

## Letting the Rhythm Move You

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Stomp. Stomp. Stomp. Someone was having a ‘turn’. I turned slightly to my right and saw Karolina. She was stomping and grunting. Stomping and grunting. Her legs wide, knees bent, head engaged in a slow repetitive bang. This did not feel strange. I could feel the imaginary protective circle around her. I felt I understood what she was going through and it seemed everyone else could too. No one was looking askance. This is what chaos is for. Chaos is the middle of the five rhythms that we dance through – the most energetic one. The music urges your feet off the ground. A hard bop is usually the most natural way to move during chaos. I like to shake my hands loose as well. Compared to Karolina’s stomping my own movements seem tame. I aspire to be a stomper in the not too distant future.

I had a brief conversation with Karolina afterwards and she said that after three years of 5Rhythms, she had only in the last two weeks learnt how to dance through anger. I felt privileged to have witnessed her awakening, as it were. 5Rhythms describes itself as a movement mediation practice. Some people seem to glide through the two hours in a graceful swirl. Others gyrate, grunt and perhaps glide, by turns. The premise is to dance freely, without caring about the aesthetics of your movement, to disengage the mind and its obsession with self-image and let your body move intuitively. The five rhythms are always done in the same order and they are: flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness. Dancing and moving through the different musical tempos is meant to eventually facilitate an emotional catharsis.

*This piece was written as a creative writing exercise for a tutorial during the Ethnography: Theory and Practice course. I was trying to create a compelling ethnographic hook to introduce our longer group project based on fieldwork carried out in a 5Rhythms class in Edinburgh.*