

**** SYNOPSIS OF DESCARTES' MEDITATION V ****

1. Of *res extensa*: the essence of material things is extension; in other words, if matter exists, it is necessarily three-dimensional.
2. The necessary existence of God revisited: this argument is closer to the traditional version of the ontological argument invented by St. Anselm; it can be abstracted as follows:
 - [A] All clear and distinct ideas are true.
 - [B] I have a clear and distinct idea of an equilateral triangle such that
 - (i) I can't think of an equilateral triangle that is not equiangular; so
 - (ii) it is of the essence of an equilateral triangle that it is equiangular (the assertion that "All equilateral triangles are equiangular" is necessarily true.); while
 - (iii) there may or may not be any real triangles.
 - [C] I have a clear and distinct idea of God (a supremely perfect being) such that
 - (i) I can't think God is supremely perfect but doesn't exist; so
 - (ii) God's essence includes existence (the assertion that "God exists" is necessarily true).
3. Descartes is best understood as making the logical point that "God exists" is tautological, an analytic truth. In the same way that "All bodies are extended" is necessarily true because the predicate "extended" is included in the subject "body," so too "God exists" is necessarily true because the predicate "exists" is included in the subject "God."