**Introduction:**

The paper exhibits the following organisation. It commences with a brief overview of the research methods employed and data collection. It then proceeds to fashion a comparative consideration of “Western” and “Eastern” philosophical approaches to mind, body and consciousness. Descartes ideas are examined under the respective lens of Husserlian Phenomenology and the later Wittgenstein (Smith, Larkin & Flowers 2009). Significantly, Phenomenology and Wittgenstein exhibit certain practical similarities to ideas in the “Eastern” philosophy’s of Hinduism & Buddhism (Harvey1990). Buddhism has fashioned a practical philosophically informed treatment of how mind works that includes at its centre meditation practice. This paper explores meditation from a western philosophical vantage, treating it as a course of practical action.

The empirical focus is a southern Buddhist walking meditation. Prior to examining walking meditation in fine detail, the paper first explores something of the fundamentals of what it is to be a bi pedal mammal. We are embodied beings & most courses of practical action, involve some form of bodily locomotion. Walking practice is acquired pedagogically as a form of situated learning that is locally organised. The paper then proceeds to explore something of the pedagogic purpose and the practical effects of walking practice on the meditators consciousness. Analytic directions from within Phenomenology & Ethnomethodology are employed in the study of walking meditation. Walking meditation is designed to develop mindfulness of bodily locomotion, promoting a sophisticated level of awareness. This practice promotes awareness of embodied consciousness, the subtle intertwining of mind and body.

The paper concludes with certain proposals for future research. Much Buddhist scholarship employs concepts from within the languages of Pali and Sanskrit. Ancient "dead" languages from the Indian sub continent (Harvey 1990). In this paper, in the first instance when Pali and Sanskrit concepts are employed, a translation is offered and the concept is shown in italics.

**Research Methods & Methodology:**

This research report is part of a broader corpus of publications. Its findings are an outcome of approximately eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in "Southern" Buddhist monastic contexts. My initial encounter with walking meditation practice presented me with an enigma. What are these people doing, why are they moving so deliberately and so slowly? What is the purpose of this strange form of walking? The pedagogic purpose to walking practice became most apparent when I engaged in strict practice. Strict practice can last between seven days and two months or longer. At a strict practice a walking practice is alternated with a sitting practice in an ongoing daily cycle of doing meditation. At a strict practice there is no conversation between the participants except when ‘reporting’ their experience of these meditations to the teacher.

Whilst the data on which this report is based was collected from within a broader organisational context as indicated above, this is not however the topic of the current research. The empirical focus of this report is a meditation practice that was acquired through pedagogic instruction, the detail of a course of practical action. An exemplar of this style of research report is Sudnow's analytic study of playing Jazz piano (Sudnow 1978 Ball & Smith 2011). If Sudnow's work can be characterised as focusing on *how* to make a piano produce the sounds of Jazz then this work focuses on something fundamentally more mundane familiar and yet also extraordinary, how to transform walking into a mediation. Whilst Sudnow was able to play the piano, he required further instruction into how to make that playing sound like Jazz, similarly whilst I could walk I required further instruction into how to transform normal walking into a meditational object. In one sense we adopt Garfinkel's dictum & render walking, an everyday activity "anthropologically strange" (Garfinkel 1967 P.9.). In the context of walking meditation practice, consciousness and bipedalism are its fundamental objects.

As Denzin, Anderson & Delamont have noted one outcome of certain post modern & post structuralist developments comprise the methodological fashioning of what has been termed auto ethnography ( Denzin 1997, Anderson 2006, Delamont 2007).

At the methodological level this paper can claim an auto ethnographic license for its research. Indeed, there are plainly certain evident characteristics in common. This paper describes how as a course of practical action walking meditation practice is assembled out of a corpus of linguistic pedagogic instructions. In this sense the ethnographic account is fashioned from the ethnographer’s reflexivity in and of the situated actions they engage in. This style of ethnographic report contributes towards a theory of social action in so far as it generates an account of a course of practical action (Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2013).

This research analytically explores a course of practical action & considers how something that is essentially mundane can be rendered news worthy. In common with Sudnow's research the consciousness of a course of practical action is the analytic object of enquiry, embodied action, body work. An ethnographically discovered practice is analytically explored by reference to certain themes within the philosophy of mind by employing an auto ethnographic variant. At the level of research practice, a record was fashioned & maintained of the "inner" experience / duration (consciousness) of a course of practical action, doing walking practice. In this sense experience can serve as an ethnographic / auto ethnographic object and a basis for documentary ethnographic inquiry & report writing. Having read the research report that follows the reader will be in an informed position to judge the extent to which it comprises a variant of auto ethnography.

**Comparative Approaches to Mind & Body;**

In the context of walking meditation practice, consciousness and bipedalism are fundamentals. Walking practice is communicated to a neophyte through pedagogic linguistic description and visual illustrative example. Consciousness, language and bipedalism are core to what it is to be human. Being human is an accomplishment that is contingent upon processes of practical reasoning. Consciousness is experienced in time, in a practical sense, we live time. Walking involves both time and energy and in the context of walking meditation, these are objects to work with. Bipedalism comprises a mechanical component of our biological embodiment (Carrier 1984). Bipedalism and consciousness are of practical concern for a number of academic disciplines (Byrne & Whiten eds. 1988 Graham 2010). “Western” orientations to consciousness and related matters find a focus in the legacy of Descartes. Descartes fashioned a dualistic view of being, psycho physical, consciousness and its embodiment, mind and body, which came to be criticised by later scholars (Descartes 1641 / 1986 Haldane & Ross 1967). Husserl emphasised the sense in which consciousness is always directed, consciousness is always consciousness of something. Mind always has a content or object. (Husserl 1960 ). The works of Wittgenstein are illuminating in so far as they are relevant for the study of consciousness and language. For Wittgenstein, language is a fundamental mental content, a mode of representation for the experience of consciousness (Wittgenstein 1953 ). Through language and other practical devices including visual images, we are able to work with mind and communicate our experience of consciousness. Buddhist and Hindu scholarship are examples of, "Eastern" approaches to mind, each tend to have a practical focus. They are grounded in the experience of working with mind in meditation, an exploration of how mind works (King 1980). The acquisition of competence in meditation practice is a practical accomplishment that is contingent upon a pedagogic system and practical reasoning (language).

Meditation comprises a part of what Eglin has termed the corpus of occult sciences (Eglin In Garfinkel ed. 1986). In Buddhism, meditation involves learning how to explore states of mind, working with meditative mental objects including the body in order to modify consciousness. This is empirically based, concrete practical investigative work with meditative objects. Through the essentially practical courses of action that comprise meditation, the meditator can seek to work with, gain insight into and even by degrees master aspects of consciousness. Mind is fundamentally mercurial in character, but through meditation practice, working with mind in an organised systematic manner, the “just how” of its functioning can be glimpsed. Aspects of mental processes can be understood more clearly. Buddhist Meditation practice offers the insight that all minds probably work in a fundamentally common natural biological manner. At a basic level, as beings with minds we are natural and biological, but through the employment of artfully and carefully fashioned cultural practices of meditation, we can embark upon understanding and transforming our mind. Through meditation we can seek to work with, gain insight into and even by degrees master aspects of consciousness. Walking practice is distinct amongst Buddhist meditation techniques in so far as the body and its basic bipedal locomotion serve as the object alongside the breath. Locomotion and the breath serve as objects to focus upon and thereby to become conscious of in the here and now of the practice, its embodiment.

**States of Mind as Courses of Practical Action:**

In broad outline, meditation involves taking an object and focusing attention upon it for the duration of the practice. That is, working with an object in order to subtly modify consciousness. Meditation is an acquired skill, a practical and in large part mental accomplishment . Meditation can be a powerful and controlled means of working with a mental object in order to acquire some mastery over the often mercurial and rapidly shifting mental content of consciousness. The ongoing changing consciousness experienced within daily life is replaced by a focused controlled manipulation of a mental object within meditation practice. This comprises the artful employment of imagination and concentration whilst working with particular meditative objects, a singularity of consciousness.

Walking meditation practice comes from within “Southern”, Theravãdan Buddhism whose central influence is the Pali canon (Harvey ed. 2001). Walking practice is designed to promote a gentle but powerful mindfulness of the body mind relationship, enabling focused calm and still mental states to arise. The meditators object is simultaneously the body in forward locomotion and the breath, with its calming or stilling potential for consciousness. The classic philosophical schools of Buddhism were initially located and spread from within the ancient civilisations of Asia. They taught a corpus of structured types of meditation practice, with variations on forms. For example, breathing practices, eidetic practices including visualisations, walking practices, standing practices, meta loving kindness practices, practices that employ stories or texts of which Zen Koans are a variant and the like (Buttny & Isbell, 1991).

Buddhist meditations share with other traditions of meditation, the taking of an object for the meditation practice (Descartes 1641, Husserl 1960). Within Buddhism, meditation practices are taught, a teacher guides a student, rather than through the study of textual products. This situated locally organised pedagogic process is the preferred mode of communication because of the subtle and frequently ephemeral nature of the exercise and the changes it can promote in the practitioner. It involves cultivating the powers of focused concentration and mindfulness and applying them to a common place activity, walking. The body that walks serves as the meditative object. A focused and directed mind that works with the body and the breath as mental objects. In part, these are the processes Garfinkel indexed when referring to “ the praxeological validity of instructed action ” (Garfinkel 1996 P.9. ).

**Bipedalism and the “Pedestrian” in Daily Life:**

As embodied beings, we are continuously engaged in the systematic construction and co-ordination of courses of practical action. The consequential engagement of mind and body within social organisation. A physical distinguishing characteristic of our species is that we are bipedal ( Megarry 1995). Being bipedal frees up our hands, for other purposes including the manufacture of socio cultural artifacts. In comparison with other primates, we are fully bipedal and have a relatively large brain and a functional ability with language (Jaynes 1976). Each of these characteristics has been significant in the development of our species as distinct and human.

As a bipedal species many courses of practical action, involve some form of bodily movement as a prerequisite. For much of daily life however, bipedalism and other bodily movements tend not to be consciously considered, and are in most of their particulars taken for granted. Embodiment and the body comprise background relevancy’s. At the purely mechanical level, the body's weight and the energy of locomotion is transmitted through the feet and the friction generated by their contact with the ground. The feet comprise central meditative objects within walking practice. Upright locomotion frees up the hands, whilst simultaneously offering an increased range of vision. The hands and the visual field each have a part in walking practice.

The more natural science informed physical anthropology has a long tradition of inquiry into significant forms of locomotive adaptation that may have predisposed us to become bipedal (Tuttle 2014). This scholarship is grounded for explanatory purposes in a form of biologically based Darwinian inspired historical reconstruction and conjecture (Megarry 1995). Physical anthropology also opens up the possibility of the study of the social organisation of bipedalism, walking in a community of other walkers. Goffman introduced such notions to the social sciences as the study of social organisation in the public domain (Goffman 1971). Goffman’s analysis of public settings was sensitive to their social organisational characteristics, as he informs us about the navigational advantages of bipedalism, “Pedestrians can twist, duck, bend, and turn sharply, and therefore, unlike motorists, can safely count on being able to extricate themselves in the last few milliseconds before impending impact.” (Goffman 1971 P.28.). Walking meditation practice is reliant on bipedalism. In a discussion about locating a site in which to carry out walking practice, Khantipalo has suggested that, “In Thailand and other tropical countries these paths are always within a thicket of trees so that they are comparatively cool.” (Khantipalo 1981 P.94.).

Whilst walking amounts to a bipedal accomplishment, it is simultaneously a routine aspect of our embodiment that we take for granted (Thomas 2008). Walking meditation practice however renders the act of walking “anthropologically strange”, and its basic constituents are empirically examined. Whilst in the contexts of daily life, walking is indeed an ordinary activity, the mental and physical rigours brought to bear during walking meditation practice are most certainly not. Walking meditation practice offers a framework for a detailed examination of certain of the constituent particulars of the assembly of walking as a routine course of practical action. Walking practice occasions a form of deconstruction of the act of walking. This encourages the meditator to become mindful of the activity, to be consciously in the moment, in the walk.

**Walking Meditation Practice; Experiencing Body & Mind:**

Within the Theravãdan tradition, there are two significant strands of meditation. Those designed to cultivate a balance of mindfulness and concentration, forms of calm meditation such as *Samatha,* *samãdhi*, and those intended to fashion and develop mindfulness, *Vipassanã* or “insight” meditation practice (Harvey 1990). Walking practice can be used in conjunction with each of these in order to sharpen up their practical emphasis. Meditation practices that focus on developing concentration and calm, *Samatha - yãna* and or those which focus on mindfulness and “insight”, *Vipassanã - yãna* , can each employ the objects of walking meditation to subtly modify consciousness.

At one level the instructions for walking practice are very straightforward, and mundane in their particulars. Most people are able to walk. The meditation teacher instructs the student to select a relatively quiet area such as an open space, private garden, path, passageway or large room to walk in. As Khantipalo recommends, “The requirement for this practice are a place to walk back and forth twenty or more paces long, preferably quiet and secluded.” (Khantipalo 1981 P.94.). The student is then instructed to “walk” in the selected area, but to walk as a meditation. In daily life, walking is common place and generally walking serves a purpose, frequently to move between one location and another, but as Goffman has noted concerning certain types of locomotion, “On walks and in semi-public places such as stadiums and stores, getting from one place to another is not the only purpose and often not the main one; individuals who are vehicular units will often be functioning in other ways, too, for example as shoppers, conversationalists, diners and so forth” (Goffman 1971 P.28.).

In walking meditation, the act of walking serves as the meditative object. Walking practice develops mindfulness of walking by focusing on an awareness of walking as an embodied activity. The mind focuses on elements of bodily motion as an object. (Shilling 2007). As a form of meditation, walking practice is one of the few in which the eyes are kept fully open. For most sitting practices, the eyes are kept closed to purposely exclude visual stimuli, and to enable the potential of the minds “eye” and the imagination.

**Walking Mindfully:** Having been instructed on the type of site to select for walking practice, the student needs to learn how a routine mechanical bodily activity such as walking can be fashioned into a subtle meditation object. Walking practice as a practical accomplishment. Initially, the instructions for doing walking practice can vary significantly in terms of the descriptive detail. To begin with the meditator may be instructed to walk mindfully, and to become aware of the act of walking. To register in consciousness the detail of what walking comprises. Walking is an embodied activity that is frequently carried out as if “on auto pilot”, with little reflection and concern for the “just how” of the activities assembly. Whilst Ryave and Shenkein alert us to what they term the “art of walking,” it is a social organisational interactive art they are concerned to study, with little consideration given to the embodied particulars and mechanics of the act itself (Ryave & Shenkein 1974 ).

Buddhist meditation practices are organised around the touch stone of acquiring both knowledge and competence through the practical experience of doing practice. By doing a meditation such as walking practice, one acquires a practical knowledge of its particulars. A how - to - do - it competence. This comprises working with meditative objects, the just - how of meditation. The care and attention it is necessary to give to the details of practical actions in order that they suffice as the demonstrable practical accomplishment of meditation. The focus of practice is the domain of practical work and lived experience. The acquisition of meditation is the learning of a practical skill, which is underpinned by a powerful and fundamentally empirical model of mind.

Plainly, there is a situated order and procedural structure when assembling even the most mundane and concrete embodied elements of practical action including walking. In order to carry out walking practice, an interconnected series of carefully if possibly in part somewhat mechanical bodily movements are embarked upon. Detailed coordinated actions that exhibit a coherence and an embodied situated purpose. Paying attention to the fine detail of the setting up of a course of practical action is consequential for the activity. Each walking practice is in certain of its particulars a unique course of activity. It requires that the same care and attention be given to its endogenous local organisation, as if for the first time, even though there may be a sense in which the doing of the activity has in part become routine. Anything less will compromise the outcome. Paying attention to the small details of a course of action has practical consequences, including acquiring mindfulness of the action in its course.

As with all practical activities, meditation is grounded in the immediacy of the here and now. A meditator can carefully set up the conditions for this practice, by following the teachers' instructions. Locating a suitable space within which to carry out the walking practice, adopting an appropriate body motion and posture and so forth, there is a sense in which beyond that they must allow the practice to go its own way. The time devoted to walking practice starts at between 5 - 10 minutes duration for the beginner and progress towards 30 - 45 minutes for the experienced practitioner. As an embodied exercise, practice is what practice is, and the meditator is the only one who directly experiences their meditations. The unmediated experiential details of walking practice are evidently the focus of the meditators field of consciousness. The experience of a particular meditation will in part be comprised of a range of feelings towards it that can register it in a positive, negative or neutral manner, with of course shades in between. Integral to walking meditation practice, the practitioner experiences the senses, the body and bodily conditions, the breath, ideas, sounds, the visual field and so forth. It is through medium such as these that ways of the mind are accessed.

**Walking Practice Through a Phenomenological Lens:**

Having been instructed to select a site for walking practice and to mindfully walk up and down within it, later certain embellishments and more detailed instructions can be added by the teacher. For instance, the practitioner may be instructed to direct the mind onto the embodied experience of locomotion. Onto how it is enacted as a practical accomplishment, the experienced sensations of being a body in locomotion, of being this body at this instant, engaged in walking as a practical activity. Amongst other bodily parts, walking involves the co-operative operation of combinations of muscle sets, bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and related bodily organs and processes that enable the physical activity to occur more or less efficiently.

In their fundamentals, as a descriptive gloss, the instructions for walking practice are straightforward. Select a site, commence walking within it whilst being continually mindful of the ever changing embodied nature of that locomotion. Be mindful of the contingent shifting contact the feet make with the ground as in a balanced reactive manner they almost roll from the heel through the soul and ball to the toes. Simultaneously, be continually aware of the bodily balance and poise that serve as the foundations for walking including the gait of the walk. Be aware of the lifting, moving through space and re making contact with the ground that the feet and legs are continually engaged in. These movements comprise the principle meditative objects of walking practice. A continual awareness of the mechanics of walking as process, walking as an ever changing unfolding phenomena, a course of practical action. Walking meditation amounts to an empirical investigation of a common place apparently stable but actually continually changing and highly unstable course of embodied practical action. This is walking, whilst focusing the attention on the how of its assembly, breaking down a mundane course of practical action into a series of sequentially related component parts and then employing these component parts to assemble the machinery of a meditation. To these apparently straightforward meditation practice instructions, certain teachers will add that the meditator should simultaneously maintain an ongoing awareness of the in and out breath and its effect on the walking body. In the above linguistic gloss of walking practice, the movement of legs, feet arms and lungs etc. seem strangely disengaged one from the other, as if what animates the biological unit is missing. The mechanical stiffness of the descriptions fail to reveal the fluid nature of the doing of the practical embodied activity. In much the same manner, Sudnow experienced problems in describing the how of playing jazz as distinct from other modes or styles of playing a piano, (Sudnow 1978). For the body to locomote efficiently necessitates that when walking occurs as a practical activity the legs, feet, lungs and other corporeal component parts function co-operatively to fashion walking as a visually flowing practical accomplishment. The embodiment of practical action. As Merleau - Ponty has argued persuasively, we perceive and are conscious of the world through our bodies, and at a fundamental level, we are embodied beings (Glenending 2007). In walking meditation, the instruction to be mindful of walking, carries with it simultaneously a request to be aware of the body. Locomotion is accomplished through the body, it is the body that moves. Being aware of the body is being aware of it through the medium of itself. In a very particular sense, this is “self knowledge”, accessed reflexively by the embodied character of consciousness. As Merleau - Ponty has noted, “Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fabric of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself” (Merleau - Ponty 1964 P.163.).

As a meditative object, consciousness of the body is continually available to the practitioner. For example, a prerequisite for selecting a site for walking practice involves a practical visual competence. Seeing is an embodied practical act geared to practical contingencies. As Merleau - Ponty might argue the matter, the site / path selected for walking practice, an external object / location is “seen” by the body, an embodied seeing, and perceived as appropriate for and in the context of a bodily activity. Walking practice and all it entails, amounts to a locomoting body in time and space, an incarnate awareness, a course of practical action, a meditative accomplishment.

**The Body’s Mind:**

As a form of meditation, walking practice is uniquely body centered, and the meditative objects are palpably body parts that are pivotal to processes of locomotion. The majority of meditation practices whilst being done in a body are carried out as a sitting practice, with a for all practical purposes still or quiet body in order to allow the mind centre stage. It is notable, that most sitting meditation practices involve the practitioner in closing the eyes, excluding visual stimuli and sitting in a full or half lotus position, which necessitates a flexible body.

Walking practice involves meditating with eyes open , ensuring an ongoing flow of visual stimuli. The terrain traversed and the things within it are visually available. Doing walking meditation along a path involves the eyes in scanning what they pass, from instant to instant. The body’s eyes see a stream of objects in sequential order, as part of the ever changing visual field presented to the walker, whilst moving from one location to the next, one object to the next and so forth. A constantly changing field of vision. In Merleau - Ponty’s sense, “Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things”. (Merleau - Ponty 1964 P.163.).

The instructions for walking practice are limited to being mindful of the act of walking itself. They do not include being mindful of the scenes and scenery passed through, and there is implicitly a practical meditational sense in which these items are excluded from the practice. Some teachers will suggest that the eyes should be trained upon the ground. Whilst the body’s eyes see and are necessary for navigation, this seeing is not the meditative object of this practice, any more than are the experienced tactile bodily sensations associated with for example temperature and moisture, or the sounds heard, smells smelt and so forth. Indeed, vision, tactile experience and sounds can serve as active distractions from the meditative purpose of the exercise, as can other ideas / things which come into the mind. Again, mind is by nature mercurial with the potential for a rapidly shifting ongoing mental content .

**Being Mindful of the Body’s Mind:**

Walking meditation is designed to develop mindfulness of bodily locomotion. Its object is located in the physical domain but simultaneously intertwined with an embodied consciousness. To be mindful of walking is to focus on aspects of locomotion as a practical activity, to be in the activity. Within Buddhist scholarship, mindfulness is a concept that is frequently applied to the quality of an action, accessing particular aspects of the how of its doing. Within Buddhist meditations such as walking practice, the practitioner puts effort into the course of practical action that is the practice. It is important however that the effort is constructive and conducive to the arising of positive meditative states of consciousness. In the literature, this is referred to as “right effort” (Harvey ed. 2001). “Right effort” comprises part of the “Ennobling Eight fold Path”. This comprises eight areas to be addressed in order to approach enlightenment, each with the prefix “right”. In the context of Buddhism, “right” is a qualitative judgement implying the perfect or exact quality of a characteristic such as action, effort, mindfulness or whatever, (Pali *sammã*, Sanskrit *samyak* ). When carrying out a practical investigative activity such as a walking meditation practice, being mindful is fundamental to the quality of the activity. Fashioning and working with constructive states of mind.

When engaged in a meditation such as walking practice, the setting up of “right mindfulness”, (Pali *sati*, Sanskrit *smrti* ) serves to guide and guard the integrity of the activity, and helps to fashion a sharp awareness of and openness to the meditational effects. When “right mindfulness” arises in a practice whilst working with the meditative object, it is a skilful state of consciousness. Mindfulness predisposes the practitioner to be located in and focused on the here and now of the meditation. To concentrate on the embodied particulars of this practice. To be open to the subtle changes to consciousness that this meditation practice and its objects are in the process of bringing about, the “now you see it now you don’t” of consciousness (Garfinkel 1974 in Turner ed. P16).

In the Theravãdan tradition, to be mindful of aspects of the experience of embodiment is to engage in a form of “insight” meditation, Vipassanã (Harvey 1990,). In many of its particulars, walking meditation practice serves as an illustration of the potential of Vipassanã - yãna. Forms of Vipassanã meditation arose within the context of a fundamentally empirical “Eastern” tradition for studying mind. Early Hindu and Tantric variants of meditation practices were largely designed to focus on developing concentration and calm. These enhance the meditator's ability to enter a blissful trance like state, Samatha - yãna , in order to re-energise and then later return to a more everyday form of consciousness (King 1980, Hopkins 1984, Ball 2000). To forms of Samatha meditation were added by Buddhism, forms of Vipassanã meditation, designed to furnish a sharp experiential “insight” into aspects of embodied existence. The purpose of Vipassanã meditation, is to access the subjective impermanent character of embodied existence, and to see it for what it is. The fine and subtle intertwining of mind and body, focusing attention upon the physical body and its range of sensations, and or the mind and its content, including feelings and thoughts, etc.

There arises a certain fundamental taken for granted dimension to being a body, inhabiting and animating a body. The variants of Vipassanã meditation are designed to reveal the condition of embodiedness in sharp relief to the meditator through practice. In Vipassanã meditations, the practitioner cultivates a powerful mindfulness of the body's mind. In Vipassanã - yãna meditations that focus on the body, all bodily parts and functions, the totality of the human biological system, are potentially available as meditative objects. For example, movements of the digestive system, the breath and lungs, sensations on the skin, bodily discomfort and pain, etc. each of which arise and subside in time. In the context of walking practice, it offers a decidedly rich and focused practical dimension of bipedal existence by which to explore the taken for granted nature of embodiment. The skilful cultivation of mindfulness of an aspect of embodiment is the acquisition of an ability that can lead in the direction of becoming in certain significant respects detached from those very bodily meditative objects that one is simultaneously mindful of. A detachment that sharpens and enhances the meditative experience. In part, this is to learn to see body and mind as faculties that are fundamentally impermanent and ever changing. A device to access the unstable nature of bodily and mental existence. For the purposes of Vipassanã meditation, the objects of walking practice are employed to subtly modify consciousness. They reveal essential aspects of embodiment, the how of mobility, of this locomotion in the here and now. In walking practice, fundamental elements within the process of bodily locomotion are employed as meditative objects. The curious experience of detachment from ones own body and embodiment that can be brought about by the focused employment of mindfulness of bodily parts and motions, shares certain similarities to what Garfinkel and Sacks have termed the procedural policy of ‘ethnomethodological indifference’ (Lynch In Button ed.1991 ). In the case of walking meditation, the ‘indifference’ arises from the internal experience of walking as embodied action alongside the Buddhist notion of neutral mental states of equanimity, neither positive nor negative. In the Husserlian sense the act of walking is the mental content / meditative object of the practice (Husserl 1960). Focusing consciousness on bodily locomotion in this mindful and gently concentrated meditative manner enables that behaviour to be experienced as “anthropologically strange”. Such subtle shifts of consciousness are notable for their naturally and gently meditatively induced character and can be contrasted to the grosser shifts in perception resulting from mind altering agents such as drugs. There is a variant within walking practice that occasions a very distinct sense of ‘indifference’ to and detachment from bodily motion. This occurs when the pace of walking is purposely slowed down to a significant degree.

**Slowing a Course of Practical Action & Componential Analysis;**

Slowing down a course of practical action and organising it into its constituent parts is common place. As a pedagogic method it is designed to assist the course of action to become for all practical purposes understood and routine. For example, when learning to drive a car, acquiring mastery over its controls is fundamental. Such mastery involves operation of the clutch, gear shift, breaks, accelerator, indicators etc. What is notable about such systems of pedagogy is that the neophyte is taught “how to do it” by the instructor who breaks a complex course of practical action down into its component parts, and teaches them as if in slow motion (Goodenough 1956). Such a slowed down pedagogic componential approach is to be contrasted with the taken for granted practical fluidity and smoothness of execution exhibited by a competent car driver. Driving involves working with the body and enacting courses of practical action, working with objects in a co-ordinated purposeful manner.

When a meditator learns walking practice however, they start from the vantage of already having a fundamental practical competence with the activity. When the meditator is invited to carry out walking practice at a slower pace than is “normal” for ordinary mundane walking, then this opens up space / time to closely inspect each of the component elements within the activity. A course of practical action that is in most of its particulars routine, is available for scrutiny in fine detail. Probably, since early childhood, walking has been taken for granted but in this context it can be treated and experienced as a form of “anthropologically strange” behavior.

Slowing down behavior renders it amenable to close inspection. In certain of its particulars, this process is analogous to the analytic practical decision making that occurs when working with the images employed for adjudicating a photo - finish in a sports event, the perpetration of a crime from CCTV footage and the like. In such instances, the detailed recorded observational experience of and access to the intricacies of the practical activity are enhanced. In walking practice when walking is carried out at a slower than normal rate, the mindfulness of walking that results from slowing down the process is potent for the modification of consciousness of the activity. When the pace of walking is slowed down from the meditator’s “normal” rate, this opens up the possibility of a closer inspection of the process. When however the pace is slowed down considerably, then this allows for a finely detailed examination and deliberation on the component parts out of which walking is assembled. The components become meditative objects.

Slowing down the pace of walking considerably within a walking meditation practice can involve for example moving five meters forward in approximately three minutes of time. This is a mindful, careful and controlled course of embodied practical action. A pace of locomotion that would be decidedly conspicuous in a public area. This point is placed into clear relief by Hamilton - Merritt’s comments concerning her observations of competent practitioners whilst being a neophyte in a Buddhist *Wat*  (monastery) in Chiang Mai Thailand that specialised in forms of Vipassanã meditation. “ I observed how strange their movements were. It took one woman minutes to walk the short distance from the dish washing apparatus to her room. She walked as if she might be ill or crippled. Later I would learn from personal experience that this slowness of all physical actions was a natural attitude that one assumed when in intensive meditation.” (Hamilton - Merritt 1976 P.95). This is a body based practice that reveals aspects of an embodied consciousness. The subtle intertwining of mind and body promotes a sophisticated level of awareness of embodiment and the body’s mind. To employ walking as a meditative object is to explore locomotion as a practical accomplishment. As a course of practical action. Walking is divided into its constituent parts for pedagogic and meditative purposes. The practitioner is instructed to be mindful of the ongoing changing nature of the gait of the walk of the contact each foot makes with the ground as in a balanced reactive manner it moves from the heel through the soul and ball to the toes. At the level of ritual, it is recommended that before commencing a walking practice the practitioner “lower the hands, clasp them in front right over left and begin walking with the right foot.” (Khantipalo 1981 P.95).

When as a part of walking meditation practice the pace of walking is slowed down significantly, then this has a distinct effect upon walking as a course of practical action. Walking is therby transformed into a mindfully structured and co-ordinated meditative object. Each component of walking is attended to in turn, and becomes the focus of the meditators embodied consciousness. Initially, the heel of the right foot connects with the ground and the attention is gently placed upon that embodied action, in process this gives way to the soul, ball and toes of the foot, whilst simultaneously the left foot moves forward onto the toes and is then lifted by the leg and moved through space and is planted on the ground heel first. A process that is then repeated by the other leg and so forth. A linguistic instructional gloss for this process suggests, heel, soul, ball, toe, lift, move, plant, heel, soul, ball, toe, lift, move, plant and so forth, concepts for an inner mnemonic. When this embodied process is carried out in a significantly slowed down and mindful manner then a transformation of consciousness takes place. Carrying out walking practice in a significantly slowed down form serves as a potent means for developing mindfulness of the doing of a mundane and taken for granted activity. Radically slowing down walking renders a common place course of practical action, “anthropologically strange.” The processual components of walking as an embodied course of practical action become the meditative object. The components of walking are held in mental focus to a degree that would not occur in everyday life. It is this mindful focusing upon routine aspects of embodiment that occasions a significant transformation of consciousness to occur. When carrying out walking practice at a significantly slowed down rate of motion, it is common place for the meditator to so to speak loose themselves in the activity. They mindfully focus on the components of walking as process. The weight bearing foot moves from heel to soul to ball to toes whilst the leg of the less weight bearing foot is moved forward and the foot is planted on the ground etc. This repetitive action can take centre stage within consciousness and become so pronounced that the experience can be one that is “as if” the rest of the body ceases to exist, “as if” ones location in a practical interactional world is temporarily of little significance. In Schutz’s sense, it comprises a “modified reality”, reality “as if”, a distinct purposeful tension of consciousness. (Schutz 1973). Whilst a slightly cruder variant of this can arise from the meditator being over concentrated on the meditational object, a more subtle version arises with mindfulness. In large part, the how of the transformation or particular tension of consciousness that this meditation practice can effect, arises fundamentally from the meditator's absorption in a course of practical action. What Heidegger has termed being there, being the there, an authentic form of being, engrossed in a practical activity, working with objects (Heidegger 1962). The “modified reality” brought about by sensitively and mindfully carrying out a slowed down version of walking practice, and being engrossed in it, can trigger access into what in Buddhist scholarship are referred to as *Jhãna* states of consciousness, which can be described as self induced trance like states.

**Being in the moment ; A Phenomenological insight into Buddhist Practice:** In daily life there are various courses of practical action that can result in a person becoming engrossed in the activity. For example, an athlete attempting to break an existent record, a student taking an exam, a musician performing a piece of music and the like. Engrossment in a course of practical action. So, what distinguishes meditative mental states from similar ones that naturally arise in certain situations of daily life such as those outlined above ? The answer is simultaneously straightforward but significant. The mental states that arise through meditation are in many of their particulars controlled by the meditator in a fine and subtle manner, as is the duration and depth of the meditative experience. A central purpose of the activity being to induce such mental states. The work done in meditation practice, is thus a controlled and established technique for entering desirable, constructive mental states. A distinguishing characteristic of meditative mental states is that they tend to be controlled and focused and can exhibit a trance like dimension. The trance like aspect is particularly experienced in and characteristic of the higher meditative mental states.

Trance like in the sense that the meditator is working with a mental object and is lightly but powerfully absorbed in the work, to the exclusion of other candidate objects. In Buddhist literature, the trance like mental states attainable through meditation practice are referred to as comprising an interlinked hierarchical system of *Jhãna* (Pali) or in Sanskrit *dhyãna* states. These indicate an absorption in the present. The "now you see it now you don't" of consciousness, of being in this here and now, this present to the exclusion of other mental objects, past and future. As the phenomenological works of Schutz, Heidegger and others make plain, we live time. (Flood1999, Schutz 1967).

We act in the moment, and how we are qualitatively in that moment, in that here and now has subtle and sophisticated consequences for the person and their interactions with others. Being only in the moment, to be fully conscious of this moment and its object, walking practice, is a practical achievement that is in large part facilitated by slowing down considerably the course of action. The slowness serves to render walking a taken for granted course of practical action, “anthropologically strange”. To be fully in the moment is to be inescapably simultaneously fully in the body. In this sense, walking practice offers an embodied experience that is organised around being engrossed in the bodily particulars of walking. To be fully in the moment is to lightly concentrate on the embodied particulars of the here and now, of this walking practice to the exclusion of the past and future. Being in the moment can frequently involve experiencing the passing of an hour as if it were an instant and the like, inner duration. To be fully in the moment is to be as it were, lost or engrossed in the course of practical action, and yet simultaneously completely aware of it to such a degree that in a sense it is all that there is. As Hamilton - Merritt suggests of the experience of carefully focused meditative states including walking practice, “Parts of my body ceased to exist or to function. Sometimes various parts of my body became so pronounced that by their sheer magnitude obliterated all else.---- At other times I had no legs yet I walked.” (Hamilton - Merritt 1976 P121). In the context of walking practice, being in the moment, engagement with the object of practice entails being in the body and experiencing the practice through that medium.

**Conclusion:**

This paper has added an empirically based study of walking meditation, to the expanding literature concerning a theory of mind. Practical meditation is core to Buddhist social philosophy. Working with meditative mental objects in consciousness as a fundamentally practical activity. Walking meditation offers a glimpse of the relationship of body to mind.

The principle distinguishing characteristic of the disciplined co-ordination of the mind and body that comprises walking meditation is located in the level of control and mastery of the physical / mental work of the practice. This involves a purposeful manipulation of a meditative object. In this case walking as an ongoing course of practical action. Walking practice comprises controlled delicate and precise mental and physical work, embodiment. The subtle intertwining of mind and body gives rise to the practical accomplishment of walking meditation. A mind trained to work with meditative objects is disciplined, concentrated and focused on the practical work of purposefully cultivating the states of consciousness meditation offers.

The paper fashions a systematic overview of how walking can be employed for meditative purposes. Analytic directions from within Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology and the later Wittgenstein have been employed to practical comparative effect in the study of ideas from within Buddhism concerning how consciousness operates. In the context of walking meditation practice, the act of walking has been explored through the meditational use of its component parts. The radical slowing down of walking thus renders the embodied act strange. This amounts to a controlled, purposeful, imaginative, exploration of states of embodied consciousness, that exhibit similarities with certain themes within Phenomenology. Plainly, such studies of consciousness comprise a fertile area for further comparative research, particularly in the context of other meditation practices. . In terms of research methods the reader is now in a position to assess to what extent this ethnographic report casts some light on the ethnographic variant of auto ethnography.

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