Attention is an essential subject of cognitive psychology enabling crucial functions of the human mind. The interest of early modern European philosophy in scientific methodology and rational behavior leads to extensive analysis of the powers and capacities of the mind. In such theories attention is implicitly or explicitly a crucial element of cognition.

This workshop aims to reconstruct and examine some essential aspects of the early modern discussions of attention.

LOCATION:

Christian-Thomasius-Zimmer
Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für die Erforschung der europäischen Aufklärung (IZEA),
Franckeplatz 1, Haus 54,
06110 Halle (Saale)

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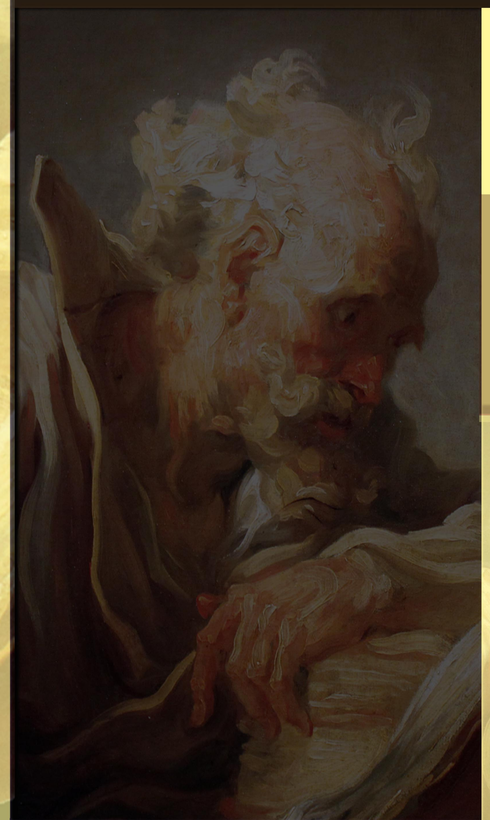
Picture credits:
Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *A Philosopher* (1764)
(Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany)

IZEA

ATTENTION IN EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITY
HALLE-WITTENBERG

Workshop
on-campus and online

DECEMBER 15-16, 2026

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2026

09.00-09.30 Registration/Welcome

09.30-10.30 Doina-Cristina Rusu (VU Amsterdam)
Francis Bacon on Attention. The Presence of the Mind as the Fundamental Virtue of the Natural Philosopher

10.30-11.30 Andreas Blank (University of Graz)
Thomas Willis on the Physiology of Attention

11.30-12.00 Coffee

12.00-13.00 Jack Stetter (University of South Florida)
The Problem of Attention in Spinoza

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.00 Matthew Leisinger (York University)
Cudworth's Theory of Attention

15.00-16.00 Sebastian Bender (LMU Munich)
Attending to Ourselves – Malebranche on Self-Awareness, Self-Knowledge and Transparency of the Mind

16.00-16.30 Coffee

16.30-17.30 Colin Chamberlain (UC London)
Attention and Perception in Malebranche

17.30-18.30 Julia Borcherding (Cambridge)
"Every Feeling Is the Perception of a Truth" – Leibniz on Reflective Attention as a Source of Moral Knowledge

19.00 Dinner

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2026

09.00-10.00 Katerina Mihaylova (MLU Halle)
"A Diligent and Patient Observation" - Christian Thomasius on Attention in its Relation to the Two Sources of Human Knowledge

10.00-11.00 Manuel Fasko (University of Basel)
"Bewust-Werdung": Amo's Processual Understanding of Consciousness

11.00-11.30 Coffee

11.30-12.30 Christian Henkel (KU Leuven)
Attention and Self-determination. Gottfried Ploucquet's Account of Human Freedom

12.30-12.45 Concluding Remarks