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Hard-Type Soft Facts

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DISCUSSION

HARD-TYPE SOFT FACTS

John Martin Fischer

There is a quite general argument which purports to establish that God's foreknowledge is incompatible with human freedom to do otherwise.¹ The argument proceeds from the claim that the past is "fixed"—out of our control—to the conclusion that if a certain sort of God exists, then no human is ever free to do otherwise. One way of resisting the argument is "Ockhamism." The Ockhamist distinguishes between two sorts of facts about the past: "genuine," non-relational facts (hard facts), which are now fixed, and "non-genuine," relational facts (soft facts), which *needn't* be fixed now. Further, the Ockhamist claims that certain facts alleged by the incompatibilist to be hard facts are in the class of soft facts which are *not* fixed, and thus that the incompatibilist's argument is unsound.

One important issue in the debate between the incompatibilist and the Ockhamist concerns the status of God's prior belief about an agent's present activity. Suppose that Jones mows his lawn at time T2. It follows (under the pertinent assumptions about God) that God believed at a prior time T1 that Jones would mow his lawn at T2. So *God believes that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is a fact about T1. One sort of Ockhamist claims that, although this is a fact about T1, it is nevertheless a *soft* fact about T1. Further, this sort of Ockhamist claims that God's prior belief isn't a *fixed* fact about the past. (A fact F is "fixed" at a time T (relative to an agent) just in case there is no action such that the agent can at T perform the action and if he were to do so, F would not obtain.)

Hoffman and Rosenkrantz have recently presented a particularly interesting and sophisticated characterization of the distinction between hard and soft facts, by reference to which *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is deemed a soft fact about T1.² They claim that this mechanism of discrimination avoids the inadequacies of Marilyn Adams's approach, and that it "avoids all of the difficulties raised by Fischer."³

¹The argument is presented and discussed in: Nelson Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action," *The Philosophical Review* 74 (1965), pp. 27–46; and John Martin Fischer, "Freedom and Foreknowledge," *The Philosophical Review* 92 (1983), pp. 69–79; and "Ockhamism," *The Philosophical Review* 94 (1985), pp. 81–100.

²Joshua Hoffman and Gary Rosenkrantz, "Hard and Soft Facts," *The Philosophical Review* 93 (1984), pp. 419–434.

³Marilyn Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *The Philosophical Review* 76 (1967), pp. 492–503; and Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, p. 419.

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Although Hoffman and Rosenkrantz do not endorse Ockhamism, they provide an analysis of the distinction which the Ockhamist needs, and they claim that God's belief at a time is a soft fact about that time. (The Ockhamist step which Hoffman and Rosenkrantz do not actually take is the claim that God's belief at a time is a soft fact about that time which is *not fixed* at later times.)

My strategy in this paper will *not* challenge the account offered by Hoffman and Rosenkrantz. That is, I will, for the sake of argument, *accept* their account of the distinction between hard and soft facts and thus accept that *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is a soft fact about T1.⁴ I will argue that even if all of this is granted, their approach fails to support compatibilism, because there is good reason to suppose that *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is in the class of soft facts about T1 which are nevertheless *fixed* after T1. Using elements of their own theory, I shall show why an Ockhamism based on their sort of characterization of the hard fact/soft fact distinction (and a wide class of similar characterizations of the distinction) must fail. My criticism will not focus on the technical acceptability of Hoffman and Rosenkrantz's way of distinguishing hard and soft facts. Thus, my criticism will be a general assault on a large group of Ockhamist approaches—those which argue that incompatibilism can be blocked in virtue of showing that God's prior belief is a soft fact (about the past).

I. A VERSION OF OCKHAMISM

I shall begin by characterizing, in a very rough and ready way, Marilyn Adams's method of distinguishing hard and soft facts. Consider an intuitively soft fact about eight o'clock, the fact that Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch. Adams's suggestion is (roughly) that it is a soft fact about eight o'clock insofar as its obtaining at eight entails that a contingent fact obtains at a later time—the fact that Jones eats lunch at noon. When the obtaining of a fact F1 at T1 entails that some contingent fact F2 obtains

⁴Elsewhere, I have argued that facts such as *Yahweh believes at T1 that Jones will do X at T2* should be construed as *hard* facts about T1: Fischer (1983), especially pp. 76–79. In that argument, I did not assume that Yahweh (the individual who is taken to actually fill the role of God) is *essentially* omniscient. It might be, however, that facts such as *God believes at T1 that Jones will do X at T2*, where “God” names an individual who is essentially omniscient, are properly construed as soft facts about T1. One should expect this difference between the two sorts of facts, given the characterization of the distinction between hard and soft facts presented by Hoffman and Rosenkrantz.

at T2, it is natural to suppose that F1's obtaining at T1 *depends* on F2's obtaining at T2. And insofar as this is true, F1 does not seem to be *only* about T1.

The problem with Adams's suggestion is that the obtaining of any fact at T1 (even a hard fact) will entail that some contingent fact obtains at a later time T2. So, the fact that Jones wakes up at eight entails that it is not the case that Jones wakes up for the first time at noon. Intuitively, what is required is a revision of Adams's account which says that a fact is a soft fact about T1 to the extent that its obtaining at T1 entails that a contingent, temporally "genuine" fact obtains at a later time T2. That is, a fact such as *It is not the case that Jones wakes up for the first time at T2* seems not to be *only* about T2—it is also about a prior time. A soft fact about T1 seems to be a fact whose obtaining at T1 entails the obtaining of a contingent fact which is, in some suitable sense, "temporally genuine" or "immediate," at some later time T2. This might seem to underlie the view that *Jones wakes up* is a hard fact about eight o'clock, whereas *Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch* is a soft fact about eight o'clock. But of course we still need an account of "temporal genuineness" or "immediacy" in order for the characterization of the distinction between hard and soft facts to be non-question-begging.⁵

Enter Hoffman and Rosenkrantz. They give an account of "temporal genuineness" or "immediacy," of what is "really happening" at a given time.⁶ In terms of this account, they can show how *Jones wakes up at eight* does *not* entail that any immediate state of affairs obtains after eight, whereas *At eight Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch* does. (The latter fact clearly entails that an immediate fact, *Jones eats lunch*, obtains at noon.) The basic idea here, which is employed and considerably refined by Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, is that a fact is a soft fact about T1 insofar as its

⁵In my discussion in this paper, I shall largely ignore such complexities as those introduced by certain "non-atomic" facts, as they will not be germane to my criticism of the sort of Ockhamism based on the claim that God's beliefs are soft facts about the times at which they are held.

⁶Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1984). On their account, a temporally genuine fact about a time—one which is happening in a "basic" sense at that time—is "unrestrictedly repeatable." The definition of unrestricted repeatability is as follows: *s* is *unrestrictedly repeatable* (UR) =df. *s* is a state of affairs such that: (i) *s* is not eternal, and (ii) $(n) (t_1) (t_2) (t_3) \dots (t_n) ([t_1 < t_2 < t_3 \dots t_n \text{ are periods of time which have the minimal duration of } s] \rightarrow s \text{ is possibly such that: } (s \text{ obtains at } t_1, s \text{ does not obtain at } t_2, s \text{ obtains at } t_3, \dots s \text{ obtains at } t_n \equiv n \text{ is odd}))$. (Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, p. 424; for the definitions of "eternality" and "minimal duration," see: p. 423). Hoffman and Rosenkrantz apply the notion of unrestricted repeatability to the analysis of omnipotence in: "What an Omnipotent Agent Can Do," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 11 (1980), pp. 1–19.

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obtaining at T1 entails that an immediate fact obtains at a later time T2.⁷ With this approach, Hoffman and Rosenkrantz argue that *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is a soft fact about T1—its obtaining at T1 entails an *immediate* fact about T2, viz. that Jones mows his lawn at T2. (Of course I am assuming here, following Hoffman and Rosenkrantz, that “God” is a proper name and that it is necessarily true that God is omniscient.)

Let us look a bit more carefully at the Ockhamist strategy based on the Hoffman/Rosenkrantz way of distinguishing hard and soft facts. It can be construed as beginning with the intuition that a certain class of facts are obviously not out of our control; they are soft facts (of a certain sort). For instance, in the absence of the assumption of God’s existence (or an impairment of Jones, etc.), it is plausible to think that Jones *can* at noon refrain from eating and thus that he *can* so act that he *wouldn’t* have awakened four hours prior to eating lunch (although he in fact wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch). Also, suppose that Smith knows at eight o’clock that Jones will eat lunch at noon. Again, Jones can refrain from eating lunch at noon, and thus he can so act that Smith wouldn’t have known at eight that Jones would eat lunch at noon. The facts about eight o’clock—that Jones wakes up prior to the time of his eating lunch by four hours and that Smith has a certain piece of knowledge then—are not fixed at noon (relative to Jones).⁸ These facts are intuitively different from a fact

⁷My characterization here is oversimplified in various ways. One important point is that, on Hoffman and Rosenkrantz’s account, a fact is a soft fact about T1 insofar as its obtaining at T1 or the *obtaining at T1 of the fact from which it is “constructed”* entails that an immediate fact obtains at a later time T2. So suppose that God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2. One can “construct” from this the existentially quantified fact, *Someone believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2*. This fact, though it doesn’t itself entail the obtaining of an immediate fact after T1, is a soft fact about T1 (on Hoffman and Rosenkrantz’s account); the fact from which it is constructed entails that some immediate fact obtains after T1. (See Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1984), especially pp. 426–427.)

⁸“Noon” here refers to some suitable temporal interval. I take it that, even though it is a fact about eight o’clock that Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch at noon, there is an interval (noon) during which it is true that Jones can refrain from eating lunch. Thus, by the definition of the fixity of facts, the fact that Jones wakes up four hours prior to the time of eating lunch is not fixed at noon (relative to Jones). If, however, one believes that *during the interval of noon* it is *not* true that Jones can refrain from eating (since he is actually eating), then one will believe that the fact that Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch is fixed at noon (relative to Jones). But this fact will not be fixed immediately *prior to* noon (or perhaps during the first instant of the interval of noon), and one could simply change the text accordingly. So, for instance, the claim would be that, whereas the fact that Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch is not fixed immediately prior to noon, the fact that Jones wakes up at 8:00 is fixed immediately prior to noon.

such as *Jones wakes up at eight o'clock*, which is fixed at noon. On Hoffman and Rosenkrantz's approach, *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is assimilated to the former class of facts—they are all soft facts about a time in virtue of entailing that some immediate fact obtains at a later time. And a certain kind of Ockhamist claims that the fact about God's belief at T1 is not only a soft fact about T1, but it is not fixed at T2—it might be in Jones's power at T2 so to act that it *wouldn't* have been a fact about T1.

II. HARD-TYPE SOFT FACTS

I believe that the fact about God's belief at T1 is fundamentally *different* from soft facts of the sort mentioned above. Whereas I shall accept that it is a soft fact about T1, I can show that it is importantly different from the other soft facts. And the way it differs from the other facts means that a defense of incompatibilism against Ockhamism *needn't* rest on an insistence that God's belief at T1 is a hard fact about T1.

The first part of my argument consists in pointing out that, from the claim that a fact is a soft fact about a previous time, it does *not* follow that it is not now fixed. For example, *Yesterday I woke up a day prior to the sun's rising in the east today*, is a soft fact about yesterday, but I cannot so act that it wouldn't have been a fact.⁹ It is a soft fact (on Hoffman and Rosenkrantz's account) because it entails that an immediate fact (*The sun rises in the east*) obtains after yesterday, but this immediate fact is "outside the scope of my abilities"—I cannot affect this immediate fact, and I must do so, in order to affect the soft fact. The fixity of the fact about yesterday does not arise from the fixity of genuine features of the *past*; rather, it comes from my inability to affect the sun's rising in the east (which is a necessary condition of affecting the fact about yesterday). If falsifying fact F1 would require falsifying fact F2, and one *cannot* falsify F2, then one cannot falsify F1.

Elsewhere, I have pointed out that when the falsity of a soft fact about the past would require the falsity of some hard fact about the past, then the soft fact is now fixed.¹⁰ This shows why an Ockhamist strategy suggested by Nelson Pike fails. Pike suggests that, whereas *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is a hard fact about T1, *God exists at T1* might be a

⁹William Rowe discusses such facts in his *Philosophy of Religion* (Encino, Calif.: Dicken-son, 1978), p. 165. Hoffman and Rosenkrantz also concede the existence of such soft facts in: Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1984), pp. 432–433.

¹⁰Fischer (1985), p. 96. Of course, the claim here presupposes the Ockhamist contention that hard facts about past times are now fixed. I shall in this paper make this assumption, but I have not offered an argument for it, and the assumption is denied by the 'multiple-pasts' compatibilist, Fischer (1985), pp. 99–100.

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soft fact about T1.¹¹ But even if this is so, the falsity of the fact about God's existence at T1 would require the falsity of the fact about God's belief at T1, so the fact about God's existence would be (if soft relative to T1) a "hard-core soft fact" (relative to T1), and thus, fixed at T2.¹²

It is reasonable to suppose that when a fact F1 entails a fact F2, there is some sense in which F1 is a "part" of F2.¹³ Now, consider the fact, *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2*. This is, according to Pike's approach, a hard fact about T1. But note that it entails *God exists at T1*. Thus, *God exists at T1* would be a soft fact with a hard part—a "hard-core soft fact" (relative to T1)—and thus fixed at T2.

The second step in my argument consists in arguing that, whereas *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is (on Hoffman and Rosenkrantz's account) a soft fact about T1, it is a soft fact about T1 which is nevertheless fixed at T2. It is, in an interesting way, similar to the facts discussed above—it is a soft fact with a hard part or aspect.

There are, I suggest, (at least) two different ways of breaking facts up into "parts." So far, we have noted that, when a fact F1 entails another fact F2, F1 is, in some sense, a part of F2—that is, we have decomposed states of affairs into sets of "component" states of affairs. But we might also note that a fact (at least, a "simple" fact) consists in something's (an object's, event's, time's) having a certain property (at a time).¹⁴ Thus, another way of decomposing a fact would break it up into its constituent property plus the thing which has the property plus (perhaps) a time. So, for instance, *At eight Jones wakes up four hours prior to eating lunch*, can be divided into: Jones, eight o'clock, and the property, "waking up four hours prior to eating lunch"; and the fact, *At eight Smith knows that Jones will eat lunch at noon*, can be divided into: Smith, eight o'clock, and the property, "knowing that Jones will eat lunch at noon," etc.

Now I shall introduce what I take to be an intuitively plausible distinction between two different kinds of *properties*. Some properties are tem-

¹¹Nelson Pike, "Fischer on Freedom and Foreknowledge," *The Philosophical Review* 93 (1984), pp. 599–614. Actually, this is *one* interpretation of Pike's strategy (presented on behalf of Adams). On the other interpretation, the hard fact is the "conditional fact": *If God exists at T1, then God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2*. I also argue against this version in Fischer (1985).

¹²I introduce the term, "hard-core soft fact," in Fischer (1985), p. 96.

¹³On the possible-worlds account of propositions, it is clear that when a proposition P1 entails a proposition P2, then P1 is a "part" of P2. On this account, a proposition is a set of possible worlds, and the entailment relation corresponds to the relation of set-inclusion. If facts are taken to be true propositions (or, at least, to "correspond to" true propositions), then the entailment relation among facts might also be understood in terms of the part-whole relation.

¹⁴Similarly, a complex fact would be a set of things having a set of properties, etc.

porally genuine or non-relational: for instance, the property, “waking up at eight o’clock.” Other properties are temporally non-genuine or relational: for instance, the property, “waking up four hours prior to eating lunch.”¹⁵ Let us call the first kind of property a “hard property,” and the second, a “soft property.”

Further, I claim that we can give a characterization of the two kinds of properties employing the apparatus of Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (although their particular apparatus is not essential to providing such an account). Parallel to the leading idea about facts, I suggest the following account for properties: a property P is a soft property relative to T just in case if anything were to have P at T, then it would follow that some immediate fact obtains after T. (Note that we can employ Hoffman and Rosenkrantz’s explanation of “immediacy” here, but that it is not essential; any plausible explanation of immediacy will do.) On this account, such intuitively soft properties as “waking up four hours prior to eating lunch,” “knowing that Jones will eat lunch at noon,” and “waking up a day prior to the sun’s rising in the east” are all soft properties (relative to the pertinent times). Also, if one wakes up at eight, then “waking up” and “waking up at eight” are hard properties relative to eight o’clock, as they should be. And notice that, in general, when one combines a soft property with an ordinary object, one gets a soft fact (for example, *In 44 B.C. Caesar dies prior to Fischer’s writing this paper in 1985*). Further, when one combines a hard property with an ordinary object, one gets a hard fact (for instance, *In 44 B.C. Caesar dies on the steps of the senate*).

But now a striking thing emerges. If you combine a hard property with a special kind of object, you can get a *soft* fact. It seems to me that having a belief is being in a temporally genuine state. And specifically, “believing that Jones will mow his lawn at T2” is a hard property relative to T1. This is implied by my account, since it is *not* true that for *any* agent, if he were to believe at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2, then it would follow that some immediate fact would obtain at a time later than T1; having this belief at T1 doesn’t *entail* that anything immediate occur after T1. But *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is (I have supposed here) a *soft* fact about T1. The softness of the fact seems to come, not from the softness of the constituent property, but from the “interaction” between a hard property and a special kind of bearer of the property—God. A

¹⁵For discussions of various attempts to distinguish between genuine and non-genuine properties, see David Lewis, “Extrinsic Properties,” *Philosophical Studies* 44 (1983), pp. 197–200; and “New Work for the Theory of Universals,” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 61.4 (1983), pp. 343–377.

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property can be a hard property, even though an agent's having it at a time is a soft fact about that time.

"Believing that *p*" seems to me to be a temporally genuine property, as opposed, say, to "waking up prior to eating lunch." I'd like to say a bit about why I think that having a belief is having a temporally genuine property. One plausible account of belief claims that a belief is a dispositional state of a certain sort; to believe that *p* is (very roughly) to be disposed to satisfy one's desires in situations in which *p* is true.¹⁶ Insofar as God's beliefs are relevantly similar to human beliefs, when God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2, He is in a certain sort of dispositional state at T1. And the important point is that (i) it is logically possible for some individual to be in the *same* kind of dispositional state at T1 and for Jones *not* to mow his lawn at T2, and (ii) being in that state would count as believing that Jones will mow his lawn at T2, even if Jones *doesn't* mow his lawn at T2. A dispositional state's counting as a belief does *not* depend on the truth of the object of belief, whereas such a state's counting as knowledge *does* so depend. Also, a physical state's counting as "waking up" does not depend on any future event, whereas a physical state's counting as "waking up four hours prior to eating lunch" does depend on a future event—one's eating lunch four hours later. Now, when God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2, it is logically impossible for *God* to be in that same dispositional state and for Jones not to mow, but this does *not* show that "believing that Jones will mow his lawn at T2" is not a hard property (relative to T1). At most, it shows that *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is not a hard fact about T1. God can have a hard property at a time, although His having it is a soft fact about the time.

In order for Jones so to act at T2 that *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* would have been false, he must act in such a way that God wouldn't at T1 have possessed the property, "believing that Jones will mow his lawn at T2." But this is a hard property relative to T1, and it seems to me plausible to suppose that no human can at T2 so act that some bearer of a hard property relative to T1 wouldn't have possessed that property at T1. For instance, no human can now so act that Caesar wouldn't have had the property, "dying on the steps of the senate."

¹⁶This is a sketchy and oversimplified account of belief. A more refined account along similar lines is set out and defended in Robert Stalnaker, *Inquiry* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1984); for a preliminary account of belief, see p. 15. Of course, I do not wish to tie my point to any particular account of belief; the argument here is intended simply to lend plausibility to the claim that belief is a temporally genuine property. If this account of belief is rejected (or its applicability to God is denied), I still would claim that belief (however analyzed) is a temporally genuine property.

My point is that the fact about God's belief is fundamentally different from the other soft facts to which the Ockhamist assimilates it. It (unlike the others) is a "hard-type soft fact," a soft fact with a constituent property which is a *hard* property (relative to the pertinent time). (I shall say that a soft fact with a soft constitutive property is a "soft-type soft fact.") And insofar as one believes that no human being has it in his power at T2 so to act that some bearer of a hard property relative to T1 wouldn't have possessed that property at T1, one must believe that hard-type soft facts about a time are fixed at later times.

Thus, even if *God believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2* is a soft fact about T1, it is a hard-type soft fact relative to T1, and so, fixed at T2. Even if one grants that the fact about God's belief is soft, there is a part or aspect of it which is hard and which must be affected, if one is to falsify the fact. So the Ockhamist strategy which is based on the claim that God's belief at T1 is a soft fact about T1 is inadequate.¹⁷

Consider the fact that God knows at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T2. This fact is, on my account, a "soft-type soft fact" (relative to T1). But it is clear that it should nevertheless be considered fixed at T2. This is because falsifying the fact about God's knowledge at T1 would require falsifying the fact about God's belief at T1—a hard-type soft fact (relative to T1). Above, I claimed that when the falsity of a soft fact about the past would require the falsity of some hard fact about the past, the soft fact is now fixed (insofar as hard facts about the past are taken to be fixed now). And similarly, I claim that when the falsity of a soft-type soft fact (relative to some past time) would require the falsity of some hard-type soft fact (relative to that past time), it is plausible to think that the soft-type soft fact is now fixed. In this sort of case, the soft-type soft fact is not "fully soft"—there is a crucial residuum of hardness.

III. A POSSIBLE OBJECTION

I wish now to consider a possible objection to my criticism of the sort of Ockhamism which is based on the claim that God's prior belief is a soft fact about the past. An Ockhamist might insist that it is *not* true that no human being can ever so act that an actual bearer of a hard property relative to a past time would not have possessed that property (in the past). I have

¹⁷Of course, the incompatibilist's argument, as typically presented, uses a fixity-of-the-past principle which claims that hard facts are fixed. But the argument can easily be reformulated to claim that hard properties are fixed, that is, that no human agent can at T2 so act that some actual bearer of a hard property at T1 wouldn't have possessed that property at T1.

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granted, for the sake of argument, that God's belief is a soft fact about T1. Then I argued that, since it is a hard-type soft fact (relative to T1), it is nevertheless a fixed fact (at T2). But one might conclude instead that since soft facts about past times need not in general be fixed now, hard-type soft facts (relative to past times) also need not be fixed now. That is, one might conclude that a human *can* sometimes so act that a bearer of a hard property (relative to a past time) wouldn't have possessed the property insofar as, by so acting, one would falsify a *soft* fact about the past.

I concede that I haven't established that no human can so act that some actual bearer of a hard property in the past wouldn't have had the property. But I needn't do so, in order to show that the Ockhamist approach considered here is unsatisfactory as a response to the basic incompatibilist argument (suitably understood). Suppose the incompatibilist employs the plausible principle that no human can ever so act that some actual bearer of a hard property in the past wouldn't have had that property. And he thus concludes that God's belief at T1 is fixed at T2. Now the Ockhamist responds by assimilating the fact about God's belief to a class of facts which are, intuitively, soft facts which are not fixed. The problem is that this assimilation carries absolutely no weight in the context of the incompatibilist's claim, if *none* of these soft facts is a hard-type soft fact. None of these facts—facts such as *At eight Jones awakens four hours prior to eating lunch*—will lend any assistance to the Ockhamist's claim that God's belief at T1 is not fixed at T2. What are needed, of course, and what haven't yet been offered, are non-question-begging examples of hard-type soft facts (relative to certain times) which are, intuitively, not fixed at later times.

IV. CONCLUSION: SOFT FACTS AND HARSH REALITIES

An argument can be constructed, using the assumption of the fixity of certain features of the past, which concludes that if God exists (and has certain attributes), then no human is ever free to do otherwise. One general strategy of response to the argument is "Ockhamism." The Ockhamist begins by distinguishing genuine, non-relational features of the past from those which are not. One kind of Ockhamist (roughly) denies that God's existence is a genuine feature of the past, whereas another kind of Ockhamist denies that God's belief is a genuine feature of the past.

The two kinds of Ockhamism fall prey to related problems. Even if God's existence in the past is a soft fact about the past, it is a hard-core soft fact (relative to the past time).¹⁸ And even if God's belief in the past is a

¹⁸Of course, the result that God's belief at T1 is a hard-core soft fact (relative to T1) stems from (rather infelicitously) conjoining the claim that God's existence is a

soft fact about a past time, it is a hard-type soft fact (relative to that past time). Thus, both facts appear to be fixed (after the times in question), and Ockhamist examples do not in any way indicate that they are not.

My general program has been to argue that, even if one grants that the relevant facts are soft, they are soft facts with hard parts or aspects, and that these hard parts must be affected, if the facts are to be falsified. My two criticisms correspond to two different ways of decomposing facts. One way fragments facts into component states of affairs; this yields the response to the Ockhamist strategy (suggested by Adams and Pike) which holds that God's existence in the past is a soft fact about the past. Another way fragments facts into constituent properties and their bearers; this yields the response to the Ockhamist strategy which holds that God's belief in the past is a soft fact about the past.

Hoffman and Rosenkrantz claim that an account of the hard fact/soft fact distinction "is required if there is to be adequate support for the compatibilist position."¹⁹ My argument here has been that, whereas such an account might be necessary, it is not sufficient to support compatibilism. It is natural to think that any suitable explanation of the distinction will include an account of immediacy (what happens in a "basic" sense at a given time); this can then be used to generate a characterization of the distinction between hard and soft properties, relative to which it can be seen that God's belief is a hard-type soft fact (relative to the time at which the belief is held). And the incompatibilist argument can be reformulated straightforwardly to insist on the fixity (at later times) of hard-type soft facts.

The harsh reality is that Ockhamism is soft on foreknowledge. Even if God's existence and God's belief are nice soft facts, they are soft facts with a residual hardness. These are the facts, hard as they may be to accept.²⁰

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soft fact about T1 with the claim that God's belief at T1 is a *hard* fact about T1. If one held that both facts are soft facts about T1, one could avoid this problematic result, but the claim that God's existence is not a fixed fact seems to violate God's independence, Fischer (1985).

¹⁹Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1984), p. 419.

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