

How it started: origins of the comparative method

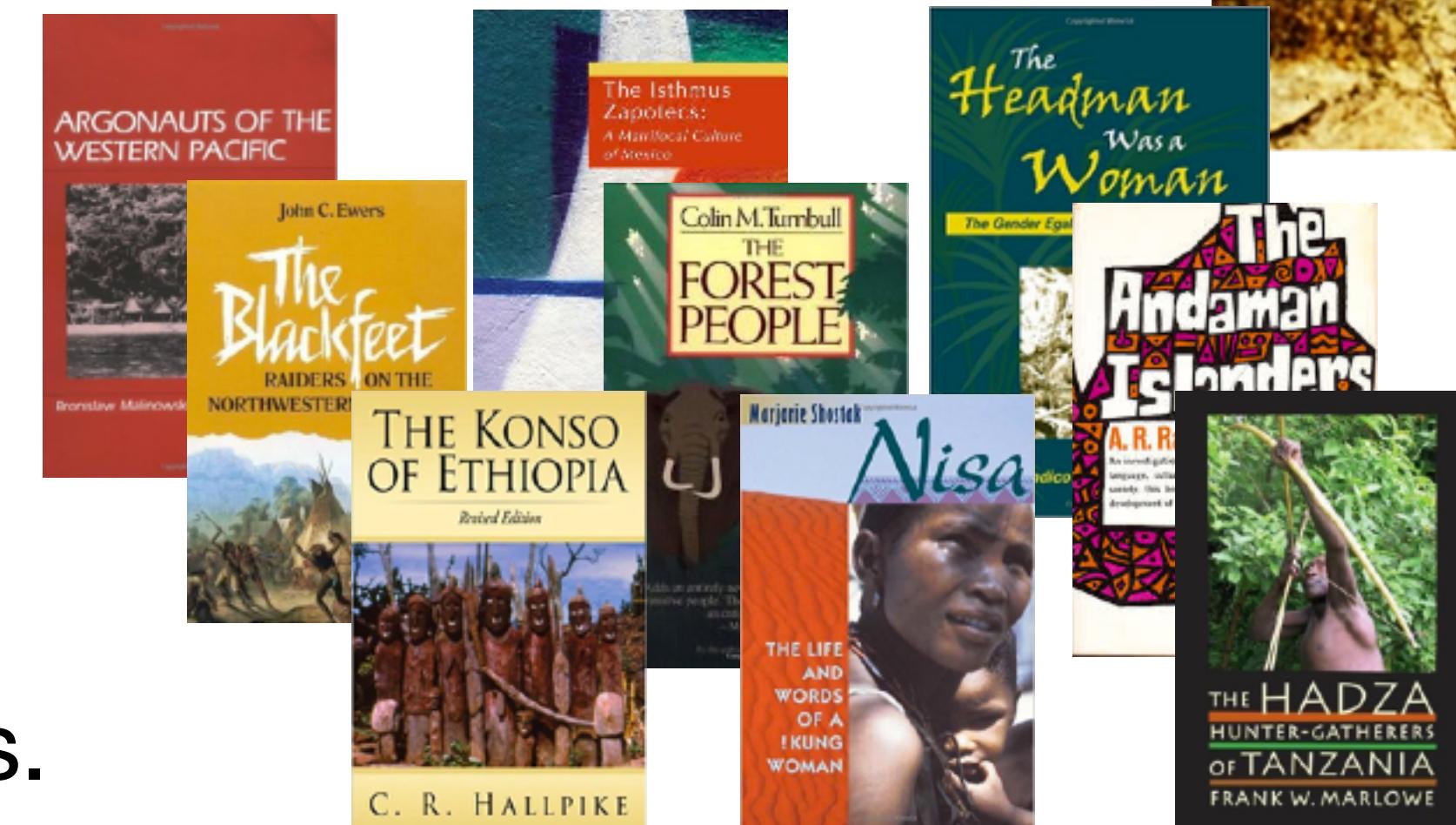
- In the beginning, **armchair anthropology** with a dash of ethnography
- Edward B. **Tylor**, 1889: “...it has become evident that the great need of anthropology is that its *methods should be strengthened and systematized*”
- Early 20th century: **Malinowski**, gets “off the veranda”; **Boas**, cultural 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

