# Why God's beliefs are not hard-type soft facts

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**Abstract:**   John Fischer has attacked the Ockhamistic solution to the freedom–foreknowledge dilemma by arguing that: (1) God's prior beliefs about the future, though being soft facts about the past, are soft facts of a special sort, what he calls '*hard-type soft facts*', i.e. soft facts, the constitutive properties of which are 'hard', or 'temporally non-relational properties'; (2) in this respect, such facts are like regular past facts which are subject to the fixity of the past. In this paper, I take issue with this argument by Fischer, claiming that it does not succeed for two reasons: (i) Fischer's account of the notion of a hard property is unsatisfactory; (ii) his notion of a hard-type soft fact is incoherent. Despite this criticism, I agree with Fischer that there is a fundamental difference between God's beliefs about the future and regular soft facts with regard to their fixity-status, but I argue that the reason for this difference is that God's forebeliefs are plain hard facts about the past.

## Introduction

Imagine that:

G    God believed at T1 that Jones would mow his lawn at T3.

Since God cannot err,[1] we know that Jones indeed mowed his lawn at T3. But would it be true to say that before he performed that act, say at T2, it was within his power *not* to perform it? A powerful argument in favour of a negative answer to this question, based on the principle of the fixity of the past (hereafter referred to sometimes as PFP), is the following:

> G is a fact about the past relative to T2, and as such it is inevitable and outside Jones's control at T2. But G also entails that Jones mows his lawn at T3. But then this latter fact is also inevitable. For whatever is entailed by something that is inevitable is also inevitable.[2]

A well-known response to this argument is the Ockhamistic response which distinguishes between two sorts of facts about the past: genuine or *hard facts* about the past, which since being fully accomplished and over-and-done-with, are

subject to PFP, and *soft facts* about the past which, being somehow also about the future, do not fall under this principle. For example, facts such as that Hitler attacked Russia in 1941, or that John F. Kennedy died in 1963, are deemed, by the Ockhamist, hard facts about the past, relative to, say, 1 May 1993. On the other hand, facts such as that Hitler attacked Russia in 1941, fifty-three years before King Hussein's visit to Israel in 1994, that Jones correctly believed in 1991 that King Hussein would visit in Israel in 1994, etc. are standard examples of soft facts about the past, relative to 1 May 1993. Furthermore, the Ockhamist treats God's prior beliefs about the future, and G in particular, as soft facts about the past. Consequently, since G is no longer subject to PFP, there is no reason to regard it as fixed or inevitable at $T_2$,[3] and therefore the incompatibilist argument cited above does not go through. The reason why the Ockhamist deems a fact such as G a soft fact about the past is that it entails a genuine fact about the future. Indeed, it is an assumption shared by most Ockhamists that, if a fact about the past entails a genuine fact about the future, it cannot be a hard or genuine fact about the past.[4]

John Fischer is a vigorous opponent of Ockhamism. In a number of influential articles, he has argued in various ways that the Ockhamistic solution to the freedom–foreknowledge dilemma is unsatisfactory.[5] One important strategy he employs against Ockhamism may be described as follows.[6] Fischer agrees with the Ockhamist that a fact such as G is a soft fact about $T_1$. But he maintains that it is a very special sort of soft fact about $T_1$, what he calls a 'hard-type soft fact'. By this, he understands a soft fact whose constitutive property, that of *believing that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$*, is a temporally non-relational property or what he calls a 'hard' or 'temporally genuine property'. In this respect, claims Fischer, G behaves like typical hard facts about the past relative to $T_1$ such as

(1)    Jones wakes up at $T_1$,

or,

(2)    Smith believes at $T_1$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$,

whose constitutive properties: *waking up*, or *believing that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$* are also hard properties. And it differs from standard-type soft facts such as:

(3)    Smith correctly believed at $T_1$ that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$,

or,

(4)    Jones woke up at $T_1$, two hours prior to his eating lunch at $T_3$,

the constitutive properties of which, i.e. *correctly believing that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$*; or *waking up two hours prior to eating lunch at $T_3$*, are temporally relational properties. The latter are referred by him also as 'soft' or 'temporally

non-genuine' properties.[7] Moreover, Fischer assumes that no human has it within his power at a time later than T so to act that what is a bearer of a hard property at T wouldn't have possessed that property at T. Consequently, since G is a hard-type soft fact about $T_1$, it is, on Fischer's view, unavoidable at times later than $T_1$.[8] This result enables Fischer to restate the incompatibilist argument from the inevitability of G to the inevitability of Jones's mowing his lawn at $T_3$, except that this time the inevitability of G derives not from its being a hard fact about $T_1$, but rather from its being a hard-type soft fact about $T_1$. Let us call this argument 'the argument from hard-type soft facts' or, for short, 'the HTSF argument'.

Fischer's strategy for opposing Ockhamism is certainly tempting. It enables him to isolate an important aspect of G, in which the latter resembles ordinary facts about the past, thus enabling him to separate the alleged softness of G from its inevitability. Note that Fischer's distinction between hard and soft properties may be also applied against Ockhamism by someone who thinks that G is a *hard fact* about $T_1$. A proponent of this view might claim that there exists a conceptual link between a fact consisting in an object exemplifying a hard or temporally non-relational property at a time T, and that fact being a hard fact about T, in the sense of being fully accomplished and over-and-done-with at times after T. That is, on this view, necessarily, if an object exemplifies a hard property at a time T, then the fact thus generated is a hard fact about the past, relative to times later than T. Now, if the property,

> BEL    Believing that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$,

is a hard property, then G is hard fact about the past, relative to $T_2$, and hence is subject to PFP, contrary to what is maintained by the Ockhamist. The fact that G entails a fact about the future, a feature which, according to the Ockhamist, renders G a soft fact about the past, turns out, on this view, to be irrelevant to the question of the past fixity of G.

Of course, the success of Fischer's way of refuting Ockhamism depends on the availability of an adequate account of notion of a soft/hard property. Recently, Fischer has offered the following account of this notion:

> **Let 'C' be the complete conjunction of temporally non-relational, i.e., hard facts about a given time T. [Assume also, that these are not facts about any essentially omniscient individuals.] I shall say that a property P is a hard property relative to T just in case (i) some individual has P at T, and (ii) for any non-essentially omniscient individual I existing at T, either C entails that I has P [at T] or C entails that I does not have P [at T].[9]**

He adds:

> **It is important to see that I am not attempting in this paper to give a fully reductive analysis of the notion of a hard property. Rather, I am assuming either some adequate account of hard facts or at least clear intuitions about clear cases of hard facts. I then construct an account of hard properties which makes use of these other notions. Hence, I have a rather circumscribed project in this paper.[10]**

So, for example, where the conjunction C of all (relevant) hard facts about T1 includes facts such as that Jones wakes up at T1, or that Smith believes at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T3, Fischer's account yields the result that properties like *BEL* or *waking up* are hard properties relative to T1. On the other hand, properties like *correctly believing that Jones will mow his lawn at T3*; or *waking up two hours prior to eating lunch at T3* turn out to be soft properties relative to T1.[11] This completes my presentation of Fischer's HTSF argument against Ockhamism.

In this paper, I intend to assess this argument critically. I shall argue that it is not successful for the following two reasons: (i) Fischer's account of the notion of a hard property is unsatisfactory; (ii) his notion of a hard-type soft fact is incoherent. Despite this criticism, I agree with Fischer's main claim that there is a fundamental difference between G and standard-type soft facts about T1 as regards their fixity status. In the last part of my paper, I defend this claim by offering three arguments for the conclusion that G, rather than being a soft fact, is a plain hard fact about the past.

### The rejection of hard-type soft facts

For convenience, let me begin with the second point on my agenda, namely, the rejection of hard-type soft facts. My argument against the possibility of such facts will be rather straightforward. Recall that the distinction between hard and soft facts about the past was introduced by the Ockhamist to distinguish facts about the past which are subject to the principle of the fixity of the past, from those that are not. Now if Fischer treats G as a hard-type soft fact, he must hold that G is a soft fact about T1, and as such is not subject to PFP. Formulating this latter principle as follows:

> PFP    If a fact F is a hard fact about a time T, then no-one has it within his power at a time later than T so to act that F would not be a fact.

Fischer's position commits him to holding that one cannot invoke PFP to reject

> (5)    G and it is within Jones's power at T2 so to act that G would not be a fact.

On the other hand, Fischer maintains that (5) is inconsistent with

> PFP1    If an object X exemplifies at T a hard property P (relative to T), then no-one has it within his power at a time later than T so to act that X would not have exemplified that property at T.[12]

But now let us ask what might be the motivation for accepting a principle such as PFP1. The answer is not hard to find. A fact such as X's exemplifying at T a hard (temporally non-relational) property P is one which is over-and-done-with at times after T, and hence, given PFP, is inevitable at times after T. In other words,

what explains our acceptance of PFP1 is that we view it as a particularized version of PFP (applying only to atomic hard facts about T). After all, what other reason might one have for accepting PFP1 which is independent of PFP? But then Fischer's position commits him to the implausible result that (5), which according to him is inconsistent with PFP1, is not refuted by PFP, despite the fact that PFP entails PFP1. To state this difficulty more generally: how can Fischer view G as a soft fact about $T_1$, i.e. as a fact to which PFP does not apply, and yet claim that it is subject to a principle such as PFP1 which derives its plausibility from PFP? Since this objection against G being a hard-type soft fact can be levelled against any alleged hard-type soft fact, I conclude that there cannot be any hard-type soft facts in Fischer's sense.

Note that Fischer cannot evade this objection by insisting that PFP and PFP1 are two independent principles so that PFP1 need not derive its plausibility from PFP. If he were to do so, his position would be again incoherent because now there would be a good reason to reject PFP1. Take, for example, G. If G were, as Fischer claims, a soft fact or a temporally relational fact about the past relative to $T_2$, it would not be fully accomplished and over-and-done-with at $T_2$. Hence, it would be in Jones's power at $T_2$ to prevent it from obtaining by refraining (at $T_2$) from mowing his lawn at $T_3$. But then PFP1 would be false.[13]

That the notion of a hard-type soft fact is incoherent can be also argued for in another way. Recall that Fischer's motivation for classifying G as a hard-type soft fact was: (i) to stress its resemblance to ordinary past facts such as that Jones wakes up at $T_1$, or that Smith believes at $T_1$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$, which, like G, consist in an object's exemplifying at T a hard property (relative to T); and then (ii) to argue that just as the latter are inevitable at $T_2$, so is G. Note, however, that this consideration in favour of the inevitability of G is convincing only if the reason that G resembles ordinary past facts about $T_1$ is *intimately connected* with the reason that these latter facts are inevitable, namely, their being over-and-done-with at times after $T_1$. Surely, the fact that G resembles ordinary past facts in some respect A, does not *by itself* imply that it resembles them in some other respect B.[14] Hence, in order for the said consideration for the inevitability of G to succeed, we must assume that being an exemplification of a hard property at T entails being over-and-done-with at times after T. But then G, which consists in God's exemplifying at $T_1$ a hard property (relative to $T_1$), must be a hard fact about $T_1$, and not a soft fact about $T_1$, as Fischer assumes.

It is important to note that in rejecting the notion of a hard-type soft fact, I am not denying that there can be soft facts that are inevitable (relative to a given agent). There certainly can be such soft facts. This happens in cases where the agent does not have the power to bring about the non-occurrence of the future event (fact) constitutive of the relevant soft fact. For example, the fact that,

(6)   Jones woke up at $T_1$, two hours prior to the sun's rising at $T_3$,

is a soft fact about the past relative to $T_2$, and yet it is unavoidable for Jones at $T_2$

due to Jones's inability to prevent the event of the sun's rising at $T_3$.[15] What I am denying rather is that there can be *soft* facts about the past the unavoidability of which is due to their being exemplifications of hard properties, or whose unavoidability derives from a principle such as PFP1.

### Criticism of Fischer's account of a hard property

An immediate consequence of Fischer's account of a hard/soft property is that it treats a property that is unexemplified at a given time as a soft or temporally relational property relative to that time. Thus, if the world were such that nothing in it were 1·78m. tall at $T_1$, or that no red object existed at $T_1$, then properties like

P1   Being 1·78m. tall;
P2   Being red;

would be classified by Fischer's account as soft properties relative to $T_1$. This result is certainly counterintuitive, given that P1 and P2 are paradigm cases of hard, or temporally non-relational properties. This objection points to a more fundamental problem with Fischer's definition of a hard property, which is that it relativizes such a property to time, making the hardness of a property dependent upon what the facts are at a given time. But obviously the hardness of a property – its being a temporally non-relational property – is not something that is relative in this sense. Being 1·78m. tall is a temporally non-relational property independently of whether or not it is exemplified by some individual at $T_1$. It is a temporally non-relational property *simpliciter*. What can properly be said to be relative in the above sense is not the hardness of a property, but the hardness or inevitability of a given *fact* or state of affairs.[16] Of course, what we have said above regarding a hard property equally applies to a soft property. Its softness or temporal relationalness also cannot be regarded as time-relative.

Aside from the above difficulty, which I regard as the principal one, Fischer's account of a hard property faces other problems. Consider, for example, the property

P3   Being true in English.

Fischer's account implies that this is a soft property relative to $T_1$, since it is *not* the case that for any non-essentially omniscient individual I existing at $T_1$, either C (the conjunction of all the (relevant) hard facts about $T_1$) entails that I has P3 at $T_1$, or C entails that I does not have P3 at $T_1$. For example, where I is the sentence 'Jones mows his lawn at $T_3$', C neither entails that this sentence is true in English at $T_1$, nor does C entail that it is not true in English at $T_1$. ('Jones mows his lawn at $T_3$' is true in English at $T_1$ iff it expresses in English at $T_1$ the proposition that Jones mows his lawn at $T_3$, and that proposition is true.) But now consider the fact

(7)   'Jones wakes up at $T_0$' is true in English at $T_1$.

This fact is certainly a hard fact about T1. But how can it be a hard fact on Fischer's theory, given that its constitutive property is a soft property relative to T1? That is, how can a fact which consists in an object exemplifying at T1 a soft property (relative to T1) be a hard fact about T1? Obviously, something must be wrong with Fischer's account of a hard property if it yields such a result.

One final problem for Fischer's account of a hard property that I wish to mention concerns the properties

> P5    correctly believing that it is not the case that Jack signs his contract at T4;
>
> P6    correctly believing that either all ravens are black at T1, or Jack signs his contract at T3.

Fischer (1993, 165–166) claims that he views these properties as soft properties relative to T1. Note, however, that his account yields precisely the opposite result. To prove this with regard to the property P5, let us assume that C (the conjunction of all the relevant hard facts about T1) includes the following two facts: that Jack is dead at T1; and that Smith believes at T1 that it is not the case that Jack signs his contract at T4. Note now that P5 satisfies condition (i) of Fischer's account, since Smith has P5 at T1. But P5 also satisfies condition (ii) of that account. Because, for any given non-essentially omniscient individual I existing at T1, either I exemplifies P5 or it does not. If it does, then C entails I's having P5 at T1, since the fact that Jack is dead at T1 entails that it is not the case that Jack signs his contract at T4. On the other hand, if I does not exemplify P5 at T1, then

> (9)    Either I does not believe at T1 that it is not the case that Jack signs his contract at T4, or Jack signs his contract at T4.

Given the falsity of the right disjunct of (9), we infer that,

> (10)    I does not believe at T1 that it is not the case that Jack signs his contract at T4.

Now (10) is a hard fact about T1, and hence is included in C. But then C entails I's not having P5 at T1. For I's not having P5 at T1 is equivalent to (9), and C which includes (10) entails (9). Thus, contrary to what is assumed by Fischer, P5 turns out, according to his account, to be a hard property relative to T1. Q.E.D.[17]

### Three arguments for the inevitability of God's beliefs

Can we provide a stronger argument for the inevitability of G than Fischer's HTSF argument? I believe we can and have provided such an argument elsewhere.[18] Here, I wish to offer three further arguments for this conclusion. Since, unlike Fischer, I think that G is a hard fact about the past, these arguments will all be arguments for the hard facthood of G.

My first argument is based on the following assumption:

> M   If F is a fact about the past, relative to a time T, and it is logically possible for some person S to remember that fact at T, then F is a hard fact about the past, relative to T.

M states what seems to me to be a plausible sufficient condition for a fact being a hard fact about the past, in the sense of its being over-and-done-with. Its plausibility derives from the fact that it is impossible to remember something that at the time of remembering isn't already settled and over-and-done-with. It is easy to see that G satisfies the antecedent of M. Surely, God can be said to remember[19] at $T_2$ that He believed at $T_1$ that Jack would mow his lawn at $T_3$. On the other hand, it is conceptually impossible for God (or any agent S) to remember, at $T_2$, soft facts about $T_1$ such as that (i) Jones woke up at $T_1$ two hours prior to his eating lunch at $T_3$; (ii) Smith correctly believed at $T_1$ that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$ etc.[20] The possibility of remembering the latter becomes available only after $T_3$. To be sure, God may *know* at $T_2$ that (i) and (ii). But to know that (i) and to remember that (i) are two different things.

The second argument for the hard facthood of G is the following. Consider a possible world $W_1$ which shares with the real world its times, its temporal structure, and the fact G that God believes at $T_1$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$. Suppose further that in $W_1$, unlike in the real world, God also tells Smith at $T_1$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$. Call this last fact 'F'. Intuitively, F is over-and-done-with at $T_2$ in $W_1$. But then G, too, must be over-and-done-with at $T_2$ in $W_1$. Otherwise, it would be hard to understand how F could be over-and-done-with at $T_2$. After all, in telling Smith at $T_1$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$, God was expressing what He believed at the time about Jones. Now, if G is over-and-done-with at $T_2$ in $W_1$, it is also over-and-done-with at $T_2$ in the actual world. For, *ex hypothesi*, the times and the temporal structure of $W_1$ are the same as that of the actual world.

My third argument for the hard facthood of G exploits the conceptually necessary link obtaining between causal efficacy and hard facthood.

> CE   If F is fact about the past, relative to a time T, and it is logically possible for F to contribute causally (as a whole) to events occurring at T or before T, then F is a hard fact about the past, relative to T.

The rationale behind CE is that it is difficult to see, given the impossibility of backward causation,[21] how a fact which is not over-and-done with at T, might contribute (as a whole) causally to events occurring at T or before T. One can easily verify that G satisfies the antecedent of C. Given the action-motivating function of belief, one can conceive of circumstances in which in the light of some of his prior beliefs about future events, God intervenes in history, causing the occurrence of certain events in the present. (For example, we may imagine that, as a result of his

believing that Jones would be mowing his lawn at T3, and his wish that Smith meet Jones at T3, God communicates this wish to Smith at T2 by causing Smith to hear, at T2, a voice telling him that he should do so and so.) Hence, G is a hard fact about the past, relative to T2. Note that the above consideration for regarding G as a hard fact does not apply to soft facts. Thus, consider, for example, a standard-type soft fact such as

> (11)   Smith correctly believed at T1 that Jones would mow his lawn at T3.

This fact cannot contribute causally to events occurring at or before T2. Surely, it would be false to say (in case Smith told Fred at T2 that Jones would mow his lawn at T3, with the intention of telling him the truth) that,

> (12)   Smith told Fred at T2 that Jones would mow his lawn at T3, because he *correctly believed* at T1 that Jones would do so.

What would be true is rather that

> (13)   Smith told Fred at T2 that Jones would mow his lawn at T3, because he *believed* at T1 that Jones would do so.[22]

One immediate consequence of the above three arguments is the falsity of the Ockhamist entailment criterion for soft facthood, according to which, if a fact about the past entails a genuine fact about the future, it is a soft fact about the past. For, if, as these arguments show, G is a hard fact about the past relative to T2, G obviously provides a counter-example to this criterion. That the criterion is problematic can be also seen in another way by attending to the following facts:

> (14)   God promises Jones at T1 that Smith will die at T3.
> (15)   God decrees at T1 that Smith will die at T3.

Intuitively, these facts are fully accomplished and over-and-done-with at T2, and hence should be deemed hard facts about the past, relative to T2. But, on the entailment criterion under consideration, they get classified as soft facts about the past, relative to T2, since they entail a genuine fact about the future, relative to T2.[23]

### Conclusion

My examination of Fischer's HTSF argument against Ockhamism has come to an end. We have seen that two of its central components – the notion of a hard-type soft fact and the account of a hard property it assumes – are problematic. Contrary to Fischer, I hold that divine forebeliefs are hard facts about the past and have argued for this contention on independent grounds. Thus, though concurring with Fischer that there is a fundamental difference between G and standard-type soft facts as regards their fixity status, I disagree with him as to the reasons for holding this thesis.

In the light of the above criticism, one might conclude that Fischer's HTSF argument against Ockhamism has no merit at all. Such a conclusion, however, would be too hasty. Note that when suitably modified so as to dispense with the problematic notion of a hard-type soft fact, Fischer's HTSF-argument can be turned into an argument against Ockhamism which, in my view, deserves serious consideration.

(1)   G is a fact about T1 which consists in God's exemplifying at T1 a hard property, i.e. BEL.

(2)   For any time T, a fact consisting in an object exemplifying a hard property at T is over-and-done-with at times after T, and hence, given PFP, is inevitable at those times.

(3)   Hence, G is inevitable at times after T1.

To be entirely convincing, this argument would have to supplemented by a satisfactory account of a hard property which would treat BEL as a hard property.[24] Though I believe that such an account can be provided, showing this is a task that lies outside the scope of this paper.[25]

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## Notes

1. I assume that God is essentially omniscient in the sense that it is impossible for Him to believe a false proposition, and that He cannot fail to believe any true proposition. Also, I regard 'God' as a proper name.

2. This way of setting up the freedom–foreknowledge dilemma is due to Jonathan Edwards. See Edwards (1745), sec. 12. It may be also found in Aquinas. See his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk 1, ch. 67, and *Summa Theologiae* I. Q. 14, a. 13. Cf. Plantinga (1986, 179) who also stresses the forcefulness of Edwards's presentation of the dilemma.

3. Throughout this essay, I shall be using 'fixed' and 'inevitable' synonymously.

4. Thus, see the Ockhamistic approaches presented in Adams (1967), Freddoso (1983), Hoffman and Rosenkrantz (1984), and Plantinga (1986).

5. See Fischer (1983, 1985, 1986, 1991). For other criticisms of Ockhamism, see Widerker (1990), and Zagzebski (1991), ch. 3.

6. Fischer develops this strategy in his (1986), 595–599. He also employs it in Fischer (1993), and in Fischer (1994), 117–120.

7. See Fischer (1986), 596–597. Following Fischer, I shall use the expressions 'soft property', 'temporally relational property' and 'temporally non-genuine property' synonymously. I shall do the same for 'hard property', 'temporally non-relational property' and 'temporally genuine property'.

8. *Ibid.*, 597.

9. See Fischer (1993), 164–165. By a non-essentially omniscient individual, Fischer means any object that is not essentially omniscient. Also, he assumes that a property is a soft property, relative to a time T iff it is not a hard property relative to that time.

10. *Ibid.*, 165. Fischer develops this account in response to a criticism of his original account of a hard property in Widerker (1990), 378–480. For Fischer's original account, see Fischer (1986), 597.

11. We can also understand now the idea behind restricting the application of clause (ii) of the definition to non-essentially omniscient individuals. Without that restriction BEL would not get classified as a hard property relative to T1, since neither God's having BEL at T1, nor God's not having BEL at T1 would then be entailed by C.

12. See Fischer (1986), 598–599.

13. In *ibid.*, 599–600, Fischer discusses a different, much weaker objection to his position. The objection questions the plausibility of PFP1 on the ground that since (i) soft facts about past times need not in general be inevitable now; (ii) hard-type soft facts (about past times), and G in particular, also need not be inevitable now. In response, Fischer rejects the objector's attempt to assimilate hard-type soft facts to the set of soft facts that need not now be inevitable, arguing that *none* of the latter facts is a hard-type soft fact. However, the objection cited in the text is a different one. What it argues is that, *given Fischer's admission that G is a soft* (*temporally relational fact about T1*, there is no good reason to view it as inevitable at T2, since at that time G is not over-and-done-with yet. Consequently, there is also no good reason to accept PFP1, i.e. the objection in the text questions the inevitability of G and hence the plausibility of PFP1 only given Fischer's assumption that G is a soft fact about T1. In this sense it is an objection directed merely against the coherence of Fischer's position and not against the truth of PFP1 as such.

14. After all, G is also similar to standard-type soft facts about T1 such as that Smith correctly believed at T1 that Jones will mow his lawn at T3, since, like the latter, it entails a genuine fact about the future. Hence, if the inference in the text were valid, there would be just as good a reason to regard G as not being fixed at T2.

15. Cf. Rowe (1993), 150, and Fischer (1986), 595.

16. Commenting on the fact that his definition of a hard property relativizes the latter to a time, Fischer says: 'Note also that just as a state of affairs must obtain (or alternatively the proposition in question must be true) for it to be a candidate for hard facthood, some individual must have the property at the relevant time in order for it to be a candidate for being hard property relative to that time'; Fischer (1993), 165. But this explanation is unconvincing. Aside from the fact that it does not answer the objection in the text, it also points to an inconsistency in Fischer's position. For, if in order to be a candidate for a hard property relative to a given time, some individual must exemplify the property at

that time, then the same should also hold for a soft property. But for Fischer a property may be a soft property relative to a time, and yet be unexemplified at that time.

17. The hardness of P6, according to Fischer's account, can be established in a similar fashion, assuming that the following are hard facts about $T_1$: that all ravens are black at $T_1$, and that Smith believes at $T_1$ that either all ravens are black at $T_1$ or Jack signs his contract at $T_3$.

18. See Widerker (1990), 475–478.

19. Some may find the assumption that God can *remember* various events problematic. But such an assumption is certainly accepted by traditional theism. See Genesis 8.1, 19.29; Exodus 2.24; Leviticus 26.45 etc.

20. This is conceptually impossible because to say that S correctly believes at T that *p* is to say that S believes at T that *p* and *p*. Consequently, for S to remember at $T_2$ that Smith correctly believed at $T_1$ that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$ is for him to remember at $T_2$ that Smith believed at $T_1$ that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$ and that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$, which implies that Jones remembers at $T_2$ that Jones will mow his lawn at $T_3$, which is absurd.

21. Attributing to the Ockhamist the assumption that backwards causation is impossible is certainly fair to him, given his commitment to PFP. Clearly, anyone who grants the possibility of backwards causation would have a good reason for rejecting PFP.

22. Note, however, that (11) can contribute causally to events occurring *after* $T_3$. Thus, if Smith were to bet Fred $1,000 that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$, and Jones were indeed to mow his lawn at $T_3$, then one could truly say that Jones received $1,000 at $T_4$, because he correctly believed at $T_1$ that Jones would mow his lawn at $T_3$.

23. Cf. Widerker (1990), 467–468. Note that, on both M and CE, the facts (14) and (15) also turn out to be hard facts about the past, relative to $T_2$ – a consequence which provides further support for the plausibility of those principles.

24. Some may find such a demand too stringent, thinking that both the notion of a hard (temporally non-relational) property and the claim that BEL is a hard property are fairly intuitive. They, of course, would find the argument in the text more convincing.

25. I would like to thank Carl Ginet, George Mavrodes, Elmar Kremer, Jerome Gellman, William Rowe, and Yakir Levin for excellent comments and discussions on earlier versions of this paper.