

Management and ‘huna’: Integrating Ancient Hawai’ian Spirituality into Daily Ethical Management?

(1st Draft – do not cite without permission)

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Key Words

Constructivist Ethic, Spirituality, Management, huna

Introduction to a Phenomenon

There is this slowly rising trend that can be observed, that the discussion about spirituality in management is getting more and more important. This is manifested in three facets where one is the growing number of world-wide business and academic conferences on this topic (see for example UMASS 2000; Delbecq 2001; AH 2004; Faulhammer 2004; SiB 2004). The second facet is a development in the economy, where companies like Xerox, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell or a law firm provide psychological help and spiritual development for their employees (see for example Dean 2003; Driver 2003; Fry 2003). Last but not least the third facet emerges in the business of consultancy or coaching where trainers draw back on works from Ken Wilber known as the Integral approach, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) or Zen techniques, shaman journeys and others.

This phenomenon raises the three questions for a conscious observer that sees this phenomenon to be an important one. This is at first how can this ‘spirituality’ be defined and what lay’s behind the ‘spiritual’ approaches? The second question is: can this ‘spirituality’ help in the discussion about moral in our economy and an ethical design of it? Both questions imply directly the third aspect of this paper that is: where are the risks and how to implement this into education sensitively?

Spirituality and Ethic

Spirituality sounds for some people that I confront with like being closely linked to religion where linkages between spirituality and ethics are seen more implicitly – but it is the other way around. Reflecting new approaches in management studies, an answer for the first question is developed by discussing definitions of spirituality and developing a scheme for ordering today’s papers in this field of research. The definition is then linked to a concept of ethic via a constructivist perspective to already work with the second question.

Roots of the spirituality discussion in management

The study of spirituality in social sciences has in my view different roots (e.g. Study of Religion: Bochinger 1994; Human Resource Management: Lips-Wiersma 1997; Organizational Studies: Mitroff & Denton 1999a; Management Studies: McCormick 1994). Since its uprising in 1994 there has been a wide amount of publications (e.g. special issues of the Leadership Quarterly [2005] or the Journal of Organizational Change Management [2003]), and in the Academy of Management a special interest group (MSR) has been founded focussing on this topic. But when reading different articles or books each reader

stumbles over “[d]efinitional difficulties” (Gibbons & Briner 2002, p. 3) between each of it. When pointing out the primary linkages of the definitions towards their common basis – as von Foerster (1995) did it for the discussion on Cybernetic – we will see some main facets of spirituality commonly understood by scientists all over the world.

Referring to the Study of Religion, Management scientists firstly base their discussion on a definition of Religion (see McCormick 1994), so that it was interpreted “[...] as the inner experience of the individual when he senses a Beyond [...]” (Clark 1958, p. 22). In this early stage spirituality in management was clearly separated from the institutional character of religion - that means “[...] practicing rituals, adhering to dogma, and attending services [...]” (Conger 1994, p. 13). Interestingly, by separating spirituality from religion the author did not realize, that referring to a ‘Beyond’ also implies special religious thoughts – so it gets clearer why the author added to his definition “[...] Spirituality [...] had more to do with life's deeper motivations and an emotional connection to God [...]” (Conger 1994, p. 13). When opposing this literature with a common definition of Religion that is defined by three categories – 1) artefacts like prayer, god or spirit ‘given’ in advance to followers, 2) by functionalism for safety and hold, or 3) systems theoretical perspective for reducing complexity on ‘unanswerable’ questions (see Stolz 2001, p. 13-35) – we can clearly say that this definition did not get far away enough from religion meaning something like religiosity; although the ‘emotional connection’ points towards an inner experience. So to this line – mostly about the protestant or catholic version of religiosity as an inner experience of God – some other articles can be grouped to, such as: Bennett 2001; Delbecq, *et al.* 2001; Neal 2001; Weiss, *et al.* 2001; Williams 2001; Fry 2003.

Another line in this discussion can be drawn out of the interpretation as spirituality being a mental Position - clearly and totally separated from religion in advance - that focuses on Self-Consciousness, Self-Search or Meaning, and Individuation (see Edlund 1998 with linkages to Bochinger 1994 and Ferguson 1980). In this context a number of other works can be named such as: Frost & Egri 1994; Langeland 2001; Lips-Wiersma 2002; Pauchant 2003. A wider definition but in the same context can be seen in the equitation that “spirituality = a worldview + a path” (Cavanaugh, *et al.* 2001, p. 6) that helps filling some gaps in daily live like a deeper purpose or a solid ground of security (*ibid.*, p. 3). The most important thing in this definition is the point that the ‘worldview’ can be interpreted as a religious or New Age phenomenon but also as Marxism or Capitalism (*ibid.*, p. 7; also Hicks 2002 on spiritual diversity); and that the path is the way of inner and outer experience. The point of view including Capitalism as a spiritual path is also supported by ‘Artha’ the Hinduism principle of materialism and richness on earth as one way that is grouped within three others. Those are ‘Dharma’ to be righteous, ‘Kama’ to live for activity, culture and joy as well as ‘Moksa’ to reach the inner ‘Samsara’ or Salvation (see Sharma 2001). What we can learn out of this context is that we as researchers shall not focus too much in dealing with spirituality like ‘Moksa’ because there are a lot of interpretations about what path to follow; including religious fundamentalism or hardcore capitalism in the workplace.

The third line that I could extract out of the definitions of spirituality in management has been given in the organizational study literature. Here in an American survey the well known authors I. Mitroff and E. Denton summarized spirituality as interconnectedness what means being connect to the three stages of “[...] ones complete self [...] others [...] the entire universe [...]” (Mitroff & Denton 1999b, S. 83 and Mitroff & Denton 1999a; or Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003). When interconnectedness is linked to the presence of a beyond or god then this definition falls back on the first line – but here the author’s make clear that being spiritual does not mean believing in god (see Mitroff & Denton 1999b, p. 89). Seeing

interconnectedness as one perspective of the many worldviews it can be integrated into the second line.

Towards a broad definition of spirituality

Here I suggest to base all further discussion about spirituality in the origin of it's research – that is the research about the New Age secularization (see Boehinger 1994). In contrast to religion, spirituality is defined as a free-minded attitude with answers for questions based on inner and outer but individual experience (see Boehinger 1994, p. 386, 391). Those experiences may be influenced by writings in advance, but fully felled inside as a connection to one-self. So as a result spirituality can be seen in the triangle of (1) an inner force of questioning, as (2) one point of view and (3) a path of experience in the same time (see Cavanaugh, *et al.* 2001; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2003). I would like to clearly separate it from the simple equitation given in advance, because it is a little bit more than having a worldview and a path: it means following the inner path and experiencing it leaded by a force.

On ethics, moral and the controversy to constructivist ethic

When now trying to bridge the gap between the two constructs of spirituality and ethic, a definition of ethic is needed. Using a broad one like 'framing action' (see Copray 1998) we see clearly that some principles or paths shall be excluded. Also in the 'Ökonomische Ethik' that is focused on cooperation for mutual advantage (see Suchanek 2001) institutions shall provide - by their quality and not there quantity - a framework for self-interest and moral behaviour together (*ibid.* p. 52). But in all cases of definitions, there is one point of reference from which all judgement shall be drawn. Referring to the broad definition of spirituality (where Marxism and Capitalism or let's say the principle of 'Artha' can be included as well) we see that there is no clear point of reference. This fact has already been analysed by constructivist: "it is impossible to talk about ethics" (von Foerster 1995, p. 2). Leaning on Wittgenstein Heinz von Foerster argues that when knowing what one shall do, one will always ask what if not following this rule. For sure, the development of a rather complex and / or high quality web of institutions might help to deal with one or another problem. But the web of institutions always gets thicker even if only their quality is in the focus, because the more 'leakages' are found by highly self-interested employees and entrepreneurs the more must be corrected; that's the tail of regulation.

So, one way to overcome this never ending story of setting new institutions or correct old ones is to support a change in consciousness and self-consciousness. What Ferguson said to be an 'Aquarian Conspiracy' academics may extract out of the theory of constructivism that results in the position that "[...] The complement to necessity is not chance, it is choice [...]" (von Foerster 1995, p. 7). Moral behaviour is not to be dictated by entities outside oneself but it lay's fundamentally in the way of how we construct our universe by sensomotoric action (see von Foerster 1994). Morality means commenting on its own self-observation referring to his own framework that is finally relative (see Maturana 1980, p. 57). To summarize the statement of constructivism versus an uniformly distributed and sanctioned ethic, one might reflect on this: "[...] whenever I act, I am changing myself and the universe as well [...]" Either to see myself as a citizen of an independent universe, whose regularities, rules and customs I may eventually discover, or to see myself as the participant of a conspiracy, whose customs, rules, and regulations we are now inventing [...]" (von Foerster 1995, p. 8). There is no way out of this interpretation that leads to a stable ethic regardless of the self-consciousness of the individual being – the constructor: It's the task for each of us on it's own to select a frame of reference (see Maturana 1980, p. 57 f.).

So the constructivist ethic supports the definition of spirituality where the own point of view with a path of experience guided by an inner force integrates the responsibility for this perspective. In a constructivist view this perspective is punctuated by the statement: “Consequently, no one can ever be rationally convinced of a truth which he did not have already implicitly in his ultimate body [...]” (Maturana 1980, p. 57). So there is no institution to stop a selfish view but the ones that are accepted by the individual because they are finally self-constructed.

‘huna’ and Management

Having a clear definitional basis for spirituality and ethic now, what follows is a discussion of one spiritual way that shall be after that linked to management education. This example shall exemplify how the development of a consciousness self-responsible observer may lead to an ethical economy so that no armies of bureaucrats are needed to deal with the web of institutions or their quality.

Because all known academic works about ‘huna’ in management (see Netzer 2002; Frost & Egri 1994) do not focus on the topic of ethics a short introduction to ‘huna’ is given in advance.

‘huna’ and Spirituality

‘Why dealing with ‘huna’?’ is not an intuitively answered question: for most people ‘huna’ is unknown, but for some – also academics – it’s a growing point of interest. ‘huna’ can be described as a system that is based on the ancient Polynesian shamanic traditions (see King 1997 (1991)). Firstly re-discovered by Max Freedom Long after a long period of religious suppression by white missionaries (see Long 2000 (1965)) he tried to re-create the spiritual knowledge by studying the language and called his results HUNA™ (see Huna-Research 2004). More being a western-protestant ‘Creation’ than a ‘Re-Creation’ criticised by Serge Kahili King – an American citizen educated after the sacred knowledge of an old ‘real’-Hawai’ian shaman (King 1997 (1991), p. 12) –, he tried to bring his experience into the discussion within different publications (see for example King 1996b, King 1996a, King 1997 (1991)). Training open-minded people, the ‘huna’-network today grew up to about 70 trainers in Europe where five German trainers focus directly on organizational consultancy (see King 2004a). The network is surely small in comparison to big organizations – like McKinsey or Kienbaum that also coach managers or deal with complex human resource training – but its existence itself is in my view a phenomenon worth to be studied. For this case I would like to focus on the interpretation of ‘huna’ following Serge Kahili King. Without supporting one point of view or the other, that ‘huna’ is more or less ‘ancient’ than ‘HUNA™’, the observer can find a book from a German speaking female shaman that tries to import ‘huna’-shamanism to management (see Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 22; i.e. shaman-seminars are already held at General Motors, AT&T, Bank of Bosten und McKinsey&Co). Within the row of academic articles one does not find any linkages to ethic but medical analysis (see Handy 1965; Paltin 1986; Foltz 1987), socio-cultural analysis (see Foltz 1985) and studies about the integration of ‘huna’ in the western life-style (see Cech 2002), western psychological concepts (see Köck 2005) or the organizational context (see Frost & Egri 1994; Netzer 2002). Interestingly, Frost & Egri (1994) did write their paper about ‘the’ shaman point of view in organizational change management but 1) without naming it ‘huna’ and 2) citing King (1997 (1991)) with his work about ‘huna’.

Following the above given definition of spirituality it is easy to categorize ‘huna’ into it. This, because the founder of the ‘huna’-network himself described ‘huna’ as a „[...] philosophy of life [...] with [...] some guidelines for practicing that philosophy [...]“ (King 2004b, p. 1). So

each who selects this perspective to be his own, had or has this force of asking questions, finding a suitable worldview and is able to experience it by himself.

The Basic concept of 'huna'

King begins his 'urban-shamanism' with the theory about the three selves (see King 1997 (1991), p. 31 ff.) while Ulmer-Janes (2000) is more focused on the practical aspects of the seven principles; those are following later in King's book. The selves mean that the human 'Self' can be divided into three different shapes (see Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 138 ff.). This does not mean separating the 'Self' into three different entities but facets being another manifestation of the 'Self'. Although what follows now seems to be closely linked to the psychological understanding of Sigmund Freud (I-Me-Mine), we are told that they are different (see Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 138) – there is only one 'Master-Thesis' / 'Diplomarbeit' were similar conceptions of 'huna' with the psychology of Carl G. Jung re carefully studied (see Köck 2005).

Turning to the three shapes of the 'Self' I start with 'Ku' that is named to be the experience. There, the past, patterns and learning are stored. It shall help us to cope with repeating problems and has stored routines of past 'worldviews'. That 'Ku' is the facet of the 'Self' being connected directly to the physical world represented by the body. It controls all functions of it and articulates physically if something in other spiritual dimensions is misleading. 'Lono' in contrast to 'Ku' is the intellect and rational decision maker that tries to anticipate future activity. Mental constructs, schemes or routines are logically activated by 'Lono' working together with 'Ku' – so both selves are recognized by 'the western manager', who has learned to work with experiences from the past using them to make a forecast for decision processes. Depending on the knowledge in 'Ku' and the wideness of the conscious and logical decision maker 'Lono' behaviour is steered. E.g. standing in front of the decision to burn waste outside of the 12-mile-zone or pay a high fee for the disposal depends on those to 'selves' working together. But there is the third self in 'huna' that is 'Kane'. This is the higher self interconnected with the 'whole' where spirituality, creativity and intuition lies within. This connection with the 'whole' – mostly forgotten in western societies – leads the decision maker through a reintegration to a result where interests of stakeholders and influences on the environment are recognized. Stepping back to the decision of the 12-mile-zone it is the communication with the interconnected 'Kane' that leads to the understanding of the systemic process accepting the higher fee for disposal.

The question is whether the understanding of those three selves already leads to a more ethical decision making. In principle, the connection to the so called 'Kane' might lead always to the best result but following King and Ulmer-Janes 'huna' has basic principles that should help to understand the 'setting' of the three selves. Many techniques for communicating with the selves or supporting the intuition and work with the own 'energy' are closely linked to those principles, but now I will analyse them only regarding to their impact on a decision process.

The seven principles of 'huna' and there influence on 'ethical' decision making

In the book about 'huna' in management (see Ulmer-Janes 2000) – based on King's understanding of a shaman as a healer of relations (see King 1997 (1991), p. 9) – she starts with the seven principles: IKE, KALA, MAKIA, MANAWA, ALOHA, MANA, PONO. The first principle means, that the world seems to be for what we as the observers take it – or it is what one construes. Ulmer-Janes (2000) links it to "O KE KAHUA MAMUA, MAHOPE KE KŪKULU" (Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 47) or in other words the building follows the plan what King (1997 (1991)) describes as reality being a relative dream. Basically, this principle can be

connected to the main statement of constructivism that anything said is said by an observer and that ones something is said it does construe a communicable entity (see Maturana 1980). A world of war or a world where wasting the earth for higher profit is surely one way of construction but the responsibility for the results lay in the hand of each of those who made the decision. And in turn the decision maker has no right at all to be sad about others depositing their waste in front of his house when he sees wasting to be a righteous path. If he burns his waste outside of the 12-mile-zone and then arguing that this place belongs to nobody he failed with the second principle: there are no borders but illusions – physically, psychologically and spiritually (see Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 57 ff.). She connects ‘huna’ again to the constructivism and sees an entity only be made by its counterpart or its’ surrounding (compare to Maturana 1980). King (1997 (1991)) differentiated the borders to be on the one hand creatively made by an observer or ‘filtered’ through internal constructions. He adds that because there are no borders, everything is connected like a web to each other! Burning waste in the 12-mile-zone means then wasting the neighbours or better the own garden. That’s why in turn everything is possible for oneself but only possible for a group of people if they believe in that too. Here ‘huna’ can be linked again to a constructivist point of view: “[...] We are free! The complement to necessity is not chance, it is choice [...]” (von Foerster 1995, p. 7). For example corruption is surely possible, but practicing it in one business has effects to all other spheres of ones action. Now changing to the third principle – that of MAKIA – meaning energy follows attention and attention follows energy. Basically ‘huna’ does not make a difference between thought, words or action so focusing one’s thoughts are equal to acting. Here we loose the freedom of a German song ‘Die Gedanken sind frei’ meaning that we are allowed to think about everything as long as we do not act against common law – the power of thoughts is already usable for ones own path of sustainable action. So, even thinking about a ‘dirty’ alternative means in ‘huna’ focusing energy at a place, which may be used by others for their action. Knowing that everything is constructed, borders are illusions and that thoughts are equal to energy the fourth principle supports those three by saying that the point of power is ‘now’. Time – being a construct of prediction (Lono) and memory (Ku) – is only changeable in this point of action. King (1997 (1991), p. 65) uses the concept of relativity to express that time is not an ultimate force in the universe but an invention and so the point of action can be easily stressed along a period (again the constructivist point of view can be tied to this principle, see von Glasersfeld 1996). Taking over the responsibility for each construct of the world we are in ‘huna’ no more able to postpone a decision or close our eyes ones again. The fifth principle of ALOHA is the power of love. Love in the context of ‘huna’ can be understood as a harmony meaning ‘being happy with someone’ (see Ulmer-Janes 2000, p. 91). An important point in this context is that of honesty because ‘Ku’ and ‘Kane’ can not be overthrown by ‘Lono’; ALOHA can be given to each entity created in correspondence with the second principle. So, when criticising an employee in and with love truly, and closing critics with support for him, then it will arrive as peaceful critics. The other way around would mean hating an employee but using the ‘sandwich’-technique of criticising would have the same effect like direct critics (see King 1997 (1991), p. 92). Now it is time to change to the sixth principle that means: all power comes from within. Like the interconnectedness of the second principle ‘huna’ says that each success and each failure, each happiness and sadness are all created and influenced by one-self and the power to move away from sadness also lays within. It is important to see in this context that not only oneself but all other created entities have the same power; because of the second concept of borders as illusions. And with the power in the constructivist their comes the responsibility but also the second order defiance “[...] we do not see that we do not see [...]” (von Foerster 1979, p. 6) – power in this context must be used wisely. Last but not least the seventh principle gathers what von Glasersfeld called viability: it’s the description of the key fitting in an unknown lock (see von Glasersfeld 1984) or an action / tool that includes already the result (see King 1997 (1991), p.

75). So for example the subjective truth of less costs for human resources by firing some thousand employees – like the Deutsche Bank or Opel did last year – is validated by the result (and they lay in the tool: less HR means less HR-costs) but it does not solve the problem why the company made less profit with the same amount of employees – the main job is then trying different keys and be sensitive for the reaction of the lock.

It gets already clear out of the above named seven principles to follow, that behaviour like corruption, illegal wasting of the earth or firing people for more profit can hardly be connected with ‘huna’. But there are situations where one might not be sure about what decision to take choosing for example between a self-analysed ‘raise’ with ‘dirty trick’ and a ‘fall’ of the company. Here ‘huna’ provides a lot of examples for techniques healing in everyday life that are not in the focus of this paper.

Foresight for Spirituality in Education and a Critical Reflection

Having discussed the spiritual way of ‘huna’ and its possible influences on ethical decision making the last aspect about the risks of spirituality in management and how it might be integrated into management education in general shall be discussed.

Critics on spirituality in management studies

Although the study of spirituality is a young field of research there are already some empirical foundations for the wide theoretically held discussion. But when referring to ‘huna’ in special, then I have to tell that there are no empirical studies about the influences on ethic, motivation or other constructs yet. This is one of the main steps needed in further research to support some propositions about the power of ‘huna’ with some experiments or interviews. Especially the different techniques used in ‘huna’ to work with the three selves shall be one point to deal with. Staying in the concepts of spirituality and constructivist ethic there is no common evidence needed but at least some who work with ‘huna’ and can talk about their experience. The observer might also see that when leaving the concept of ALOHA and KALA there is a great potential for a misuse of the concept – but as already showed: out of the discussion of spirituality and constructivism the responsibility lay’s in the hand of the observer.

When talking about spirituality in general, there is always the risk of getting lost – lost within or lost out there, when using a more focused definition of spirituality. Critically, some authors reject the literature from gurus that preach the one or another way of following different rituals, prayers or something else (see Luechauer 1998). This, because it has been observed that spiritual ‘leaders’ may turn out to be a wolf within the skin of a sheep (see McCormick 2003). So ‘buying’ spirituality into the organization, e.g. by using change agents, always arrives with the problematic aspects of fellowship and earnings. Special critics are also discussed, when spiritual consultants ‘steer’ the employees instead of supporting their development (see Watts 2003). But binding this critics together and give the hint to remember that my definition of spirituality means following his own path of an inner experience than there shall be no risk to follow a guru.

For sure, the study on spirituality in management is also criticised regarding the methodology used and their often free interpretation of the results (see for example Mischel 2001; Talaulicar 2000). Those critics are welcome in the debate about spirituality because they help to find a way through the jungle of phenomenon’s and their analysis.

Spirituality and Management Education

There are already hints for the introduction of spirituality beside or instead of ethics into management education. A first suggestion is a course where texts are read, that help on the

reflection of 'how to find meaning in work?' or 'how to accept others and the self?' and 'how to produce a healthy society?' (see Golden & Diamond 2002). Being focused on the self-expression and the search for meaning another variant suggested is to work with texts, case studies and small games in a combination where aspects of creativity and especially 'inner work' are focused. As teaching strategies for supporting the 'inner work' storytelling, creative writing, field studies and discussion rounds with representatives of different spiritual 'paths' are suggested (see West 2003).

Another variant is seen in the use of the paradox in education (see Lips-Wiersma 2004 and the special issue of the Journal of Management Education [2000]). In her studies about the impact of spirituality on career behaviour she extracted out of her data that especially embracing the paradox was one of the main tasks of spiritual journeys. For a lecturer in management studies this means he has to deconstruct himself being a teacher at first. Showing his one way of thought that produces types of paradox that might be worth to deal with - rather than teaching some tools out of his box of Pandora - will be the result. Not teaching 'dilemmas' or 'competing values' the lecture shall focus for example on the paradox of spirituality in business itself as a challenge: spirituality leading to the inner path and maybe away from the work shall help a company to have an ultimate competitive advantage (see Lips-Wiersma 2004, p. 122).

Out of the principles of 'huna' where King (1997 (1991)) developed several techniques for example to get into contact with his or her own intuition like Hailona, 'Oi-pahu or the shaman stone-throwing I would suggest to 'practice' different paths and techniques in management education. As spirituality being understood mainly based on experience and a worldview, different 'keys' might work in different cases and the effect of self-consciousness by testing would be greater than only by talking. I know that this suggestion is a far step beyond the idea of a seminar talking about spirituality. But I expect it to be a necessary step in education to experience what we are talking about to see whether it fit's. Not only 'huna' is full of techniques but Zen-meditation or NLP could directly be 'tested' in the class-room.

To summarize all those suggestions it might be suitable to work on the one hand with different paths and guest-lecturer for small seminar groups that talk about their spiritual way and their experiences how the world reacts to certain 'keys'. On the other hand texts, games, case studies and 'field-work' using different techniques that imply dealing with the own schemes and points of view should be used to support or initiate the self-consciousness and the reflection. For sure, this type of courses would be a challenge for the 'common' lecturer as well but it might be a very good source of inspiration and learning for all participants – that is the lecturer as well.

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