

# How it started: origins of the comparative method

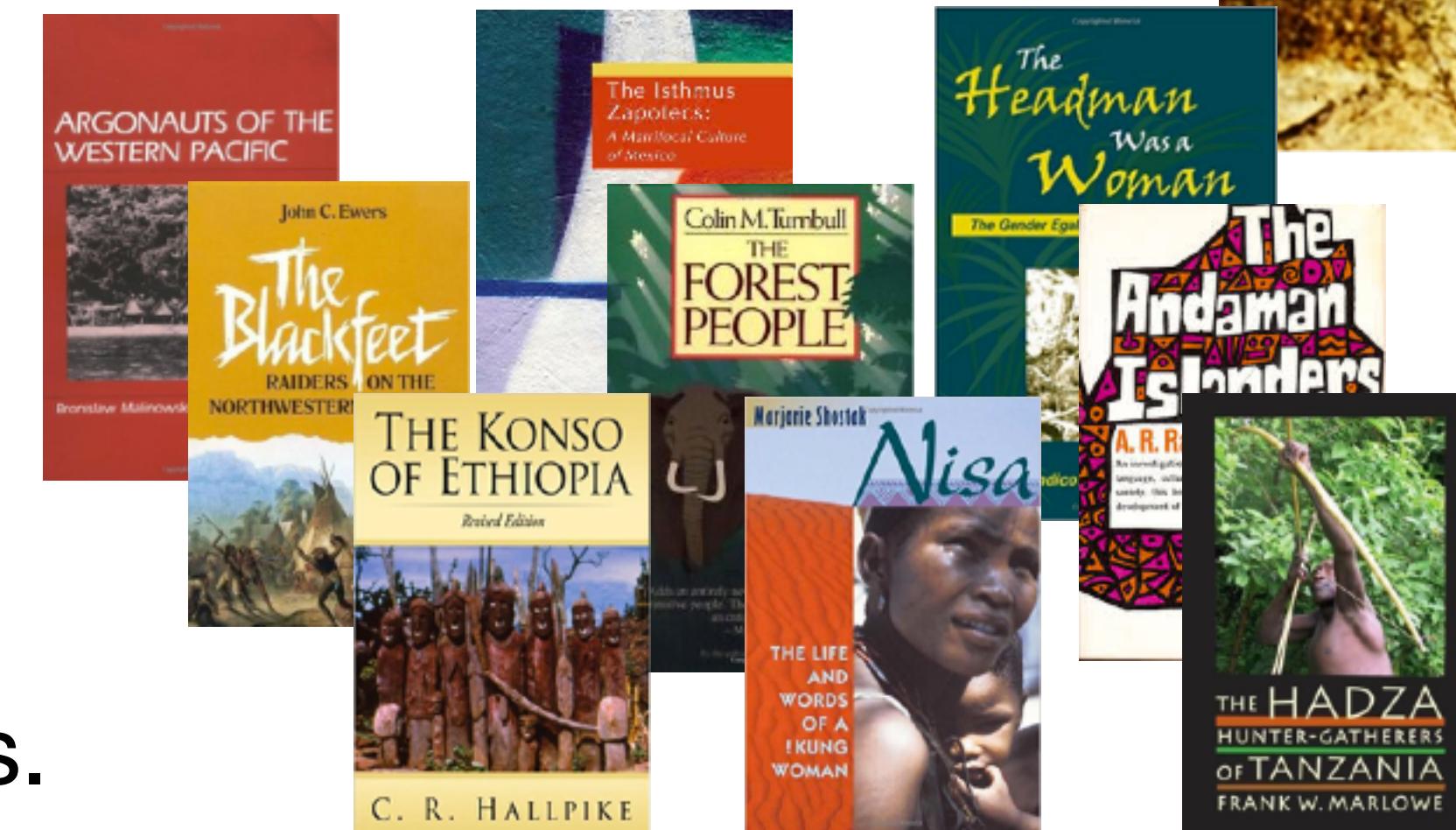
- In the beginning, **armchair anthropology** with a dash of ethnography
- Edward B. **Tylor**, 1889: “...it has become evident that the great need of anthropology is that its *methods should be strengthened and systematized*”
- Early 20th century: **Malinowski**, gets “off the veranda”; **Boas**, cultural comparisons require *deep historical/ethnographic information*.
- Mid 20th century: Methods and data refined by George P. **Murdock** et al.; standard samples and collated data bases.



Bronisław Malinowski, Trobriand Islands. 1918.



Lorna Marshall, 1898 - 2002



# How it's going: cross-cultural databases

- **The Ethnographic Atlas (EA)**
  - \*almost\* all cultures ( $n > 1200$ ), some variables ( $p < 100$ )
- **The Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS)**
  - many cultures ( $n = 186$ ), all the variables ( $p > 1700$ )
- Binford's Hunter-Gatherer Data
  - many H&Gs ( $n = 339$ ), socioecology variables ( $p > 200$ )
- Other recent *focused* databases: Seshat, Pulotu, Database of Religious history, Natural History of Song, Leadership Data Package
- **D-PLACE** (Database of Places, Language, Culture and Environment)
  - many databases in one (D)place.

## ★ Human Relations Area Files (HRAF)

\*\*\*NOT LIKE THE OTHERS...\*\*\*



**D-PLACE**

