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Beuchelt but also as general remarks anticipating potential misunderstandings on the part of future readers. Moreover, this short comment is intended for a contribution to the debate on anthropological ethics in general, and on the anonymity of persons and places in the dissemination of ethnographic data in particular.

This last point directly refers to the criticism put forward by Roth, who considers the use of pseudonyms in a scientific report an "unusual" practice, which would commonly be restricted to "Cineastenkreise" (filmmakers; p. 199). Considering the countless contributions dealing with this particular problem in the ethics of the social sciences (e.g., Beals 1969; Gibbons 1975; Hicks 1977; Barnes 1979; Akeroyd 1984) we simply do not comprehend Roth's argument. After all he accepts social and religious conflict, as described in Rössler 1987, as a factor making the disguise of locations and persons "tolerable."

Professor Beuchelt aims at a more serious criticism when designating the use of pseudonyms in ethnography as a "growing bad habit" (thereby at the same time refuting Roth's argument), which not only would make it impossible to check up on the information given in a report, but which is also supposed to weaken the credibility of the study (298). Explaining our inclination to this "bad habit" to the reviewers and other readers requires listing some major items that urged us to follow a practice that "was one of the first indications to the inapplicability of the natural science paradigm to social inquiry" earlier in this century (Barnes 1979: 136).

The Anonymity of Persons and Places in Ethnography

A Comment

Martin Rössler and Birgitt Röttger-Rössler

Two recent reviews of Rössler's (1987) study of a rural Makassar community in South Sulawesi (Indonesia) include more or less serious criticism with regard to the fact that in this study pseudonyms were substituted for all personal names as well as for the locations within the region under investigation (Beuchelt 1988; Roth 1989). Since this criticism also concerns Röttger-Rössler's (1989) study, both of us feel urged to explain why we had no other choice than to disguise personal and place names in the mentioned studies as well as in other publications. The following arguments should not only be regarded as responses to Roth and

1. The analysis of social tensions as expressed during ritual performances (Rössler 1987) revealed that social conflict today primarily results from political changes rather than from religious or spiritual phenomena. Nevertheless, the religious domain is closely connected to the actual political situation in that public confession to the pre-Islamic faith is no longer tolerated in the region under investigation. In several instances Rössler states that people are afraid of being identified as followers of traditional religion, which here (as all over Indonesia) is associated with backwardness and regarded as a hindrance to national development. Rössler furthermore stresses the difficulties he encountered during the collection of data on the old faith. He was frequently requested by informants not to tell other local people about their knowledge of the ancestors' beliefs, in order not to provoke conflict among the villagers or between the latter and governmental or Islamic officials.