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Louis de la Forge

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Descartes' philosophy represented one of the most explicit statements of mind-body dualism in the history of philosophy. Its most familiar expression is found in the *Meditations* (1641) and in Part I of *The Principles of Philosophy* (1644). However neither of these books provided a detailed discussion of dualism. The *Meditations* was primarily concerned with finding a foundation for reliable human knowledge, while the *Principles* attempted to provide an alternative metaphysical framework, in contrast with scholastic philosophy, within which natural philosophy or a scientific explanation of natural phenomena could be developed. Thus neither book explicitly presents a Cartesian theory of the mind nor does either give a detailed account of how, if dualism were accepted, mind and body would interact. The task of articulating such a theory was left to two further works, only one of which was completed by Descartes, viz. the *Treatise on Man* (published posthumously in 1664). The *Treatise* began with the following sentence, describing the hypothetical human beings who were to be explained in that work: "These human beings will be composed, as we are, of a soul and a body; and, first of all, I must describe the body for you separately; then, also separately, the soul; and finally I must show you how these two natures would have to be joined and united to constitute human beings resembling us."

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