When Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch set up the Annales (d'histoire économique et sociale) in 1929 to save a languishing history by an injection of the insights of the social sciences, they had a clear understanding of what the project involved. The journal would deal with economic history, thus introducing economics to history; it would make no distinction between past and present, thus introducing sociology; it would be a point of liaison with linguistics, geography and anthropology and the other social sciences, and above all, it would publish work on method in these disciplines illustrating concretely what was new (1). So the project was strictly speaking historiographical, though eschewing high falutin' philosophy of history in favour of concrete examples of new methods. For years the Annales school were, as Braudel recalled in his Personal Testimony, 'the black sheep' of the historical community, but by 1947 exclusion from jobs and honours was over and their 'new kind of history' has since become hegemonic in French – if not world – historical scholarship (2). This paper will subject their historiography to both an internal and external critique, examining how far the school remained true to its original historiographical positions both in its theory and its practice, and as its history has been that of a continual, almost imperceptible shift away from its original positions to one of incoherence and contradiction, suggest why this is so. The illustrative evidence will necessarily be limited primarily to the work of the major figures in the school but the paper will attempt to reinforce this by keeping in mind the detailed statistical account of the contents of Annales elaborated in the contemporary Annales seminar at the Hautes Études.

Whence came this ambitious project to change completely the practice of historical scholarship? There are, of course, those explanations belonging to the sociology of knowledge, best dealt with by Pierre Nora, but on which I will only touch (3). There had been, by 1900, a 'mondialisation' or extension to the whole world system of the object of investigation of historians; there had been the democratic or mass political innovations which characterise modernity; there had been the discrediting of 'mechanistic' theories in the sciences which dated back to the Enlightenment; there had been the
emergence of new intellectuals (which as the descendants of peasants both Febvre and Braudel symbolised); and there were personal histories - they had suffered as students of a dull history - they had that sense of being 'situated', so common in the conditions of the thirties and which curiously Sartre also made central to his œuvre. But what concerns me is above all the theoretical influences proper, which while interlaced with the others, also synthesised them in a particular fashion (4).

The putative major, though not the sole, source of inspiration for Febvre, Bloch, Braudel and practically every other Annales historian I have read about or met, was the 1903 article of the statistician François Simiand, 'Méthode historique et science sociale'. The appropriation of this article alone provides sufficient reason to agree with Burguière's claim that the prehistory of structuralism is inseparable from the history of Annales (5). I ask you to note the date of its publication, three years before the earliest of de Saussure's famous lectures. Simiand's article attacked the historical method of the doyen of the historical establishment, Charles Seignobos. It argued that Seignobos understood the world of men and their practices (the facts of history), commonsensically as a world where individuals were the authors of their history, where their actions resulted from will and intention and where the modality which united actions and their effects was that of causation. In other words, Seignobos was implicitly working within the empiricist problematic which reads history for what happens in it - for what can be seen in it. This historiography presumed that the social unity, men as social beings, were so as the result of a social contract - the social structure was thus understood as a product of the individual. Simiand countered that the individual was always a product of the social structure. 'Nowhere at the outset do we find a contract between individuals who are independent and isolated.' Prior to the conscious actions of individuals always lay the institutions: the actions were the products of institutions.

Thus the facts of history were always 'given' already 'constituted', independent of the historian's spontaneity, and imposing themselves upon him as a structured whole which could not be reduced to its constituent parts any more than water could be reduced to oxygen and hydrogen without the loss of something not reducible to them. Indeed, these social objects were present within us in such a manner that the traditional dichotomy of subject and object had no meaning. This meant that the empirically identifiable individual with his intentions, his consequent actions, and his resultant causes was not the starting point of history, but rather what was invisible in
these visible actions, the structure of which he was a product. This structure should not be understood as a hidden essence in the Hegelian sense - something lying below the surface - but as a present absence. It followed that the 'facts of history' were an abstraction from reality (the production of an 'object for us', or thought object - even a creation) which had the characteristics of an ensemble, which could never be pointed to in the way that a material person or action could be. In turn, it followed that to know that knowledge was more than opinion, techniques of 'verification' had to be used which eliminated the 'individual spontaneity' of the historian since there was a risk of everyone seeing in the visible acts of men and women, only what they imagined was there. Having rejected the concept of causation of the establishment historians, the 'facts' in an ensemble could now be only antecedent and unconditioned phenomena whose relationship could only be established serially. This implied the use of correlations of series of abstractions whence could be obtained statistical laws of history. "The rule here as in the other positive sciences is to follow the "happy abstractions", that is to say those which lead to an establishment ... of regularities, and of possible laws.' In sum, the practice of history was no different from that of any other social science: it was the process of 'indirect experimental knowledge'.

There are some explicit and implicit propositions in Simiand which need to be stressed. According to Simiand, historians certainly write history but they write it from within history which produces them. History always faces them as a structured complexity, and must be analysed as such. Historians therefore should not engage in any method which leads even implicitly back to an essential, unknowable first cause. They have to eschew the empiricist/idealist problematic which shares the view that certain things in history cause other things to happen and are thus obliged to adopt a certain alternative method if they wish to make any sense of the complex phenomena of history. They have to understand that they pose problems to history; that what they work with is abstracted from it and that the phenomena they deal with can only be correlated in series. This means that the primary sources have the status of artefacts or institutions and not 'events', that is they are not the reality they purport to represent (transparently reveal something else). Moreover, it also means that the intention of their creator is not necessarily relevant to the sense they would take on as part of a series. Implicit in these latter views is the notion that the object of history is what is proceeding 'unconsciously'. Also implicit is the rejection of total history, or a knowledge of all history, which would necessarily make the
unconscious conscious and thus vitiate all the other steps in the argument.

Simiand's article appeared in the Revue de synthèse historique edited by Henry Berr (7). It was through this man and journal that the leaders of the Annales School became acquainted with Simiand and his assertion that history was just another social science studying statistical regularities - we might say faute de mieux. In his Synthèse en Histoire (1911) (first draft 1906) Berr certainly stuck closely to Simiand's positions (8). However, we note in anticipation that he had embarked on a collaborative Universal History in which Febvre and Bloch also participated and this project marked a departure from the anti-totalising position of Simiand which would be significant for the Annales historians. Febvre, the oldest, certainly accepted from at least 1911 the notions in Simiand. He scorned the 'puerile dream' of those 'ragpickers' who wandered around inside history finding 'at every step something interesting to put into (their)baskets', in the belief that ultimately a history in 'all its details' could be written, a practice he associated with Ranke's empiricism (9). He thus coupled the rejection of the empiricist/idealistic problematic with the rejection of total history. He also asserted again and again throughout his career that: 'Aptitude for finding correlations' was one of the most satisfactory definitions of the scientific spirit, thus endorsing the basic practice recommended by Simiand (10). He suggested that the historical object should be thought of like a circuit of electricity, thus repeating in a homely way the notion that the object was 'men seized in the framework of the society of which they are members' (11), where men were conceived of not as 'individuals' but as groups.

Bloch, his junior, and in many senses his student, also adhered to some of Simiand's propositions in his theoretical works. Already in an article of 1921, also in Berr's Revue, he had shown that (for him) the historical object was the unconscious collective social psychologies which precede the facts (12). In his celebrated Metier d'un Historien(1941) he still rejected the notion of the original cause, and rejected the 'common sense' reading of facts in favour of the classification of unconscious evidence in series. However, the traces of Simiand were becoming fainter in Bloch, who claimed at the conclusion of this book that even Simiand had recognised that his schema was too strict and that, for example, history demanded (because of its perspective) answers to 'how the fire started', not merely to know the conditions for fires.

So Bloch indicated that Simiand's rejection of the 'événementiel' in favour of science had been too strict. History,
Bloch maintained, could not be a science in the strict serial sense since there could not be a science of a past where there was an 'eternal relativity of the measure'.

History was rather the knowledge of Man in Time (durée).

Thus in a famous passage he wrote that 'where the historian smells human flesh, he knows he has found his quarry'. This anthropological object was far from that proposed by Simiand. The object had become men and women in Bloch even though they were deciphered behind the evidence in a complex structure.

In place of the concept of Simiand that the object of history was an abstraction and thus never the reality itself, we find revived - via the reintroduction a phenomenological notion of Man as the object of history - a sort of creeping empiricism in Bloch. For example, Febvre, following closely in the traces of Simiand, argued in his historiography that the cult of the documents was useless given the gaps and the infinite number of documents available, but Bloch insisted that a historian had to get all the documents possible together (13).

By the time Braudel, the present leader of the *Annales* school, had become editor, the traces of Simiand had become so faint, that despite lip service to Simiand, Braudel in his pronouncements on historiography really took the opposing position. In a review of Pierre Chaunu's *Seville et l'Atlantique* (11 volumes) which explicitly continued Simiand's demand for serial history, Braudel wrote: 'son propos ... n'est pas le mien', which Braudel then continued to typify as a 'total (globale) history'. Moreover, in his famous essay on 'History and the Social Sciences' Braudel not only relegated the techniques proposed by Simiand and adopted by Chaunu to the medium-length time period, but also in asserting that the real area of interest was the immense time periods when nothing changed in the everyday production and reproduction of everyday life which was unconscious and structured, he pronounced that in the face of social mathematical techniques used by the other social sciences 'We shall just have to light our lantern as best we can'. In fact, while making a plea for a future use of statistics in the quantitative rather than the serial sense of Chaunu, Braudel admitted that it had not been done and it was difficult to know how it could be done (14).

Why the gradual eradication of the serial of Simiand from Bloch and Braudel, if not Febvre? The answer seems to lie in the first place in the impossibility of putting Simiand's proposals into practice in the thirties and forties. When this emerged as a problem, a second source of influence emerged to dominate the school, that of human geography taken from Vidal de la Blache.

When *Annales* was created in 1929 the historians quickly became
aware of the absence of the data to make a statistical series of any sort for economic history, let alone social and ideological history (15). One of the first tasks of Annales was to establish this base. It had done so by the end of the war, through elaborating certain techniques for the use of documents. Particularly important in building up the relevant series was Simiand, but from the outset the work of Kondratieff and later Witold Kula and Simon Kuznets was utilised. It was in elaborating certain canons of methodology allowing, for example, the use of ports records (bills of lading) (Chaunu), parochial records (Duby), the catasto (Klapitsch) and even the headstones, among other 'documents' for purposes for which they were not intended (for example, Rau's use of emblems to show technological development), that the real contribution of Annales has come. Chaunu, who carried on the work of Simiand and Kondratieff, by projecting back into the 17th century the history of medium-length cycles, made quite clear that he understood the limits of this method. He distinguished carefully between quantitative analysis and serial analysis. The first was possible only where full records existed and thus the theory could emerge from the statistics themselves. The second, which necessarily was all that could exist before a certain date, while inspiring itself from quantitative knowledge, presumed posing a question and then utilising the scraps of evidence with ingenuity to construct indicative series of varying value. The limits can be illustrated. At one end there are a few pieces of evidence put together in a comparative method (Duby, Aymard). At the other - after the beginning of widespread use of computers - (in 1963 Annales had published computer manuals by the Russian Ustinov) - there is the evidence about 40,000 Tuscan families in the fifteenth century or 400,000 pieces of mail fed into the computer. On the whole the products of this serial investigation threw brilliant new light on dark corners, overturning received wisdoms on this or that aspect of history, especially that of everyday life. Sometimes even Chaunu allowed himself the theoretically forbidden dream that one day 'history in all its details' would be written.

In the meantime in the absence of the skills and resources which would be available after the Second World War to the second generation of Annales historians, the leaders had written history, which was, after all, their métier. Febvre had started his career by writing articles on linguistics and an important book on geography for Berr. The inspiration for La Terre came from Vidal de la Blache, who for want of a better term, we will call an early structural geographer. De la Blache argued that in order to make sense of human geography all enquiries into the origins of the human race
had to be put aside. Men as they had been known had always lived in specific structured communities in relation to a specific environment and each other. 'The phenomena of human geography are related to terrestrial unity by means of which they can be explained.' In the place of the classificatory techniques of statistics the mode according to which human geography should be thought was 'the correlations between all organisms living together in one and the same locality and their adaptation to their surroundings.' In sum, Vidal argued an anti-diffusionist theory long before Claude Levi-Strauss.

In a series of studies of particular areas of France he put his theory into practice (16). Febvre, in his book on the land in history, used Vidal to discredit the existing geographical determinism. His argument was that geography, the environment, was always man-made, worked up, and that the correlations were always between men and that human environment. By associating Simiand and de la Blache together in this book, while simultaneously rejecting Durkheim's social morphology (thus starting a problematical relationship with sociology which was never overcome), Febvre in fact shifted the focus of his attention from the concerns and methods of Simiand to those of de la Blache and thus to what we will call comparative human geography. The study of men and their environment was, of course, a study of 'relations', not 'correlations' and not 'influences', even on a historical scale. Everything depended on how those relations were theorised. Unfortunately, Febvre, under the influence of Berr and his universal history, theorised them by an a priori reference to the nature of man, and only then to his type of collective life (17).

This shift from the serial to the comparative which started in 1911 continued, perhaps because of the absence of statistical data. For example, in a series of articles on linguistics, Febvre extolled the work of Millet in comparative linguistics. This work was certainly an improvement on the generative theory of languages (philology) which corresponded with that of empiricist history and certainly took into account that 'you can only understand the evolution of a language by taking account of the historical situations and social conditions within which that language developed' (18). On the other hand, it had the implicit weaknesses which de Saussure was indicating in his lectures at the same time - criticisms of which the Annales school were apparently ignorant, or uninterested in, until after the Second World War. Bloch, too, shared Febvre's tendency to substitute comparative for serial method. As late as 1928 he wrote: 'The comparative method is capable of a great deal; I regard its generalisation and its perfecting as one of the most pressing needs imposing themselves today on historical study' (19). Bloch regarded the comparative method as most fruitful when studying the same phenomena in
the same time period but he also explicitly allowed the comparison of contemporaneous cultures of a 'primitive sort' with periods for which only historical traces remained in Europe. The first mode of comparison he explicitly made equivalent with comparative linguistics. Perhaps the most accessible statement of the need for comparative method is the article by Febvre and Barr on History in the 1932 edition of the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. 'History can be a science only in the measure in which from being descriptive it becomes explanatory. Now explanation includes above all comparison; or, to put it more explicitly, how is one to describe if one does not compare mentally.'

Obviously this comparative method, which became a feature of Annales, moved them well away from Simiand's insistence that the serial method was designed to exclude the 'individual spontaneity' of the historian. Indeed, Bloch makes clear that the posing of the problem and choice of materials which all agreed marked the beginning of historical investigation, meant making a choice between documents in which the historians' intuition (premier coup d'œil) would identify what was comparable (20). The document was a 'witness' which the historian had to know how to read, or in Febvre's favourite word 'understand' (a significant word). Its primary significance was, thus, not as part of a series, though this might be so secondarily, because it was not the computer or series which validated the historian's 'hypothesis' but the historian himself, who made a parade of his skills. Hence, the enormous attention paid by Bloch in his Mètiers to skill in documentary research.

The move away from Simiand's method was coupled with, and emphasized, a move towards a proto-structuralism. Indeed, as Saussure himself revealed, the limitations of the comparative method - it merely constitutes the facts and does not define the object of investigation - leads directly to a structuralist enquiry. This move had been evident already in de la Blache's insistence that terrestrial unity determined lawfully the function of its parts; Febvre's early acceptance of similar ideas in his thesis of 1911 and his early intimations of the relations between Centre and Periphery (21), and it also found explicit formulation in Febvre's entry on History and Psychology in the Encyclopédie française (1938): 'Social environment impregnates the author of any historical work in advance and sets him broadly speaking within a framework, predetermining him in what he creates' (22). A bit crude, perhaps, but once the notion of author as product is set in the context of his great work Le Problème de L'Incroyance au Seizième Siècle la Religion de Rabelais (1942) we can see a clear thrust towards a structural analysis. The work ignores

69
completely the serial method of Simiand in favour of a very
traditional and exhaustively erudite documentary study of
the social possibilities - the mental structures which made
it possible to think certain ideas at a particular time.
'Intellectual activity presupposes social life. Its essential
instruments with language to the forefront imply the existence
of a human society in which they had necessarily to be worked
out, the aim of such instruments being to make it possible
to set up relationships between all those who participate in
one and the same environment. But where is the initial
ground for such inter-individual relations between the
consciousness of men to be found if not in the sort of thing
we have just described which can be termed emotional life' (23).

Febvre had relinquished his early interest in geography to
Bloch in favour of an investigation which we will typify as
that of the elimination of the author in favour of mental
structures, which predate the more refined views of
Foucault by twenty years. This investigation took up one
theme in Simiand - that all facts were abstracted or made up -
to emphasise that the abstractions were made in a field of
visibilities and invisibilities that, for example, the
historian could only 'see' those relationships which the
determinate, temporally bound mental structures within which
he operated allowed him to see, but Febvre made them inescapable
prisons where Simiand hoped that the serial method would allow
an escape to science. Bloch continued the economic and
geographic investigation which, while clearly marked by
comparative method, also emerged onto a structuralist problem-
atic. As the book on Feudal Society is well known, I will
comment briefly on the French Rural History (1931). In this
study Bloch refused completely to discuss the vexed problem of
origins with its problematic causation. The starting point,
as he explained in his introduction, was the complex present or
developed form: 'the finished drawing'. Hence Bloch made
possible a brilliant analysis of the structured conformation
of factors of determinate though not invariable production and
consumption, and contemporary but at best corresponding social
formations.

The Annales historians were thus opening up onto a structural
investigation of history even before the Second World War. It
was Braudel, who, subordinating serial history, brought this
trend to fruition, and thus brought about the incoherence in
the school one part of which still eschews grand history even
today. The distance between Febvre and Braudel, though much
unites them, can be measured by the former's condemnation of a
history built up like the floors of a house, and the latter's
insistence in a private interview that he was engaged in
precisely that (24).

Braudel's first classic, the Mediterranean, was written in a
German prisoner-of-war camp. It thus antedated the vogue for structuralism by at least ten years. In it Braudel attempted to study the Mediterranean in the age of Philip II in terms of the long, medium and short durées, with each level constituting a structured whole within which men acted. The geographical influence was strong: he studied a region 'with its own history and destiny', in a fashion which Febvre pronounced 'revolutionary' in the way it subordinated the événementiel to the long-term. It was a 'whole' or 'total history' from which the serial was absent, except as a support. In it was elaborated the notion of the conjuncture in which the various trends themselves, and, at the three levels, came together to provoke transitions (25).

Only subsequently did Braudel maintain that this was structural history, when in attempting to explain it in terms borrowed from de Saussure, Levi-Strauss and other theoreticians of structure, he proposed that the almost unconscious patterns of reproduction of material life which constituted the long cycle were understood through the word 'structure', which 'implies organisation, coherence and fairly stable relationships between social realities and masses' (26). Structure was the area which had to come to the 'centre of our study'. The interest in structure certainly preserved the realm of 'unconscious history' to be known in abstraction. This led to an emphasis on the need for the use of 'models' and 'qualitative social mathematics' once the historical equivalent of the 'phoneme' or the 'gusteme' had been found. 'The procedure followed by this sort of research is plain - one must go beneath the surface of the thing observed to reach the zone of unconscious or barely conscious elements, then reduce this reality to its tiniest elements, perceiving the delicate, identical keys whose relationships with one another can be precisely analysed.' (27)

Yet again the call for a serial history which would be total was no more than a call. In his recent three volume extension of structural history to the world as a whole, a sort of object lesson to Wallerstein about the way world systems theory would be written if original and secondary sources were used, there are no historical gustemes, even if there is tasty history. Nor is there serial analysis. Rather the first volume is a republication of Capitalism and Material Life (1967) with footnotes added; the second examines the capitalist world, understood as the realm of exchange values; and the third, which deals with 'Economy Worlds', is a documentary study of the emergence of worldwide mercantile capitalism. (28)

In it Braudel carries to a logical conclusion the idea of de la Blache that history can only be written from the point of view of the always antecedent structured world system, but by
a virtuosity of the document - and considerable acquaintance with Kuznets and Kondratieff - and not with the help of the computer. Today we still face the problem that to render 'conscious' what is unconscious, where the historian is himself, as Febvre said, part of the unconscious, calls for more than a single man or a team of polymaths, since making unconscious evidence meaningful can be done only by situating it, not by probing it for its essence. The technique here, as Chaunu says, (Seville VIII, p 14), should be 'to choose a series or an ensemble of series and let oneself be carried along by it' not to make the hypothesis self-confirming, as it must be where a structural historian validates his own evidence in that sleight of hand where the conclusion already present at the outset is concealed in the unfolding of the evidence.

Why is there this constant tension between theory and practice running through the Annales and between its members, and particularly strongly in Braudel? The answer seems to be, that despite Simiand, history is not just another social science, or, alternatively, that there are two sorts of history. Bloch, making clear a resistance to Simiand present from the outset even in the more loyal Febvre, stressed very early that history was about change not the unchanging and studied the second only in order to comprehend the first. Braudel continued that the object of history was to understand changes over time, or the periods of rupture in a structural history emphasising the almost-static. The historical problem was therefore more than that of asking questions within history, but of understanding all history so as to understand its development. Thus Febvre concluded the article on 'History' (1932) by writing, 'The final goal of the historian is not to make known certain groups of men at certain periods, but humanity in the totality of its representations.' (29) Can this goal be reconciled with Simiand's proposals?

Total knowledge certainly conflicts with the implications of Simiand's historiography on the level of method. First because correlations of series is potentially infinite and so only limited questions can be asked and second, because it means presupposing what can not be presupposed, a total visibility. At times Febvre, closest to Simiand, tried to square the circle by proposing massive collective work in which presumably a very large number of correlations would make the whole almost totally 'known'. Braudel condemns such enterprise directly.

To the Annalist, the conclusion after seeing this conflict with the proposed method, was simply a return to the Berrian
This argued that since all the evidence could never be there, history would always have to be written before all the details were known. Information of a serial sort would therefore become a fact in a constellation of other sorts of facts (some traditional) which the Annales historien globalisant would insert into his total picture where he could. This was the line proposed by Chaunu in his less utopian moments (see Seville et l'Atlantique (SEVPEN, Paris, 1959, VIII(I), Ch 1, pp 13-14) and is very clearly the theme of history Braudel has written in his Civilisation matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme XVe-XVIIIe siècles. On a common sense level it seems quite reasonable to effect this synthesis, since the insights provided by serial history into what would otherwise have been dark corners are obvious. Of course, parenthetically, it does make the serial fact an 'event' contra Simiand.

There is, however, a greater problem than seems apparent at first in the reconciliation of total history and Simiand's serial historiography. A concern for synthetic total history - where the explanatory model with its hierarchies and distributions must come first - is not primarily a concern in methodology, or even theory, it is a concern within the philosophy of history - the horrible first enemy of Berr and his colleagues. A concern for philosophy involves inter alia investigation of the Good and True - that is it concerns values, and norms. This is because a total history concerns 'what it is all about' and what it is all about cannot simply be 'factual' or exclude value since then it would not be what it is all about, since some things, in this case, values, would have been excluded. Moreover, its conclusions are judgemental, if not in themselves conclusive, since they are always a priori subject to the discourse of the audience - or eminently democratic. From this point of view Febvre and Bloch were protesting too much why they stated that a historian's task was simply to understand, not to judge. Perhaps a more thorough scrutiny of Croce on the problem of subjective choice might have nuanced their views somewhat (30). The philosophical demands of total history pose a problem for a combination of the serial and the synthetic. Why? Obviously from the notion of an 'unconscious' level of history, a total history must, and in Braudel did, shift to the notion that the deep structures could be known even if they could not be controlled through that knowledge. We might say that Braudel's total history could tell us how men had loosed the juggernaut of the money market so that a structure had been set up in which the life of the centre and the life of the periphery were determined and determining at one and the same time; that men could know this through Braudel's researches - even know the mechanisms of their
interaction; but that that process was still uncontrollable even if allowing prediction. Indeed, Braudel predicts an unavoidable deep depression for the next ten years at least, on the basis of the economic cycles capitalism has gone through in the fifteenth to the twentieth century (31).

There is, we see, still a distinction from the historians who believe that the understanding of total history will empower men, as, for example, in the historicist tradition in Marx.

A total history which postulates an uncontrollable though man-made structure— for example, structured capitalism—renews practically a subject/object dichotomy since the best our understanding can do is teach us to tailor our activities to that of the uncontrollable structures. They are the Other, an empirical base or datum. The effects in terms of change are just the same as they are in a determinism, men are left within history; never capable of making their own conscious destinies; and therefore not ever capable of the autonomy of true moral decision—or value decisions, because there never exists that real freedom of choice without which making a rational decision about values is a fiction. The structure thus becomes for Annales total history an object whose order is no different from that postulated by the objects of empirical history. Thus on this count a total (philosophical) history incorporating uncontrollable structures seems a contradiction in terms.

This problem is compounded by another aspect of serial history, implicit in its method. As Braudel pointed out, to write a really quantitative history the smallest element, equivalent to the phoneme in language, must be identified. This is so because to make 'scientific' statements, calculability is essential and the comparability and inter-changeability of the base unit is necessary for that. The same views must apply in the meantime to serial history, which implicitly assumes that what is in each series is somehow alike to more than a superficial degree: it deals with categories or groups of objects, which are never unique. But as Lukács intimated in the volume History and Class Consciousness, the demand for calculability establishes a sole exclusive criterion of worth or value, that of equivalence (inscribed in our society as money). This, in turn, must occlude other notions of value, differentiated values. Indeed, where all is reduced to one interchangeable value, there is in fact no criterion of social value at all. Ultimately, the result is to prevent totalising history entirely since 'value' hierarchies are excluded except as 'opinion'.

Thus on a second count total history, understood as evaluation, must eschew serial method, whose relevance can only be
limited to partial questions. For example, if one wishes to examine human beings as groups then it is possible, but not if one wishes to know what 'Man in the durée' is about. A combination of both is a monster.

All this adds up to the impossibility of the theory and the failure of the practice of total history in the Annales School despite the originality and richness of their methods and insights. Whether it is Judd criticising the implicit rationale of studying the incidence of blue eyes before the French Revolution or Hexter revealing that Braudel is himself 'a rag-picker' in these words: 'he cannot resist all the lovely irrelevant or quasi-irrelevant details that his researches brought into his net', Annales has really retreated from total history and is under siege. Unfortunately, from a starting point where knowing the facts was decried ('And we would no longer hear amused and slightly irritated, candid, cordial voices saying to us "You as a historian you should know that. What was the date of the death of Pope Anaclete? or Sultan Mehmet?" (32)) Annales historians are now merely worse (more erudite) fact-grubbers than the historians they challenged nearly eighty years ago. Braudel, in reply to a question about the concept of capitalism he used (it is the same as Wallerstein's) did not discuss the explanatory value of a mode of production but contented himself by telling me that he knew much more about capitalism than Marx. The disintegration of their history as explanation leads me to conclude by asking whether the fruitful future path for total history might not be learnt not from the amoral realm of science but from the study of the relationship between mythology and philosophy, a realm, where, as Agnes Heller says of philosophy, we will be no longer concerned with either plagiarism or footnotes.

NOTES

1. Paul Leuilliot, 'Aux origines des "Annales d'histoire et sociale 1928" in Méthodologie d'histoire et sciences humaines (Privat, Paris, 1973), pp 317-324; Annales, 1930, 1, p. 3; The 'social' in the title was originally a 'come-on' since, as Febvre said, all history is social. Lucien Febvre, Combats pour l'Histoire (Colin, Paris, 1965), pp. 19-20.


6. This article was republished in Annales, 15, I, Jan.-Feb. 1960, p. 83ff when Annales was seeking to define itself under Braudel. It was recalled as seminal by Febvre in Annales, 4, 1930, p. 585.


11. See Combats, pp. 16, 21, 26, 82.


15. For an example see M. Bloch Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française (Colin, Paris, 1968), p. VII, footnote 1. 'I note in passing that I have not been able to give, far from it, all the numerical data (précisions) that I would have desired, notably for the size of holdings; the research instruments ... are almost totally lacking.'


18. 'La Grèce ancienne à travers sa langue' in Combats, p. 159. See also his articles in Revue de synthèse, XXII, October 1911; XXVII, August-October 1913.


20. ibid., p. 17.


22. See A New Kind of History, p. 4.

23. 'Sensibility and History: how to reconstitute the emotional life of the past' in ibid., p. 15; La problème de l'incroyance au XVIème siècle (Michel, Paris, 1968), p. 16; '(the problem) ... is to know how the men of 1532 understood, were able to understand (entendre et comprendre) Pantagruel and Cymbalum Mundi. Let's reverse the sentence: it is, rather, it is to know what they could not, certainly, hear or understand.' For Michel Foucault, see Les Mots et les Choses (Gallimard, Paris, 1966).

24. Marc Bloch, Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française (Colin, Paris, 1968); see also The Cambridge Economic History of Europe (Cambridge U.P.), Ch. 6, where he writes 'You cannot study embryology if you do not understand the grown animal' and uses the word 'structure', and La Société féodale (Michel, Paris, 1968), p. 16. 'It is the analysis and explanation of a social structure, with its relation which we propose here', Combats, p. 26; Braudel, Le Jeux de l'échange, Vol. II of Civilisation.
Matérielle, économie et capitalisme XVe-XVIIIe (Colin, Paris, 1979), p. 7. We note the change in Annales title after the war: it also concerns 'Civilisations'.


26. 'History and the Social Sciences', p. 17.

27. Ibid., p. 32.


29. Bloch, 'Que demander a l'historie?' in Mélanges, I, pp. 8; Métier, pp. 1-15; Fevbre, in A New Kind of History, p. 32; Braudel, 'History and the Social Sciences', p. 37; 'The historians' real interest is in the meeting points of these movements, their interaction and their breaking points: and these are all things which can be recorded only in relation to the uniform time of historians, which is the general measure of all such phenomena; they cannot be recorded in relation to multiform social time, which is merely the particular measure of each taken separately'.

30. They knew of Croce's work and published it in one of their astonishing contradictions but did not take his point that there can be no choice without judgement.
