

TOTA SIMUL AND CONTINGENT FUTURES: BOETHIUS'S CONCEPTION OF ETERNITY IN BOOK V OF THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY AS A RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE

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Abstract: The article offers a systematic reconstruction and contemporary re-evaluation of Boethius's solution to the problem of divine foreknowledge in Book V of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. The central research question is whether the Boethian doctrine of eternity — defined as *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*, the whole, simultaneous and perfect possession of unending life — still constitutes a defensible response to the dilemma of divine omniscience and human freedom, given the objections raised against it in the analytic philosophy of religion between 2019 and 2025. The research applies a hermeneutic-analytical methodology that combines close textual analysis of *Consolatio* V.1–V.6 with rational reconstruction of its argumentative structure and a comparative-systematic mapping of that structure onto the contemporary debate. The analysis yields three principal results. First, Boethius's solution is shown to be a unified three-component strategy, integrating an epistemic principle (the modes-of-cognition thesis), a metaphysical doctrine (atemporal eternity), and a modal distinction (simple versus conditional necessity), such that no component functions successfully in isolation. Second, the article develops its original contribution, the praesential-dependence reading, according to which the *tota simul* doctrine operates as a metaphysical vehicle for an implicit dependence response: divine vision is explanatorily posterior to the free act it apprehends, which anticipates the contemporary dependence solutions of Wasserman, Law, Cyr, and Fischer. Third, it is argued that the most influential recent objections — Hasker's presentist critique and Cyr's superfluity objection — target the metaphysical component while leaving the praesential-dependence core intact. The conclusion is that Boethius's fifth-century solution remains a live option in the twenty-first-century debate precisely when it is read as a structurally unified dependence response rather than as a bare appeal to timelessness.

Keywords: *Boethius, eternity, tota simul, divine foreknowledge, future contingents, theological fatalism, dependence response, Consolation of Philosophy.*

INTRODUCTION

The problem of divine foreknowledge is one of the oldest continuously debated problems in Western philosophy, and it has returned to the centre of the analytic philosophy of religion with remarkable intensity in the last decade (Deng, 2024). Its canonical modern formulation is due to Pike, who argued that if God essentially and infallibly believed yesterday what an agent will do tomorrow, then the agent lacks the power to do otherwise, since exercising such a power

would require either falsifying an infallible belief or altering the fixed past (Pike, 1965). The argument threatens what is sometimes called theological fatalism: the thesis that exhaustive divine foreknowledge is incompatible with human free will and, by extension, with moral responsibility, desert, and the rationality of deliberation, prayer, and hope (Wasserman, 2021). The stakes of the problem are therefore not narrowly technical. They concern the coherence of classical theism itself, and every major position in the contemporary field — Ockhamism, Molinism, open theism, and atemporalism — can be understood as a strategy for either dissolving or absorbing Pike's argument (De Florio & Frigerio, 2019).

The oldest fully developed version of the atemporalist strategy is found in the fifth book of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, written by Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius in prison around 524 CE while awaiting execution under Theodoric (Marenbon, 2021). There, the character Philosophy answers the prisoner's complaint that divine prescience destroys freedom by redefining the mode of God's cognition: God does not, strictly speaking, *fore-know* anything, because God's life is eternity, defined as *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio* — the whole, simultaneous, and perfect possession of unending life (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). From the standpoint of such a life, all events — past, present, and future by our reckoning — are apprehended as present, and knowledge of the present, Boethius argues, imposes no necessity on what it apprehends (Rogers, 2024). This solution shaped the entire medieval trajectory of the problem, from the earliest Carolingian receptions through Aquinas to the fourteenth-century critics of the eternity doctrine (Colli, 2022; Knuuttila, 2025).

The contemporary fortunes of the Boethian solution have been mixed. On the one hand, the doctrine of atemporal eternity received its classic analytic rehabilitation in Stump and Kretzmann's account of eternity as atemporal duration and of ET-simultaneity as the relation connecting eternal and temporal relata (Stump & Kretzmann, 1981), and it continues to be defended vigorously in recent work (Rogers, 2022; Stump, 2022). On the other hand, an influential line of criticism argues that eternity either fails to secure libertarian freedom or fails to deliver providentially useful knowledge (Hasker, 2020), while a second line argues that the atemporalist solution enjoys no advantage over its temporalist rivals unless it is supplemented by a dependence claim — in which case, the objection runs, the appeal to eternity becomes superfluous (Cyr, 2020). At the same time, an independently motivated literature on the so-called dependence response has emerged, arguing that the fixity of the past should be restricted to facts that are explanatorily independent of our actions (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022), and that God's beliefs, because they depend on what we freely do, are precisely not fixed in the relevant sense (Law, 2020; Wasserman, 2021). These two literatures — Boethius scholarship and the dependence literature — have so far developed largely in parallel, with only occasional points of contact (Cyr & Law, 2020).

The central research question of this article is therefore the following: does Boethius's conception of eternity in Book V of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, when reconstructed with full attention to its own argumentative architecture, constitute a defensible response to the problem of divine foreknowledge under the conditions of the contemporary debate? Three hypotheses guide the investigation. The first hypothesis (H1) holds that Boethius's solution is a unified three-component strategy — an epistemic principle, a metaphysical doctrine, and a modal distinction — and that each component is individually insufficient, so that standard objections which isolate a single component miss their target. The second hypothesis (H2) holds that the *tota simul* doctrine functions in the text as a metaphysical vehicle for an implicit dependence response: the necessity that attaches to what God sees is harmless precisely because divine vision is explanatorily posterior to the free act it apprehends. The third hypothesis (H3) holds that the most influential contemporary objections to the Boethian solution target its metaphysical component while

leaving its dependence core intact, so that the solution survives in the current debate to the extent that it is read as a dependence response.

The original contribution of this article lies in the second hypothesis: it introduces, for the first time in the literature, an explicit praesential-dependence reading of *Consolatio* Book V, according to which the dialectical function of the eternity doctrine is not to replace but to legitimate the dependence claim that the prisoner himself dismisses in V.3 as preposterous — namely, that events ground divine knowledge rather than the reverse (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3). On this reading, the contemporary opposition between atemporalist and dependence solutions (Cyr, 2020) rests on a false dichotomy, because the earliest atemporalist solution already was a dependence solution. The reading thereby supplies what recent critics have demanded of the dependence response — an independent account of why God's cognition depends on our choices (Cyr & Law, 2020) — by locating that account in the metaphysics of eternal presence.

The argument proceeds as follows. The next section reviews the relevant literature in two streams, recent Boethius scholarship and the analytic debate on eternity and foreknowledge, and describes the methodology. The subsequent section presents the results of the textual analysis of Book V in systematic form. Three analytical sections then interpret these results: the first examines the modes-of-cognition principle, the second the metaphysics of *tota simul* and its contemporary critics, and the third the doctrine of the two necessities in relation to the dependence response. The conclusion evaluates the three hypotheses, restates the original contribution, acknowledges methodological limitations, and identifies directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Recent Boethius scholarship has undergone a notable revival, concentrated in the 2024 Cambridge Critical Guide to the *Consolation* (Wiitala, 2024). Within that volume, three chapters bear directly on the present topic. Rogers reconstructs Boethius's position as a form of theist compatibilism, on which the atemporal God's knowledge of choices imposes no necessity upon them while preserving full divine sovereignty (Rogers, 2024). Evans examines the contrast between the timeless, simple God and time-bound creation, and asks the pointed question whether the temporal-eternal distinction in the *Consolation* is ontological or merely epistemic-perspectival — a question that any contemporary rehabilitation of the doctrine must answer (Evans, 2024). Cvetković demonstrates the Proclean provenance of the circle and sphere metaphors through which Boethius relates providence to fate, situating the *Consolation* firmly within the late Neoplatonic metaphysics of remaining, procession, and reversion (Cvetković, 2024). Beyond the Critical Guide, the most significant recent intervention is Noble's revisionist study, which argues against the standard indeterminist reading that Boethius, following Proclus, is a causal determinist and compatibilist for whom God's providential knowledge ensures the occurrence of everything it embraces (Noble, 2024). The present article engages this revisionist challenge directly, since the praesential-dependence reading presupposes that divine vision tracks, rather than determines, free choices.

The reception and contextualization of the Boethian eternity doctrine have likewise received fresh attention. Colli documents its earliest medieval afterlife, showing how the ninth-century Carolingian author Paschasius Radbertus already deployed the *tota simul* definition from *Consolatio* V.6 to explain prophetic cognition (Colli, 2022). Torrijos-Castrillejo compares Boethius's and Aquinas's commentaries on the ninth chapter of Aristotle's *De interpretatione*, arguing that Boethius

there develops Proclean ideas on fate and providence that the *Consolation* later elaborates, and that Aquinas's own reconciliation of foreknowledge and freedom proceeds in continuous dialogue with Boethius (Torrijos-Castrillejo, 2020). Kijewska traces the sapiential background of the *Consolation*, including its opening allusion to the Book of Wisdom's description of providence reaching from end to end, which bears on the disputed relation between Boethius's Christianity and his Platonism (Kijewska, 2021). The standard synthetic surveys remain Marenbon's treatment of Boethius as the intermediary between ancient Neoplatonism and the Latin Middle Ages (Marenbon, 2021) and Knuuttila's account of medieval theories of future contingents from Boethius through Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, and Molina (Knuuttila, 2025).

The second stream is the analytic debate on divine eternity. Its foundational text is Stump and Kretzmann's defence of eternity as illimitable atemporal duration, together with the ET-simultaneity relation designed to render coherent a timeless God's cognitive and causal contact with temporal events (Stump & Kretzmann, 1981). The most sustained recent attack is Hasker's, who argues that neither Stump's nor Rogers's version of timeless eternity can simultaneously secure libertarian freedom and providentially useful divine knowledge (Hasker, 2020). Both targets have replied: Stump restates the Boethian conception of eternity against the claim that an atemporal God could not know a changing world (Stump, 2022), while Rogers defends an explicitly eternalist, four-dimensionalist version of the doctrine on which all times exist equally and are equally present to God (Rogers, 2022). The temporalist counter-position has been developed most systematically by Mullins, who criticizes views on which God creates time and defends an identification of God's life with time itself (Mullins, 2020a), answers the objection that a temporal God's providence would be guilty of improvisational error (Mullins, 2020b), and has extended the case for divine temporality into a book-length treatment of creation, sovereignty, and providence (Mullins, 2024). On the opposite side, Page has argued that the influential creation objection against timelessness rests on false premises (Page, 2023a) and that divine timelessness is compatible even with presentism, allowing the atemporalist to co-opt responses to evil usually reserved for temporalists (Page, 2023b). Between these poles, Young proposes an inclusive conception of eternity, drawing on Plotinus and Boethius, on which eternity transcends yet includes temporal change (Young, 2021), Rodrigues analyses how assumptions about divine timelessness function as hermeneutical principles shaping entire theological systems (Rodrigues, 2024), and Deng's survey maps the interaction between positions on God's relation to time and the underlying metaphysics of time (Deng, 2024).

The third stream concerns the logic of the foreknowledge dilemma itself. The dependence response has become the most discussed compatibilist strategy of the last decade: Wasserman distinguishes and evaluates versions of the claim that God's past beliefs depend on our future free actions (Wasserman, 2021) and proposes restricting the fixity of the past to facts that are explanatorily independent of one's actions (Wasserman, 2022); Law argues that the intuition behind the fixity of the past is better captured by a fixity of the independent principle (Law, 2021) and defends the dependence response against the objection that it generates vicious explanatory loops (Law, 2020); Cyr and Law jointly caution that the response cannot advance the dialectic without an independent account of why God's beliefs depend on our actions (Cyr & Law, 2020). Fischer's actual-sequence theology argues that moral responsibility does not require alternative possibilities, so that divine foreknowledge is compatible with responsibility even if it forecloses alternatives (Fischer, 2022). Crucially for the present argument, Cyr has applied the dependence framework to atemporalism itself, contending that the Boethian solution enjoys no advantage over temporalist views unless supplemented by a dependence claim, and that with such a claim in hand the appeal to eternity becomes superfluous (Cyr, 2020). The rival strategies complete the map: Todd defends the open-future thesis that all future contingents are false (Todd, 2021), and

with Rabern shows that open-future views which retain the retro-closure principle cannot accommodate a temporally omniscient being (Todd & Rabern, 2021); Iacona defends an Ockhamist-friendly account on which future contingents can be known when true (Iacona, 2022); the Ockhamist programme is examined across the contributions to Santelli's collection on branching time and the thin red line (Santelli, 2022); open theism has received both a systematic exposition (Rhoda, 2024) and a formal defence of its limited-foreknowledge variant (Ackermann, 2025); Molinism faces the objection that middle knowledge explains creaturely freedom away (Climenhaga & Rubio, 2022) alongside grounding puzzles for the counterfactuals of freedom (Koons, 2022); and Lampert has constructed a new incompatibility argument from contingent a priori truths that is claimed to be immune to standard Ockhamist replies (Lampert, 2025). Finally, the broader epistemological setting of the debate is not irrelevant: recent work on the crisis of epistemic authority under algorithmic conditions (Postolache, 2025) and on the post-truth collapse of a shared cognitive horizon (Radišić, 2025) underscores that the question of what knowledge is, relative to the capacities of the knower, retains philosophical urgency well beyond philosophy of religion — which is precisely the question Boethius's modes-of-cognition principle addresses.

The gap in the literature is now visible. Boethius scholarship has produced increasingly refined readings of Book V (Noble, 2024; Rogers, 2024), and the analytic literature has produced increasingly refined dependence solutions (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022), but no study has systematically asked whether the *Consolatio* itself already contains the structural core of the dependence response, and what such a finding would imply for the alleged rivalry between atemporalist and dependence strategies (Cyr, 2020). Closing that gap is the task of this article.

Research Methodology

The research applies a hermeneutic-analytical methodology in three coordinated components. The first component is close textual analysis of *Consolatio Philosophiae* V.1–V.6, conducted on the Latin text of the standard Loeb critical edition (Boethius, 1973) and controlled against the annotated English translation of Walsh (Boethius, 1999); the analysis of the Aristotelian background of future contingency relies on Ackrill's standard translation of and commentary on *De interpretatione* (Aristotle, 1963). The unit of analysis is the argumentative move: each prose section of Book V was segmented into discrete claims, objections, and replies, and the resulting argument map constitutes the empirical basis of the study. The second component is rational reconstruction in the tradition of analytic history of philosophy: the segmented arguments are restated in contemporary terms — necessity operators, fixity principles, grounding and dependence relations — in order to make them commensurable with the formal literature (De Florio & Frigerio, 2019). The reconstruction deliberately preserves interpretive neutrality between the indeterminist and determinist readings of Boethius at the outset, so that the revisionist challenge (Noble, 2024) can be adjudicated rather than presupposed. The third component is comparative-systematic mapping: each reconstructed Boethian move is matched against its closest analogue in the 2019–2025 debate, and the principal recent objections are tested against the reconstructed whole rather than against isolated components.

The source base of the study comprises the primary texts named above and a corpus of secondary literature assembled under strict verification constraints: peer-reviewed publications from 2019–2025, each verified through DOI resolution or publisher metadata, supplemented by two canonical pre-2019 items (Pike, 1965; Stump & Kretzmann, 1981) retained as foundational texts of the modern debate and by the standard critical editions of the primary sources. Journal articles indexed in Scopus constitute the majority of the cited corpus. The temporal restriction of

the secondary corpus is a deliberate methodological choice: it ensures that the evaluation of the Boethian solution is conducted against the current state of the debate rather than against positions that have since been refined or abandoned.

Three methodological caveats should be registered at the outset. First, the study is interpretive: its results are textual and systematic findings, not experimental data, and their validity is argumentative rather than statistical. Second, the argument map of Book V, while constructed to be exhaustive at the level of argumentative moves, inevitably involves judgment calls in segmentation, which are documented in the results section so that they can be contested. Third, the comparative mapping privileges the anglophone analytic debate; the rich continental and regional literatures on Boethius are represented only where they intersect the systematic question (Kijewska, 2021; Đukić, 2025). These limitations are revisited in the conclusion.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The textual analysis of *Consolatio* Book V generated findings that can be organized into four blocks, corresponding to the argumentative architecture of the book, the three components of the solution, the dialectical status of the dependence claim, and the mapping of components onto the contemporary debate. This section presents the findings without interpretation; the three analytical sections that follow interpret them.

The first block of findings concerns the architecture of Book V. The argument map identifies a strict problem-solution symmetry. Sections V.1–V.2 prepare the ground: V.1 reduces chance to the unforeseen concurrence of causes within the providential order, and V.2 grades freedom of judgment across the hierarchy of rational natures (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.1–V.2; Marenbon, 2021). Section V.3 contains the prisoner's incompatibility argument in two stages: first, that if God foresees all things, they cannot turn out otherwise than as foreseen, so that the foreknown is necessary; second — and decisively — that the incompatibility does not rest on any causal contribution of the foreknowledge, since even if foreknowledge merely accompanied events, the mere existence of infallible prior knowledge would suffice for necessity (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3; Knuuttila, 2025). Within V.3 the prisoner also considers and rejects a grounding reversal: the suggestion that the occurrence of events is the cause of God's knowledge of them is dismissed as a preposterous inversion, on the ground that it would make temporal things the cause of eternal prescience (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3). The section closes with the practical corollary that hope and prayer would lose their point if fatalism were true (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3; Kijewska, 2021). Philosophy's answer occupies V.4–V.6 and reverses the prisoner's argument point by point: V.4 introduces the modes-of-cognition principle, V.5 extends it through the hierarchy of cognitive powers, and V.6 grounds it in the definition of eternity, distinguishes the two necessities, and closes by restoring the point of prayer and hope (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4–V.6; Rogers, 2024).

The second block of findings identifies the three components of Philosophy's solution. The epistemic component is the principle, stated programmatically in V.4 and reiterated in V.6, that everything which is known is grasped not according to its own nature but according to the capacity of the knower (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4; Marenbon, 2021). The analysis registers that the principle is stated or invoked at least three times across V.4–V.6, each time at a hinge of the argument, and that it is supported in V.4–V.5 by the fourfold hierarchy of sense, imagination, reason, and intelligence, in which each higher power embraces the objects of the lower in a higher mode (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4–V.5; Evans, 2024). The metaphysical component is the definition of eternity in V.6 as the whole, simultaneous, and perfect possession of unending life, explicitly contrasted with the endless successive duration of the world — even a world without

beginning or end would be perpetual, not eternal, since its life is lived serially, losing each moment as it gains the next (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Stump & Kretzmann, 1981). The same contrast between the divine permanent present and the running now of temporal things appears in the fourth of the theological tractates, confirming its systematic status in Boethius's corpus (Boethius, 1973, De Trin. 4; Evans, 2024). The modal component is the distinction of V.6 between simple necessity, which flows from a thing's nature — as that all human beings are mortal — and conditional necessity, which attaches to a thing only under a condition, as when a man's walking is necessary while he is seen to walk, without his walking being necessary in its own nature (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Knuuttila, 2025). Philosophy's application is exact: relative to the divine vision of them as present, all events carry conditional necessity; considered in their own nature, free acts remain contingent (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Rogers, 2024).

The third block of findings concerns the dialectical status of the dependence claim, and it constitutes the textual basis of the article's original contribution. The analysis establishes a precise asymmetry between V.3 and V.6. In V.3 the prisoner rejects the claim that events ground divine knowledge because he construes it temporally: if the knowledge is prescience, located in the past relative to the event, then grounding the earlier in the later appeared to him an absurd retro-dependence (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3). In V.6, after the redefinition of divine cognition as the vision of things present, Philosophy asserts the very grounding direction the prisoner had dismissed: the divine gaze, like a human observer's sight of a present action, follows its object without altering the object's own nature, and future things are necessary only relative to being seen, not in themselves (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). The map thus records that the eternity doctrine does not merely coexist with a dependence claim; it is introduced precisely at the point where the dependence claim requires legitimation, and it removes exactly the feature — temporal priority of the knowledge over the known — that had made the claim seem preposterous in V.3 (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3, V.6; Cyr, 2020). This structural finding, summarized in Table 1, is what the praesential-dependence reading generalizes.

Section	Argumentative move	Status of the dependence claim
V.1–V.2	Chance reduced to providential causal order; degrees of freedom graded	Not yet at issue
V.3	Prisoner: infallible prescience entails necessity, independently of causation; prayer and hope threatened	Rejected as preposterous retro-grounding of earlier knowledge in later events
V.4	Modes-of-cognition principle introduced; necessity located in the knower's mode, not in the event	Implicitly prepared: cognition varies with the knower, not with the object
V.5	Hierarchy of cognitive powers; divine cognition exceeds reason as reason exceeds sense	Implicitly prepared: a higher mode of knowing the same objects is possible
V.6	Eternity defined as tota simul possession of life; prescience redefined as praesential vision; two necessities distinguished; prayer and hope restored	Affirmed in praesential form: vision follows its present object and imposes only conditional necessity

Table 1. The argumentative architecture of Consolatio Book V and the function of the dependence claim
Source: author's analysis of Boethius (1973, Cons. V.1–V.6).

The fourth block of findings results from the comparative-systematic mapping and is summarized in Table 2. Each component of the Boethian solution possesses a distinct contemporary analogue and attracts a distinct class of objections. The epistemic component corresponds to perspectivalist and knower-relative accounts of cognition discussed in the recent literature on divine knowledge (Evans, 2024; Rodrigues, 2024). The metaphysical component corresponds to the Stump-Kretzmann doctrine of atemporal duration and its eternalist refinements (Rogers, 2022; Stump & Kretzmann, 1981), and it is the target of the presentist and providential objections (Hasker, 2020; Mullins, 2024). The modal component corresponds to the

distinction between hard and soft facts and, more precisely, to dependence-sensitive restrictions of the fixity of the past (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022), and it is the target of the superfluity objection (Cyr, 2020). The mapping supports the claim, defended in the analytical sections, that objections isolating one component leave the composite solution untouched: the presentist critique concedes the modal analysis, and the superfluity objection concedes the coherence of atemporal vision (Cyr, 2020; Hasker, 2020). No recent objection identified in the corpus attacks all three components simultaneously.

Component	Boethian formulation	Contemporary analogue	Principal recent objection
Epistemic: modes of cognition	Knowledge is according to the capacity of the knower (Cons. V.4)	Knower-relative accounts of divine cognition; perspectival readings of the temporal-eternal distinction	Threat of epistemic-perspectival deflation of eternity
Metaphysical: tota simul eternity	Whole, simultaneous, perfect possession of unending life (Cons. V.6)	Atemporal duration and ET-simultaneity; eternalist four-dimensionalism	Presentist critique: no real relata for eternal vision; providential uselessness
Modal: two necessities	Conditional necessity of the seen; simple necessity of natures (Cons. V.6)	Soft-fact and dependence responses; fixity of the independent	Superfluity: dependence does the work, eternity is idle

Table 2. The three components of the Boethian solution, their contemporary analogues, and their principal objections in the 2019–2025 literature

Source: author's systematization based on Boethius (1973), Stump & Kretzmann (1981), Hasker (2020), Cyr (2020), Law (2021), Wasserman (2022), Evans (2024), and Rogers (2022).

Two further results complete the picture. First, the analysis of V.6 identifies the terminological correction that Philosophy herself proposes: since God's knowledge never was earlier than its objects in the eternal frame, it is better called providence — a looking-forth from above — than foresight, a looking-ahead in time (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Cvetković, 2024). The correction is not rhetorical ornament; it is the exact textual marker of the shift from a temporal to a praesential model of divine cognition, and its earliest reception already exploited it to model prophetic knowledge (Colli, 2022). Second, the analysis registers that Book V nowhere asserts that divine vision causes or necessitates its objects taken in themselves; the necessity Philosophy concedes is uniformly conditional (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). This finding is in prima facie tension with the revisionist determinist reading (Noble, 2024; Knežević, 2024), and the tension is addressed in the first analytical section below.

THE MODES-OF-COGNITION PRINCIPLE AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE ETERNAL PRESENT

The first component of the Boethian solution is an epistemological thesis of striking generality: whatever is known is grasped not according to its own force but according to the capacity of the knower (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4). Philosophy introduces the principle as the diagnosis of the entire dilemma. The prisoner had tacitly assumed that knowledge must conform to its object, so that knowledge of a future contingent must itself be contingent-tracking in a way that either destroys the contingency or destroys the infallibility; Philosophy replies that the assumption inverts the true order, because the mode of cognition is fixed by the cognizer's nature, not by the object's (Marenbon, 2021). The principle is then given systematic depth in V.4–V.5 through the fourfold hierarchy of cognitive powers: sense grasps the figure in matter, imagination

the figure without matter, reason the universal in the particular, and intelligence the pure form itself, each higher power comprehending in a higher mode everything available to the lower (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4–V.5). The hierarchy licenses an a fortiori inference that carries the whole weight of the book: as reason transcends imagination without falsifying it, so the divine intelligence transcends reason, knowing in its own simple and unified mode what reason can only know discursively and temporally (Evans, 2024; Marenbon, 2021).

The philosophical yield of the principle is best appreciated by noting what it does not claim. It does not claim that God's knowledge is of different objects than ours — a move that would purchase infallibility at the price of relevance; it claims that the same contingent events are known in a different mode (Rogers, 2024). Nor does it claim that human cognition of the future is simply illusory; the prisoner's reasoning is diagnosed as a category mistake, the projection of the discursive mode of reason onto a cognition that is not discursive (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.5; Evans, 2024). This is why Philosophy insists, in a passage the results section identified as a hinge, that if we could ascend to the divine standpoint we would judge that what seems contradictory from below — infallible knowledge of the contingent — is coherent from above (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.5). The structure of the argument is thus neither a definition smuggled in as a premise nor an appeal to mystery: it is a principled relocation of the modal operator from the object known to the mode of knowing, prepared in V.4–V.5 and cashed out metaphysically in V.6 (Knuuttila, 2025; Marenbon, 2021).

The modes-of-cognition principle also determines how the Neoplatonic scaffolding of the *Consolation* should be read. Cvetković has shown that Boethius's images for the relation of providence to fate — the nested circles turning about a simple centre, the sphere whose centre holds the whole — are of Proclean provenance and encode the metaphysics of remaining, procession, and reversion (Cvetković, 2024). The centre-circumference image is precisely an image of modal asymmetry: the centre contains in a simple mode what the circumference unfolds in a dispersed mode, just as intelligence contains in one act what reason unfolds in succession (Boethius, 1973, Cons. IV.6, V.6; Cvetković, 2024). The same monistic architecture of a simple first cause unfolding into ordered multiplicity remains productive in contemporary regional scholarship on esoteric and hermetic Neoplatonism, where the morphology of the first cause is treated as the generative core of an entire metaphysical system (Đukić, 2025). Within this architecture, the modes-of-cognition principle is not an ad hoc epistemological device but the cognitive face of the general law that effects pre-exist in their causes in a higher mode (Torrijos-Castrillejo, 2020; Cvetković, 2024).

It is here that the revisionist challenge must be confronted. Noble argues, on the strength of the Proclean parallels, that Boethius is a causal determinist: God's providential knowledge, being causally productive, ensures the occurrence of all it embraces, so that the famous solution of Book V is compatibilist not merely about foreknowledge but about causation itself (Noble, 2024). The results of the textual analysis presented above constrain this reading at one decisive point: the necessity that Philosophy concedes to events under the divine gaze is uniformly conditional, and V.6 explicitly denies that the divine vision alters the proper nature of things, comparing it to a human spectator's sight of a present action (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). A consistent causal determinism would render the elaborate doctrine of the two necessities idle, since simple necessity would already govern all events through their causes — yet the two-necessities doctrine is the culmination of the book, not a residue (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Rogers, 2024). The praesential-dependence reading accommodates what is right in the revisionist case — the Proclean provenance of the cognitive hierarchy and of providence as cause of the world's order (Cvetković, 2024; Torrijos-Castrillejo, 2020) — while preserving the manifest argumentative role of the spectator model, in which vision follows and does not produce its object (Boethius, 1973,

Cons. V.6). On this point the present study sides with the mainstream reading against the revisionist one, but on textual-structural rather than doctrinal grounds (Marenbon, 2021; Rogers, 2024).

Finally, the modes-of-cognition principle has a contemporary resonance that deserves registration, because it explains why the Boethian analysis is not a museum piece. The principle asserts that epistemic authority is indexed to the capacities and mode of the knower — and the recent epistemological literature has documented, from the opposite direction, what happens when a culture loses any shared index of that kind. Analyses of algorithmically mediated cognition describe a regime in which acceptance precedes rather than follows verification, and in which the authority of knowledge migrates from the knower's capacities to the fluency of the interface (Postolache, 2025). Diagnoses of post-truth epistemology describe the collapse of a common cognitive horizon within which competing claims could be adjudicated at all (Radišić, 2025). Boethius's hierarchy is the mirror image of both pathologies: it grounds the authority of a cognition in the ontological rank of its mode, and it supplies a shared vertical horizon — the ascent from sense to intelligence — within which disagreement between modes is adjudicated rather than dissolved (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4–V.5; Evans, 2024). Even phenomenological studies of contemporary temporal experience, which document presence without encounter as the signature of hyperconnected life, converge on the Boethian insight that presence is an achievement of a mode of apprehension, not a mere datum of simultaneity (Vasconcelos, 2025). The eternal present of V.6 is, in this exact sense, the limit case of achieved presence — which is why its metaphysics, examined next, carries the burden of the solution.

TOTA SIMUL: THE METAPHYSICS OF ATEMPORAL PRESENCE AND ITS CONTEMPORARY CRITICS

The metaphysical component of the solution is condensed into a single definition: eternity is the whole, simultaneous, and perfect possession of unending life (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). Every term is load-bearing. Possession of life distinguishes eternity from abstract timelessness — the eternity of a number is not the eternity of God, because only a living cognition can possess its life; whole and simultaneous exclude the seriality by which temporal life loses yesterday in order to have today; perfect excludes the incompleteness of a life still awaiting its own future (Stump & Kretzmann, 1981). The contrast class is explicitly not the finite temporal world but a world of endless duration: even if the world had neither beginning nor end, as Aristotle held of the cosmos, its unending life would be perpetuity, an infinite succession of losses and gains, not eternity (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Evans, 2024). The distinction is confirmed in the theological tractates, where the permanent divine now is opposed to our running now which generates time (Boethius, 1973, De Trin. 4). Boethius's definition thereby fixes the logical grammar of the doctrine for the entire subsequent tradition, from its Carolingian reception (Colli, 2022) through Aquinas (Torrijos-Castrillejo, 2020) to its analytic rehabilitation as illimitable atemporal duration related to time by ET-simultaneity (Stump & Kretzmann, 1981).

The function of the definition within Book V is strictly argumentative: it converts foreknowledge into knowledge of the present. If the divine life possesses itself whole and at once, then nothing in the object domain of divine cognition stands to that cognition as future; everything is embraced in a single praesential act, so that the correct name for the divine cognition is providence, a looking-forth from above, rather than foresight, a looking-ahead in time (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Cvetković, 2024). The force of the conversion is that knowledge of the present is the uncontroversially innocent case of infallible knowledge: seeing a man walk entails that he walks, but no one concludes that the seeing makes the walking unfree (Boethius,

1973, Cons. V.6; Rogers, 2024). The definition thus does for the whole of time what ordinary perception does for the present moment — and the question on which the contemporary debate turns is whether that generalization is metaphysically coherent (Deng, 2024; Hasker, 2020).

The most sustained recent critique answers in the negative. Hasker argues that the doctrines of timeless eternity defended by Stump and by Rogers face a dilemma: either the eternal God's knowledge is knowledge of a genuinely indeterministic temporal world, in which case it cannot be providentially useful — since a timeless cognition cannot be deployed at times to guide the world — or it is providentially useful, in which case the freedom it was designed to protect is compromised (Hasker, 2020). The critique has a presentist root: if only the present is real, there are no future relata for the eternal vision to be related to, and the tota simul embrace of all times is an embrace of mostly nonexistent objects (Hasker, 2020; Rogers, 2022). The replies define the current state of the debate. Stump answers that the objection quietly re-temporalizes the divine standpoint — it treats eternity as a frozen moment within time rather than as the possession of all of time at once — and that on the Boethian conception an atemporal God knows the changing world precisely as changing, in its own present mode (Stump, 2022). Rogers answers by embracing the metaphysics the objection demands: on her four-dimensionalist eternalism all times exist equally and are equally present to the eternal God, so that the vision has all the relata it needs, and libertarian freedom is preserved because the existence of a choice at its own temporal location is not its determination from outside (Rogers, 2022). The exchange makes explicit what Stump and Kretzmann's original account left implicit: the Boethian doctrine is most naturally at home in an eternalist metaphysics of time (De Florio & Frigerio, 2019; Rogers, 2022), although Page has argued that even this concession is not forced, since divine timelessness can be rendered consistent with presentism itself (Page, 2023b).

The temporalist alternative has meanwhile matured from an objection into a systematic programme. Mullins identifies the divine life with temporal duration itself, arguing that the traditional creationist views of time are incoherent (Mullins, 2020a), and develops a full account of a temporal God's creation, sovereignty, and providence in which divine knowledge grows with the open future and providence is exercised diachronically (Mullins, 2024). Against the charge that such a God would be a cosmic improviser whose plans are vulnerable to error, Mullins argues that a perfectly wise temporal God makes no providential blunders (Mullins, 2020b). The atemporalist counter-attack has concentrated on the creation objection — the argument that a timeless God could not create without undergoing change — which Page has shown to rest on false premises about the relation between acting and changing (Page, 2023a). Survey evidence from the literature indicates that the choice between these programmes is increasingly recognized as tracking prior commitments in the metaphysics of time and even in theological hermeneutics rather than any single decisive argument (Deng, 2024; Rodrigues, 2024). Young's proposal of an inclusive eternity that transcends yet includes temporal change, drawing explicitly on Plotinus and Boethius, is symptomatic of the same recognition: the live question is no longer whether God is in time or outside it, but what structure of presence can hold both claims' insights together (Young, 2021).

For the purposes of this article, the decisive point is what the critique and the replies jointly concede. Hasker's dilemma targets the reality of the temporal relata and the providential deployment of eternal knowledge; it does not dispute that if the eternal vision has its objects present to it, that vision imposes only conditional necessity on them (Hasker, 2020; Stump, 2022). Rogers's eternalist defence secures the relata; it does not need to revise the modal analysis at all (Rogers, 2022). Even the temporalist programme concedes the conditional-necessity analysis for God's knowledge of the present and past, disputing only that there is anything praesential for God to know of the future (Mullins, 2024; Rhoda, 2024). In the terms of Table 2: the entire

metaphysical battle is fought over the second component of the Boethian solution, while the third component — the modal analysis that actually neutralizes the fatalist argument — is left standing by all parties (Cyr, 2020; Knuuttila, 2025). This observation motivates the final analytical section: if the modal component carries the anti-fatalist load, what exactly does the metaphysics contribute, and is the contemporary suspicion that it contributes nothing (Cyr, 2020) correct?

THE TWO NECESSITIES AND THE DEPENDENCE RESPONSE: BOETHIUS IN THE CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

The modal component of the Boethian solution distinguishes two necessities: simple necessity, grounded in the nature of things — that all human beings are mortal, that the sun rises — and conditional necessity, which binds a state of affairs only relative to a condition, paradigmatically the condition of being known (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). When you see a man walking, it is necessary that he is walking; but this necessity is the harmless necessity of the consequence — necessarily, if he is seen walking, he is walking — and not a necessity of the consequent that would expel the walking from his own power (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Knuuttila, 2025). Philosophy's application to the divine case is immediate: relative to the eternal vision, every event is conditionally necessary; considered in its own nature, the free act remains contingent, and the same future event is thus necessary when referred to the divine cognition and free when considered in itself (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Rogers, 2024). The medieval tradition refined exactly this analysis in its distinction between the composite and divided senses of modal claims about the foreknown, and its echo is audible in every modern discussion of the fatalist's modal fallacy (Knuuttila, 2025; De Florio & Frigerio, 2019).

The contemporary fatalist argument is, however, deliberately built to survive the charge of modal fallacy. In Pike's canonical version, the necessity that transfers from God's past belief to my present act is not logical but temporal: the belief, being past, is fixed and beyond anyone's power, and infallibility transmits that fixity to the act believed (Pike, 1965). The modern debate therefore turns on the fixity of the past — the principle that no one can now act otherwise than in ways consistent with everything the past contains (Wasserman, 2021). It is precisely here that the dependence response intervenes: the fixity intuition, its defenders argue, does not attach to the past as such but to what is explanatorily independent of us, and God's past beliefs about my future free acts, being explanatorily dependent on those acts, are not fixed in the relevant sense (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022). Law has defended the response against the objection that it generates vicious explanatory loops between belief and act (Law, 2020); Wasserman has systematized its variants and their costs (Wasserman, 2021); Fischer has argued on independent grounds that responsibility survives even if the alternatives are foreclosed, since responsibility is a matter of the actual sequence of the act (Fischer, 2022). Yet the response faces a persistent dialectical complaint, pressed by Cyr and Law themselves: absent an independent account of why God's beliefs depend on our acts, the dependence claim merely restates compatibilism against the incompatibilist (Cyr & Law, 2020).

The praesential-dependence reading defended in this article locates such an account in the oldest text of the tradition. The results section established the textual asymmetry: in V.3 the prisoner dismisses the suggestion that events ground God's knowledge as a preposterous retro-grounding, because he construes divine knowledge as prescience, temporally prior to its objects — and grounding the temporally earlier in the temporally later is what strikes him as absurd (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3). Philosophy never refutes this intuition; she removes its target. Once divine cognition is redefined as the praesential vision of an eternal life possessing all of time at once, the grounding of the vision in its object is no longer retro-grounding across time but the

ordinary, innocent posteriority of sight to the thing seen — the spectator model of V.6 (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). The eternity doctrine, in other words, is introduced exactly where the dependence claim needs legitimation, and it legitimates the claim by dissolving its only offensive feature, the apparent dependence of the earlier on the later (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3, V.6). Boethius's solution is therefore not an alternative to the dependence response; it is the dependence response, equipped with the metaphysics that answers the demand of Cyr and Law for an independent account of the direction of dependence (Cyr & Law, 2020; Law, 2020).

This reading directly inverts the most pointed recent objection to atemporalism. Cyr argues that the Boethian solution enjoys no advantage over temporalist views unless it is supplemented by a dependence claim — since a timeless infallible belief seems no more up to us than a past one — and that once the dependence claim is added, it does all the anti-fatalist work, rendering the appeal to eternity superfluous (Cyr, 2020). The praesential-dependence reading grants the first horn entirely: the eternity doctrine without the dependence claim is indeed inert, which is why Boethius never deploys it without the spectator model and the two-necessities analysis (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). But the second horn fails, because the dependence claim without the eternity doctrine is dialectically naked: asserted of a temporally prior belief, it is exactly the preposterous retro-grounding that the prisoner — anticipating the modern incompatibilist — refuses to accept (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3; Cyr & Law, 2020). What eternity contributes is not an additional anti-fatalist mechanism but the metaphysical precondition under which the sole anti-fatalist mechanism — dependence — is coherent without backward explanation in time (Law, 2020; Rogers, 2022). Far from being superfluous, the metaphysics is what converts a question-begging retort into a principled solution; and conversely, the dependence literature supplies what critics of eternity have long demanded, a precise statement of why the conditional necessity of the seen is harmless (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022). The two research programmes turn out to be the two halves of a single, originally Boethian, strategy.

The comparative map confirms that the surviving rivals purchase their solutions at substantially higher doctrinal cost. The open-future programme denies the truth of future contingents outright: Todd defends the thesis that all future contingents are false (Todd, 2021), and Todd and Rabern prove that open-future views retaining the retro-closure principle — from tomorrow's sea battle it will have been true today that a sea battle occurs — cannot admit a temporally omniscient being at all (Todd & Rabern, 2021). Open theism accordingly restricts omniscience to what is knowable, either because future contingents have no truth values or because their truths are unknowable, a position now available in systematic (Rhoda, 2024) and formally developed limited-foreknowledge versions (Ackermann, 2025). These are coherent positions, but their price is the surrender of exhaustive definite foreknowledge — the very datum Boethius set out to preserve — and their Aristotelian ancestry faces the same semantic pressures that already confronted the indeterminate readings of the sea-battle chapter (Aristotle, 1963, De Int. 9; Santelli, 2022). Ockhamism preserves foreknowledge by distinguishing hard from soft facts about the past, and its best current versions argue that future contingents can be known when true (Iacona, 2022); but the wider Ockhamist programme remains embroiled in the semantic and metaphysical difficulties of the thin red line in branching time (Santelli, 2022; Todd & Rabern, 2021). Molinism preserves both foreknowledge and a strong providence through middle knowledge of counterfactuals of freedom, but faces the objection that the Molinist explanatory structure explains creaturely freedom away (Climenhaga & Rubio, 2022) as well as unresolved grounding puzzles for the counterfactuals themselves (Koons, 2022). Meanwhile, the incompatibilist arsenal continues to grow: Lampert's recent argument from contingent a priori truths is expressly designed to bypass standard Ockhamist replies, and it leaves praesential views untouched only because they never locate the offending truths in the fixed past (Lampert, 2025).

Against this landscape, the reconstructed Boethian strategy — eternalist metaphysics, praesential cognition, dependence-based modal analysis — emerges not as an antiquarian curiosity but as the position with the most favourable ratio of preserved doctrine to incurred cost (De Florio & Frigerio, 2019; Rogers, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The research question of this article asked whether Boethius's conception of eternity in Book V of the *Consolation of Philosophy* still constitutes a defensible response to the problem of divine foreknowledge under the conditions of the contemporary debate. The answer defended here is affirmative, but conditionally so: the solution survives precisely when it is read as the structurally unified strategy the text presents, and not as the bare appeal to timelessness that both its critics and some of its defenders have made of it (Cyr, 2020; Hasker, 2020; Stump, 2022).

The first hypothesis, that Boethius's solution is a unified three-component strategy whose components are individually insufficient, finds full confirmation in the textual results. The argument map of Book V shows the epistemic principle of V.4, the eternity doctrine of V.6, and the two-necessities analysis of V.6 functioning as premises of a single argument, each introduced exactly where the previous component requires it: the modes-of-cognition principle licenses the possibility of a non-discursive knowledge of contingents (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.4–V.5; Marenbon, 2021), the eternity definition specifies the mode in question as praesential vision (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Stump & Kretzmann, 1981), and the modal distinction converts praesential vision into an answer to the fatalist by confining the transmitted necessity to the conditional kind (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Knuuttila, 2025). The analytical sections showed, correspondingly, that no recent objection engages all three components at once: the presentist critique targets the metaphysics while conceding the modal analysis (Hasker, 2020; Rogers, 2022), and the superfluity objection targets the division of labour while conceding the coherence of the whole (Cyr, 2020).

The second hypothesis, the praesential-dependence reading, is confirmed by the asymmetry between V.3 and V.6 documented in the results. The prisoner rejects the grounding of divine knowledge in events as a preposterous retro-dependence of the temporally earlier on the temporally later (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.3); Philosophy's eternity doctrine removes the temporal priority that made the dependence offensive, and the spectator model of V.6 then asserts exactly the dependence the prisoner had refused — vision follows its present object and leaves the object's nature untouched (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6). The principal original contribution of this article is this reading and its systematic consequence: the contemporary opposition between atemporalist and dependence solutions rests on a false dichotomy, because the earliest atemporalist solution already was a dependence solution, and the metaphysics of eternity is precisely the independent account of the direction of dependence that recent critics have demanded of the dependence response (Cyr, 2020; Cyr & Law, 2020; Law, 2020). To the extent that the reading holds, the two most productive research programmes of the recent debate — the defence of eternity (Rogers, 2022; Stump, 2022) and the fixity-of-the-independent programme (Law, 2021; Wasserman, 2022) — are working on the two halves of one Boethian whole.

The third hypothesis is partially confirmed. It is true that the most influential recent objections target the metaphysical component and leave the dependence core intact, as the second and third analytical sections showed in detail (Cyr, 2020; Hasker, 2020). But the analysis also revealed a genuine residual vulnerability that the hypothesis underestimated: the praesential-dependence reading inherits the metaphysical debts of eternalism about time, since the innocent posteriority of vision requires that the objects of the eternal vision exist to be seen (Rogers, 2022;

De Florio & Frigerio, 2019). Page's demonstration that timelessness is compatible with presentism mitigates but does not discharge this debt, since compatibility with presentism is not yet an account of praesential vision under presentism (Page, 2023b). The Boethian solution therefore survives the current debate not unconditionally but at the price of a definite metaphysical commitment — a price its chief rivals pay in other currencies: the open future programme in surrendered foreknowledge (Rhoda, 2024; Todd, 2021), Molinism in compromised freedom and ungrounded counterfactuals (Climenhaga & Rubio, 2022; Koons, 2022), and pure Ockhamism in the semantics of the thin red line (Santelli, 2022; Todd & Rabern, 2021).

The limitations of this study are fourfold. First, its method is interpretive, and the argument map on which the results rest, though documented, involves segmentation judgments that other readers of Book V may contest (Evans, 2024). Second, the study adjudicated the dispute between the indeterminist and determinist readings of Boethius only at the single point where it intersects the praesential-dependence reading, and a full engagement with the revisionist case remains outstanding (Noble, 2024). Third, the secondary corpus was deliberately restricted to verified 2019–2025 publications plus two canonical foundations, so that older stages of the analytic debate are represented only through their current descendants (Pike, 1965; Stump & Kretzmann, 1981). Fourth, the comparative mapping privileged the anglophone analytic literature, leaving the continental, regional, and reception-historical dimensions — from Carolingian prophecy to contemporary hermetic Neoplatonism — indicated rather than developed (Colli, 2022; Đukić, 2025; Kijewska, 2021).

Future research should proceed along three lines. The first is formal: the praesential-dependence reading should be given an explicit semantics, extending the existing formal frameworks for atemporal omniscience to represent explanatory posteriority of vision within an eternalist model (De Florio & Frigerio, 2019; Santelli, 2022). The second is historical: the reception of the *tota simul* doctrine should be re-examined with the dependence question in hand, beginning with the Carolingian and Thomistic receptions in which the praesential model was first put to work (Colli, 2022; Torrijos-Castrillejo, 2020). The third is systematic: the confrontation between the praesential-dependence reading and the newest generation of incompatibility arguments, including those designed to bypass Ockhamist replies, should be carried out in full (Lampert, 2025; Todd & Rabern, 2021). If the argument of this article is sound, the fifth-century prisoner's problem and the twenty-first-century literature that still wrestles with it are not merely continuous in subject matter; they are working within the architecture of a single solution whose blueprint Boethius drew, whole and at once, in the last book he ever wrote (Boethius, 1973, Cons. V.6; Marenbon, 2021).

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TOTA SIMUL I KONTINGENTNA BUDUĆNOST: BOETIJEVO POIMANJE VJEČNOSTI U V. KNJIZI UTJEHE FILOZOFIJE KAO ODGOVOR NA PROBLEM BOŽIJEG PREDZNANJA

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Sažetak: Članak nudi sistematsku rekonstrukciju i savremenu reevaluaciju Boetijevog rješenja problema Božijeg predznanja u V. knjizi *Utjehe filozofije*. Centralno istraživačko pitanje glasi: da li Boetijeva doktrina vječnosti — definisana kao *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*, cjelovito, istovremeno i savršeno posjedovanje beskonačnog života — i dalje predstavlja odbranljiv odgovor na dilemu Božijeg sveznanja i ljudske slobode, s obzirom na prigovore formulisane u analitičkoj filozofiji religije između 2019. i 2025. godine. Istraživanje primjenjuje hermeneutičko-analitičku metodologiju koja kombinuje pomno tekstualno čitanje *Consolatio* V.1–V.6 s racionalnom rekonstrukcijom argumentativne strukture i komparativno-sistematskim mapiranjem te strukture na savremenu debatu. Analiza donosi tri glavna rezultata. Prvo, pokazuje se da je Boetijevo rješenje jedinstvena trokomponentna strategija koja integriše epistemički princip (tezu o modusima saznanja), metafizičku doktrinu (bezvremenu vječnost) i modalnu distinkciju (prosta naspram uslovne nužnosti), tako da nijedna komponenta ne funkcioniše izolovano. Drugo, članak razvija svoj originalni doprinos, prezencijalno-zavisnosno čitanje, prema kojem doktrina *tota simul* djeluje kao metafizičko sredstvo implicitnog odgovora iz zavisnosti: Božije viđenje je eksplanatorno posteriorno slobodnom činu koji zahvata, čime se anticipiraju savremena rješenja iz zavisnosti kod Wassermana, Lawa, Cyra i Fischera. Treće, argumentuje se da najuticajniji noviji prigovori — Haskerova prezentistička kritika i Cyrov prigovor suvišnosti — pogađaju metafizičku komponentu, dok prezencijalno-zavisnosno jezgro ostaje netaknuto. Zaključak je da Boetijevo rješenje iz petog vijeka ostaje živa opcija u raspravi dvadeset prvog vijeka upravo onda kada se čita kao strukturno jedinstven odgovor iz zavisnosti, a ne kao puko pozivanje na bezvremenost.

Ključne riječi: *Boetije, vječnost, tota simul, Božije predznanje, budući kontingenti, teološki fatalizam, odgovor iz zavisnosti, Utjeha filozofije.*