCIOUSNESS, AND MEMORY (1898–1925)

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What follows is a translation of *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung* (1898–1925), Volume XXIII in the Husserliana series,¹ the critical edition of the works of Edmund Husserl. Husserliana XXIII brings together a broad range of posthumous texts on perception, phantasy, image consciousness, memory, time, and a variety of related topics. They were written during a period of enormous productivity and pivotal development in Husserl’s philosophical life, reaching from the years immediately preceding the publication of the *Logical Investigations* (1900–1901) almost to the time of his retirement in 1928.

As Eduard Marbach, the editor of Husserliana XXIII points out, Husserl formulated grand plans early in the last century for the systematic development and presentation of his thought, particularly of the phenomenology of reason. Part of this project would consist of a “‘very comprehensive work on perception, phantasy, and time.’”² Husserl never in fact realized his idea of exploring these topics collectively in a single work, but he did offer courses and write sketches touching on all of them. A selection of these materials, mainly from the first decade of the last century and devoted to time consciousness, was published in 1928 in Husserl’s *Jahrbuch*³ with a brief foreword.

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³ A critical edition of Husserl’s texts on time consciousness from 1893 to 1917, including those published in the *Jahrbuch* supplemented by a wealth of previously
by Martin Heidegger, who was also listed as the publication’s editor, although it was Edith Stein who had actually assembled the texts when she was Husserl’s assistant in 1917. A significant portion of Stein’s selection consisted of material from the fourth part (“On the Phenomenology of Time”) of a lecture course Husserl gave at Göttingen in the winter semester of 1904/05 on the “Principal Parts of the Phenomenology and Theory of Knowledge.” The third part of the course was devoted to “Phantasy and Image Consciousness,” and appears in this volume as text No. 1 (1–115). 4 Although the four parts of the 1904/05 course do not represent the fulfillment of Husserl’s dream of a systematic presentation of perception, phantasy, and time consciousness, they do constitute a rich trove of phenomenological analysis and offer fertile soil for the refinements and developments that appear in Husserl’s sketches written over the next two decades, many of which appear in this volume.

Husserliana XXIII includes investigations of Gegenwärtigung, or “presentation,” which characterizes perception, but it focuses particularly on the array of phenomena that fall under the heading of Vergegenwärtigung, or “re-presentation.” The latter embraces memory, expectation, phantasy or imagination, and image consciousness, which is the kind of experience one has in looking at paintings, sculptures, photographs, films, and theatrical productions. The texts assembled here do not exhaust what Husserl had to say about these topics. Eduard Marbach notes, 5 for example, that the distinction between presentation and re-presentation is a fundamental issue in the phenomenology of time consciousness; one therefore finds extensive discussions of perception, memory, expectation, and even phantasy


4 For an account of the status of the texts included in this volume, see Eduard Marbach’s “Einleitung des Herausgebers” to Husserliana XXIII (xxv-lxxxii) and his editorial supplement (“Textkritischer Anhang,” 595–723). Marbach’s introduction, notes, and appendix provide an exhaustive critical apparatus for the texts with respect to their dates of origin, condition, subsequent revision, and so on.

5 “Einleitung des Herausgebers,” Husserliana XXIII, xxviii-xxix.
in Husserl’s writings on temporality. The themes also appear, at least in passing, in the *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I*. The texts in this volume, however, do not simply repeat what can be found in other parts of the Husserlian corpus. Indeed, they offer a significant broadening and deepening of Husserl’s reflection on re-presentation and its forms. And although their primary focus is not on perception or time consciousness, they throw new light on these phenomena as well, adding the kind of nuances that make Husserl’s observations so philosophically fruitful, and clarifying the difficult and often perplexing positions he takes elsewhere in his work. The texts also suggest rich lines of analysis one might take in pursuing such topics as imaging, art, and aesthetic experience.

Despite the ubiquity and obvious importance of presentation and re-presentation in our conscious lives—we are always perceiving in our waking moments, and very often remembering, phantasying, and looking at images—the connections and differences among these experiences are elusive and obscure. They initially confront the philosopher as a tangled skein of phenomena, and Husserliana XXIII may be read as a chronicle of Husserl’s attempts to tease them apart. He returned to this task again and again, his views evolving over the years and in some cases undergoing dramatic change. What he achieved by the end of his life was a comprehensive, if not exhaustive, account of the forms of re-presentation and their relations to one another and to other phenomena. His process of untangling involves making distinctions and showing connections, a common enough phenomenological procedure, but nowhere more in evidence or more effective than here. Husserl’s sketches and lecture notes present the philosopher at work, not talking about phenomenology, but actually doing it. Since, on the whole, he did not write the texts with an eye to publication, he is less constrained than in his published work. He experiments—raising, exploring, and discarding possibilities—and concedes that the phenomena often defy his efforts to understand them and to capture them in an appropriate terminological net. He sometimes changes his mind and freely admits that something he has written is not correct. All

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