

Introduction

In an age when market values shape political, cultural, and institutional practices in countries like the United States, metrics emerge to determine normative merit. For universities, this means they face product-oriented pressures to quantify the value of academic endeavors. Instructional faculty members, as a result, face the difficult task of navigating mixed expectations from universities. Mission statements, on the one hand, discuss the importance of cultivating wise global citizens and academic excellence. Hired in part to realize these goals, faculty members are tasked to cultivate the craft of teaching to encourage students to undertake processes of learning that can vary for persons and whose outcomes are uncertain. At the same time, university strategic directions documents express a business ethos when they articulate institutional aims using a product-oriented parlance that prioritizes returns on investments. From this perspective, faculty prestige is largely determined by research contributions.

Problematically, the use of metrics as a way to determine the value of the breadth of faculty contributions heightens the delineation of faculty roles, and it sets the roles up in competing ways. The emerging complication is that those aspects of faculty endeavors that can be more easily measured, then, risk becoming normatively viewed as more institutionally valuable. For instance, when teaching and research are viewed in product-oriented terms as separate, even competing, endeavors, faculty members must make deliberate choices about how to expend limited energy and time. These choices have extensive implications for their academic communities.

For instructional faculty members, the product-oriented phrase “publish or perish” may seem like an open secret. A normative market-oriented focus on outcomes suggests that publishing research contributes the most to institutional prestige, implying that those who choose to

emphasize teaching may jeopardize the success of their tenure and promotion applications. As higher educational institutions face increasing scrutiny by lawmakers and the public to justify their expenditures, tenure guidelines for instance reflect a reliance on the production of measurable evidence to assess the “big three” of faculty activities—research, teaching, and community and institutional service. How faculty members make sense of their academic roles amid tension between normative market pressures to publish and relative institutional quiet on the relation among their activities has a profound impact on their and other’s experiences of academia.

A product orientation functions in part by fragmenting faculty activities and framing them as separate and competitive endeavors. While evidence of research expertise in the form of peer-reviewed publications is normatively regarded as sufficient for review committees to determine research contributions, providing evidence of expert teaching or quality of engagement in service may be more difficult to describe in standardized, quantifiable terms. Situating these activities through the lens of measurement implies that the big three of faculty endeavors are separate because they require different ways to compare their outcomes among different faculty. Given that tenure guidelines often refrain from explicitly weighting their activities, faculty and tenure review committees are left to infer institutional priorities and make decisions about the value of particular faculty activities.

A product orientation institutionally frames faculty foremost as producers. A focus on outcomes simplifies faculty activities because it narrows a notion of value, especially given that some faculty activities are not easily measurable. Situating faculty members as expert producers of research, teaching, and service overlooks the complexity and value of what they do as colleagues, mentors, and people who are part of extensive academic communities. A market orientation that implies that faculty endeavors can be characterized in a quantifiable way relies on a major assumption—that for tenure and promotion purposes, faculty members can delineate their achievements in clear, evidence-based ways. It assumes that people’s activities can be abstractly extricated from their engagement with others with a rational, orderly method. It situates faculty members as independent of the colleagues in their departments and broader institutional community rather than as inextricably connected. It overlooks the complexity of the processes involved in their activities and the learning that they involve.

More broadly, engaging a market orientation to shape higher educational practices including faculty activities masks the limits of such an approach through deflection and redirection. It deflects by deemphasizing the influence of those relational aspects of faculty activities that refuse measurement. Consider the myriad conversations that take place among people on any given day at a university: the classrooms, labs, departments, administration offices, hallways, and parking lots, among others. Higher educational institutions are massively complex organizations often involving tens of thousands of people. How is it possible to comprehend the varied activities and their affective nuances in measurable ways and how they influence teaching, learning, and research? It may be quite difficult, if not impossible.

Rather than acknowledge this, a product orientation instead redirects by driving attention to those aspects of university function that are more easily measurable, overlooking the complexity of many academic endeavors. For instance, while a university mission statement may affirm a stated core value of “academic rigor”—a value that may be difficult to quantify—its strategic directions may be preoccupied with achieving specific retention rates and the preparation of workers for the state where a university is located. While engaging a product orientation can contribute productively to discussions about an educational institution’s directions, an overreliance on evidence-based determinations of value without acknowledgement of its limits narrows envisioning the potential breadth of educational institutional endeavors.

Political scientist Wendy Brown (2012) suggests it is the drive to economize human endeavors that means success needs to be measured. Scholars, for instance, need to provide evidence of their contributions to show their value to institutions. They must prepare to “go on the job market” by distinguishing themselves with niche research areas, build CVs featuring prizes and publications, and provide evidence of the ability to acquire grants to ensure an institution is making a good investment through a hiring. Even after achieving a faculty position, tenure and promotion rely on showing metrics of contributions mainly via publications, in which teaching, ironically, gets devalued: “Tenure and promotion, let alone targeted recruitments and lucrative counteroffers, are never based on teaching excellence in research universities” (Brown, p. 197). The professionalization of scholars, Brown warns, positions them as “human capital” rather than teachers and thinkers. For those who have risen through the ranks in this system, there is little alternative

view, and many are left feeling resigned to and pressured to perpetuate current norms.

In a time of globally scaled challenges, such as issues related to climate and health, people are increasingly turning toward collective integrative problem solving to seek to address them. Higher education institutions and faculty members in particular are poised to participate. However, interdisciplinary approaches, which necessitate attention toward the cultivation of inclusive and diverse processes, imply the importance of relational activities, for instance, cross-disciplinary learning among participants of multidisciplinary collaborations and academic programs. Because global challenges resist any particular disciplinary approach to address them, universities need to acknowledge and even embrace complexity, not seek to reduce it. The broad challenges require that faculty members not only be situated in market-oriented ways as expert producers of research, teaching, and service, but also as connected, adaptive learners open to change. For faculty members and universities, this means they are compelled to look beyond product-oriented ways of understanding their activities to attend to the processes and contexts of generating possibility, which may be risky because the outcomes may be uncertain and hard to measure.

Value of Cohering Faculty Roles

This book explores the use of a concept of Confucian relationality as a way to assist universities to make good on their commitment to cultivating wise global citizens. It does this by putting forward the value of developing the craft of teaching. But it does this not in the sense that it suggests teaching is a unidirectional activity that simply involves faculty members communicating with students to produce wise citizens, but rather suggests a more complex process that implicates and influences all involved. The distinction between a reductive and a more complex view of the value of teaching hinges on one critical aspect—how people are situated. While a product orientation reflects a broader normative and culturally dominant assumption that people are “individuals” in order to be able to quantify their perceived attributes and achievements, a Confucian relationality assumes just the opposite—that people are necessarily relationally constituted.

What engaging a Confucian relationality does more broadly is to show the limits of a product orientation that situates people as separate from each other. Instead, the process-oriented concept of a Confucian relationality offers the notion that people are relationally constituted as an alternative and valuable framework to engage contemporary phenomena that privilege the notion that people continually construct the contexts they engage through their activities. To view people as necessarily constituted by others suggests that while attempts may be made to normatively fix identities and quantify achievements, these are ultimately acts of decontextualization that may be somewhat arbitrary in their determinations.

What a Confucian relational view means for teaching is that it necessarily involves a process of learning. The two are aspectual in part because they are activities that necessarily emerge through engaging others. When people are seen as relationally constituted, it is through engaging others that personal distinctiveness emerges and enriches the contexts people generate through their activities. To undertake a process of personal cultivation that involves reflection on how a person engages others does not simply influence those undertaking the process themselves but also impacts how they relate with others. To try to achieve the broader goal of cultivating wise citizens means recognizing in part the shared responsibility for complex and unpredictable processes that occur not only within classrooms but beyond them too. Such processes defy complete description in quantifiable terms because they necessarily take into account particular relational contextual considerations.

More specifically, this book engages Confucian relationality as an interdisciplinary process-oriented framework to inquire about some higher education institutional product-oriented priorities and practices and considers their implications for faculty activities. While tenure guidelines and norms may prioritize publications over teaching and service, Confucian relationality compels a more comprehensively integrated view of faculty member endeavors as part of relational networks that may not be easy to quantitatively pin down. In brief, the concept situates people as necessarily constituted by others, foregrounds a process orientation that engages a view of time and space as related, and frames personal cultivation as relationally resonant. Engaging Confucian relationality calls attention to the value of complex educational processes deemphasized by a product orientation like support for the craft of teaching, reflective pedagogical research, and the value of faculty collegiality. It is a valuable approach

because it situates the world as changing, foregrounds experiences, and fosters inquiry about the contextual field of higher education.

A concept of Confucian relationality is constructed from reading a translation of the *Zhongyong*, a classical Chinese philosophical text. Rather than an occasion to mainly focus on the analysis of Confucian texts and tradition, this work constructs a concept of relationality to use as an inquiring lens to encourage reconsideration of some normative priorities in a case study institution. The Confucian relational concept emerges informed by the work of comparative philosophers such as Roger Ames, David Hall, Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee, Sor-hoon Tan, Henry Rosemount Jr., Peter Hershock, and Thomas Kasulis, among others. These scholars suggest that the classical Chinese tradition is relevant to contemporary philosophical discussions when situated as flexible and dynamic. In other words, it continues to change when people read classical Chinese philosophical texts from their own particular spatial and temporal locations. They have written extensively about the differences between substance-oriented and process-oriented worldviews and the impact they have on the construction of people's identities. Whereas a substance-oriented perspective emphasizes defining "what things are," a process-oriented worldview focuses on situating life as happenings, events. This shift from "being" or "thing" to "happening" has profound implications regarding how to situate people. Engaging a broader worldview of processual change envisions people as contingently relation-ing rather than as individuals. As a result, a process-oriented concept of Confucian relationality foregrounds the importance of complex relationships without a need to quantify them because it assumes their value.

Engaging a concept of Confucian relationality suggests a more comprehensive view of faculty roles because it foregrounds a process-oriented view, which complicates a notion of faculty as producers. A process orientation situates faculty as learners, a move that calls attention to the effort, time, and risks involved in engaging the processes of conducting research and developing the craft of teaching, among others. I mention risks because emphasizing processes also reminds that outcomes may not always emerge as predetermined; the processes can be intricately nuanced and outcomes uncertain. At the same time, this unpredictability also calls attention to the emergence of valuable possibilities. In other words, a focus on processes may return more unexpected and complex outcomes than a product-oriented focus might. The value of these may be missed if there is tunnel vision on some expected outcomes. To broaden a

notion of faculty from producers to learners frames the nature of faculty work as ongoing, of faculty in the midst of their activities—not simply as researchers but as researching, not simply as teachers but as teaching and continually developing the craft of teaching.

Confucian relationality integrates faculty activities by reframing them not simply from the perspective of outcomes but primarily as changing experiences. It situates universities as constituted by people foremost who are relating, performing various roles, and continually vitalizing institutional structures through their activities. Instead of human “beings,” as mentioned earlier, a notion that assumes an independent state, people are envisioned as necessarily constituted by others. By situating people in this way, Confucian relationality insinuates that people emerge through experiences, which necessarily emerge in relation with others. Our relation-ing continually shapes us. This perspective engages a process-oriented worldview that considers life as ongoing. When faculty activities are seen as ongoing processes, then this shifts attention from a focus on measurable outcomes to the importance of attending to people’s experiences. When experiences of people are foregrounded, then faculty activities emerge as integrated aspects of each other because this focus calls attention to the people themselves who generate the activities. Faculty activities, then, cannot wholly be considered separate from each other because they cannot be separated from the people and contexts from which they emerge. Learning from the context of featuring experiences emerges from relation and influences relation.

A concept of Confucian relationality informs a notion of faculty activities by highlighting the relational implications of personal cultivation. When considered relationally, learning has extensive implications because it impacts people and how they relate with others in unpredictable ways. Because people are envisioned as intricately enmeshed with others in changing ways, learning emerges from and assumes the primary importance of relationships. This means envisioning universities foremost as constituted by people’s activities. In other words, people construct the university. For faculty, this means that what they do matters. How they learn matters. From a process perspective of the world where people are deeply connected, faculty who undertake the activity of learning influence not only themselves but also their “relation-ing” with others in unpredictable ways. This enriches normative notions of value.

While a market orientation focuses on outcomes, Confucian relationality legitimizes multiple notions of value with its focus on process,

people's connectedness, and subjective experiences. By foregrounding experience, what is considered valuable may differ for different people in different contexts. Engaging Confucian relationality inspires questions related to whom, how, and why? For faculty members, engaging Confucian relationality suggests that while they may feel the need to respond to institutional normative focuses on outcomes, at the same time, they can see the limits of this focus and seek to develop their own notions of value to guide their activities. In fact, Confucian relationality urges taking a longer-term view. The faculty who at one point must undergo tenure review will later constitute tenure committees and take on positions to review tenure guidelines and institutional strategic directions. Having reflected on their own notions of value throughout their institutional employment, they will be poised to thoughtfully shape the guidelines for others.

Engaging a Confucian relationality is a valuable approach to considering universities because it calls attention to the relational aspects of the complex contextual field of higher education. Engaging Confucian relationality as an adaptive, process-oriented resource and a methodological approach suggests the frame itself, rather than seeking to compete with other orientations, becomes enriched when engaging others. For instance, while it recognizes the usefulness of situating the university from a normative, product-oriented perspective of higher educational institutions as producers for the state, of jobs, employees, and research, at the same time, it encourages a stance of modesty about its capabilities and complicates notions that outcomes can be wholly attributable and fixed in a measurable way. It serves to remind administrators and faculty to continually ask what institutional directions leave out, to consider what might be unknown along with the perceived known. A process-oriented Confucian relational framework challenges normative notions of faculty identity from one of a producer of knowledge to one that emphasizes that even the experts are always learning—through relation and informing relation. Rather than separate activities, it suggests that teaching, research, and learning, for instance, are aspectual and contingent. More broadly, it situates the university as a learning community.

Marketizing Higher Education

What I have been referring to as a market or product and outcomes orientation has a more formal moniker: neoliberalism. The rationality

of neoliberalism, expressed as a relationship between a country and its citizens that is primarily economic, dominates current social, political, and educational constructs (Biesta, 2010; Brown, 2015). In other words, this framework strongly emphasizes a free-market and deregulation orientation with regard to government policies, situating people and institutions in a producer-consumer oriented relationship. From this perspective, managerial accountability through the provision of evidence is necessary to provide, as Gert Biesta calls it, “quality assurance” of institutional activity to ensure that the perceived needs of its stakeholders are met. Such a market orientation influences contemporary university structures, directions, and values, positioning people as independent and in generally competitive ways.

How does neoliberalism influence higher educational institutions? Patrick Fitzsimons (2002) suggests that a neoliberal culture has two major tasks. The first is that all institutions need to be reshaped in the form of commercial enterprises that are consumer oriented. For universities, this means they should be organizationally structured like corporations and operate using business practices. Higher educational institutions already employ a heightened level of bureaucracy with regard to their organizational structures in that they share so-called production systems of “mediums of exchange” such as diplomas, transcripts, and certificates that allow people to move among institutions and institutions to control participant entry (Green, Ericson, & Seidman, 1997). Building on these structures, institutional mission statements and strategic plans, which publicly articulate a university’s values and goals, openly express their interest in becoming more business oriented. For example, the University of Hawai‘i’s Strategic Directions for 2015–2021 (2015) cites as one of its four goals the development of a “high performance mission-driven system,” committed to “accountability, transparency and managing costs by leveraging our unique status as a unified statewide system of public higher education.” Furthermore, for each of the four goals, the document identifies specific “productivity and efficiency measures associated with these outcomes [to] provide clear, measurable goals and the ability to effectively monitor progress over time.” The institution’s strategic directions showcase a market orientation not only through its articulation of institutional goals but also in the structures and how it evaluates outcomes.

The use of business language to describe institutional purposes and goals is not only evident at the University of Hawai‘i—the institution I refer to as a case example throughout this book—it is common in many

universities and colleges, public and private, across the United States. For example, at the University of California, Berkeley (2002), a strategic academic plan refers to the university as an “academic enterprise” tasked with “maximizing the potential for interdisciplinary synergy . . . to ensure our investments in both academic programs and physical improvements . . .” At the University of Michigan (2016), the president’s office lists six areas of interest on its webpage, each with a link to its own strategic directions that describe strategies for “recruitment, supporting innovation, and creating equity.” The area of “Academic Innovation” works closely with the “Academic Innovation Initiative Steering Committee” during the 2016–17 academic year to “assess the constraints that inhibit academic innovation and explore ways to overcome them” and “propose a transformational approach for leveraging academic innovation to shape the future of education and further realize our mission,” among others. At Harvard University (2017), the president and fellows of Harvard, known as the corporation, is an entity that “engages with both questions of long-range strategy, policy, and planning as well as transactional matters of unusual consequence. It serves as a confidential sounding board for the President on matters of importance . . . and is responsible for approving the University’s budgets, major capital projects, endowment spending, tuition charges, and other matters.”

Such consumer-oriented language suggests the importance of economic considerations in numerous higher educational institutions and reflects market-oriented perspectives with regard to institutional directions.

Engaging a predominant product-orientated view compels administrators and policy makers to value perceived measurable outcomes and deemphasize those deemed not relevant to achieving specific goals. For instance, in the University of Hawai‘i’s strategic directions document, one “tactic” noted for the goal of a “high performance mission-driven system” is to “implement world-class business practices to advance efficiency, transparency and accountability with sound risk management.” Biesta (2010) points out that discussions and research about educational function, which impact institutional directions, necessitate judgments about desirable expectations. If administrators emphasize the construction of efficient institutional standards to evaluate institutional developments, then they may overlook those aspects of educational endeavors whose outcomes are difficult to quantify in economic terms.

As a matter of fact, Fitzsimons (2002) suggests that the second task of a neoliberal culture is to background or even reverse any initiatives

that do not contribute to the development of “enterprise.” This suggests administrators tend to value the activities that fit more cleanly into an economic-driven frame, while undervaluing those aspects thought to complicate specified goals. Furthermore, Fitzsimons suggests that neoliberalism is also an ethic that implies market operations are values in and of themselves and need not be connected to the actual production of goods and services. To engage a market orientation, then, is to strive to determine value according to its principles even when such categorizations may seem incompatible, for instance, with regard to complex processes or relational phenomena of educational institutions.

A neoliberal orientation has a more inadvertent, even unassumingly extensive, implication for faculty members. In higher education institutions, faculty members may feel pressure to perceive their roles in simplified ways. Brown (2015) warns that the reach of neoliberalism, as a rationality and language, extends toward marketizing areas of life that have been traditionally noneconomic. In other words, it frames all aspects of life from a market-related perspective in a narrow way that suggests that people should be situated as entrepreneurs (Fitzsimons, 2002). Fitzsimons describes neoliberal or “enterprise” culture as one where a market orientation is reflected in people’s beliefs, notions of self, which influence professional and personal activities. It reflects a status-oriented attitude that infuses all aspects of life such as choice of partners, friends, and hobbies, among others. While these choices may not necessarily be assigned a dollar value per se, they can be seen as a way to raise a person’s status in the perceived eyes of future employers or for particular employment-related purposes. Biesta (2010) argues that to situate the state as a provider of public services and citizens as consumers depoliticizes and formalizes their identities, limiting their relationships with each other. For instance, product-oriented institutional expectations pressure faculty members to prioritize publishing of research over their teaching endeavors to achieve tenure and promotion. This situates faculty as producers of research and teaching, a view and expectation that can influence how faculty members construct their own roles as part of higher educational institutions. For institutions to situate faculty mainly as producers reflects a construct that narrows relationships, suggesting they can be understood in financial terms, and implying that the value of particular activities, like research, teaching, and service, can be measured as isolated endeavors.

The dominating influence of a culture of measurement on educational institutions informs not only how institutions situate people but

also how people, through the use of an evidence-based lens, view each other's roles. A formal economically framed relationship between state and citizen resonates in the relations between state officials and educational administrators, departments and faculty members, and faculty members and students. For instance, faculty members and administrators may determine the breadth of student learning based mainly on test scores, a focus that may overlook and even devalue the learning that may have occurred outside an evaluatory scope. Administrators and colleagues may determine faculty members' instructional success largely based on end-of-semester teaching evaluations from students, a limited measure of the complexity and impact of teaching. They are limited especially given that they reflect students' own performance in classes and biases rather than serve as a standardized evaluation of teaching quality. For instance, students' gender bias emerges when female junior faculty are systematically given lower evaluation ratings than their male colleagues (Mengel, Sauermann, & Zölitz, 2019). Also, racial biases influence teaching evaluations—the race and language of instructors influence how students rate their instructors in evaluations (Subtirelu, 2015). Not only do the terms of a culture of measurement shape people's views of each other in a product-oriented way, but they also influence our expectations of and behavior toward each other.

Although the frame of a culture of measurement can be useful—it provides data on educational phenomena for faculty, administrators, and policy makers—it has limitations as a dominant paradigm for educational considerations because it can obscure the vast complexity involved in educational initiatives. For instance, how does one quantify or describe “quality” or “expert” teaching? Or calculate the value of a colleague's input on reading a draft of a syllabus or of gaining a deeper understanding of a concept that one learned in a class decades ago? How can one really measure learning about teaching—an ongoing process that one may not be completely aware of oneself—when there may be multiple desired outcomes? The complexity of educational endeavors may be impossible to usefully characterize in terms of measurement. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) goes so far as to argue that if teaching is envisioned as the transfer of information from one person to others, then it is “impossible” because teachers cannot control what students will hear and think, and should not assume that they can. Ellsworth suggests that an acknowledgment that teaching is impossible opens up new possibilities. It does not mean one does not try to teach, but, rather, teaching with awareness that one

cannot expect to have complete control over what others hear and how they will react influences how one approaches and what one expects from the activity of teaching. This is an example of how it may be impossible to wholly comprehend the complexity of educational endeavors.

A product orientation limits consideration of complex phenomena such as relationships and experiences. As a result, institutions can overlook important aspects of educational function such as support for the development of faculty members' collegial relationships and attention to the broad value of reflective pedagogical research. To participate unquestioningly in a normative culture of measurement can be problematic because such an orientation conveys a sense of false confidence that one can understand or describe educational endeavors and their value completely with such a framework. It also influences how people understand their roles as part of an institution and are situated in relation to one another. In particular, a neoliberal orientation relies on a critical assumption: it situates people as necessarily autonomous and is reflected by an interest to foster competition between so-called "individuals."

Normalization of Individualization Separates

A neoliberal orientation functions largely by deliberately individualizing people. For instance, formalized educational systems function to organize relations among people for the purposes of individualization (Foucault, 1995). Often from the ages of four and five, if not younger, people are expected to attend school through to the age of 18, and often beyond to college and graduate school, if they want access to certain jobs and perceived social status. A person must move through each level of the system to move onto the next. Institutional structures are in place to evaluate people at each stage to determine when a person can move on. These structures are used largely for organizational purposes and only work if a person's perceived characteristics or performance can be captured somehow in order to compare with others. This has a normalizing impact on situating people as separate from each other. In institutional contexts, it situates learning largely as an "individual's" responsibility too.

To draw on the writing of Michel Foucault (1995), educational institutions are formations that make use of disciplinary methods such as time tables in the form of schedules, evaluation through examinations, and enclosures in the forms of classrooms and office spaces that are designated

for specific functions. The purpose of these methods, in neoliberal terms, is to distinguish people from each other in hierarchical and competitive ways to make it more efficient for interested parties, such as employers, to identify people as qualified for particular positions. Individualization has a productive purpose, which can also have a normalizing effect. Educational institutions influence societal notions of what it means to learn, to teach, and to be “schooled”—even “educated” implying that these activities happen for people as individuals. Disciplinary methods introduce a scale around norms that influences people’s relations in part because they seek to organize relations and to situate a person as separate from another.

Engagement of a neoliberal orientation by higher educational institutions situates people in economic terms. The framework does this to distinguish people from each other, further reinforcing the importance of documentation and evaluation of people for the purposes of realizing institutional goals. A neoliberal rationality provides a power/knowledge construct that situates people as objects and subjects of power. From a neoliberal perspective, people are objects because reliance on the use of disciplinary methods to organize relations through a process of individualization insinuates that people can at some level be understood or described through those methods. In other words, a transcript or CV, among other documents, reflects a simplified rendering of a person. People become subjects to such disciplinary methods because the methods influence how people feel about themselves, whether one is good at school or a subject, and the extent to which one feels educated. Norms influence how we behave, relate, think, and judge others and ourselves. Participation in an institution oriented by economic terms and business practices, to some extent, encourages internalization of those terms—and their rationality. The emergent norms not only suggest that quality research and teaching can be adequately quantified, that grades do reflect what students learn, that retention rates indicate institutional success, among others, but also imply that people are necessarily separate from others and situated in a competitive way.

While a neoliberal orientation reflects a power/knowledge regime that seeks to situate people as objects and subjects and emphasizes the differences between people to distinguish them from each other, Foucault suggests that people cannot be autonomous because we are necessarily socially constructed (Bevir, 1999). A notion of autonomy would suggest that a person could exist outside society. Foucault implies this is not

possible because one cannot escape the influence of some kind of societal normalization because people are born into and live in relation. This is not to say that people cannot become aware of normalizing influences and seek to act in ways that counter them. Mark Bevir (1999) suggests one can engage reason, senses, the development of perspective, reflection, among others, to consider how to act within institutions and society. While one's responses and actions may influence how one experiences social constructs to an extent, one cannot be separate or autonomous from these constructs.

A Confucian relationality shares the same assumption—that people are not autonomous—but takes it in a different direction than Foucault does. A framework of relationality drawn from classical Chinese philosophical texts envisions life as processual and, because people are situated necessarily in relation, it suggests that relationships are of utmost importance. One has some choice about how one engages with others in ways that can influence the robustness of a relationship. For instance, people who act toward one another with a sense of reciprocity, respect, and care may have stronger, more enriched relationships. People grow through their relationships. To be clear, a notion of relation does not mean that people cannot have their own personalities and differences, but, rather, Confucian relationality suggests that our individualities emerge through our engagement with others. While Foucault suggests that power/knowledge regimes can situate people as objects and subjects generating societal norms that mask the complexity of people causing oppression and suffering, a concept of relationality emphasizes that people can influence norms because they generate and perpetuate them continually through their activities.

A Confucian relational perspective offers a profoundly distinct view of institutions as formations that seek to organize relations, which can generate norms and knowledges, impacting how people act and what they believe without a need to situate people as individuals. This is not to shy away from the fact that institutions can function in oppressive ways to keep certain groups of people out of them. Rather, this orientation suggests that because relation is primary, it reminds that institutions exist because people construct them continually. Because institutions exist only because people in relation constitute them, how people relate influences them. In fact, educational institutions could be situated not only as organizing relations between people, but also as generating roles and chances for relating. While the roles reflect varied levels of institutional power,

from a relational perspective they could also be perceived as creating opportunities for unintended activities that have the potential to unsettle the product-oriented aims of the institution including the construct of people as autonomous individuals.

Distinguishing Confucian Relationality

A neoliberal framework, which situates people as autonomous for competitive purposes to distinguish them from each other, is largely a product-oriented perspective that tends to be reductive in nature because it backgrounds complexity to make it easier to compare people. In other words, it is an approach that tends to exclude those aspects that may serve to complicate comparative identifiers. But a Confucian relationality, on the other hand, situates people as necessarily constituted by others and in doing so assumes and foregrounds complexity. Because it is process oriented, it is more inclusive in nature because perceived differences do not have a pressure to be framed as having competitive implications. Rather, considering activities as emergent welcomes diversity because differences may enrich the activities themselves in part by initiating inquiry. Because outcomes are not the sole valued focus, the experience of the ongoing activity itself matters. This direction of thinking when extended to considering broader notions of relationality implies that varied frameworks of relationality need not be viewed as competitive but rather as complementary. Different characterizations of relationality emerge as a matter of inclusive emphasis rather than exclusive. While this book engages a concept of Confucian relationality, I want to point out that there are other related notions, which differ with regard to their focus and purpose.

Eurocentric perspectives, for instance, generally employ the term “relationality” as a useful metaphysical concept, often framed as a reverse discourse deployed to challenge epistemological, ontological, or methodological norms. For instance, it can be a way to resist notions of dualistic beliefs and ways of knowing reflected by Platonic and Rousseauian educational theories (Stone, 1988/2013). Lynda Stone suggests that a relational epistemology is largely feminist and potentially transformative because relation is basic; emphasizing relation challenges the notion of transcendental truths. This construct echoes poststructuralist interests in considering how power relations shape notions of truth and

knowledge, destabilizing assumptions that there exists some kind of direct link between them (St. Pierre, 2000). For instance, engaging relationality loosens notions of positionality from being essentialist and fixed.

In addition to providing epistemological challenges to binary thinking about mind/body, subject/object, and sciences/humanities, among others, Barbara Thayer-Bacon (2010) makes a more specific case for a relational epistemological perspective when framing knowing as transactional. This pragmatist social feminist view, as Thayer-Bacon calls it, situates beliefs, expectations, and standards as socially constructed, requiring continual critique and adjustment; people construct what we know through our relationships with others. An idea, for example, cannot be isolated but exists in a web of knowing that emerges through people's embodied social environments. The characterization of a relational epistemology can be useful for "active engagement" and "democratic inclusion" as a way to connect educational theory and practice (Thayer-Bacon, 2010, p. 3). For educators, this means not prioritizing ideas (or abstractions or objectivity) over experiences (often seen as subjective, concrete, temporal) or vice versa, but rather to envision their connectedness. This move emphasizes the importance of developing awareness of the role of contexts and beliefs in the construction of knowing while also accommodating ambiguity. When people are situated as active participants in a natural world that is contingent, this focus considers a view of what phenomena are possible rather than what may be perceived as actual.

While Thayer-Bacon uses a concept of relationality as a way to reframe philosophical notions of epistemology, Karen Barad (2007), drawing on quantum physics, suggests that relationality can be used to consider how notions of epistemology, ontology, and ethics are mutually implicative and inseparable. Barad offers a concept of "agential realism" to destabilize scholars' perceptions of the normative boundaries among humanities, social sciences, and traditional sciences to provoke more far-reaching conversations. In particular, Barad suggests that a relational ontology provides the basis for a "posthumanist performative account of material bodies," which indicates that agencies form through relation. A key part of the conception of agential realism is the notion of intra-action, which is described as different from interaction because it implies that identifiable agencies do not precede relation but emerge from it. Agencies are enmeshed and only become distinctive through relation.

Barad further invokes relation between humans and nonhumans through the suggestion that there is reciprocity between "thinking about

something and knowing your intentions (concerning the matter)” (Barad, 2007, p. 21). The nature of intentionality needs to be rethought because circumstances inform thinking. As a result, intentions cannot preexist relation. In fact, Barad (2007) states—provocatively—that

Perhaps intentionality might better be understood as attributable to a complex network of human and nonhuman agents, including historically specific sets of material conditions that exceed the traditional notion of the individual. Or perhaps it is less that there is an assemblage of agents than there is an entangled state of agencies. (p. 23)

Humans and nonhumans, then, cannot ever be considered as existing separately from others but, rather, as necessarily actively embedded in particular changing contexts. While one may seek to describe a person or “thing” in particular ways, the act of description itself is always partial because it entails the act of selection, which smacks of artifice because to select is to distinguish and background relation. For Barad, relationality can be a useful theoretical tool to reconfigure notions of meaning and boundaries that envision the world, human and nonhuman, as deeply connected.

While Barad discusses relationality with regard to the inextricability of agencies and its implications for the entangled relations between humans and nonhumans, Bruno Latour (2004) invokes it epistemologically with a cultural context in mind. Latour argues for a repositioning of the critic not simply as one who participates in a process of critique and deconstruction of objects for the sake of it, or for possible misuse, but one, who through thoughtful, even ethical analysis, can contribute to the generation of meaning. In particular, Latour argues that epistemological matters of fact are situated as emergent and relational to matters of concerns, implying a reality that is not bound by matters of fact. They are limited representations of experience: “Matters of fact are only very partial and, I would argue, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concerns . . .” (Latour, 2004, p. 232). For example, the intention of identifying something as an object or fact implicates it in a web of matters of concern. Latour uses relationality to consider how matters of fact are always embedded in matters of concerns rather than existing in isolated or transcendent ways devoid of contexts.

While the renderings of Eurocentric notions of relationality that I have described so far emphasize a largely epistemological perspective, a concept of relationality drawn from reading classical Chinese texts, instead, has a different focus. Rather than an emphasis on perceptions of knowing, Confucian relationality largely engages a notion of the world as specific and embodied, taking as its focus the human realm of conduct. This compels a view of people as constituted by others in particular ways. I discuss this in more detail in chapter 3. In brief, however, people are not seen as abstractions but emerge in specific relation. Because people are particular and emergent, this implicates a process-oriented view of life as changing. When we accept there is no individual, no essence of a person, then it suggests that people are contingent and foregrounds the importance of experiences.

I want to point out that engaging a specific notion of relationality does not reductively devalue others. Choosing to use a Confucian relationality to read higher educational institutions does not presume that, for example, Barad's considerations of the connections between humans and nonhumans or relational epistemologies are moot. Rather, I see them together as generating a broader field of relationality; rather than antithetical, the frameworks have different emphases that can coexist and complement each other. While it may be difficult to characterize "relationality" beyond a general notion of connection without delving into intentions and specific contexts, I suggest the term's flexibility reminds educators that our endeavors are particular—necessarily spatially, sensorially, and temporally experienced. In fact, the more ways that relationality as a conception is theorized in specific contexts, the more complex the field of relationality that develops. The multiplicity of purposes for its use presents an opportunity to consider how the term's meanings take specific shape from engagement. The frameworks develop meaning when they are engaged contextually, and I situate myself as one of many exploring the implications of these constructions. In the case of this research involving educational institutions, I use a Confucian relationality to consider the primary contextual value of enriching human relationships and communities through dynamic intra-actions. More broadly, this view of a notion of relationality as continually emergent and accommodating of differing notions and informed by them suggests that rather than a product-oriented, dualistic notion of winners or losers, better or worse, a Confucian relationality features

creative and generous conjunctive notions—“and,” “if”—encouraging focus without losing complexity.

Attending to Processes

The purpose of the book is twofold. First, it seeks to construct a concept of Confucian relationality through the reading of a classical Chinese text. To do this, I situate the Confucian tradition as a relationally dynamic one in part because its commentarial practices suggest that textual meaning is continually constructed through readers' engagement. I explore this perspective in more detail in chapter 1. If the activity of reading is considered a way to construct meaning about the classical texts, then this suggests that the particular temporal and spatial locations of readers influences the meaning of the texts too. In other words, textual meaning emerges through the activity of reading. In chapter 2, I share my reading of a translation of the classical text *Zhongyong* and use it to construct a concept of Confucian relationality, a process-oriented concept that situates people as necessarily constituted by others. This suggests that classical Confucian texts have relevance as interdisciplinary resources for contemporary contexts.

Second, the book explores how the concept can be used to foster inquiry about contemporary higher educational contexts by drawing attention to the product-oriented nature of some practices and values. In particular, engaging the concept of Confucian relationality suggests the value of attending to process-oriented aspects like developing the craft of teaching and the faculty collegiality that emerges through participation in learning communities that foster imaginative collaborative learning, which enrich academic communities in unexpected ways. In fact, what emerges from this exploration is the surprising resonant value of teaching, which rather than a normatively considered unidirectional activity becomes an important context for faculty learning too. The engagement of the concept with specific contexts at the same time also elaborates various aspects of a Confucian relationality, which contributes to ongoing contextualizing of a notion of Confucian relationality. The inquiry challenges educators to envision faculty roles beyond product-oriented notions of separation and competition to situate them as relational and changing.

More specifically, I use the concept to examine three specific examples of higher educational phenomena. In chapter 3, I use the concept