



Philosophical Review

Freedom and Foreknowledge

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Source: *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Jan., 1983), pp. 67-79

Published by: [Duke University Press](#) on behalf of [Philosophical Review](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2184522>

Accessed: 24/02/2011 13:15

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FREEDOM AND FOREKNOWLEDGE

John Martin Fischer

A powerful argument can be made that God's omniscience is incompatible with human freedom.¹ If God is eternal and omniscient, then it might seem that my freedom now to do other than what I'm doing must be the freedom so to act that a fact about the past (God's prior belief about my present activity) wouldn't be a fact about the past. But since the past is "fixed," it seems that if God exists, then I am now not free to do other than what I'm doing.

Many philosophers have been attracted to an Ockhamist response to this argument.² Both the Ockhamist and the incompatibilist can distinguish between "hard" and "soft" facts about the

¹Nelson Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action," *Philosophical Review* 74 (January 1965), pp. 27–46; "Of God and Freedom: A Rejoinder," *Philosophical Review* 75 (July 1966), pp. 369–379; and "Divine Foreknowledge, Human Freedom and Possible Worlds," *Philosophical Review* 86 (April 1977), pp. 209–216. Pike also discusses the same basic argument in the fourth chapter of his book, *God and Timelessness*, (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1970), pp. 52–86.

²Some examples are: Marilyn Adams, "Is the Existence of God a 'Hard' Fact?" *Philosophical Review* 76 (October 1967), pp. 492–503; and William L. Rowe, *Philosophy of Religion*, (Encino, Dickenson, 1978), pp. 154–169.

The approach sketched below is called "Ockhamist" because William of Ockham distinguished between propositions about the past which are necessary and those which are not and argued that among those propositions about the past which are not now necessary are certain propositions about God. (William Ockham, *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents*. Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann (trans.), (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), pp. 46–47; 92.) Roughly, Ockham claims that those propositions about the past which are true by virtue of contingent future events are not now necessary. Such propositions, it might be said, express "soft facts" about the past. A useful discussion of the Ockhamist approach can be found in: Arthur Prior, *Past, Present, and Future*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 121–127.

John Turk Saunders agrees with the Ockhamist that certain propositions about God express soft facts: John Turk Saunders, "Of God and Freedom," *Philosophical Review* 74 (April 1966), pp. 219–225. Saunders holds a position which is even stronger than Ockhamism, since he believes that neither soft facts nor hard facts need be fixed: John Turk Saunders, "The Temptations of Powerlessness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 5 (April 1965), pp. 104–107.

past; the hard facts are fixed while the soft facts need not be fixed. But the Ockhamist claims that God's prior belief about my present activity is a soft fact about the past and hence not fixed; my freedom is thus preserved. Some Ockhamists even claim that the very existence of God is also a soft fact about the past.

I shall argue that a very attractive presentation of the Ockhamist approach, one explicitly formulated by Marilyn Adams, is inadequate.³ There are significant problems with Adams' attempt to characterize the hard fact/soft fact distinction. Further, I shall present a general challenge to *any* sort of Ockhamist attempt to explain this distinction.

I. PIKE'S ARGUMENT

Nelson Pike claims to exhibit the incompatibility of human freedom and divine foreknowledge, relative to certain plausible assumptions about God's nature.⁴ These assumptions reflect central features of the standard Judeo-Christian conception of God. Pike explicitly adopts the assumption that if God exists, then God is essentially omniscient and God is eternal. On Pike's account, God is omniscient if and only if God believes all and only true propositions, and we might say that God is essentially omniscient if and only if God is omniscient in all possible worlds in which God exists. Pike says that God is eternal if and only if God has always existed and always will.⁵

Following Pike's presentation in a different article, I assume that the term "God" is a descriptive expression used to mark a certain *role*, rather than a proper name.⁶ Whoever occupies the role of God is omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, etc. In contrast, the term "Yahweh" is a proper name; it refers to the person who actually occupies the role of God (if God exists). It is not necessarily true

³Adams, *op. cit.*

⁴Pike, "Divine Omniscience," pp. 26–31.

⁵Thus Pike conceives of God's eternality as sempiternality—existence at all times. This conception is shared by the Ockhamist; it can be contrasted with the atemporal conception of eternality held by Boethius and Aquinas.

⁶Pike makes this assumption explicit in "Omnipotence and God's Ability to Sin," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1969), pp. 208–216, esp. pp. 208–209.

that Yahweh is omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, etc.; it is logically possible that some other person has been God.⁷

Since "God" is being used here as a nonrigid designator, there is some ambiguity in the assumptions about God's attributes. "God is essentially omniscient" does not mean that the person who is in fact God is essentially omniscient, but rather, that necessarily, whoever is God is omniscient. In terms of possible worlds, God is essentially omniscient just in case for any possible world in which there is a person who is God, that person is omniscient. (One can assume that if God is eternal in a particular world, then it follows that there is one and the same person who is God at all times in that world. Pike need not accept this particular assumption, as it is not crucial to his argument.)

Though this is the approach to the term "God" that Pike appears to adopt, it might seem to be an unusual and unappealing position. I shall follow Pike in adopting this interpretation, but it is important to note that Pike could just as easily embrace the stronger interpretation according to which the person who is in fact God is essentially God. Nothing in Pike's proof, or in my criticism of Adams' Ockhamism, rests on adopting the weaker rather than the stronger interpretation of God's attributes.

In effect, Pike also appears to adopt what might be called the "fixed past" constraint on power attributions:

(FPC) It is never in any person's power at a time T so to act that the past (relative to T) would have been different from what it actually was.

Pike's view about the fixity of the past implies not only that one cannot causally influence the past; it implies that no person is free to do something which is such that, were he to do it, the past would have been different from what it actually was.

Pike's argument is essentially as follows. Suppose Jones did X at time T_2 and God exists. Since God exists, it follows from God's eternality that He existed at T_1 (a time prior to T_2). Let us call the person who was God at T_1 , "Y." Since Jones did X at T_2 , it follows

⁷C. B. Martin argues for this approach in the fourth chapter of his *Religious Belief*, (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1964).

from God's omniscience that He believed at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 . Now if it was within Jones' power at T_2 to refrain from doing X , then (1) it was in Jones' power at T_2 to act in such a way that Y would have been God and would have held a false belief at T_1 , or (2) it was in Jones' power at T_2 to act in such a way that Y would have been God but wouldn't have held the belief He held at T_1 , or (3) it was in Jones' power at T_2 to act in such a way that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 .

But (1) is ruled out by God's essential omniscience, and (2) and (3) are ruled out by (FPC). Hence it was not in Jones' power at T_2 to refrain from doing X . If the argument is sound, it can easily be generalized to show that God's eternity and essential omniscience are incompatible with any human agent's being free at any time.

It should be pointed out that incompatibilism about divine foreknowledge and human freedom needn't entail incompatibilism about human foreknowledge and human freedom. The problem is deeper with divine foreknowledge because of God's essential omniscience; perhaps it was in Jones' power at T_2 so to act that Smith (who actually held only correct beliefs) would have held a false belief at T_1 . Pike wants to insist on an *asymmetry* between divine and human foreknowledge.⁸

II. HARD AND SOFT FACTS

It is sometimes in one's power so to act that facts about the past *wouldn't* be facts. John Turk Saunders discusses such a fact:

Although it is true that if I had refrained from writing this paper in 1965, Caesar's assassination would have been other than it is in that it

⁸Pike says in his original paper: "The important thing to be learned from the study of Smith's foreknowledge of Jones' action is that the problem of divine foreknowledge has as one of its pillars the claim that truth is analytically connected with God's *beliefs*. No problem of determinism arises when dealing with human foreknowledge of future actions. This is because truth is not analytically connected with human belief even when (as in the case of human knowledge) truth is contingently conjoined to belief." Pike, "Divine Omniscience," p. 43. Thus it is clear that Pike as well as the Ockhamist *needs* the distinction between hard and soft facts.

would not have preceded by 2009 years my writing this paper, it would be absurd to argue that I therefore did not have it in my power to refrain from writing this paper in 1965.⁹

It is obvious that the mere fact that if Saunders had refrained from writing his paper, then Caesar's assassination wouldn't have preceded Saunders' writing his paper by 2009 years did not render Saunders incapable of refraining; relative to 1965, "Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper" expresses a soft fact about the past. Of course, it was not in Saunders' power so to act that Caesar would not have died on the steps of the Senate. Relative to Saunders' lifetime, the fact that Caesar died on the steps of the Senate is a hard fact about the past.

Pike agrees with the Ockhamist that there are both hard and soft facts about the past.¹⁰ It is not easy to provide a precise characterization of the hard fact/soft fact distinction. Pike himself provides no such account, though he claims we can recognize clear examples of each sort.¹¹ The disagreement between Pike and the Ockhamist is about where to draw the line. Pike's position is that if the ordinary notions of belief and existence are applied to God, then God's belief at T_1 and God's existence at T_1 (including the fact that Y was God at T_1) are hard facts about the past relative to T_2 . And if they were soft facts about the past relative to T_2 , this would show that we were ascribing beliefs and existence to God in a special, nonstandard way.

Given the hard fact/soft fact distinction, the appropriate interpretation of Pike's claim about the fixity of the past should be made explicit:

(FPC*) It is never in any person's power at a time T so to act that any

⁹Saunders, *op. cit.*, p. 224. Unfortunately, Saunders' arithmetic is wrong since there is no O B.C. or O A.D. Hence, Caesar's death preceded Saunders' writing his paper by 2008 years! For simplicity's sake, however, I shall ignore this and proceed with Saunders, Pike, and Adams in adding a year to history.

¹⁰Pike, "Of God and Freedom," pp. 369–370; Rowe makes a similar distinction between facts which are "simply about the past" and facts which are not, in William Rowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 162–165.

¹¹Pike, *op. cit.*

hard fact about the past (relative to T) would have been different from what it actually was.¹²

Marilyn Adams presents an account of the distinction which she believes supports compatibilism against Pike's attack. It will be useful to consider Marilyn Adams' attempt at giving an account of the distinction:

- (B) "Statement P is at least in part about time T " = df. "The happening or not happening, actuality or nonactuality of something at T is a necessary condition of the truth of P ."

¹²Put in terms of possible worlds, the fixed past constraint is:

- (FPC*) A possible world W^* (in which an agent does other than what he does in W at T) can establish that the agent had it in his power at T in W to do otherwise only if W and W^* have the same hard facts about the past relative to T .

In "Pike on Possible Worlds, Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom," *Philosophical Review* 88 (July 1979), pp. 433–442, Joshua Hoffman criticizes Pike's interpretation of the fixity of the past. Hoffman construes Pike as claiming that the possession of every power *entails* the occurrence or nonoccurrence of past circumstances. That is, Hoffman attributes to Pike the claim that the truth of a statement ascribing a particular power to an agent at a time in a world W *entails* that the past be as it is in W (Hoffman, pp. 441–442).

Pike himself puts the constraint in a misleading way, saying: "If we assume that what is within my power at a given moment determines a set of possible worlds, all of the members of that set will have to be worlds in which what has happened in the past relative to the given moment is precisely what has happened in the past relative to that moment in the actual world." Pike, "Divine Foreknowledge," p. 215. But nothing in Pike's position requires acceptance of the radical doctrine attributed to him by Hoffman. Pike's fixed past constraint commits him to the claim that if an agent performs an act in world W , then any possible world W^* in which he refrains from performing the act must have the same past as W , if W^* is to establish that the agent can in W refrain from performing the act. But there may be possible worlds (including W) in which the agent can perform the act (and *does* perform the act) in which the past histories (relative to the time of the act) are all different from one another; hence, the truth of a power-ascription need not *entail* the past history. Hoffman's criticism of Pike misses the mark and leaves the fixed past constraint unscathed.

Thus the statement, "Caesar died 2009 years before Saunders wrote his paper" is at least in part about 44 B.C., since Caesar's death at that time is a necessary condition of the truth of that statement. It is also at least in part about 1965 A.D. since Saunders' writing his paper in 1965 A.D. is also a necessary condition of the truth of that statement. Given (B) the notion of a "hard" fact may be explained as follows.

- (C) "Statement P expresses a 'hard' fact about a time T " = df. " P is not at least in part about any time future relative to T ."¹³

Adams uses this account to present an Ockhamist response to Pike's argument. On her account, God's belief at T_1 and the fact that Y was God at T_1 are deemed soft facts about T_1 .

Adams claims that her account shows why "Caesar died 2009 years before Saunders wrote his paper" does not express a hard fact about 44 B.C. But her account does *not* explain this unless it is interpreted to imply that *no* sentence expresses a hard fact. Adams says that "Caesar died 2009 years before Saunders wrote his paper" is at least in part about 1965, since Saunders' writing his paper in 1965 is a necessary condition of the truth of that statement. But this seems plainly false; the statement entails that Caesar's death and Saunders' writing his paper be separated by 2009 years, but it does not entail any two particular dates for the two events. The statement entails that the two events stand in a certain temporal *relation*, but it does not entail that they occur on any specific dates. Hence, Saunders' writing his paper in 1965 is *not* a necessary condition of Caesar's death being 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper, if we interpret " Q is a necessary condition for P " as " P entails Q ."

One might reply that since it is true that Saunders wrote his paper in 1965, "Saunders wrote his paper in 1965" is *materially implied* by "Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper." So if we interpret " Q is a necessary condition for P " as " P materially implies Q ," Saunders' writing his paper in 1965 is a

¹³Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 493–494.

necessary condition of the truth of “Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders’ writing his paper.” But it is obvious that if this sense of “necessary condition” is adopted, then *no* sentence will express a hard fact about 44 B.C. So Adams’ account of Pike’s intuitive distinction is inadequate as it stands. Adams gives no explication of the notion of a necessary condition by reference to which she can say that “Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders’ writing his paper” does not express a hard fact about 44 B.C.

Consider also the statement, “John F. Kennedy was assassinated.” Given the entailment interpretation, this statement expresses a hard fact about 1961, since it does not *entail* the occurrence of anything subsequent to 1961. Of course, there are logically possible worlds in which Kennedy was assassinated in 1961. But we want to say that in 1962 (and in 1963, until November 22nd), it was within Oswald’s power so to have acted that Kennedy wouldn’t have been assassinated. And again, it is obvious that the material implication interpretation of “necessary condition” is inadequate.

Complex statements further illustrate the inadequacy of the entailment account of “necessary condition.” If Jones did not believe at T_1 that he would do X at T_2 , then “Either Smith knew at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 or Jones believed at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 ” should *not* express a hard fact about T_1 ; the Ockhamist would say that Jones might have been able so to act at T_2 that this disjunctive statement would be false. Yet on Adams’ account, the statement expresses a *hard* fact about T_1 , since its truth does not entail that anything happens after T_1 ; the truth of the disjunction does not entail that anything happens (or fails to happen, etc.) after T_1 .

In defense of Adams’ approach, one might offer the following account of a necessary condition: Q is a necessary condition for P if and only if P would not be true (or have been true) if Q weren’t true (or hadn’t been true). Let us call this interpretation the “counterfactual” account of a necessary condition. It is plausible to say that if Saunders hadn’t written his paper in 1965, then it *wouldn’t* have been the case that Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders’ writing his paper. Thus, Adams could say, on the counterfactual account, that “Saunders wrote his paper in 1965” is a necessary con-

dition of “Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders’ writing his paper.” Also, it is perhaps reasonable to say (though I’m not sure) that if Oswald had not shot Kennedy in 1963, then Kennedy would not have been assassinated. If this is so, then Adams could say that “Oswald shot Kennedy in 1963” is a necessary condition of “John F. Kennedy was assassinated.” Similarly, if Jones hadn’t done X at T_2 , then it would have been false that either Smith knew at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 or Jones believed at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 . Thus, Adams could say that “Jones did X at T_2 ” is a necessary condition of the disjunction.

But there is another sort of problem which afflicts both plausible accounts—both the counterfactual and entailment interpretations of “necessary condition.” Suppose “Smith existed at T_1 ” is true. It is a necessary condition of the truth of this statement (on both the counterfactual and entailment accounts) that it is not the case that Smith existed for the first time at T_2 . It is obvious that Smith’s existing at T_1 entails that he doesn’t exist for the first time at T_2 . And if Smith had existed for the first time at T_2 , then he wouldn’t have existed at T_1 , so the counterfactual account fares no better than the entailment account. Thus, by (B), the statement “Smith existed at T_1 ” is at least in part about T_2 ; by (C) the statement *fails* to express a hard fact about T_1 . But since Smith need not be eternal (or essentially omniscient), this is a disastrous result for Adams’ account. The same sort of argument shows that Adams must say that “Jones believed at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 ” does not express a hard fact about T_1 . This is because “It is not the case that Jones believed for the first time at T_2 that he would do X at T_2 ” is a necessary condition of “Jones believed at T_1 that he would do X at T_2 .”

Also, it is a necessary condition (on both interpretations) of the truth of the statement, “Piece of salt S dissolved at T_1 ,” that S did not dissolve at T_2 . One wants to say that this statement expresses a hard fact about T_1 , but Adams’ account does not capture this intuition (since the statement is at least in part about T_2).

It is not easy to see how Adams could provide an account of “necessary condition” which would avoid all the problems raised above. Without such an account, she hasn’t presented an adequate explanation of the distinction between hard and soft facts.

III. THE INCOMPATIBILIST'S CONSTRAINT

Various contemporary Ockhamists have argued that on any acceptable account of the distinction between hard and soft facts, God's prior belief will be a soft fact about the past. I shall not here further discuss particular compatibilist accounts of the distinction; rather, I shall sketch a constraint on the account of the distinction which an incompatibilist might use to defeat *any* compatibilist characterization of the distinction. That is, I shall develop an explanation of the claim that God's prior belief is a hard fact about the past; this explanation will *not* imply that *human* foreknowledge is also a hard fact about the past. This might provide a way in which Pike could defend both his incompatibility claim and the asymmetry thesis—the thesis that God's foreknowledge undermines human freedom in a way in which human foreknowledge does not.

Consider the fact that Caesar died 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper. What lies behind our view that this fact is not a hard fact about 44 B.C.? We might say that it is a soft fact about 44 B.C. because one and the same physical process would have counted as Caesar's dying 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper, if Saunders wrote his paper in 1965, and would *not* have counted as Caesar's dying 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper, if Saunders hadn't written his paper in 1965. This captures the "future dependence" of soft facts; a soft fact is a fact *in virtue* of events which occur in the future.

Similarly, suppose that Smith knew at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 . Smith's knowledge is a soft fact about T_1 because one and the same state of Smith's mind (at T_1) would count as knowledge if Jones did X at T_2 , and would not count as knowledge if Jones didn't do X at T_2 . Exactly the same sort of future dependence explains why both facts—the fact about Caesar's death and the fact about Smith's knowledge—are soft facts.

Thus, an incompatibilist might insist on the following sort of constraint on an account of the hard fact/soft fact distinction: the only way in which God's belief at T_1 about Jones at T_2 could be a soft fact about the past relative to T_2 would be if one and the same state of the mind of the person who was God at T_1 would count as one belief if Jones did X at T_2 , but a different belief (or not a belief at all) if Jones did not do X at T_2 . But it is implausible to suppose that one and the same state of the mind of the person who was God

at T_1 would count as different beliefs given different behavior by Jones at T_2 .

Suppose again that Jones did X at T_2 . Y (being God) believed at T_1 that Jones would do X at T_2 . Let's say that Y 's mind was in state s at T_1 ; this constituted His believing that Jones would do X at T_2 . Now if Y 's mind were in state s and Jones did *not* do X , Y 's mind being in s would still count as a belief that Jones would do X . (In this case, Y wouldn't be God, since he would have a false belief.) Hence, Y 's mind being in s at T_1 would *not* count as one belief if Jones did X at T_2 and another belief (or not a belief at all) if Jones did not do X at T_2 .

Someone might agree that the incompatibilist's constraint is appropriate but disagree with what I have said about its application. That is, one might argue that if Jones hadn't done X at T_2 , then the state of God's mind that actually constituted His believing that Jones would do X would not have constituted that belief. This position might be supported by extending Putnam's point that meanings and beliefs ain't in the head.¹⁴ According to Putnam, my belief that water is wet—the state of my mind that constitutes in fact, my believing that—would have been a different belief—the belief that XYZ is wet—if lakes and oceans on earth had been filled with XYZ rather than water. On this approach, the state of God's mind at T_1 that counts as His belief that Jones will do X at T_2 counts as that belief partly in virtue of the fact that Jones does in fact do X at T_2 .

But this picture of God's omniscience is highly implausible. God's omniscience would be seriously attenuated if the same state of God's mind at T_1 would constitute different beliefs about Jones, depending on Jones' behavior at T_2 . The following is a more appealing picture of God's omniscience. An Ockhamist might deny the appropriateness of the constraint, claiming that while it's not true that one and the same state of God's mind at T_1 would constitute different beliefs, depending on Jones' behavior at T_2 , it is true that God's mind would have been in a *different* state at T_1 (from the one it was actually in), if Jones had not done X at T_2 . Whereas

¹⁴Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" reprinted in Hilary Putnam, *Mind, Language, and Reality*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 215–271, esp. pp. 223–227. Robert Stalnaker suggested to me the idea for the incompatibilist's constraint and pointed out the relevance of Putnam's point to it.

Y 's mind was actually in state s at T_1 , it wouldn't have been in s , had Jones not done X at T_2 .

If the Ockhamist makes this move, however, he weakens his argument to the conclusion that God's belief at T_1 is a soft fact about T_1 . There is now an *asymmetry* between soft facts such as Caesar's dying 2009 years prior to Saunders' writing his paper and Smith's knowing at T_1 that Jones will do X at T_2 , on the one hand, and God's belief at T_1 that Jones will do X at T_2 , on the other. But it was the assimilation of these sorts of facts which was the ground for claiming that God's belief at T_1 is a soft fact about T_1 .

The incompatibilist can agree with the Ockhamist that the facts discussed above about Caesar's death and Smith's knowledge are "spurious" facts about the relevant times. They are temporal analogues of facts involving "mere Cambridge" spatial properties, such as the property of being ten miles south of a burning barn. But if the incompatibilist's constraint is rejected, then it is open to him to argue that God's prior belief is a *genuine* fact about the past.

The constraint I have proposed captures the incompatibilist's notion of the fixity of the past. If this constraint is acceptable, then Pike could defend both his incompatibility claim and the asymmetry thesis.

There is, however, one form of Ockhamism which isn't defeated by the proposed constraint. Consider again, "If it was within Jones' power at T_2 to refrain from doing X , then (3) it was in Jones' power at T_2 to act in such a way that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 ." There are two ways in which it might be true that it was in Jones' power at T_2 so to act that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 . First, Jones could have had it in his power at T_2 so to act that Y wouldn't have existed at T_1 . Second, Jones could have been free at T_2 to act in such a way that Y (though existing) wouldn't have filled the role of God at T_1 . The Ockhamist might agree with Pike that the existence of a particular person is a hard fact about a time, but he might insist that the fact that the person is God is *not* a hard fact about a time.

Thus, the Ockhamist might claim (following Adams) that the fact that Y had the property of being God at T_1 is a soft fact about T_1 . This is because the fact that Y was God at T_1 depends upon the truth of Y 's beliefs about future contingent events; indeed, since God is eternal, the fact that Y was God at T_1 depends on the fact that Y existed at T_2 .

But the incompatibilist should point out that from the claim that Y 's occupying the role of God at T_1 is a soft fact about T_1 it does *not* follow that Jones could have at T_2 so acted that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 . There are soft facts about the past which are such that one cannot now so act that they wouldn't have been facts. For instance, on Tuesday, it was a soft fact about the past that on Monday it was the case that the sun would rise on Wednesday morning.¹⁵ But on Tuesday, one could not have acted in such a way that it wouldn't have been the case that on Monday it was true that the sun would rise on Wednesday.

Thus, even if the fact that Y was God at T_1 is a soft fact about T_1 , this doesn't *suffice* to establish that Jones could have so acted at T_2 that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 . Further, it is theologically implausible to suppose that any human agent is free so to act that the person who is actually God wouldn't be God. This would make the identity of God dependent on human actions in an unacceptable way; such a God would hardly be worthy of worship. So, whereas the fact that Y was God at T_1 might be a soft fact about T_1 , an Ockhamist who claims that one could have at T_2 so acted that Y wouldn't have been God at T_1 would posit an unacceptable view of God. Incompatibilism can be defended even if Pike's claim that the fact that Y was God at T_1 is a hard fact about T_1 were false.

IV. CONCLUSION

Adams' formulation of Ockhamism is inadequate. I have not here argued that *no* account of the hard fact/soft fact distinction can be given which captures the Ockhamist intuition. Rather, I have posed a challenge to Adams' Ockhamism and have presented the incompatibilist's motivation for thinking that any Ockhamist account will be unacceptable. I have thus issued a twofold challenge to the Ockhamist: first, to formulate the hard fact/soft fact distinction in a way which yields Ockhamism, and second, to explain why the incompatibilist's constraint is inappropriate.¹⁶

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¹⁵I borrow this sort of example from Rowe, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹⁶I have benefited from comments by Carl Ginet, Norman Kretzmann, T. H. Irwin, and Judith Jarvis Thomson. I am especially indebted to Robert Stalnaker, many of whose suggestions have been incorporated in this paper.