Michael D. K. Ing

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Ritual as a Process of Deification

Much of our approach to ritual is influenced by Western culture, particularly Judeo-Christian practices and beliefs. At the same time, traditional Judeo-Christian belief has proposed an antagonistic relationship between spirit and body, which influences our appreciation, or lack of appreciation, for our ritual experience. Yet in some religious traditions, the tension between spirit and body is not found. Michael Ing reviews Confucian teachings concerning ritual and the body and suggests that Confucian theories of ritual can assist in deepening Latter-day Saint conceptions of the body and ritual practice. —*DB*

> Yan Yan further asked, "Is ritual of such urgent importance?"
>
> Confucius replied, "It was by ritual that the early kings took upon themselves the Way of the heavens, and ordered the dispositions of the people. For this reason, one who loses ritual dies, and one who attains ritual lives."
>
> *Li Ji, "Li Yun"*[1]

For Latter-day Saints, the eternal self is an embodied self. From this perspective, we are not who we are without our bodies.

Michael D. K. Ing is an assistant professor of religious studies at Indiana University. He wrote this article while he was a PhD student at Harvard University studying in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

Our spirits without flesh are incomplete portraits of our eternal selves. Despite these deep theological claims, there exists no uniquely Latter-day Saint conception of the body. Latter-day Saint language is replete with attempts to speak of the body as something to be controlled, conquered, and objectified. Latter-day Saint metaphors, for instance, speak of the body as a temporary vessel for the spirit—as if people are saved *despite* their bodies, not *because of* their bodies.

This scenario presents a conflict between two prevalent yet competing paradigms of the self. The first can be designated "the paradigm of self-*as*-a-body" and the second "the paradigm of self-*in*-a-body." The former views the body as a constitutive part of the self, and the latter views the body as a container or receptacle for the self. Theologically, Latter-day Saints tend toward the paradigm of self-as-a-body; however, colloquially, they tend toward the paradigm of self-in-a-body. This disjuncture is reflected in statements from past Presidents of the Church, such as President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972, presiding 1970–72), who stated, "There are two purposes for life—one to gain experience that could not be obtained in any other way, and the other to obtain these tabernacles of flesh and bones. Both of these purposes are vital to the existence of man."[2] On the one hand, Smith employs the metaphor of body-as-container, or, in this case, body-as-tabernacle.[3] As such, the body is a house for the spirit—similar to the way the tabernacle of the Old Testament was a "house" for Yahweh. Just as Yahweh was considered an entity residing in (and independent of) the tabernacle, we are entities residing in (and independent of) our bodies. On the other hand, President Smith's first purpose of life is ultimately predicated on the second. In other words, the "experience" Smith has in mind is an embodied experience. It is experience made possible only by a body and only through, with, and in a body. Implicit in President Smith's thought is that this life is a bodily training for the next eternally embodied life.

The purpose of this essay is to provide resources for further thinking about Latter-day Saint conceptualizations of the body. More specifically, it will explore one meaning of ritual as it relates to a larger theory of body—a theory in which the body is a transformative participant on

the path to self-realization or, to put it in Mormon terms, a part of an unfolding process of deification. In doing this, I will utilize resources from religious traditions other than Mormonism. In particular, I will employ Confucian theories of ritual. I believe my purposeful use of a system of thought most Latter-day Saints are very unfamiliar with will in effect lay claim to a series of larger arguments that extend beyond the topic of ritual and the body.

This paper, therefore, makes an explicit claim and an implicit claim. The explicit claim is that Mormon notions of eternal embodiment, combined with the idea that a central purpose of this life is to gain a body, could more deeply impact Latter-day Saint conceptions of bodily practice. Because there is ultimate significance in bodily experience in this life, the notion of ritual can be reexamined and expanded to include all practices and ways of practice that go toward cultivating the body in the process of becoming a deified body. Confucian theories of ritual can assist in deepening and broadening these conceptions.

Implicit in this argument is the value of the "other." It is my position that religious traditions can contribute things of religious significance to each other. This is to take a pluralistic view where non-Mormon religious traditions at the very least provide an opportunity to reinterpret the familiar in the terms of the previously unfamiliar. Confucianism, in this case, provides the frame of the unfamiliar with which to reinterpret Mormonism, or the familiar. I will not judge the "truthfulness" of Confucian rituals as part of my argument. Throughout this piece I rarely discuss specific Confucian rituals; instead I focus on Confucian attitudes toward ritual or theories about ritual performance. Confucianism, therefore, provides a new lens with which to view and reconceptualize the performance of Mormon activities.

Ritual as Li 禮

The Confucian notion of the self (*shen* 身) is a pictograph of the body. In a very real sense, there is no distinction between "self" and "body." The human self, therefore, is an embodied self; and the purpose of this life is to cultivate the self (*xiushen* 修身), or more literally to cultivate the body.

The body in this view is an attainment achieved through proper practice of being human. To learn with one's body is to learn to become human.

The body is sometimes spoken of as an instrument of sorts, but it is not instrumentalized or objectified. This is to say that Confucians realize that there is often a disconnect between what one internally wills and the body's ability to perform one's will. However, it is important to note that this disconnect is not caused by a distinction between self and body.[4] Rather, from the Confucian point of view, we are cosubjects with our bodies, and our bodies become an instrument similar to the way the violin becomes an extension of the violinist. Take away the violin and there is no violinist. Take away the body and there is no self. From the Confucian perspective, not only are our bodily performances expressions of who we really are, but we are, in a very concrete way, the performances of our bodies.

The process of self-body cultivation in Confucianism is performed by means of *li* 禮, a term often translated as "ritual." The *Shuowen Jiezi*, one of the oldest Chinese dictionaries (compiled by Xu Shen ca. 58 CE–ca. 147 CE), defines *li* as the composite of two characters, *shi* 示 and *li* 豊.[5] *Shi* is defined as an ideograph meaning "up," referring to the objects of the sky—the sun, moon, and stars—which, according to Xu Shen, were given as signs to human beings so we can "observe the patterns of the heavens [and] fathom the changes of the seasons," thereby allowing us to see the times of "fortune and misfortune." In short, Xu refers to *shi* as "the affairs of the spirits [above]."[6] The second character, *li* 豊, is defined as a pictograph of an instrument of ritual—a vessel with an offering placed on it. Combined together these characters constitute *li* 禮, which Xu defines as "to perform" or "to carry out (according to a certain path)." It is "serving the spirits in order to obtain blessings."[7] This description of *li* is remarkably close to traditional definitions of ritual as response to the sacred, or in the terms of Mircea Eliade, a mirroring of a "divine model" or "archetype."[8] One of the Five Classics of Confucianism, the *Liji*, or *Discourses on Ritual*, even describes the coming forth of *li* as rooted in the creation of the cosmos itself.[9] However, as close as this description may come to traditional notions of ritual, *li* should not be understood

The character 禮 written in early clerical script. (Image by Ponte Ryuurui [品天龍涙], www.ryuurui.com.)

simply as "symbolic activity as opposed to the instrumental behavior of everyday life."[10] In other words, *li* is not confined to ceremony and rites. Following Xu Shen's definition, *li* is not necessarily the physical form of the ritual event (i.e., *ritual* conceived of as a noun) as much as it is the *performing* of the ritual event (i.e., *ritual* as a verb), or the "carrying out" of the ritual. *Li*, therefore, is processual. It is the enacting of the ceremony, or the comportment of the rite. As the contemporary Confucian scholar Tu Weiming states, "*Li* in this connection is understood as movement instead of form. The emphasis is on its dynamic process rather than its static structure."[11]

Li as process, performance, or demeanor extends beyond any particular event and becomes a "way" (*dao* 道) of performing. The end goal of *li*, therefore, is not a physical destination (such as the completion of a ceremony) but a condition one conducts the journey in.[12] In short, it is a way of life. To draw from Tu Weiming again, "*Li* thus may be understood as

the movement of self-transformation, the dialectical path through which man becomes more human."[13]

Herbert Fingarette, in one of the most influential works on Confucianism in the English language, describes *li* as "the map or the specific road-system which is *Dao*."[14] His book, entitled *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, demonstrates how Confucianism blurs the line between the categories of sacred and secular and explains that *li* is a process of sanctifying even the most mundane aspects of life. The first printing of the book even had an enlarged character *li* 禮 standing alone on the cover. This sacralization of life, therefore, can also be spoken of as a ritualization of life.[15] The ideal human being is *li* in everything she or he thinks, says, and does.

This last statement indirectly refers to the twelfth chapter of the *Analects*, in which Confucius states, "If not [seen with] *li* do not look. If not [heard with] *li* do not listen. If not [said with] *li* do not speak. If not [performed with] *li* do not act."[16] Confucians, as experts in *li*, therefore should not be thought of as experts in a limited number of ceremonial ordinances (which is the way they are portrayed in most non-specialized English writing) but instead as experts in performing proper human behavior. To state it succinctly, they are virtuosos of becoming a completely realized human self.[17] This implies that Confucians will never "arrive" at complete self-realization in this life. As long as there is more life to be lived, there is more self to be realized. This is echoed in Confucius's autobiography in the second chapter of the *Analects*, in which it is suggested that even Confucius still had room to grow.[18] The processual dimension involved here is worth reemphasizing. I am relying primarily on a notion articulated by Roger Ames, who describes the Confucian self as a human *becoming* as opposed to a human *being*.[19] In other words, Ames wishes to highlight the Confucian self as a self perpetually in a dynamic state of transformation, rather than as a self categorized according to the possession of certain eternal attributes.

What this means for Confucianism in general and a *li*-like lifestyle in particular is that people are all fellow travelers on the same path and fellow performers in the same ensemble, so to speak. We are working as

a communal body of human beings, each person learning what it means to be human.

In Mormon terms, the idea of learning to be human takes on an added significance, for learning to be human is learning to be a god. And learning to be a god is best understood as a process. The community of Mormons, therefore, is a fellowship of willing individuals seeking to understand what it means to be human. Indeed, this means seeking a way to live as gods-in-embryo. This also means—to relate it back to the processual dimension of *li*—that our journey through life is defined by our walk, or the way we act in life, and not simply by the physical events of life (or rituals) themselves. From this perspective, which will be elaborated later, the ritualization of Mormon living is in the "framing" of conduct, or the way in which actions are *enacted*, and is not limited to particular activities traditionally associated with ritual.[20]

Li and the Body

The connection between *li* and the body is apparent. *Li* as a process of self-cultivation is an embodied process. Thus, as one can imagine, the body is often spoken of in terms of *li*. The *Zuo Zhuan*, a commentary written over two thousand years ago on one of the Five Classics, describes *li* as the "trunk" of the body (like the trunk of a tree—extrapolated to mean the "base" of a person) and as a thing that "shields" the body.[21] *Li* in its relationship with other virtues is also likened to the way that "muscle meets with flesh, and sinews connect bones."[22] Xunzi, a third-century BCE Confucian, defines *li* as "that which rectifies the body."[23]

Another commonly used Chinese character for body is *ti* 體. *Ti* shares a linguistic relationship with *li*. The right-hand portion of the character employs the same graph as the right-hand side of *li*, which, as we have seen, Xu Shen defined as a pictograph of a ritual vessel.[24] While it is possible that the character borrows the graph for its sound rather than its meaning, the two are clearly paired together in Confucian texts. The *Discourses on Ritual*, for instance, states, "*Li* is similar to the body (*ti*). When the body is not complete, the profound person will consider such an individual 'an incomplete person.'"[25] The second to the last character,

cheng 成, translated here as "complete," can also be understood as "fully grown," "capable," "realized," "becoming," or "successful (in attaining)." Thus the implication of this passage is that fully realized *li* is metaphorically similar to a fully realized human body.

Mencius (ca. 372 BCE–ca. 289 BCE), one of the most influential thinkers of Confucianism, taught that *li* is so innate in the human body that it is one of the four "sprouts" that all people are born with. In his theory, *li* must be cultivated like a tender plant to become a guide to human action. And since *li* is similar to a young plant, it is capable of being damaged like a young plant. Thus, in language similar to that in the *Discourses on Ritual*, Mencius describes the loss of *li* as the loss of what it means to be truly human. Indeed, he even likens these four sprouts to four parts of the body.[26] On the other hand, according to Mencius, the nourishing of *li* is also the nourishing of inborn human nature. And since human nature is also conferred by the cosmos above, there is a reciprocal relationship at play here. Thus, while we, as human beings, can nourish *li*, the cultivation of *li* symbiotically results in the nourishing of the self. In the words of the *Discourses on Ritual*, "When *li* resides in human beings, it is nourishment."[27] One passage from the *Xunzi* in particular describes the relationship between *li* as nourishment and the body:

> Thus, the meaning of ritual [*li*] is to nurture. The meat of pastured and grain-fed animals, rice and millet blends and combinations of the five flavors, are what nurture the mouth. The fragrances of peppercorns and orchids, aromas and bouquets, are what nurture the nose. Carved and polished [jade], incised and inlaid [metals], and [fabrics] embroidered with the white and black axe emblem, the azure and black notched-stripe, the azure and crimson stripe, the white and crimson blazon, are what nurture the eye. Bells and drums, flutes and chime-stone, lutes and zithers, reed pipes and reed organs, are what nurture the ear. Spacious rooms, secluded chambers, mats of plaited rushes, couches and bed mats, armrests and cushions, are what nurture the body [i.e., the remaining parts of the body]. Thus, rituals are what nurtures.[28]

The objects listed here are implements used in particular ritual ceremonies. There is a direct connection drawn between each set of objects and the differing parts of the body. Each part of ritual has a corresponding part of the body that it nourishes. The power of ritual, therefore, is not only in changing the metaphysical structure of human life (a structuralist interpretation of ritual) but also in effecting a power inherent in the human body. To say it another way, there is not only an upward component of ritual that aligns the self with a transcendent power but also an inward component that makes manifest the immanent nature of human beings. The power of *li* therefore is to both shape human nature and unlock human nature. It has ramifications that transcend the physical action taking place and significance immanent in the action of the ritual itself. *Li*, in short, is both about transforming our selves into the people we ought to be and about realizing the divine self we already are.

This dual function of *li* is a prominent factor in Confucian texts, in which ritual, besides being spoken of as inherent in human nature, is likened to levies that direct the flow of water and is described as a means for restraining the self.[29] Ritual has a habituating force that, as Catherine Bell explains, creates a type of "instinctive knowledge . . . embedded in [our] bodies."[30] Another passage in the *Xunzi* states, "Rites [*li*] trim what is too long, stretch out what is too short, eliminate excess, remedy deficiency, and extend cultivated forms that express love and respect so that they increase and complete the beauty of conduct according to one's duty."[31] *Li*, therefore, while rooted in the self, is also meant to work on the self by acting as an exercise in humanization through bodily training.[32]

Li and Ritual Reenactment

One reason that theory on the body is so prevalent in Confucian thought (and Chinese thought in general) is that it lacks the exclusive dichotomy of body being opposed to mind. As such, the assumption is that body and mind are mutually penetrating categories that serve to work on each other. While most texts speak of the mind as the director of the body and its parts, the body is also frequently spoken of as having the ability to shape the mind. A recently discovered bamboo text dating back to at

least the third century BCE, for instance, concludes with this peculiar sentence: "The profound person regards the body as that which controls the mind."[33] This line is not to be taken too literally, but in the larger context of the piece, it speaks to the importance of the body in moral cultivation. The thrust of this text, the *Xingzimingchu*, is that participation in ritual reenactments of past heroic events develops bodily habits that allow a person to respond naturally to future circumstances. To use an example from the text, reenacting the glorious overthrow of the decaying Shang dynasty provides an experiential basis for understanding what it was like to do the right thing in that circumstance. In other words, rather than simply relying on a theoretical discussion of the event to inculcate a sense of moral rightness, the actual practice of the event itself benefits the participants by encompassing them more fully in the unfolding of the event. Thus, not only does one know *what* happened but one also knows *how* it occurred. This notion of experiential learning also creates a connection to the sage-like individuals who originally enacted the event.

For Mormons, this idea has implications not only in doing temple ordinances for those who have passed away (and temporarily lack a body) but also for ritual broadly conceived as reenactment. In this light, there is more than symbolic significance in the temple when one acts as Adam or Eve. In the tying and untying of the robes, the posturing of the body, and the performative utterances of the covenants, there is an embodied learning that takes place. There is a bodily transformation of sorts that happens as participants habituate themselves, as well as a connection that is strengthened between them and the great individuals who have come before.

But this style of ritual learning is not limited to the temple, where ritual is perceived to be most potent. The recent efforts to reenact the crossing of the plains by the pioneers are also examples of embodied ritual. The re-creation of their faith, fortitude, and sacrifice binds past to present not only by providing an opportunity to learn the stories of the past but also by bodily binding people of the present to the experiences of the past. From a Mormon perspective, participants capture a more holistic picture of who these pioneers were and what it meant to choose

the right in their circumstances. Granted that one would not go so far as to say that participants actually take upon themselves the private experiences of the early pioneers, but they do gain a glimpse into their personal lives, and this glimpse leaves a lasting impression of moral rectitude in body as well as mind.

Li as a Mormon Theory of Ritualization

To understand Mormon ritual in terms of *li* would broaden the category of ritual to include all bodily performances done for the sake of cultivating a divine body. In essence it would expand ritual to include every activity humanly possible when performed in accordance with *li*. In other words, understanding ritual in the processual terms of *li* means taking ritual as a posture for performance and as a ritualization of everyday life. This would in effect be carrying Arnold van Gennep's "pivoting of the sacred" to its full extent—for since ritual has the ability to define what is sacred, the commonplace activities of the humdrum life become sacralized.[34] For Latter-day Saints, this "pivoting" would mean that not only are baptisms, blessings, and marriages ritual but so are the more mundane acts of ironing the shirt, corralling the children into the minivan for church, and making the physical voyage to the chapel. The weekly congregating with fellow Saints likewise takes on new meaning in this light. The significance in attending is not simply learning new ideas from sermons and Sunday School or partaking of the sacrament (as significant as these things are). In addition, there is an embodied significance in cultivating the social habits of sitting together, in listening to the voice of the speaker, and in raising one's hand to sustain a newly called member. Singing hymns and reading scripture becomes a means by which participants do more than learn concepts about the gospel. They furthermore engrain the words of the text into the very "fiber of their being." Singing as a congregation, in a literal way, brings souls together as participants repeat the same words at the same time and their bodies (more specifically their vocal cords) vibrate at the same frequency. Singing in harmony allows every "body" to perform a different function yet resound in a bodily way that contributes to a greater whole.

Temple ceremonies, from this perspective, begin long before one puts on the robes and makes the covenants. Indeed, one postures one's body differently the moment one walks in the door. But even before that, while getting dressed at home, the body is already being groomed as a coparticipant in a ritualized performance. The physical voyage to the temple, often understood symbolically as a sacrifice one makes in order to attend, can also be understood as instilling a directionality in the body—the self learns the way to the temple, and with further repetition it reflexively follows that way.

The home has long been regarded as a sacred place in Latter-day Saint belief. Indeed, most Mormon homes are replete with representations of sacredness in pictures of temples, figures of Jesus Christ, and sets of scriptures lying in plain view. Understood in terms of *li*, however, homes are more than symbols of sacredness. They are also the sacred grounds of ritual training. Education in the home is nourishment for the entire self; it extends beyond scripture study and family home evening. The conversation over the dinner table, the combined efforts of spring cleaning, or the tender embrace as mother or father leaves for work serves to inculcate a memory in one's body of how to engage in sacred interaction.

The proper performance of bodily activity in the home (or chapel or temple) serves as a corpus of knowledge to draw from in performing appropriately beyond the walls of the house. The usage of "corpus" here is purposeful, as it implies the bodily word "corpse." In essence, training in the home bestows a "corpus of habits" in the body that allows one to respond to various circumstances.[35] As new circumstances arise, the ritualized self taps into this corpus and enacts the appropriate response. These appropriate responses in turn contribute to the body of knowledge one draws from in future situations. Thus the corpus of knowledge and the corporeal body increase in their capacity to realize the divine self.

The sacralization of life through a theory of *li* could of course be carried over into the more mundane. From this perspective, conversing with our friends, the way we eat lunch, and the way we drive our car are also ritualized performances. Because this life is about bodily training, and ritual is a means of bodily training, everything we do can be done

in the frame of *li*. Thus there is not only an ontological significance to ritual, but an existential one as well. This is to say that there is not only a transformation that takes place on the level of ultimate being as ritual is performed, but also a tangible sacralization that takes place in the concrete self. In short, from this point of view, ritualization is a sanctifying process for the human body in its aspiration to reach its eternal goal.

The body in this regard is not an object to be controlled, conquered, or constrained. The spirit is not in bondage to the body. This line of thinking gives additional insight into Joseph F. Smith's account of the spirit world in section 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants, in which the disembodied spirits "looked upon the long absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage" (D&C 138:50). The body, in this sense, is a liberating component in a Mormon worldview. It serves as an essential element in freeing oneself from the "awful monster" (2 Nephi 9:10) of death and hell, for without the body "our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God" (v. 8). As we read in another section of the Doctrine and Covenants, "Spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy" (D&C 93:33).

Ritual Power and Ritual Authority

The discussion thus far has been a somewhat romantic portrayal of a Mormon integration of the Confucian concept *li*. Stated flatly, however, *li* can also be seen as a form of "social control."[36] And as such, we must take into account the relations between parties vying for power in creating, modifying, and enacting ritual.

Priesthood within the Church is the entity traditionally associated with the authority to perform ritual. While this authority is occasionally challenged, Church leadership has been rather effective at defining the parameters of ritual enactment—determining not only who receives the priesthood but also how and when religious rituals are performed. Indeed, it could be said that for the vast majority of church-attending Latter-day Saints, the institution of the Church is the only party with the authority to determine ritual performance. The ritualization of everyday life, therefore, can be seen as both extending the power of the Church

and challenging its power. To put it in theoretical terms, expanding the concept of ritual augments the current sources of social control—for in addition to those activities traditionally taken as ritual (e.g., baptisms, confirmations, and baby blessings), the nonritualistic activities endorsed by the institution are now ritualized (family home evenings, for instance). But at the same time, expanding the concept of ritual also creates competing sources of social control—for the parties normally seen as uninvolved in ritual now take on a new significance. This conflicting situation means that broadening the category of ritual increases the power of the Church because the seemingly nonritualistic activities encouraged by the Church (such as wearing white shirts and ties to meetings) are now included as ritual, but it also brings other players to the table who begin to act as alternative bases of power that compete to define proper ritual performance (women, for instance, become creators of ritual). To state it succinctly, expanding the real estate of ritual invites speculators into a new and contested space.

This is not to say that many of the tensions highlighted here are not already latent in the current situation. The present belief in the home as a source of the sacred implicitly competes with the Church for control of the sacred—especially since even the idealized leadership structures of each entity do not map on to each other.[37] Indeed, much of what this discussion on ritual accomplishes is raising the level of consciousness toward the power relations that already exist.

The Church, as a vibrant institution, has the resources to continue navigating these streams of competing power—particularly as it relates to ritual. The notion that the individual is a copossessor (and by implication a competitor) of godly power is not a new claim in the history of Mormonism. The individualistic spirit of "knowing for one's self" seems to be within Mormonism from its early roots. The combination of the opposing forces of individualism and authoritarianism, therefore, is not new. As pointed out by Terryl Givens, Mormonism in this respect seems "especially rife with paradox."[38] The challenge here, however, is in dealing with an ever-increasing number of competitors vying for ritual control. The tension is not simply between the individual and the institution

but also between various subgroups within the institution (such as the Relief Society and the priesthood) as well as emerging groups that extend beyond the institution (such as Hispanic and American cultural groupings). The relations between parties become even more complex as the Church continues to become an international organization.

This long-standing paradox within Latter-day Saint culture suggests that the success of this endeavor lies not in a resolution of the tension between competing parties but in an ongoing dialogue of mutual "edification."[39] In other words, any attempt to monopolize the power to define ritual performance undermines the foundational experience in which Joseph Smith, circumventing the religious authorities of his day, inquired for himself. Indeed, the belief that every human being has a divine nature should serve as a basis for further reflection in defining the ritualization of everyday life. This concept need not suggest that all things are equally sacred—one should perform much differently in the celestial room than in the dining room—but rather that the sacralization of the body happens through a diversity of performances, many of them lying in the mundane.

Conclusion

I have argued in this piece for broadening the notion of Mormon ritual to include all bodily practices and techniques that produce a divine body. Since the primary purpose of this life, according to Latter-day Saints, is to gain a body and enable a process of embodied learning, Latter-day Saints need not view the body as something objectified and as a thing to be conquered. Indeed, from a Latter-day Saint perspective, we are not ourselves without our bodies. The Confucian notion of *li* provides a way for reconceptualizing ritual and its relationship with the body. In the words of the *Discourses on Ritual*, "When *li* resides in human beings, it is nourishment." In Mormon terms, this line should be read literally. Going to church, for instance, provides more than "spiritual nourishment." There is bodily sustenance in physical participation. The embodied habits of daily prayer and scripture reading serve more purpose than merely to reveal the true nature of reality. They convey an existential import that imprints itself in the very marrow of our bones.

One of the questions this piece implicitly raises is, how much of another religious tradition can Latter-day Saints accept? How much of the Confucian notion of *li*, for instance, can be made "Mormon"? Without pushing the issue too far, there are obvious points of conflict. But what I have tried to portray here is a theory that may stretch the boundaries of tradition while remaining within Mormon orthodoxy. Had I perhaps the room to write a second piece, I would focus on a Mormon contribution to Confucian religiosity.

The title for this article was adapted from a piece that Tu Weiming wrote in 1972 entitled "*Li* as [a] Process of Humanization."[40] Substituting "Ritual" for "*Li*" speaks to my claim that theories from a religious "other," in this case Confucianism, can reshape the way that religious traditions conceive of their own categories. Substituting "Deification" for "Humanization" speaks to the nuance that Mormonism puts on the term "human." In Confucian terms, the purpose of life is to become fully human. In Mormon terms, becoming fully human means becoming divine. Latter-day Saints catch a deeper glimpse of what it means to be human, and have a body, through dialogue with Confucianism on the topic of ritual. In a Confucian worldview, the body is not a way station on one's path to progression; it is the culmination of that progression.

Notes

1. This is an edited version of an article that originally appeared in *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 39–55. I would like to thank the editors of *Element* for allowing this article to be reproduced.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 1:66.
3. For more on metaphor theory, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
4. For the issue about how will relates to action in Confucianism, see David Nivison, "Weakness of Will in Ancient Chinese Philosophy," in *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 79–90.
5. All translations that follow are my own, unless noted otherwise. For the sake of the English-speaking reader, I have tried to cite sources that provide both an English translation as well as the Chinese original. I also employ

the Pinyin system of Romanization for Chinese words. The only exception is the names of contemporary Chinese authors whose work is catalogued according to various Romanizations.

6. Xu Shen, *Shuowen Jiezi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 7. "*Shi*: The heavens hang down images to reveal fortune and misfortune, and thereby display [fortune and misfortune] to people. It comes from 二. [二 is the ancient character for "up."] The three [images] that hang down are the sun, moon, and stars. Observe the patterns of the heavens to fathom the changes of the seasons. *Shi* are the affairs of the spirits."
7. Xu, *Shuowen Jiezi*, 7.
8. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 21.
9. See, for instance, the "Liyun" chapter in *Liji*. "Therefore, as for *li*, it must be rooted in the great unity; which divides to become the heavens and the Earth, rotates to become Yin and Yang, transforms to become the four seasons, and splits to become ghosts and spirits. What it sends down is called the mandate; and its abode is in the heavens." Yihua Jiang, *Xin yi Liji du ben* (Taibei Shi: San min shu ju, 1997), 339; translation by author (hereafter cited as *Liji*).
10. Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 55.
11. Weiming Tu, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 1998), 25.
12. I borrow this notion from Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 20.
13. Tu, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation*, 27.
14. Fingarette, *Confucius*, 20.
15. I believe it more than coincidence that scholars mentioned later in this piece, who frequently employ the term *ritualization*, specialize in China. See, for instance, Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
16. Confucius, *Analects* 12.1.2, trans. James Legge, in *The Four Books* (Taizhong: Yishi Chubanshe, 1971), 250.
17. This is one reason that there are very few self-proclaimed "Confucians." On this issue, see John Berthrong, "Boston Confucianism: The Third Wave of Global Confucianism," in *Confucianism in Dialogue Today*, ed. Liu Shu-Hsien and others (Philadelphia: Ecumenical, 2004), 26–47.
18. *Analects* 2.4, Legge, *Four Books*, 146–47.
19. Roger T. Ames, "Confucianism and Deweyan Pragmatism: A Dialogue," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no. 3–4 (2003): 403–17. Also helpful is Roger T. Ames, "The Meaning of Body in Classical Chinese Thought," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas P. Kasulis, Roger T.

Ames, and Wimal Dissanayake (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 157–77.

20. For more on the idea of "framing" action as a way of conceiving ritual, see Michael Puett and others, *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially page 5.
21. James Legge, ed. and trans., *The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes* (Taibei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 1971), 379, 386. I came across the latter of these references when reading Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 323.
22. "Liyun," *Liji*, 339; translation by author.
23. John Knoblock, trans., *Xunzi* (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1999), 38.
24. Xu Shen defines *ti* as a composite character taking its meaning from the left-hand side graph *gu* 骨 (flesh and bones) and its sound from the right-hand graph *li* 豊 (a ritual vessel with an offering placed on top). See Xu, *Shuowen Jiezi*, 86.
25. "Liqi," *Liji*, 352; translation by author.
26. *Mencius* 2.1.6, Legge, *Four Books*, 201–4.
27. "Liyun," *Liji*, 339; translation by author.
28. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 601–3.
29. See "Fang Ji," *Liji*, 715–35; and *Analects* 12.1, Legge, *Four Books*, 249.
30. Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 222.
31. Knoblock, *Xunzi*, 625.
32. "Humanization" here means a process of becoming a proper human being.
33. *Guodian chu mu zhu jian* (Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she, 1998), 181; translation by author.
34. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 12, quoted in Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 37.
35. A similar play on "body" as "corpus" occurs in Ames, "Meaning of Body," 157–77.
36. See Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 222, in which ritual is described as "social control." Bell explains that ritual must be "perceived as . . . amenable to some degree of individual appropriation" in order to maintain its staying power.
37. Interesting work could be done on the changing relations between the family and the Church throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One part of this picture is that in the last few decades, the Church has attempted to bolster the power of the family (and perhaps its influence in the home) by decreasing the number of activities it holds and encouraging activities in the home such as family home evening.

38. Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), xiv.
39. This refers to D&C 50:22, in which the edification of the Holy Ghost is predicated on the mutual understanding of all parties involved in dialogue.
40. Reprinted in Tu, *Humanity and Cultivation*, 17–34.