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Knowing, Being, Doing – Perhaps Not So New: A Comment on Illman and Czimbalmos, *Temenos* 56 (2)

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The previous issue of *Temenos* 56 (2), contained an article by Ruth Illman and Mercédesz Czimbalmos entitled 'Knowing, Being, and Doing Religion: Introducing an Analytical Model for Researching Vernacular Religion' (2020, 171–99). The article's authors analyse data from interviews with 101 members of the Jewish communities in Finland to map 'how individuals in the various datasets describe personal and institutional ways of knowing, being, and doing Jewish' (Illman and Czimbalmos 2020, 182).

I would like to congratulate Illman and Czimbalmos for a fine and interesting article, which among other things shows that it can be fruitful to structure such interview data according to the three concepts of *knowing, being,* and *doing*. However, it surprised me that the authors did not refer to any previous research using the three concepts; this indicates that the authors' use of *knowing, being,* and *doing* is new in religious studies, as well as in other fields of research.[1]

Illman's and Czimbalmos's article interests me partly because of a long-standing research interest in contemporary Jewish communities, and partly because I have long used the three concepts of *knowing, being,* and *doing* in the study of the Danish Baha'is. I have analysed interviews with 120 members of the Danish Baha'i community, and presented quotations and other data from the interviews, showing among other things how their religious belonging can be structured by using the three concepts of *knowing, doing,* and *being* (the order in which I used the terms) (Warburg 2006, 331–73). The

1 Before I wrote this comment I contacted Ruth Illman in her capacity as first and senior author. We agreed that I should write a comment on their article to which she and her co-author could respond, and that our texts should be published as two separate entries in the same issue of *Temenos*. I wish to thank the editor, Dr Måns Broo, for giving us the space for this exchange.

characterization of the three concepts is similar in content in Illman's and Czimbalmos's article and in my publications. A careful reading of Illman and Czimbalmos compared to the presentation and use of the three concepts in my monograph on the Baha'is, *Citizens of the World* (Warburg 2006), shows parallels (see Table 1) that would normally call for a reference to this work.

Tracing knowing, doing, and being in scholarship

When I first used *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* in 1988 to structure belonging in religious minority groups, I was inspired by sociolinguist Joshua A. Fishman's theoretical discussion of ethnicity. Fishman's suggestion was to apply *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* sociologically to characterize ways of belonging to an ethnic group (Fishman 1980). My own contribution was to transfer Fishman's approach to the study of religion, to elaborate on the characteristics of the three dimensions, and to stress that they could be manifested in both attitudes and behaviour (Warburg 1988; Warburg 1997; Warburg 2005; most fully in Warburg 2006, 331–73). The three concepts were also used in a monograph characterizing Danish identity (Gundelach, Iversen, and Warburg 2008, 159–64); this was followed by another article (Warburg 2008). There are some later scholarly works on religious attitudes and behaviour that reference both Fishman's chapter and my exposition of the three concepts (Rosen 2009; la Cour and Hvidt 2010; Andersen et al. 2011; Moestrup and Hvidt 2016; Prinds et al. 2016; Leth-Nissen 2018).

More generally, *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* have long been used in many disciplines. For example, a leadership training textbook from Harvard Business School bears the title *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being* (Scott, Nohria, and Khurana 2012). The whole textbook is organized according to the headlines *knowing*, *doing*, and *being*, and the connection between the three is depicted in a graphical model which, according to the authors, was developed for leadership training in the American army.

The three concepts are also proposed as a paradigm for 'dynamic conceptual frameworks that can adequately represent the complexities of everyday CYC [Childhood and Youth Care] practice' (White 2007). The author's reflections on the praxis of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* lead her back to Aristotle's three different forms of knowledge: *episteme* (theoretical and contemplative knowledge); *techne* (action-oriented, pragmatic, and productive knowledge), and *phronesis* (value-oriented wisdom). She employs a graphical model depicting *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* as three overlapping ellipses.

Table 1. A comparison of the use of the three concepts of *knowing*, *being*, and *doing*

Illman & Czimbalmos 2020	Warburg 2006
'The analytical model presented in the following proposes a conceptualization of vernacular religion as an interplay between three dimensions: "knowing"; "being"; and "doing" religion. Moreover, it proposes that this triad of dimensions or modalities are tied together by the dynamic forces of continuity, change, and context' (176f.).	'In the present chapter, I show how belonging to a Baha'i community was manifested among the Danish Baha'is in the beginning of the 1980s' (332). 'I can now introduce three dimensions of belonging – "knowing", "doing" and "being"' (333).
'The three modalities – "knowing", "being", and "doing" religion – should not be regarded as mutually exclusive categories or as necessary conditions for vernacular religion' (181).	'The dimensions of "knowing", "doing" and "being" are manifested in both attitudes and behaviour, and they are not mutually exclusive, instead, they supplement each other. Sometimes one dimension is particularly emphasised, sometimes another, depending on the specific context' (333).
'In line with the many ethnographically based approaches that have been developed to broaden the scope of the research field, this article has sought to introduce a novel analytical model for the study of vernacular religion' (193).	'The terms "knowing", "doing" and "being" were originally proposed by the sociolinguist Joshua A. Fishman in a theoretical discussion of ethnicity' (333).
'The goal is thus to develop it into a more generally applicable analytical tool for structuring and elucidating contemporary ethnographies' (173).	'I suggest, however, that the terms may also be useful in an analysis of belonging to any group with a strong feeling of identity, and they therefore can be applied in an analysis of belonging to most religious minority groups, including the Danish Baha'i community' (333).

The literature above is among several other examples of the use of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* in a different context than analysing religious identity or belonging. The concepts are commonly used in educational research; another example where they are used is in brain and consciousness research (Clarke 2013).

Within the study of religion I have traced the three concepts of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* back to the philosopher of religion Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). In his famous treatise *Über die Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799, rev. 1806, 1821) Schleiermacher saw *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* as an expression of piety, a grasping of the love of God with all your human faculties of being (or feeling), doing, and knowing (Merklinger 1993, 60f.). Schleiermacher's own allusion to the three concepts is found in the epilogue to *On Religion*:

> I was sure you would there find, what I would willingly show you, that, in the very type of religion, which in Christianity you so often despise, you are rooted with your whole knowing, doing and being (Schleiermacher 1893, 177).

The combined concepts of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* in Schleiermacher's use is a Christian ideal, and they cannot be said to lead directly to Fishman's sociological use. Fishman saw the three concepts as a way to systematize informants' various expressions of their ethnic belonging.

Since Schleiermacher *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* have had a continued use in theology. An example is a British PhD thesis on the Salvation Army with the title *Knowing, Being and Doing: The Spiritual Life Development of Salvation Army Officers* (Shakespeare 2011). The author concludes that 'spiritual life development is concerned with understanding and facilitating the interaction between knowing, being and doing in the life of Salvationists' (Shakespeare 2011, 131).[2]

2 I have also noted the use of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* in modern Islamic theological thinking: 'Religion that is free from all coercion refers to belief in God as embodied in the verse of the Throne. The word for religion, and Islam's own self-description, is *deen*. As these verses make clear, *deen* is a way of knowing, being and doing, a way of life. What is more, this way of living, based on God's consciousness, brings God near to us, it illuminates our lives' (Sardar 2011, 180f.).

The claim of novelty

The theoretical core of Illman's and Czimbalmos's model is the three concepts of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being*. This is also indicated by the title of their article and the analyses of the empirical material with repeated references to *knowing*, *doing*, or *being*.

Illman and Czimbalmos claim that their approach using the three concepts is *new* or *novel*. This claim is made in the abstract and in the concluding section (193). The word *Introducing* in the title and 'introduce' (172f.) also indicates a claim of novelty.

However, in the light of the above brief literature survey there is little basis for calling Illman's and Czimbalmos's use of *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* as new. Nor is their presentation of the three concepts in a graphical model with overlapping circles showing their interplay new in light of White (2007). Illman and Czimbalmos have added an outer circle with *continuity*, *change*, and *context*; however, this alone hardly justifies calling the model new.

Why is it so important to discuss whether the idea of using *knowing*, *doing*, and *being* and its derived graphical model is new? The problem is that the claim of novelty in Illman's and Czimbalmos's article signals that there is no need to look elsewhere for scholarship on *knowing*, *doing*, and *being*. Without drawing on previous scholars' contributions, the reader therefore has less basis for a stimulating discussion of the three concepts. Furthermore, whenever scholars are applying the three concepts on any empirical material – at least within the study of religion – they are now obliged to refer to Illman and Czimbalmos 2020, even in cases where it is irrelevant, because of the authors' claim of novelty. If they do not, a third-party reviewer would have good reason to question the state of the art.

The above problem may be augmented by the widespread use of electronic algorithmic literature search tools. Illman and I discussed this briefly by mail. When I last tried a simple search through Google Scholar using the obvious keywords, *religion – knowing – doing – being*, the search resulted in close to a million references, because these keywords are extremely common. The search caught the article by Illman and Czimbalmos among the first ten references, which is unsurprising, as its *title* contains all four key words. No other literature mentioned above was caught among the next hundred. However, if the search was confined to books, Schleiermacher's *On Religion*, Warburg's *Citizens of the World*, and Clarke's monograph on

consciousness studies popped up in the first ten results.[3] It is generally fruitful to make an additional search on *books* to comply with the tradition in the humanities that we publish much of our primary work in monographs or anthologies. In all circumstances claiming novelty places extra demands on the exposition of the state of the art.

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3 However, one should remember that such literature searches are not completely reproducible, because the search algorithms differ and change over time, meaning a subsequent try may give a different result.

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