Encounters with Otavalo: Ritual, Identities, and the Internet

When I was thinking about how to approach the issue of places of encounter from the perspective of a South Americanist, Otavalo immediately came to my mind. Although I never did extensive ethnographic research in the Andes, the district of Otavalo in Northern Ecuador and its people have always fascinated me. I travelled to this region as a ‘visiting anthropologist’ time and again in the 1990s during my years of fieldwork with the Shuar in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Otavalo is special in many ways: one of its attractions is an unusual style of encounters between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity,’ indígenidad (Amerindian identity) and global business that goes hand in hand with indigenous empowerment and economic growth. Otavalo and the Quichua speaking Otavos/as (Otavalo ruma) also offer interesting insights in regard to multiple arenas of encounters connected to notions of place, placemaking and culture in a framework of globalisation.

On the following pages I will approach such issues in regard to three periods and spheres of encounters: Firstly, I shall take a look at the historical context and its implications for the construction of culture and place in Otavalo. Secondly I shall discuss encounters in regard to processes of global economic and cultural flows that provoke question concerning new spatial associations and changing identities; and thirdly, I shall enquire into these topics in regard to the use of media, in particular the internet. One major focus of my reflections will be the fiesta of San Juan/Inti Raymi that represents an arena of encounter in diverse settings, as well as a form of placemaking and/or production of locality in changing historical situations.
As Santos-Granero (2004) has pointed out recently, foremost in this field of research is the examination of how places are constructed, imagined, contested and enforced (cf. e.g. Appadurai 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Halbwasser and Mader 2004). Such processes have been mainly associated with globalisation, economic migrations, diasporic movements, and the emergence of new trans-local communities thanks to the spread of new means of communication. Nevertheless, “the idea is not that globalization has disrupted some pre-existing fit between culture and place, but rather that the relationship between culture and place is itself a historical and cultural product to be analyzed” (Santos-Granero 2004:91).

Process-oriented approaches to culture and place have a long-standing tradition in the anthropology of Latin America. A substantial amount of studies in the twentieth century are dedicated to the investigation of complex intercultural local situations and translocal constellations in various regions of the continent. In part, they concern the processes of conquest and colonisation that go back to the ancient empires. In South America a variety of local cultures and translocal socio-political regimes have interacted within the Tawantinsuyu (the realm of the Inca) and in other empires as well. Such encounters took place on various local and translocal levels, including the translocation of (subversive) ethnic groups from central regions to the margins of the empire, and they created diverse forms of multiculturalism and hybridisation. Later in history, Spanish colonialism imposed yet another system of meaning and domination on these configurations, and established connections to worldwide networks of cultural and economic interactions. In recent times, globalisation has added new dimensions to the ongoing processes of translocal interactions; it has often amplified, accelerated, and intensified them.

Incas, Haciendas and Otavalo

The name Otavalo refers to a district in the Ecuadorian Province of Imbabura as well as to its principal town. The district encompasses a valley at an altitude of approximately 2,500 metres that is surrounded by volcanoes, and is inhabited by 89,562 people (to a large extent Amerindian Otavalo/ as, see: http://www.otavalo.gov.ec/otavalo.html, accessed 30. 6. 2006). Otavalo has been a place that engenders flows of people, items, and ideas throughout various periods of its history; it has been a place of peaceful encounters, but also of violent ones. A wide range of interactions are described in the first written (Spanish) sources: On the one hand, Cieza de Leon relates in his chronicles the fierce resistance of Otavalo/ as against the Inca armies in the fifteenth century. Paz Ponce de Leon (1582), on the other hand, describes how weaving and trade in pre-colonial times has guaranteed merchants from Otavalo a special place in the tribute system of the Inca Empire. They were exempt from mita labour, and had the opportunity to pay their tribute in blankets, gold, and beads (Schnitzer 1976; Salomon 1986: 24-6).

Economic activities have provided a significant arena of encounters at all times. Local economy in Otavalo has always been based on agriculture and textile production, and was integrated in the larger framework of the Andean economic system during the pre-colonial era. It was restructured during Spanish rule as encomiendas were parcelled out to the conquistadors. During the colony period, again, was mainly collected in textiles. One part of the manufacture was traditional Otavalo weavings, another part was products fashioned after European models. Thus, Otavalo weavers have been producing “non-traditional textiles” for an international market for at least 450 years (Meisch 2002: 20-1). Political economy in the Otavalo region has not changed significantly from the Spanish conquest to the times of the hacienda that lasted until the 1960s. It was dominated by the wasipungo system which comprises various forms of encomienda. Economic encounters during that period implicated mainly Hispanic landlords and indigenous serves, although a weekly market of some significance for the local exchange of agricultural and textile products in the town of Otavalo has been mentioned since the nineteenth century (Schnitzer 1976: 82).

Other arenas of encounters in Otavalo concern social and political relations between multiple groups of people during changing regimes of hierarchy, dominance, and resistance. The local population of the Otavalo region under Inca rule, for example, has been composed of various sociolinguistic groups from heterogeneous origins in the Tawantinsuyo. During Spanish rule a dichotomy between ‘Whites and Indians’ was established, that lasts until today to some extent, and implies a hierarchial order grounded in race and (economic)
power. Otavalo/as participated in various revolts against Spanish rule with the aim of redefining their political position and their territory, an enterprise that was successful only for short periods of time. The 1777 rebellion, for example, was part of a larger framework of indigenous uprisings that took place all over the Andean highlands, and has been noted in Ecuador for the extensive participation of Otavalo women (Stark 1985). The various resistance movements throughout the centuries can be considered as part of a history of Amerindian anti-colonial politics in Latin America that have been transformed into politics of identity in the twentieth century.

The history of economic and socio-political arenas has been, on the one hand, linked to a place, Otavalo; on the other hand it comprises extensive trans-local dimensions. The same counts for another arena of encounter, namely the fiesta of San Juan, celebrated every 22-24 June in several communities in the Otavalo region and beyond. The fiesta of San Juan in the Andes goes back to agrarian rituals of pre-colonial times (documented for example by Bernabe Cobo 1990 [1653]), and represents a combination of continuity and change, as well as of identity and alterity in the lifeworlds of indigenous Andean communities. Mary Crain makes the following remarks on syncretism and camouflage related to the fiesta: “Instead of stamping out all forms of paganism and idolatry in the New World during the early colonial period, Spanish priests frequently superimposed Catholic religious holidays, such as that of San Juan which honours the birth of St. John the Baptist, to dovetail roughly with pre-Hispanic periods of native feasting.” Crain also describes the coexistence of alternative cosmologies and ceremonial rites enacted during the fiesta of San Juan by different groups of participants. Whereas the Hispanic elites (landowners and church) celebrate Catholic faith and hierarchical agrarian class relations, indigenous peasants invoke, for example, the sacred powers of the landscape associated with shamanic healing as well as the continuity of Andean values and social organisation (Crain 1998: 138-9).

Several authors have analysed the fiesta of San Juan as an arena of action and representation, and as a space of constructing and negotiating identity and power. Building on the work of Nestor Canclini (1995), Mark Rogers (1998) emphasises two dimensions of Andean fiestas: During the celebration cultural practices are detached from fixed social positions and circulate in a larger and hybrid symbolic space, at the same time they are of great significance for the construction of identities. Thus, one dimension of the ritual is concerned with the maintenance of tradition and the construction of identity within the community, the other one with the negotiation of relations to the world outside of the community. This management of relations includes the enactment of conflicts between individuals and groups, such as landowners, the state, and indigenous communities.

Luis Botero (1991) regards the Andean fiestas as an interface of colonial power, collective memory, and the art of resistance. His focus lies on the enactment of indigenous culture and history in the course of changing power relations. In particular during the hacienda system, and from the point of view of indigenous peasantry, the fiesta of San Juan aimed at an appropriation of social space dominated by the elites. This was accomplished by ritual action, especially by dances and processions that brought the Otavalos/as from their villages into the towns and onto the hacienda. Botero argues that an important aspect of ceremonial rites lies in the reproduction of the symbolic and social regime of indigenous Andean communities. This becomes manifest in a set of values, and in certain features of sociality and conviviality. It embraces the concept of reciprocity, as well as the cargos (tasks and status positions related to the fiesta) that represent traditional power positions and their responsibilities. The reproduction of the symbolic and social system of the group takes place by enacting their history in midst of the history of colonial and post-colonial hierarchies, and in relationship to changing socio-political situations, and relations of power. The fiesta of San Juan thus produces a certain cultural geography, and can be analysed as a cultural text, a specific form of production of meaning in an intercultural setting. Of major significance in these processes is the construction of identity in the space of the other (Botero 1991: 11-34).

According to Botero's point of view the fiesta San Juan can be regarded as a form of placemaking—a set of embodied practices that represent and (re)construct relations between people and places (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

In the following, I will demonstrate how the forms, the issues, and the scale of placemaking have changed during the past 30 years.
Globalisation, Politics of Identity, and Ritual

In 1964 an agrarian reform brings the feudal order of the wasipungo in Ecuador to an end, and engenders substantial changes for the life worlds of Otavalo/as. As Lynn Meisch (2002) describes in her book this incident had great influence on the economic, political and cultural expansion and dispersion of Otavalo/as, and on the growing presence of people from other cultures and places in Otavalo. These developments are at the same time deeply rooted in local and regional cultural and socio-economic configurations, and are linked to processes of globalisation. I will mention only a few elements of these trends. The increasing autonomy from landowners and proprietors of manufactory raised the possibilities for independent production of and trade with textiles combined with the migration of merchants to other places in Ecuador and beyond. Since 1980 it produced a ‘new’ socio-economic regime in Otavalo. It reconstructed, on the one hand, pre-colonial conditions of long distance trade, and extended, on the other hand, these activities beyond the borders of the former Tawantinsuyu on to a global level, and integrated them in late-capitalist macro-economic conditions. This includes business relations with wholesalers from Europe, the USA, or Asia who time and again visit Otavalo. Similar conditions mark the raise of the music business in Otavalo and promote a large number of travelling Otavalo musicians worldwide. These two economic fields are closely linked to tourism that has become a major source of income in Otavalo, and for Otavalo/as.

The Saturday Market, of little economic significance in the late 1960s (Schnitzer 1976), was ‘invented’ and established on the Plaza de Ponchos with the help of a Dutch NGO in the 1980s. Today artesania [arts and crafts] from all over Ecuador as well as from Peru and Columbia is sold at the famous fair which has developed into one of the foremost tourist attractions in the country. Although most guests only stay for a day or two, some visitors remain for a longer time, and sometimes gringas [women from the North] fall in love with an Otavalo and establish close personal relations (Meisch 1995).

Globalisation in Otavalo thus becomes manifest in an acceleration and an extension of flows of people, items, and ideas. It goes hand in hand with a number of transformations in several arenas of actions after the end of wasipungo-peonage, and is connected to long-standing economic traditions such as weaving and trade. It fostered migration to other Latin American countries, North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and created a global translocal Otavalo community. Even if by far not all Otavalo/as participate in the ‘new economy’ and its benefits, Otavalo has become one of the wealthiest indigenous communities in Latin America.

The expansion and diversification of life worlds and arenas of encounters of Otavalo/as in a global context goes hand in hand with local politics of identity and ethnic empowerment. As I have discussed elsewhere, in indigenous Latin America processes of diversification and hybridisation, and the construction of identities based on very localised and almost essentialist concepts of traditional culture are not mutually exclusive, but should be analysed as two sides of a coin (Mader 2001).

In Ecuador indigenous movements have entered the political scenario since the 1970s. Organised into various ethnic and regional configurations, and supported by interna
tional NGOs, the representatives of indigenous communities in Ecuador have gained increasing power in various spheres of political decision making. On the national level the CONAIE (Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador), who represents about 40% of the population, has worked on an improvement of economic, social and cultural issues of Amerindian communities.

One goal of this political struggle is a new valorisation of indigenous culture in a context of racism and cultural hierarchies dating back to an ideology of conquest and colonisation. In this respect indigenous organisations aim at a new representation of their ‘cultura propia’ [their own and real culture], and put strong emphasis on language, material culture, social organisation, cosmology, and ritual. Other objectives are participation and empowerment within the political institutions of the nation state. In the mid-1990s the Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador formed an alliance with other social movements and founded a political party named Pachakutik – ‘the turning of time/space.’ Pachakutik was a success: it initiated changes in the constitution that officially acknowledge the existence of Amerindian cultures in Ecuador and guarantee indigenous communities a variety of collective rights. Furthermore, it won indigenous people po-

7. For a detailed study of this topic see Meisch (2002).
Otavalo/a\textquoteright s/ have been very strong forces in the Ecuadorian indigenous movement from its beginning. In connection with increasing economic resources new indigenous elites were formed in Otavalo. They include icons of politics of identity such as Nina Pacari, one of the founders of the Federation of Indigenous Peoples of Ecuador, and for two years Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, as well as intellectuals like Ariruma Kowii, Narzico Conejo or Germán Lema. Otavalo politicians and intellectuals are active in local and translocal scenarios. Since 1995, they regularly won local elections in large parts of the province of Imbabura, and have been active in pan-Amerindianist and pan-Andean movements. Many indigenous leaders promote a form of \textit{indianitude} and seek the preservation, recovery and/or reconstruction of Andean culture and political power - as many indigenous movements did during the past centuries. This idea is frequently associated with a revitalisation of the concept of the \textit{Tawantinsuyo}, the realm of the Incas, as a locus of identification and a contemporary cultural space. Otavalo/a\textquoteright s/ as remain ambivalent in front of these ideas: Whereas some authors emphasize the common grounds of Andean indigenous cultures (e.g. Kowii 2004), others underline the uniqueness of Otavalo traditions (e.g. Conejo 1991). Another important concept in this philosophy is the \textit{pachakutik} (already mentioned above as the denomination of a mainly Amerindian political party in Ecuador). It represents a periodical turn/return and change of time, space and socio-political conditions, and takes place approximately every 500 years. According to this cosmology time has come for another \textit{pachakutik} that will - among other things - re-establish indigenous culture and Amerindian political power in the Andes (as has happened in Bolivia recently).

The \textit{fiesta} of San Juan has not remained untouched by these developments. The rise of a \textit{pachakutik} construction of a pan-Andean indigenous cultural space has generally promoted the renaming of rituals that had carried the name of catholic saints or deities for several centuries. The \textit{fiesta} of San Juan is nowadays called \textit{Inti Raymi}, the name of a sun-ceremony in the Inca era that has been revitalised time and again in the Cuzco region (Peru).

Furthermore, it has adopted additional features as an arena of encounter and as an instrument of placemaking in an intercultural setting. In some aspects it has become 'more indigenous.' It takes place in a modified cultural geography, in a space governed by indigenous authorities instead of representatives of Hispanic landowners. The ritual performance of \textit{taking the town} has become political reality in the meantime, and its enactment during the fiesta has acquired new meanings, especially in connection with the enactment and representation of Otavalo and Quechua culture in the context of increasing political power.

Furthermore, changes in the political setting have promoted some unexpected modifications of ritual performance: The \textit{fiesta} of San Juan includes violent 'battles' between various indigenous groups that frequently lead to casualties. The deaths and serious injuries are regarded as a sacrifice: \textit{"You can say we are paying the earth because the earth is our mother and we can offer our blood"} (Narzico Conejo 1996; personal communication in Meisch 2002: 262). In recent years, however, indigenous Otavalo authorities tried to ban violence from the Inti Raymi and other \textit{fiestas}, in order not to support the image of 'wild Indians' (\textit{indios bravos}), but to promote other images of indigenous identity - and not to scare visitors (Bernhard Wörle 2006; personal communication).

The \textit{Inti Raymi} has also acquired new qualities as an arena of encounters and as a transcultural event, involving more participants and taking place in different settings and at new locations. At a regional level such changes sometimes imply the transformation of the \textit{fiesta} into a novel type of multicultural performance that represents the ideals of conviviality and public culture in the 'new pluri-ethnic Ecuador.'

In 1996 the Otavalo community of San Pablo organised the first intercultural event, \textit{Inti Raymi} which integrated two distinct indigenous groups (Otavalo/a\textquoteright s and Cayambes), and the white mestizo population:

Dancers, singers, and musicians from both indigenous groups, white-mestizo musicians and dancers, masquerading as indigenas, and thousands of onlookers filled a huge open field on the side of Imbabura. (Meisch 2002: 263)
Another aspect of the Inti Raymi as an arena of encounters is connected with tourism. On the one hand, the figure of the 'gringo tourist' has become a very popular masquerade (while the figure of the mayordomo, the overseer of the hacienda, has almost disappeared), on the other hand the fiesta has become a tourists attraction to a certain extent. This also involves the growing spiritual tourism in Latin America that is focussed on the visit of shamanic and other religious ceremonies and sites.  

Yet another new dimension of the Inti Raymi in a changing cultural space is its association with the 'Otavalo diaspora.' In this context the ritual is closely linked to two Appaduran scapes: It has become a significant feature of Otavalo-ethnoscape worldwide, and has acquired major importance in Otavalo-mediaskape, particularly in the internet. While the relationship between Inti Raymi and the internet will be discussed in the next section of the article, I want to mention a few features of the relationship between Inti Raymi and ethnoscape at this point.

Lynn Meisch gives a short account of the dispersal of the Inti Raymi in the 1990s, and describes how it travelled overseas with the Otavalo/as. The first transnational Inti Raymi of Otavalo/as took place in Amsterdam in 1993 where "more than 300 Otavalo/as assembled with instruments to dance San Juan in the traditional fashion with about fifteen groups, each dancing in a circle and playing its own music" (Adi Willnauer, personal communication, in Meisch 2002: 258). Hand in hand with the expansion of the Otavalo ethnoscape in Europe and North America during the late 1990s more and more Inti Raymi dances were held at new places. New York and Chicago hosted big fiestas that also demonstrated new transnational qualities. The Inti Raymi in Chicago, for example, was not celebrated exclusively by Otavalo/as, but had become part of a diasporic interculture that displays special forms of overlapping plural identities and spaces of performance. The transnational fiestas often integrate participants from various indigenous people and diverse Latin American countries, as well as life partners, lovers, friends, or business partners of Otavalo/as from their new locality. According to the new combination of participants, the responsibilities of the cargo - holders have also changed (Meisch 2002: 258-9). By 2004 the Inti Raymi (and the migration of Otavalo/as) has reached many more towns and countries in Latin America, Europe, North America, and East Asia (particularly Japan and Korea). The newest developments in this process can be observed in the global mediaskape, namely the internet.

**Inti Raymi and the Internet**

The production and circulation of visual representations of the fiesta of San Juan among Otavalo/as became popular in the 1990s, when more and more people could afford photo and/or video cameras. Mary Crain describes some of these practices in Quimsa – a town in the Otavalo region:

For example, taped cassettes of san juanitos as well as videotapes of the feast day are loaned to any Quismeño or other interested party who could not be present. Similarly, re-runs of video-taped performances of San Juan are frequently viewed in Quimsa, particularly during the weekends when community residents have more free time and those Quismeños who work in Quito are back ‘home.’ ... These videos are favoured over many of the foreign programmes, such as Star Trek, which are broadcast on national television. (Crain 1998: 144-5)

Furthermore, videos of famous bands that play during the fiesta are especially popular and represent a link between local performances and their visual representations and the cosmopolitan scenario of world music. During the past decade production and circulation of visual representations of San Juan/Inti Raymi have expanded in the context of the Otavalo diaspora, and the viewing of pictures and videos of fiestas in other places has gained a global dimension. The major arena for the circulation and distribution of such visual material is the internet.

As Daniel Miller and Don Slater have argued, an ethnographic approach to the internet is necessary to analyse the wide range of contents and contexts of internet culture. These comprise, for example, diasporic personal relations and diverse encounters in a global 'culturescape.' Internet culture is neither homogeneous nor is it detached from other aspects of life, as some theories of cyberspace or virtual reality have argued. Rather, it is closely connected to particular people
and places, and should be regarded as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces (Miller and Slater 2000: 1-5). For Otavalo and Otavaloas the internet has developed into a significant media in several contexts: E-mail, chat, and other forms of internet communication provide the dominant means of exchange of information within translocal community, comprising diasporic personal relations as well as business. In addition, a great variety of web pages refer to Otavalo. Most of them are connected with tourism and encompass pages in Spanish and/or English of local, national, and international tourist agencies and/or hotels, as well as travelogues from tourists who globally share their impressions of and experiences in Otavalo. Furthermore, the city and district of Otavalo has its own website (http://www.otavalo.gov.ec/otavalo.html, accessed 30 June 2006) which provides historical, cultural and political information for locals and tourists. Last but not least, and most important for this study, some websites are directed primarily at the trans-Otavalo community. The most popular page is http://www.OtavaloOnLine.com: It contains visual material and texts written mainly in Spanish (and some parts in Quichua), and constitutes a space for the production and circulation of meaning in diverse contexts, embracing migration, politics of identity, ritual, music, social relations, entertainment, and commerce. 

If one enters the web site as a stranger, one might be astonished that the most dominant theme is the representation of ritual, the Inti Raymi covering most of the space. On the main homepage one finds texts on ritual and cosmology by renowned Otavalo's such as the writer, poet, and anthropologist Ariruma Kowii, explaining the background and meaning of the ceremonies. Such texts are directed at several audiences simultaneously: On the one hand they have an educational purpose, especially for young Otavalo's as living abroad, and represent a new form of transmitting cultural and spiritual knowledge. On the other hand they form part of a system of construction and representation of Otavalo and Andean culture and identity, and are linked to various spheres of indigenous politics.

But more prevailing than explanatory texts are visual representations of the fiesta. The pages on the Inti Raymi 2005, for example, cover 42 events (13 in Ecuador, 7 in other Latin American countries, 14 in Europe, 7 in North America, 1 in Japan; see http://www.OtavaloOnLine.com, accessed June 2006). Each page usually offers basic information about the event: time, place, detailed programme and the names of the priests, the highest offices during the ceremony. Furthermore, all pages feature visual material ranging from a few snapshots to several hundred photographs per fiesta, and occasionally one or two videos of dances and offerings.

A rough sorting of the content of the visual representations reveals two key themes: (ritual) action and close ups of participants and visitors. Thus, on the one hand, the visual material demonstrates and communicates what was done, including social programmes and sport events. On the other hand, it shows who was there by taking a close look at the persons who participated in the events, in order to make it possible for members of their family and their community in other places of the world to recognise them. Such series of pictures could easily be sent directly and privately to family and friends, but they are positioned in a space open to all Otavalo's as well as to all interested internet users instead. Consequently, the internet is utilised to reproduce and to extend the public space of the fiestas in several ways: It opens up new possibilities of visiting Inti Raymi (and other rituals) as a spectator - instead of being limited to the participation at one local event, everybody can see several Inti Raymis, observe other people perform, share some of their experiences, and talk about them (offline and/or online). This process attains extra significance for diasporic family relations. Nowadays, members of one family frequently do not participate in the same ritual at the same time as they usually did before. However, visual representations of relatives and friends performing the ritual in another part of the world enable families and communities to share the fiesta in a certain way.

These practices also add new dimensions to the interface between ritual and media in Otavalo and beyond that can be linked to two themes explored by Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Mary Crain in their study on performance, media, and identity. One concerns the diversification of performance, participants, and audiences in live and mediated contexts that takes place within diasporic cultures. The other one focuses on the significance of performance and media for the construction and representation of the relationships between culture, power, and place in local and translocal practices (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998).

15. A more detailed study of this webpage by the author is in preparation.
Conclusion

I would like to conclude by going back to questions of how places of encounters are constructed, imagined, represented, contested and enforced. Placemaking and the production of locality in an intercultural setting has been a significant element of the lifeworlds of Otavalo people at all times, and can be traced through various contexts and/or arenas of encounter. It forms part of complex cultural situations and processes that are deeply rooted in local and regional historical configurations, but have changed significantly in the framework of globalisation. Arenas of encounters are ubiquitous in the life in Otavalo, they are neither a scenario of management of external relations, nor a new phenomenon that is exclusively connected to global flows. Rather they have formed an intrinsic part of the economic, political and spiritual life throughout the history of the Otavalo.

The fiesta of San Juan/Inti Raymi, an arena for constructing and negotiating power and identities over the centuries, has been of great significance for Otavalo placemaking in the sense of ‘embodied practices’ that represent and (re)construct relations between people and places (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). One important aspect of this fiesta for Amerindian people in the Andes is the “appropriation of a space of their own charged with profound meaning” (Botero 1991: 32) in shifting contexts of culture, power, and place. During the past decade this feature has attained new dimensions in connection with a globalised Otavalo ethnoscape and mediascape. The internet adds novel possibilities for Otavalo society as to use the Inti Raymi for community. The traditional festival once again for the construction and negotiation of identity and belonging, in particular by an extension of public (ritual) space and its (visual) representation. Like many other people Otavalo people use internet “to mould their image” and to enact – on a global stage – core values and components of identity (Miller and Slater 2000: 1). Thus, the Inti Raymi provides continuity in the global ethnoscape while continuously assuming new forms, new masquerades, and new arenas of performance. Today, a dispersed transnational Otavalo community continues to enact their own cultural geography by dancing in an old way in new spaces, and using each step to make place for themselves, and for new encounters.

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Elke Mader, Professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria.
E-mail: elke.mader@univie.ac.at