

1: Who am I? Who are you?: Colin Turnbull, The Mountain People.

Anthropologist Colin Turnbull was born London in , and raised in a surreal upper class family, which he described in his important book, The Human Cycle. World War Two jolted the pampered lad into the bloody real world.

His mother was known to point out admirable qualities of various disadvantaged people, much to the consternation of various relatives and acquaintances. This aspect of her character deeply influenced the young Colin. He had a succession of German nannies, none of whom stayed long enough to form any bond with him. At six years old, he was sent to the prestigious Westminster boarding school, and remained there until he completed his high school education. Turnbull had "a jeweled soul" and became a renowned organist , but these qualities were not particularly rewarded. A pivotal point came when, as a teenager, he witnessed a gang rape of a friend by the other boys, and he vowed to become a champion for those who were weak or unable to defend themselves. Attending Magdalen College, Oxford , Turnbull studied music , literature, and anthropology under the ethnographer E. However, his studies were cut short when he volunteered to join the Royal Navy in , where his duties included mine-sweeping, recovering bodies, and collecting name tags from fallen soldiers. He was one of the few westerners to study under Sri Anandamayi Ma and Sri Aurobindo , two great Indian religious teachers of the twentieth century. In , Turnbull made the first of several trips to Africa to see the Pygmies in what was previously the Belgian Congo. He traveled on a motorcycle with his musician friend, Norman Beal. Once there, he met the eccentric Patrick Putnam who made sure he obtained a job building the boat named African Queen for the famous movie of the same name starring Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn. In , he traveled to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada , to work as a geologist for a gold mining company. When he returned, he and a cousin traveled again to Africa and Turnbull made his first recordings of Mbuti Pygmy music. He loved the sound of the "molimo," a simple kind of wind instrument unique to their culture. The women would sit in their huts while it was played and pretend that they thought that it was the sound of an animal. Turnbull visited the Mbuti Pygmies a total of six times. When he met a young Mbutu named Kenge, he felt a fulfillment of what he had been taught in India, where he had been told that perhaps he would meet someone who would show him how we ourselves create beauty from the muck of life, as the lotus sucks up the dirt and becomes beautiful. He dedicated his first book, The Forest People, to Kenge. From to he returned to his studies in Oxford, and became engaged to an Indian woman, Kumari Mayor. He terminated his engagement when he met the love of his life and partner for the next 30 years, Joe Towles, an African American man. They exchanged vows of commitment in Although they lived in an openly homosexual relationship, Turnbull did not think of himself as "gay. He said that he realized he simply preferred the company of men to women. Fame came with the publication of The Forest People in He obtained a D. There were some accusations from the staff at the American Museum of African Ethnology that some data was fabricated, and references to his gay relationship were made. In , Turnbull became a naturalized citizen of the United States and Towles decided to become an anthropologist. He also began fieldwork with the Ik tribe of Uganda. In , Turnbull resigned from the museum, ascribing his resignation to their unfair treatment of African Americans. He continued his fieldwork and took a teaching position at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York. With the publication of The Mountain People in , he became as reviled as he had been previously celebrated, as his pronouncements against the Ik culture were very strong and unusual for an anthropologist. Criticisms involved the utilization of verbal report, per se, and the ethical issues of publicizing the photographs and names of subjects studied who were involved in crimes. A movement against the findings of the book sparked much debate within anthropology for decades. They lived as an openly gay and interracial couple in one of the smallest and most conservative towns in rural Virginia. During this time, Turnbull also took up the cause of death row prison inmates. In , Turnbull studied death row inmates in Florida full time, and Towles received his Ph. His partly autobiographical book The Human Cycle appeared in Turnbull buried an empty coffin next to him, and the gravestone reads that they both died on that date. He said that his soul died on that day. In fact, Turnbull lived another six years. He gave all his possessions to the United Negro Fund and moved to Samoa. Although he said he wanted no other funeral after the one he had with Towles, the

Mbuti Pygmies gave him a traditional Pygmy funeral ceremony. Legacy Turnbull never expressed the desire to be considered an objective scientist, or accepted by mainstream academia. His purpose was to uncover the goodness and beauty in diverse peoples. As a proponent of the necessity of being involved in the subject and the futility of objectivity in anthropology, Turnbull became his own worst enemy: As well as stirring up passionate responses to his work among the general public, Turnbull also excited intense academic criticism. Many criticized the way his passion for a subject seemed to blur his vision. The reliability of his field observations was also questioned and many of his original conclusions were later discredited. For example, he claimed that the Ik culture had become devoid of any values, as they practiced behaviors such as gorging on whatever occasional excesses of food they might find until they became sick, rather than saving or sharing the bounty. Even those, like Grinker, [2] who originally rejected his research as mere storytelling, came to recognize its value and to respect Turnbull. His recordings of Mbuti music were commercially released, and his works inspired other ethnomusicological studies, such as those of Simha Arom and Mauro Campagnoli. He befriended numerous prison inmates in Florida, working hard to overturn their death sentences. He also was outspoken against interracial discrimination. Finally, it may be that the pure joy of discovery and finding data to support the unity of humankind was his greatest legacy, contributing to the development of human cross-cultural relationships. Harcourt Brace College Publishers. *Music of the Rainforest Pygmies*. Historic recordings made by Colin M. Turnbull, Colin, and Thubten Jigme Norbu. *Science News*, Sept. *The Arms of Africa: The Life of Colin M.*

2: The Mountain People by Colin www.enganchecubano.com

In 'The Mountain People', Colin M. Turnbull, the celebrated author of the classic 'The Forest People', describes the dehumanization of the Ik, African tribesmen who in less than three generations have deteriorated from being once-prosperous hunters to scattered bands of hostile, starving people whose only goal is individual survival.

Where Dulness doses on a couch of lead. Simon and Schuster, and London: They had little choice but to embark on a more settled way of life. What was left of their traditional range was a largely mountainous area where they now started to build semi-permanent villages usually abandoned after a few years, and a new village built not very far from the old one and rely on farming to a much greater extent than before. But the area was not fertile enough; every four years or so there was a severe drought ch. Years upon years of permanent scarcity exerted a relentless pressure upon them, turning their lives into nothing but a ceaseless struggle for survival. Under this pressure, their society eventually disintegrated. What remained was little but a mass of supremely selfish individuals to whom most of the principles that we naively imagine to be universally human, e. A transformation like this is, of course, somewhat shocking; one would hardly expect that a whole tribe, a formerly quite viable society, could go down the drain like this. This is what makes this book so interesting and worth reading. One also appreciates the style in which the book is written: So let the old go first, then the children. Anything else is racial suicide, and the Ik, I almost regret to say, are anything but suicidal. It seems that, far from being basic human qualities, they are superficial luxuries we can afford in times of plenty, or mere mechanisms for survival and security. Given the situation in which the Ik found themselves as I headed toward them, man has not time for such luxuries, and a much more basic man appears, using much more basic survival tactics. It is clearly stated by the Ik themselves in their daily conversation, in their rationale for action and thought. Parents kick their children out of the house at the age of three. In the end his or her next younger colleagues kick him or her out of the band, and he or she has to join a new band consisting of children age eight to thirteen, where he or she is again the youngest and thus least important member. At thirteen or so he or she is again kicked out by his or her next younger colleagues, and from then one is an adult. When this has happened to you three or four times you are ready for the world, knowing friendship for the joke it is. But since you want him to be indebted to you in this way, you try to help him in such a way that he cannot refuse In point of fact they are helping themselves, and their help may very well be resented in the extreme, but is done in such a way that it cannot be refused, for it has already been given. In a harsh life like this, people age quickly. This reminds me of a shocking scene from some Holocaust-memoir type of book I once read, but I forget which one perhaps *The House of Dolls* , where a high-school girl ends up in a concentration camp relatively late in the war; at some point she has a conversation with another inmate, an elderly grey-haired woman “ and it turns out that they are the same age, only that the second woman had been in the camp since the first days of the war. The plates are also quite touching, as are the curiously terse and matter-of-fact captions next to them. He thought it quite funny. In a few months she was, like all useless things, to be abandoned to her fate. The opportunity offered itself when the girl to be captured left the outer stockade, after dark, for a final defecation. The Ik seem to be the ultimate libertarians. They had formerly had some religious beliefs, but most of that was gone during the disintegration of their society. This reminds me of a similar difference between the young and old in WW2-era Ukraine, observed by Malaparte in his *Volga Rises in Europe* , see e. They used to have ritual priests, the last of which, Lolim, died, old, weak, denied food or shelter by his children, while Turnbull was there ch. Their views on sex: The second factor was the expenditure of energy involved, and the young men, the only ones smitten by this ridiculous urge, pointed out that it required much less energy to masturbate. This will illustrate the kind of climate the Ik had to deal with: On the Ik language: Archie finally pronounced, with no little satisfaction, that the nearest language he could find to this one was classical Middle-Kingdom Egyptian! The disintegration of Ik society was not a sudden process. It took some time before the old people died, the ones who could still remember the times when people would occasionally help each other or do something at least moderately altruistic. But once this process was complete, it seems that there is no way back ch. Near the end of the book, the author mentions a

famine relief effort organized by the government. Food was provided for everyone, but the government only transported it as far as the nearest town. The strong and healthy Ik could get there from their villages and were supposed to pick up the food not just for themselves but for their weak, elderly, or ill relatives as well and carry it to them. But almost without exception this idea of bringing food to a weak or elderly person struck them as absurd, as a laughable waste of food, and they would routinely stuff themselves full of it on the way home, even to the point of vomiting, rather than bringing any of it to their starving neighbours and relatives ch. Turnbull ends with a very bleak view on the future of the Ik: Now that more than 30 years have passed since this book was written, whatever was destined to be the fate of the Ik has probably already played itself out; but I wonder what it was. Of course, a question one can hardly help wondering about when hearing of something like the Ik is whether anything similar could also happen to our modern society. Unfortunately, what Turnbull offers on this subject ch. Perhaps his rants and doomsday-mongering are simply an artefact of the period in which his book was written; the late 60s and early 70s were no doubt a turbulent period, especially in the U. We may be more individualistic now than people were fifty or a hundred years ago, but we are not completely oblivious to the notions of kinship, friendship, affection, and so on. Most of us in the at least moderately developed world live only in relative scarcity, not absolute one. I suspect that complete disintegration of society the way we saw in the case of the Ik is only possible in conditions of absolute scarcity, not only relative scarcity such as we have now. And our society functions entirely on relative scarcity: Thus, as long as our present lamentable capitalist system persists, we will probably have as much relative scarcity as possible, but no more of absolute scarcity than is inevitable. Earlier in his career, Turnbull had done a lot of work among the Congo pygmies, and wrote a book about them, *The Forest People*.

3: Colin Turnbull and the Forest People - SciHi BlogSciHi Blog

I recommend "The Forest People" and "The Mountain People" to all who care about the fate of our species. An added bonus of Turnbull's work is the quality of his writing, which, like that of Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, is fluid, clear, and graceful.

Community structure[edit] The Ik people live in several small villages arranged in clusters, which comprise the total "community". Each village is surrounded by an outer wall, then sectioned off into familial or friend-based "neighborhoods" called Odoks, each surrounded by a wall. Each Odok is sectioned into walled-off households called asaks, with front yards for lack of a better term and in some cases, granaries.

Culture[edit] Ik village in northern Uganda , Children by age three or four are sometimes permanently expelled from the household and form groups called age-bands consisting of those within the same age group. No adults look after the children, who teach each other the basics of survival. However, it is not certain whether this practice is typical Ik tradition or merely triggered by unusual famine conditions. Joseph Tainter proposes this fragmentation to be an artifact of the dire circumstances where each person must depend on their own resources alone to find food and the age peers band together primarily to protect themselves from older stronger children who would take their food. The book provides an examination of Ik culture and practices based on information he gathered during a stay in the years 1960-1962. He depicts the Ik as a people forced into extreme individualistic practices in order to survive. Using the few remaining elderly Ik as sources, he attempts to describe the former Ik society including hunter-gatherer practices; marriage, childbirth, and death rituals and taboos; religious and spiritual beliefs, and other aspects. Much of the work, however, focuses on the then-current condition of the Ik people during a severe famine brought on by two consecutive drought years. Archie Tucker, the English linguist, accepted an invitation to come up and see just what this extraordinary language was, for it certainly was not Sudanic or Bantu. Archie finally pronounced, with no little satisfaction, that the nearest language he could find to this one was classical Middle-Kingdom Egyptian!

Turnbull became very involved with the Ik people, and openly writes about his horror at many of the events he witnessed, most notably total disregard for familial bonds leading to the death of children and the elderly by starvation. He does speak warmly about certain Ik, and describes his "misguided" efforts to give food and water to those too weak to provide for themselves, standing guard over them to prevent others from stealing the food. Overall, living with the Ik seems to have afflicted Turnbull more with melancholy and depression than anger, and he dedicated his work "to the Ik, whom I learned not to hate". He seems to have misrepresented the Ik by describing them as traditionally being hunters and gatherers forced by circumstance to become farmers, when there is ample linguistic and cultural evidence that the Ik were farmers long before they were displaced from their hunting grounds after the formation of Kidepo National Park 1961—the event that Turnbull says forced the Ik to become farmers. Moreover, three out of the six villages Turnbull studied were headed by non-Ik people. Rather, these files and reports actually suggest that the largest number of cattle raids occurred in parts of Dodoth County where no mention of Ik raiding livestock can be found in any of these documents. They reported that during the two years Turnbull stayed in Pirre there was only one case of adultery. Rather than being a study of the Ik, this is an autobiographical portrait of the author utilizing the Ik as counters for expressing his personal feelings and experiences in the field. Turnbull also argued that Ik society was already destroyed and all that could be done was to save individual tribal members. Consequently Turnbull advocated to the Ugandan government forcible relocation of random tribal members with no more than ten people in any relocated group. It also toured the United States in as a bicentennial gift from the French government. Physician and poet Lewis Thomas wrote an essay entitled "The Ik"; Cevin Soling read this as a child, sparking an interest that ultimately led to his making a documentary, *Ikland*. The film depicts the Ik people in a positive light by showing how easily befriended they are, how they survive and live as families, their music and dancing and even their ability to step into acting roles. The documentary concludes with members of the tribe staging a performance of *A Christmas Carol* , by Charles Dickens , as a metaphor of redemption.

4: Colin Turnbull - New World Encyclopedia

*Colin Macmillan Turnbull (November 23, - July 28,) was a British-American anthropologist who came to public attention with the popular books *The Forest People (on the Mbuti Pygmies of Zaire)* and *The Mountain People (on the Ik people of Uganda)*, and one of the first anthropologists to work in the field of ethnomusicology.*

Colin Turnbull was an anthropologist with a special interest in the hunter-gatherer societies of Africa. He lived in the rain forests of Zaire and also in the mountainous areas that border Uganda, Sudan and Kenya. This book is an account of his observations in the latter region. He writes about the semi-nomadic tribes that traditionally move around and across the frontiers herding cattle, hunting game and engaging in some simple cultivation to supplement the collection of vegetables, roots and berries. The tribe that he studied in detail called themselves the Ik and had always had their temporary villages in the higher mountains of Uganda. This was a distinguishing feature that differentiated them from other groups such as the Turkana who were plain dwellers and cattle herders. He and his colleague Joseph Towles spent the better part of three years with them between and The interest of the narrative is not so much the study of hunter-gatherer life do anthropologists study anything else? The Ik started to get into difficulties at the end of the 2nd World War as the new nation states in the area "hardened" their frontiers. Previously the Ik had moved freely between all three countries hunting game in the Kidepo valley and following it through the mountainous areas into the Sudan. However the Kidepo area was declared a Ugandan National Park and they were no longer allowed to hunt there. Subsequently they had to make a permanent base on the inhospitable mountainous eastern edge of the Park, an area that had previously only been a temporary resting place. What follows is a narrative of serious non-adaptation as Turnbull shows that the traditional society of loose co-operation for hunting and weak family bonds is insufficient to meet the new challenge that the tribe faces. Food is no longer shared. Men hunt what they can and eat it far from the village and women collect only for themselves. As starvation sets in children and old people die as they are not fed, the tribe becomes known for its cattle thieving among the neighbouring groups. The thieving becomes intense among themselves and Turnbull interestingly shows how this becomes the new norm. Honesty becomes foolishness and lying becomes an art with Turnbull as the main target he had a Land Rover, cigarettes and plenty of food. At this point one can ask whether 1 Turnbull is exaggerating in the interest of a dramatic story or 2 supporting a thesis which is, to quote, "my hope that we who have been civilised into such empty beliefs as the essential beauty and goodness of humanity may discover ourselves before it is too late. He is not a co-author of this book and only appears in it very briefly. All the same Turnbull does give cases where there is some residual co-operation and more honest individuals move away from the tribe. To answer 2 , the story fits in too neatly with the new socio-biological view of the world Sociobiology: Wilson where man can only be understood on the basis of his animal drives. When he states that; "we have been civilised into a belief in the essential beauty and goodness of humanity.

5: The Mountain People by Colin M. Turnbull

The Mountain People deals with the ethnographic details of the Ik or Teuso people living in northern Uganda. We will write a custom essay sample on A book review on "The Mountain People" by Colin Turnbull specifically for you.

Journal of the International African Institute, Vol. Simon and Schuster, I THIS is apparently intended to be an unpleasant book, for it describes a society that has been reduced to a level of harshness that would seem horrifying and inhuman to persons from many other cultures. The Ik Teuso are a group of some two thousand hunters and gatherers now also practising some agriculture. Today they reside in northern Uganda; their traditional mode of life was severely disturbed by the creation of a national park and game refuge out of the major portion of their habitation. Their consequent displacement into an area ill suited to their needs led to an erosion of their customary values and mode of life, so extreme that Dr. Turnbull compares Ik social relations today as more shocking than those in a Nazi concentration camp. They still insist on living in villages even though the villages have nothing that could be called a truly [sic] social structure, for they encompass no social life, and despite the fact that members of a village mistrust and fear each other more than any others, in direct proportion to their proximity and completely without regard to family and kinship. Numerous examples are provided to support this grim picture. However, when any act or belief is manifested which contradicts the overriding picture of a horrid society, the author credits this as being a survival from happier days. Turnbull assigns emotions to Ik even when he could not possibly be sure what their feelings might be. This book cannot be discussed in any proper sociological terms for we are provided with only snatches of data. Rather than being a study of the Ik, this is an autobiographical portrait of the author utilizing the Ik as counters for expressing his personal feelings and experiences in the field. Turnbull clearly had a dreadful field-trip and has succeeded in conveying this to the reader. It is not, in other words, primarily intended for an anthropological audience. It is this, he suggests, that led by I to new qualities of acrimony, envy, suspicion, the pursuit of immediate self-interest, and the abandonment of loyalty and trust. There was no maternal love, children were turned out of their homes at three years old to fend for themselves and older people died prematurely, neglected and denied food even by their own children. There was evidence of earlier institutions that sustained a degree of control and co-operation among the Ik, but with hunger and endemic famine these have largely been abandoned and even the family, we are told, had ceased to exist. Clearly, Turnbull is vulnerable to criticism from his professional colleagues, especially as he is widely quoted as an authority on small-scale societies, lending respectability to the popular notion that such people lead an idyllic, trouble-free existence, wisely conserving their population size and environment, until they are tainted by progress cf. Wilkinson, Poverty and progress, reviewed p. There is no evidence that the Ik ever conformed to such a model indeed, there are no references at all to earlier writings on this area. At the other end of the scale, one may question whether the Ik today really represent the total negation of society. For all their perverted sense of humour and prolonged silences, there is ample evidence of a people who cling tenaciously to one another and to the area in which they live, with a mutual respect for the prowess to survive. There are, however, important issues here that anthropologists should welcome rather than criticise, and it is to be hoped that Turnbull will elaborate on these in a later publication, just as his Wayward servants gave us a fuller insight into the Ituri Pygmies. I would single out two such issues. In the first place, he had the privileged misfortune of visiting the Ik at a time of famine in the area and political upheaval in Uganda. Over the period he was with them, most of the older people died and their population size was severely reduced. This would be demographically more dynamic, and sociologically more challenging with regard to the nature of social institutions under stress and of social transaction. The attempt to settle the Ik, in other words, may have produced a sharp unprecedented shift in their ecology, but it could be misleading to assert a perfect ecological balance before that time. Secondly, although Turnbull shows only a minor interest in the topic, Ik society occupies an interesting interstitial position between neighbouring Karamojong-speaking pastoral tribes, trading with them, blacksmithing for them, spying for them, and guiding them on their cattle raids through the area. A number of cases are also cited of intermarriage and intermigration with them. Individual ties nyot tend to be developed between Ik and

pastoralists that are ideally inheritable by the families on both sides. What is so revealing is that during a period of famine and malaise when even the family is held no longer to exist, these nyot ties should have been fully sustained despite the fact that they are essentially contractual with no mystical or religious backing. In this one institution alone, the Ik are prepared to display a longer term self-interest and a degree of trust that is lacking everywhere else p. Here again, Turnbull appears to be trapped by his own model of an isolated self-contained hunting and gathering horde. The pastoralists are not presented as intruders in quite the same way as the Uganda administration, but they have no place in his conception of an earlier scene despite their presence in this area for countless centuries. They are, it would seem, an outward-looking people who do not and perhaps never did match an inward-looking model. From *Current Anthropology*, 15 1, March pp. It must be human in recognizing the social and cultural construction of reality while yet seeking inter-cultural translatability and universality in participation. It must be concerned in its striving to transcend complacent tolerance and value-freedom to create deeper understanding of the human condition. Since our steps are still so uncertain in these directions, we cannot allow many serious mistakes in the profession, and must be highly critical of ourselves and others. In our common interest I therefore feel we are justified to demand full accountability of each other. Turnbull "since I feel it exhibits a number of anthropological difficulties and failings in such a crass form that it deserves both to be sanctioned and to be held up as a warning to us all. Let me make some of my premises more clear. The pursuit of research in social and cultural anthropology entails circumstances of fieldwork and analysis which are rather special, and which therefore require special ethics and competences both of professional and personal kinds. We impose ourselves unmasked and in many ways incompletely perceived on other people in other countries and societies. There are no standards in those worlds for the intellectual and moral operation of making an anthropological study; and as "marginal natives" we are free of many of the constraints of society " both ours and theirs. This entails that we ourselves set the standards and impose the constraints, and that we carry full responsibility for what happens. We legitimize " and finance " our activity as research, perhaps even with a vague promise of applied usefulness. In so doing, we surely commit ourselves to certain standards of intellectual integrity and competence, and objectivity, by which our work should be judged and used by others. We use ourselves as a research tool in participant observation: For this reason we are particularly dependent on our own self-awareness and understanding, and we can not afford to lose our judgement without noticing. My judgement is nonetheless that his book fails on all these points. Though presented as a popular account, it reveals itself as poor anthropology in method, in data, and in reasoning. It is emotionally either dishonest or superficial. It is deeply misleading to the public it sets out to inform. Most disturbingly, it is grossly irresponsible and harmful to its unwitting objects of study. Their illegal activities are publicized to anyone who bothers to read the book: But what can justify letting an illiterate family live forever in the libraries of the West in the following description pp. Bila was always crawling with them, as was her ill-tempered and mean little daughter, Nialetcha. Nialetcha, being over three, no longer lived in the house, however, so possibly had fewer lice. Poor Matsui had eye sores, and the flies were constantly at them and had of course enlarged them and had gradually, in this way, eaten away at the eyebrows and eyelashes. Her eyes offered such a tempting meal to the flies that there was never enough room, and they crawled all over her face. Matsui never seemed to think of brushing them away, and often when she opened her mouth in a smile of welcome the flies would crawl in and explore it. I do not think that Matsui had the least idea that there was anything wrong with her. She was the mother of three sons and three daughters, two of whom were truly beautiful, all the more so, in my eyes, because they were the only people who seemed to share my opinion of their incredible younger brother, Lokwam, and who used to treat him much as he treated Adupa. It was one of the few real pleasures I had, listening to his shrieking and yelling when they caught him and did whatever they did for it was always out of sight behind their stockade and then watching for him to come flying out of the odok holding his head and streaming with tears, while Kimimei and Lotukou laughed with happiness. Ik persons are used in this way to provide material for a truly bizarre picture of a culture and a society. Let it be that they practice that "very early form of marriage, marriage by capture" p. More staggering, perhaps, this is a society without the institution of the family and one in which "they still insist on living in villages even though the villages have nothing that could be called a truly social structure,

for they encompass no social life And the general public is here informed of an African society which offers us pp. If it is, the Ik should have it. Whether it makes them or us any different from other animals is a matter of opinion, but I must confess that early during fieldwork I wrote back that I could not believe I was studying a human society; it was rather like looking at a singularly well-ordered community of baboons. I searched for evidence of love almost from the beginning, I found more of it in In all this, Turnbull for some reason sees a spectre of the future of the West, a theme he develops in his last chapter to a level of sophistication where he agonizes in one paragraph about "what has become of the Western family" p. Even supposing we can avert the disaster of nuclear holocaust or that of the almost universal famine that may be expected by the middle of the next century if population keeps expanding and pollution remains unchecked, what will be the cost, if not the same already paid by the Ik? They too were driven by the need to survive against seemingly invincible odds, and they succeeded, at the cost of their humanity. This is what "the Ik teach us" p. Judging from the popular reviews, such philosophizing sounds authoritative and sells well to a public that searches for understanding. What method is used to establish these sensational data and insights? But in other cases we can see the steps whereby the picture is built. One procedure is the classical error of imputing thoughts and motives: Describing how mothers handle infants, we learn how a mother "goes about her business, leaving the child [in the bush], almost hoping that some predator will come along and carry it away" p. We learn about "the splendid pastime of wife-beating, which, surprisingly, among the Ik follows a formal procedure: Of the informant who describes traditional custom for punishing adultery we are told: I had been desperately looking for something that would warm me to these difficult people, some human trait that I could enjoy and share, and I had thought I had found one when I first started living in my house and I saw that every morning men and women spent a lot of time just over the edge of the descent into Kidepo, simply sitting and staring at that great and wonderful stretch of country as the sun came up behind Meraniang. I used to sit outside my stockade and enjoy the view with them until I found that all they were doing was combining their morning toilet with their first hopeful search for signs of food. Then I began noticing the odors, but I did not have the courage to say anything about it. At the same time, I was frustrated because here was one massive toilet on my doorstep. The indignation when it is apparent that the Ik do not suit Turnbull is pervasive pp. I had seen no evidence of family life. I had seen no sign of love. I had seen things that made me want to cry, though as yet I had not cried, but I had never seen an Ik anywhere near tears or sorrow. So it was with curious pleasure that I awoke one night to hear a distinct mournful wailing, such as heralds death. I got up feeling better than I had for a long time, hoping that I was actually right that someone was actually crying over someone who had died So in his preface he exercises his own compassion against the accepted premise that "most of us are unlikely to admit readily that we can sink as low as the Ik How can a reputable anthropologist with previous extensive field experience get himself into such a mess? The book supplies clues in the form of a series of grotesque descriptions of scenes and events during fieldwork. The account we are given is a systematically false record of these events, since it depicts Turnbull alone in the field, handling his relations and judging the situations, whereas he was in fact throughout accompanied by the African medical doctor Joseph Towles,¹ "who shared much of the experience with me.

6: Colin Turnbull | Revolv

Magazine article New African The Mountain People Revisited: Curtis Abraham Went to Ik-Land in Uganda and Saw How Wrong Colin Turnbull, the British-Born American Anthropologist, Was in His Book on the Ik, the Mountain People.

Early life Turnbull was born in London and educated at Westminster School and Magdalen College, Oxford, where he studied politics and philosophy. Turnbull and Beal first studied the Mbuti pygmies during this time, though that was not the goal of the trip. An "odd job" Turnbull picked up while in Africa at this time was working for the Hollywood producer Sam Spiegel. Spiegel hired Turnbull to assist in the construction and transportation of a boat needed for his film. Upon returning to Oxford in 1954, Turnbull began specializing in the anthropology of Africa. He remained in Oxford for two years before another field trip to Africa, finally focusing on the Belgian Congo in 1958 and Uganda. After years of fieldwork, he finally achieved his anthropology doctorate from Oxford in 1961. Other professional associations included corresponding membership of Royal Museum for Central Africa and a fellowship in the British Royal Anthropological Institute. He first gained prominence with his book *The Forest People*, a study of the Mbuti people. In 1961, having been commissioned to come up with an explanation and solution to the difficulties experienced by the Ik people, the controversial *The Mountain People* was published. The Ik were a hunter-gatherer tribe who had been forced to stop moving around ancestral lands, through the seasons, because it now involved the three national borders of Uganda, Kenya and Sudan. Forced to become stationary in Uganda, and without a knowledge base and culture for survival under such conditions, they failed to thrive, even to the point of starvation and death. Turnbull later worked on a theatrical adaptation of *The Mountain People* with his friend, playwright Peter Brook. In 1962 he moved to New York City to pursue a career as an actor and writer. He met Turnbull in 1962 and they exchanged marriage vows the following year. In the Congo in 1963, they conducted fieldwork on the Nkumbi circumcision initiation ritual for boys and the Asa myth of origin among the Mbo of the Ituri forest. In 1964, they traveled studying the concept of tourism as pilgrimage. Turnbull himself dies of AIDS in 1982. His graphic descriptions were placed into context by interviews he did with older Ik to contrast the older society that existed prior to displacement. Publications *The Lonely African*. *The Two Worlds of the African Pygmies. Its History, Religion and People*. *A functional Non-Social System*". *Extinction and Survival in Human Populations*.

7: Ik people - Wikipedia

The Mountain People revisited: Curtis Abraham went to Ik-land in Uganda and saw how wrong Colin Turnbull, the British-born American anthropologist, was in his book on the Ik, the mountain people.

World War Two jolted the pampered lad into the bloody real world. In the s, he spent lots of time in the Congo, with the Mbuti Pygmies, who inspired his masterpiece, *The Forest People*. It was a beautiful life-changing experience to live with healthy, happy humans who were profoundly in love with their sacred forest – nothing like the zombies of England. When war in the Congo zapped his plans for another visit, he accepted an assignment to learn about the Ik tribe in northeastern Uganda. The government wanted a plan for transforming them into law-abiding taxpaying farmers. For unknown thousands of years, they had been hunter-gatherers in the Kidepo Valley, an arid mountainous savannah. In , their traditional lands became a square mile 1, sq km wildlife preserve, the Kidepo Valley National Park. Hunting was banned, and the Ik were moved into the mountains. They were expected to magically shape shift into farmers in a region that experienced droughts about one in every four years. Crops withered in the fields, the granaries were empty, and about 2, people began to starve. Turnbull described the cultural meltdown in *The Mountain People*. He knows the world he lives in as few others do, and he lives in sympathy with it, rather than trying to dominate it. When he first got there, the famine was just beginning. Two months later, the horror began. People became totally self-centered. Their two interests in life were now food and water. They pulled many juvenile pranks on him, hoping for him to get hurt or die. It was amusing to steal food from the feeble, and push them down. Evicted children formed bands and wandered the countryside looking for something to eat. Lucky ones found some figs, the unlucky ate dirt and pebbles, and soon died. Turnbull was often scolded for his idiotic generosity. He was feeding folks who were soon to be dead, cruelly prolonging their misery. Adults refused to feed their starving parents, or let them into their house. When they died, most were quickly buried in the family compound, in secrecy. If the villagers found out, they would expect a funeral ceremony, which required a feast. Famines were a crappy time to be born. Nobody was happy to see you, nobody cared. Maybe a hungry leopard would relieve her of her little bummer. One time, a leopard ate a baby. Sleepy from a delicious meal, the cat laid down for nice nap. Men found it, killed it, and ate it, baby and all. Turnbull once took pity on an old woman who was close to death. He wanted to create a new village, where the abandoned people could be properly cared for. She was not interested. She wanted to die near her son, who would not take care of her. Turnbull fed her, and gave her some food. Stuff like this fills most of the book. Turnbull spent 18 months eating by himself in his Range Rover. For some reason, he got the blues. I first read *The Mountain People* in , and it snapped my mind. It was an unforgettable book that you wished you could forget. I was blindsided by the misery, cruelty, and horror, and this was the impression that I took away from the book. In , I read the book a second time, and it blew me away again, for another reason. Near the end of the book, Turnbull shared some troubling conclusions that I was too dazed to grasp in my first reading. He held up a mirror, so his well-fed readers could see their own deformities, and get their noses rubbed in them. Having spent years with the Mbuti, he had directly experienced a healthy functional society. Before that, he had grown to adulthood in twentieth century Western society, a world of atomic bombs, concentration camps, and the brutal extermination of tens of millions. It was the opposite of a functional society. It had become pathologically individualized and de-socialized – similar to the Ik, and in many ways worse. The Ik give us a taste of our days to come. Here is a comment, from 45 years ago, that could have been written today. The Mbuti enjoyed a society harmonized by a common set of beliefs, values, and lifestyles. Everyone was on the same channel. Our society is a cranky boisterous mob of numerous competing cultures, classes, and religious beliefs. It has to be learned. When love is not reciprocated, it dies. The Ik demonstrated that love can go extinct. When lonely consumers are starving for love in modern society, many choose to purchase companions. Each one was alone, and content to be alone. Turnbull often sat with Ik men on a ridge overlooking the valley, gazing into space. Day after day, all day long, not a word was ever spoken. This reminds me of the spooky smart phone cult in my town today. The Ik expelled their children from home at age three. Westerners wait until kindergarten,

when the kids begin their decades of institutionalization. The state now oversees health, education, and welfare. Immediately, hordes of dignified scholars explosively soiled their britches. The Ik were nothing but an extreme exception, a bizarre mutation! Civilized humans are moral and virtuous! We are the greatest! All his screws are loose, real communication with him seems impossible. Perhaps one has to belong to one of the backwards races in order to get his wavelength.

8: Mountain People - Colin Turnbull - Google Books

From these trips he drew the material for his first book, The Forest People, an account of the three years he spent with the Pygmies of Zaïre. Mr. Turnbull was a Professor of Anthropology at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

But it turns out that this was one of the all time most controversial books about Africa ever written. And another blog says this: What does it say about Western intellectual life that such obvious nonsense could spread so easily across the Anthropological borderline into popular culture? A account of a mid-20th century anthropological field trip to northern Uganda seemed like fairly intriguing but hardly spectacular stuff. What does it say about Western intellectual life that such obvious nonsense could spread so easily across the Anthropological borderline into popular culture and thence into the received wisdom of the age? The parallel with our own society is deadly. Now, perhaps that last sentence has a clue in it. What exactly happened anyway? CT loved loved the Mbuti and his book was a hit. He says that the Ik were hunter gatherers originally, but because of the creation of national parks, the government had forced them to become subsistence farmers, penning them in the mountainous northern corner of the country where it rains only two or three years in every four, and where the soil is poor. He says that the destruction of their formerly sustainable hunter-gatherer life caused Ik society to crumble. Food became ever scarcer. A low-level famine was ever-present, and this led to behaviour becoming ever more viciously individualistic. The family unit practically dissolved. The young and the old were not cared for. Anyone who could not feed him or herself was useless, already dead. I have seen Bila and Matsui do this many a time. Then she goes about her business, leaving the child there, almost hoping that some predator will come along and carry it off. This happened once while I was there – and the mother was delighted. She was rid of the child and no longer had to carry it about and feed it! The men set off and found the leopard, which had consumed all of the child except part of the skull; they killed the leopard and cooked it and ate it, child and all. One day he said his wife was sick. He asked CT for food and medicine for her, which CT gave him. After a while when she continued being sick CT suggested she should go to a hospital. Then after a while, when I still had not once seen her, his brother-in-law, the beady-eyed Lomongin, sidled up to me and said he supposed I knew that Atum was selling the medicine I was giving him for his wife. I was not unduly surprised, and merely remarked that that was too bad for his wife. A funeral, it was said, was a nuisance to everyone, and made everyone upset with all the crying and wailing. I would have given quite a lot to believe that the Ik were capable of crying and wailing at that point. And later, regarding another old man In a very short time Loomeraniang was dead, and his son refused to come down from the village above and bury him; his sister hurried over and snatched his few belongings, leaving the corpse. At eighteen a woman begins to enter the loneliness and isolation of old age. Caption on another photo Adupa, in the unused kitchen area of her compound, which was to become her grave. She made the mistake of thinking of it as a home. Her parents were unable to feed her, and when she persisted in her demands they shut her in. She was too weak to break her way out, and after a few days her dead body was unceremoniously thrown out. Caption on another photo which shows a small boy and his taller brother Liza, younger brother of Murai, died while his older brother thrived. He made the mistake of expecting more of family than mere tolerance. Murai would eat while his brother, starving, watched. Yet he showed no malice or hatred, no regret, nothing. As Murai said, surely, it is better that one lives than that they both should die. CT remarks that in famine conditions There simply was not room, in the life of these people, for such luxuries as family and sentiment and love. So close to the verge of starvation, such luxuries could mean death, and is it not a singularly foolish luxury to die for someone who is already dead, or weak, or old? This seemed to strike hard at the assumption that there are such things as basic human values, at the very notion of virtue, of goodness even. The Ik present us with an opportunity for testing the cherished notion that love is essential to survival. If it is, the Ik should have it. Whether it makes them or us any different from other animals is a matter of opinion, but I must confess that early during fieldwork I wrote back that I could not believe I was studying a human society I searched for evidence of love almost from the beginning, I found more of it in Of course the proper study of man is Man, man in this sense

meaning woman too, of course, of course. But I dunno, the notion of a white intellectual paying the natives to build him a hut and a road to the hut so he can get his fucking Landrover up the hill, and living in this hut for a couple of years, and trying to learn all about this society, and then after this brief period trotting back to the University of Rich White America and writing down what he thinks about these poor benighted starvelings kind of sticks in my throat more than somewhat. And Rather than being a study of the Ik, this is an autobiographical portrait of the author utilizing the Ik as counters for expressing his personal feelings and experiences in the field. Turnbull clearly had a dreadful field-trip and has succeeded in conveying this to the reader Reviewer: It is deeply misleading to the public it sets out to inform. Most disturbingly, it is grossly irresponsible and harmful to its unwitting objects of study. Their illegal activities are publicized to anyone who bothers to read the book: And the face which the anthropologist presented to the Ik seems strongly marked by the Bwana complex. One of the clearest expressions is found in his relationship to Kauar, who emerges from the description pp. He was always pleased with himself when he came back, and asked if he had made the trip more quickly than the last time. Then he used to sit and watch while I read the mail, studying the expression on my face to see if all was well. When we drank tea together he always took exactly the same number of teaspoons of sugar that I took, and helped himself to exactly the same number of biscuits, never more, never less. When one day Kauar fell dead on his return marathon, Turnbull is indignant at the lack of compassion shown by the Ik, while "I still see his open, laughing face, see him giving precious tidbits to the children, comforting some child who was crying, and watching me read the letters he carried so lovingly for me. And I still think of him probably running up that viciously steep mountainside so that he could break his time record, and falling dead in his pathetic prime because he was starving" p. This whole thing begins to be nauseating after a while. CT portrays himself as a lover of Africa, and surely he did love parts of it, but the Ik freaked him out so much by their abjectness and squalor that the old judgemental colonial paternalism kind of rose up inside Colin and overwhelmed him, the old heart of darkness thing. He ends up saying that it would be better if the Ugandan government solved the Ik problem by forcibly rounding them up and dispersing them round the country in groups of ten or so. Since they no longer have any strong family bonds it would do them no harm. They could blend in with other tribes and that would be a final solution to the Ik problem. I am most profoundly happy to be done with it.

9: What Is Sustainable: The Mountain People

The Mountain People, based on Turnbull's fieldwork in Uganda in and , is a frightening book about the Ik (pronounced "eek"), a group of 2, starving and hostile hunters. It remains one of the most controversial and commercially successful books in the history of anthropology.

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