Grammar and Memory
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The search for lost time announced in the title of Proust's A la Recherche du Temps Perdu is at the same time, as Deleuze (1964) reminds us, a research into it. That that research is to be thought of as analogous to scientific research is one of Proust's great themes--the "artist . . . in his own sphere . . . studying laws, conducting experiments, making discoveries which are as delicate as those of science." (The Past Recaptured, 1971, p. 142) Proust includes in what might yield those laws to the researching writer the laws of language itself, and specifically those governing the use of tense. In his essay "A propos du 'style' de Flaubert" (1920), it is to tense and aspect that Proust directs the major part of his attention, subjecting Flaubert's tenses to what he calls a "clear analysis" (p. 84). The result is the discovery of a "grammatical beauty" which he attributes in part to "the manner of applying certain rules of syntax." (p. 74) This importance accorded verb tense should hardly be surprising in a writer the title of whose great work contains the word temps, which in French can mean either time or tense. So for Proust, the novelist's search for lost time includes a research into past tense--for it is the tenses of the past which he rightly sees as central to the novel.

Proust concentrates on Flaubert's "recurrent series of imperfects," (p. 84), imperfects which have two distinct uses. One is specific to narrative--"cet éternel imparfait" (p. 77) which for the French reader has always been the first grammatical sign of what Proust calls "style indirect" and what Bally (1912) had already christened the "style indirect libre"--the style which I call, after Jespersen (1924), "represented speech and thought."[1] For as Proust himself observes, "this imperfect serves to narrate not only people's words but their whole lives." (p. 78) I have already analyzed the imperfect of represented speech and thought and its English counterparts, the simple past and the past progressive, as tenses cotemporal with the moment which I qualify as that of "consciousness" and which I notate NOW. (Cf. Banfield, 1982, Chapter 2) NOW, which designates the present and future time deictics, specifies a moment which in narrative fiction is not necessarily that of the present tense, classically defined as the moment of the speech act. Some examples of this past cotemporal with NOW (where the latter is made explicit by the presence of time deictics) are given in (1).

(1) Tout était tranquille maintenant. (Flaubert, L'Education Sentimentale, cited in Proust, 1920, p. 77)
Il faisait déjà nuit maintenant . . . . (Proust, A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, Pléiade I, p. 1036)
She would not say of any one in the world now that they were this or were that." (Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, Harcourt, p. 11)
Today she did not want him. (D. H. Lawrence, The First Lady

Chatterley, Penguin, p. 47)

In French, the special role of the imperfect in written narrative emerges by way of contrast with the passé simple or narrative past. But the grammar of French only makes explicit a division between the past tenses of narrative, which, I have argued (Banfield, 1982), linguistically defines the novel. The sentence containing a past cotemporal with NOW forms one side of that division; the narrative past (in French, the passé simple; in English, either the simple past or the past progressive) forms the other. It can have no NOW, as Benveniste (1966) points out for the specific case of the passé simple. Sentences in the passé simple are normally interpreted as narrating a series of events which took place one after the other; they indicate "la succession des faits," as Sensine puts it (1926, 1966, p. 23), as is illustrated in (2)

(2) Puis sa mère mourut, ses soeurs se dispersèrent, un fermier la recueillit, et l'employa toute petite à garder les vaches dans la campagne. (Flaubert, "Un Coeur Simple," Pléidade, p. 592)
[Then her mother died, her sisters went their separate ways, a farmer took her in, and employed her, little as she was, to tend the cows in the fields.]

The essential characteristic of the passé simple is to recount, to give an account, to tell a tale, in other words, to count, to tally, to sum up. It "tells time," establishing for events a linear order, that of the integers. For this reason, there is no privileged moment, no NOW with respect to which other moments are placed. Its role is objectivizing--enumerating discrete entities which are past events.

By contrast, the past cotemporal with NOW is an experiential past, that lived moment which is re-presented in a now-in-the-past. A series of verbs in one of the tenses realizing a now-in-the-past like the imperfects in (3) are normally interpreted as referring to events more or less simultaneous, existing within the same here and now. (I force this reading by a translation using past progressives.)

(3) Des gens arrivaient hors d'haleine; des barriques, des câbles, des corbeilles de linges gênaient la circulation; les matelots ne répondaient à personne; on se heurtait; les colis montaient entre les deux tambours, et le tapage s'absorbait dans le bruissement de la vapeur, qui, s'échappant par des plaques de tôle, enveloppait tout d'une nuée blanchâtre, tandis que la cloche, à l'avant, tintait sans discontinuer. (Flaubert, L'Education Sentimentale, Oeuvres I, Pléiade, p. 33)
[People were arriving out of breath; casks, ropes, baskets of laundry were blocking the traffic; the sailors were answering to no one; every one was colliding; packages were piling up between the two paddlewheels, and the uproar was blotted out in the humming of the steam which, escaping through the boilerplates, was shrouding everything in a whitish cloud, while the bell, in the

bow, was clanging incessantly.]

But there is another use of the imperfect which plays a crucial role in narration, the habitual, which Thibaudet (1920) mentions in his response to Proust on Flaubert. And it is that flaubertian use of the imperfect which Proust parodies in the pastiche of Bouvard et Pécuchet in Les Plaisirs et Les Jours. Genette (1972) has demonstrated the special importance the habitual assumes in Proust the novelist. But it is Proust the theorist of the novel who implicitly raises the question of the habitual for a linguistic definition of the novel. The answer to this question is dependent on an analysis of the habitual which would allow it to find its place in the schema of narrative tenses composed of the narrative past and the past cotemporal with NOW.

This schema, which treats the narrative past as that tense which counts past events, points the direction for investigation. It suggests the cooccurrence of this past and the temporal adverbs specifying "the number of times" an event has occurred, such as the numerals themselves. Indeed, one finds sentences like those in (4). (I confine myself to the passé simple, since it is unambiguously a narrative past.)

(4) Je revis, du reste, sa femme cinq fois.
[Moreover, I saw his wife five more times.]
Mais une fois, au moment où je remontais par l'ascenseur, le lift me dit que . . . (A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, Pléiade II, p. 1025)
[But once, at the precise moment I was taking the elevator up, the operator said to me that . . .]

The not very surprising cooccurrence of the passé simple with numerals indicating the number of times an event took place allows us to isolate, by constrast, the peculiar distributional features of the habitual. For we immediately observe that neither the imperfect with an habitual reading nor its English counterparts habitual would and used to can appear with numerals. This is no doubt apparent to traditional grammarians when it is a question of a single time. Sensine, for instance, says of a passage in the passé simple that the verbs indicate a series of actions which have taken place once only , whereas the same passge in the imperfect adds the notion of repetition or habit. (1926, 1966, p. 24) Thus, to make explicit Sensine's claim, the sentence in (5) should be unacceptable with the habitual reading, and such is indeed the case.

(5) *Mais une fois, le lift me disait que . . .
*But once the elevator operator would (used to) tell me that . . .

The traditional distinction Sensine here articulates is between a tense which designates a single event and one which indicates a set of repeated actions. But it is already clear from (4) that the passé

simple can refer to more than one event, if that is stipulated by an appropriate quantifier. What is not anticipated in Sensine's analysis is that the same does not hold for the habitual: although indicating repeated action, it cannot occur with a numeral counting these repetitions, as (6) illustrates.

(6) *Je voyais sa femme cinq fois.
*Five times (on five occasions) I would (used to) see his wife.

The habitual appears, rather, with another class of temporal adverbs or prepositional phrases containing quantifiers, one whose characteristic role is to quantify the repetitions while keeping the number of times non-specific. Sensine puts it in the following terms: "The imperfect expresses states of indeterminate duration; it corresponds to the words habitually, often, already or at the same time," (1926, 1966, p. 24) Some examples of the adverbs cooccurring with the habitual are given in (7). The English translations of the French are examples in their own right.

(7) Souvent, quand M. de Cambremer m'interpellait de la gare, je venais avec Albertine . . . (RTP, II, p. 1097)
Often, when M. de Cambremer would question me from the station, I would have Albertine with me.
Pendant ces retours, (comme à l'aller), je disais à Albertine de vêtir . . . (RTP, II, p. 1100)
During these return trips (as on the trip out), I would (used to) tell Albertine to get dressed.
A Hermenonville montait quelquefois M. de Chevregny . . . (RTP, II, p. 1086)
At Hermenonville sometimes M. de Chevregny used to get on.
Chaque fois que M. de Charlus regardait Jupien, il s'arrangeait pour que son regard fût accompagné d'une parole . . . (II, p. 605)
Every time M. de Charlus would look at Jupien, he would arrange it so his look was accompanied by a word.
Il passait ses journées et soirées avec elle. (III, p. 1017)
He used to spend his days and nights with her.

Other adverbs of this type which may appear with the habitual are in French tous les jours, toujours, de temps en temps, maintes fois, presque jamais, habituellement et rarement and, in English, time and (time) again, many a time, from time to time, every (other) day, repeatedly, rarely, seldom. Apart from manner adverbs such as often and habitually, many of these adverbials contain quantifiers such as many and all. In addition, time adverbs such as the days of the week or the months of the year occur with the habitual either in the plural ("Saturdays") or in the generic form ("Saturday we would. . .)[2]

At this point, a refinement in our notion of "number of times" is required. In general, in uses of tense where the action designated by the verb occurs more than once, there are two possible referents of the iterated action. Either the action designated by the verb may

be iterated on a single occasion or the occasions may be repeated. In fact, this difference is the basis of the distinction between iterativity and habituality, as Comrie (1976) points out.

> In some discussions of habituality, it is assumed that habituality is essentially the same as iterativity, i.e., the repetition of a situation, the successive occurrence of several instances of the given situation. . . . If a situation is repeated a limited number of times, then all of these instances of the situation can be viewed as a single situation, albeit with internal structure, and referred to by a perfective form. Imagine, for instance, a scene where a lecturer stands up, coughs five times, and then goes on to deliver his lecture. In English, this could be described as follows: the lecturer stood up, coughed five times, and said . . . It would not be possible to use the specifically habitual form with used to, i.e., not *the lecturer stood up, used to cough five times, and said . . . In French, similarly, one could express this by using the perfective Past Definite [passé simple] throughout: le conférencier se leva, toussa cinq fois, et dit . . . (p. 27)

In the example Comrie constructs, the action of coughing is repeated or iterated five times, but upon a single occasion; for this reason, the habitual form is inappropriate and the numeral possible. But a refinement of Comrie's claims is required. The sentence he marks as unacceptable is so only because all the verbs are not in the habitual; with the habitual throughout, the sentence becomes acceptable.

(8) The lecturer used to stand up, cough five times and say. . .

This is because a reading is possible whereby the action quantified by five times is understood as iterated five times upon some unspecified number of occasions, i.e., each time the occasion recurs. For this reason, a sentence like (8) containing a numeral can occur with the type of time adverb appearing with the habitual as well, as in (9).

(9) Habitually (occasionally) the lecturer used to (would) stand up and cough five times before beginning.

The appropriate formulation of the distinction is not that between limited and unlimited repetitions but between those which are numberable and those which are not. What is excluded is a temporal adverb containing a numeral which specifies the number of occasions upon which an event has occurred together with an habitual form of the verb, as in (10).

(10) *On four occasions (four times) the lecturer used to (would) cough five times.

What holds for the numerals holds likewise for true dates, for

dates count the number of times. One finds (11a) with the habitual past, but not (11b).

(11) a. {Every Christmas / Each December 25th} they used to (would) always have turkey.
A Noël (le 25 decembre), ils avaient toujours une dinde.
b. *July 29, 1870, August 3, 1914, and May 12, 1940, Germany used to (would) always attack France.
*Le 29 juillet, 1870, le 3 août, 1914, et le 12 mai, 1940, L'Allemagne attaquait la France. [with habitual reading]

What underlies distinctions like Sensine's once/habitually (1926, 1966, p. 24) and Genette's singulary/iterative (1972, p. 145) is the idea that the distinction between singular and plural applies to verbs as well as nouns. Fiengo (1974) elaborates this notion, making the further distinction between "count" verbs and "mass" verbs, by analogy with the two kinds of plural nouns.

Fiengo's "mass verbs" are statives, verbs referring to mental states such as know, love, like, resemble and so on. If the habitual is a plural tense, one using "count verbs," it should then not appear with statives. This is indeed the case with English would, as in (12).

(12) *John would often know algebra.
*From time to time Mary would resemble her father.

But this allows us to further distinguish between English would and used to, for used to may mark a verb as referring to an habitual state or a repeated series of events; would, on the other hand, may mark the verb as only referring to a series. Hence one finds (13), although not (12) above.

(13) John used to (*would) know algebra.
Mary used to (*would) resemble her father.

Thus, an analysis like that of Vendler (1967), where "Habits . . . are also states" (p. 108), will have to be revised in favor of one which divides habituality between states and repeated occasions. This division would coincide with Fiengo's between "mass verbs" and "count verbs." The category of mass verbs would correspond to that of states, as Fiengo argues, and would include the generic present, as in "he swims well" and habitual used to in the reading which it does not share with habitual would, as illustrated in (14).

(14) *There often would be a tree there.
There (*often) used to be a tree there.

The category of count verbs would correspond precisely to that reading of the habitual modifiable by the class of time adverbials quantifying repeated occasions, regardless of whether the tense of the verb is past or present, i.e., it would also include sentences like "he swims often." This division is represented by the chart in (15).

(15) Habituality

Mass verbs (states)	Count verbs (repeated occasions)
used to (in reading not shared with would)	used to, would (modifiable by time adverbials quantifying occasions, but not by numerals)
generic present (modifiable by qualifier such as well)	habitual present (modifiable by quantifying time adverbials)

It follows that the essential property of the habitual of repeated occasions is its plurality. This plurality is built into the habitual --the habitual reading does not have to be made explicit by temporal adverbs. By contrast, other past tenses may receive an habitual reading only with an appropriate temporal adverb, as in (16).

(16) Il y eut des jours où il travailla sans manger.
There were days when he worked without eating.
Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure.
For a long time I've gone to bed early.

But if habitual verbs of repeated action are to be considered plural verbs, that is, in the traditional terminology adopted by Fiengo, as "count verbs," referring to discrete events which are repeatable, this plurality cannot be taken as meaning that these repeated events are counted, that their exact number can be specified. Our analysis requires a distinction between two senses in which a set is countable (as opposed to counted). In the first sense, a set is countable if it is composed of discrete entities which are distinguishable and capable of being treated as duplications of one another at some abstract level. This is the sense underlying the notion of plurality as applied to "count nouns." But this sense of countable in no way entails the second, in which "countable" means that an exact number can be given.

The confusion arises from the extension of the traditional term "count" to verbs as well as nouns, a confusion which the term plural (as opposed to "mass") verbs and nouns avoids. The question raised is what is the relation between the two senses in which a set is "countable" or plural. The answer to this question lies in the very relation between the quantifiers, including the plural, and the numerals. For we have already observed that the distribution of temporal adverbs "quantifying"--as opposed to qualifying--verbs follows that division between quantifiers and numerals: all the quantifiers except the numerals (including those dates which have unique reference and hence count) may appear with the habitual, but the numerals may appear only with the simple past or passé simple.[3]

Now this distinction observable in the distribution of verb tenses and temporal adverbs containing quantifiers and numerals is one which has already been made to account for the distribution of quantifiers and numerals as they quantify nouns. Jackendoff (1977, pp. 126ff.) treats the numerals with what he calls the "semi-numerals" (dozen, a hundred) and group nouns (group, gallon, bunch, number, lot, score, hundreds, thousands, millions, couple) as nouns, and much, many,

several, few (negative)[4] and little (negative) as true quantifiers.

Semantically, what unifies the quantifiers, in contradistinction to the numerals, is the fact that they quantify inexactly. Indeed, one might say that quantification, as opposed to counting, is inexact. Moreover, quantifying is independent of counting, in the sense that one can never set up a system precisely relating certain quantifiers to certain numerals. The quantifiers establish various ranges of possibilities going from few to many, some to all or indeed none, which, it can be established from other syntactic data, is not not one, i.e., the negation of a numeral, but not any, the negation of a quantifier, and for the temporal adverbs, from seldom to often, from never, as the negation of ever, to always, from rarely to frequently. But one can never deduce a number from a quantifier. In one case, all can mean, in absolute terms, less than some, in another case.

The linguistic evidence suggests that in some sense language cannot count; it can only distinguish between singular and a quantifiable plurality.[5] This is reflected in the fact that the amount of research and speculation in linguistics and logic on quantifiers is not matched by any work of comparable extent for the numerals. The behavior of any one numeral appears to be the same as that of any other, except for one and perhaps two (see fn. 5), the other numerals belonging to an extra-linguistic system; the same could not be said of the class of true quantifiers.

The distinction between quantification and counting explains not only the difference between (many) boys and twenty boys, but that between il nageait souvent or he used to swim often and il nagea vingt fois or he swam twenty times. Thus, in the system of narrative tenses, we have a narrative past which counts or re-counts and an habitual past which quantifies past events. The first may count in two ways: it places discrete events one after the other, assigning them a place in a linear ordering captured by notions like "earlier than" or "later than" and it also optionally may specify for one event in a series on how many occasions it was repeated. This time or past which is re-told is not a remembered past. It is the past, whether once experienced or not, become history, translated into calendar time. It recounts a past which is an objective knowledge, a knowledge by description, to use Russell's distinction, and not a knowledge by acquaintance.

What is the place of the quantification of the past in narrative? It is the oeuvre of Proust which suggests an answer. If the passé simple recounts the past, the habitual remembers it. It is, to be precise, the tense of what Proust calls "voluntary memory," the memory he calls "uniforme" (Pléiade, III, p. 869), because it recalls an uncounted succession of repeated events. Memory recalls a lived past which the rememberer has an acquaintance with, as opposed to the impersonal past of the passé simple. The essence of voluntary memory is the recalling of a countless plurality of events which, as remembered, are converted into duplicates, repetitions, one of the other, and hence no one of them has a date or a numbered place in the series.

This means that in the common notion of remembering when or how many times what is being invoked is not strictly speaking memory but a second order act departing from memory; in other words, this question of the confessor is inappropriately posed to the habitual repeater's memory. To remember when and how many times, to count, is to perform another operation upon the data of memory, comparing them with other data; it requires an inference, a deduction. One knows one has done something more than once, habitually, time and time again, or even rarely, but in order to determine how many times and when, one must put one's memories, by nature without a date and without an exact number, in relation with other facts established by other means than by memory--by consulting datebooks, calendars, newspapers, diaries and subjecting this data to calculations. The Bergsonian formula which helped shape Proust's thinking on time and memory is to "introduce an order into what is successive" (Bergson, 1889, 1960, p. 102).[6] In other words, what is remembered is then recounted, the two linguistic operations contributing to constitute narrative.

But, as is well known, these two operations are for Proust not sufficient to constitute a novel, to "recapture the past." That involves that other memory which Proust calls "involuntary." With involuntary memory the past is returned to us by chance--a chance whose conditions are created, Proust explains, "when I found myself torn from my habits" (The Past Recaptured, p. 128), when, for instance, "My mother suggested that, contrary to my habits, I have some tea" (RTP, I, p. 44). And what returns is "the moment"--the single moment (PR, p. 131).

If voluntary memory has a grammatical representation, can we assume that involuntary memory does? Making that assumption will, indeed, allow us to place that other narrative tense, the past cotemporal with NOW, within a revised schema which adopts the Proustian theory of memory, which is one foundation for the Proustian theory of the novel. For the past cotemporal with NOW is always a singular tense referring to that singular occasion represented by NOW. But once this hypothesis is entertained, then the grammatical account of this literary tense provides independent support for Proust's own account. For all Proust's attempts to define involuntary memory stress the cotemporality of two moments, one past and one present: "the moment to which I was transported seemed to me to be the present moment" (The Past Recaptured, p. 131); "I experienced them [the happy impressions caused by remembering involuntarily] at the present moment and at the same time in the context of a distant moment, so that the past was made to encroach upon the present and I was made to doubt whether I was in the one or the other." (p. 133)

We now have the following division of labor within narrative fiction: the narrative past, of which the passé simple is one realization, recounts the past; the habitual past remembers it; and the past cotemporal with NOW re-presents it, in the sense that it makes a past moment here and now again. It is in this sense that it recaptures the past. The first relates narrative fiction to history; the last two divide up the personal realm of memory. Such was the conclusion of Thibaudet (1920),

in his answer to Proust on Flaubert: "Perhaps it is the aspect of things and persons, as they imposed themselves upon Flaubert which required the use of the imperfect, because the imperfect expresses the past, in relation either to the present or to an habitual nature --, two conditions which are brought back together when we go back into our past 'in search of lost time.'" [à la recherche du temps perdu]. (p. 430) Finally, it is that grammatical analysis which Proust defends to Thibaudet which vindicates Proust's claim that it is art alone which makes it possible to recapture the past, to represent "a fragment of time in the pure state" (The Past Recaptured, pp. 133-4), which then becomes "a minute freed from the order of time" (p. 134). For it is precisely that Flaubertian imperfect Proust qualifies as "eternel" which unites a moment of the past with a NOW. For whereas the habitual occurs in the spoken language and the passé simple can appear in historical writing as well as in the novel, the past cotemporal with NOW occurs only in the language of the novel. To write a sentence which "represents" the past, which "recaptures" it, is already to write a novel.

Notes

[1]See Banfield (1982), Chapter 2.

[2]A numeral may appear with the habitual, as long as it does not specify the exact number of times the event took place in the past; thus, one finds:

> Regulièrement, trois fois par semaine, les voyageurs qui stationnaient dans les salles d'attente ou sur le quai de Doncières-Ouest voyaient passer ce gros homme aux cheveux gris, aux moustaches noires, les rouges d'un fard qui se remarque moins à la fin de la saison que l'été, . . . (RTP, Pléiade II, p. 1037).

In the sentence above, trois fois par semaine qualifies regulièrement, but either adverbial could appear alone with the habitual. The point is that trois fois par semaine specifies the nature of the regularity, but in no way indicates how many times in the past M. de Charlus was seen by travellers at Doncières-Ouest.

[3]The claim holds only for the tenses of narrative.

[4]It should be noted that in Jackendoff's system a few, "because of its indefinite article, can be identified as a semi-numeral, hence, a noun" (p. 130), while few is analyzed as a true quantifier. Thus, one would predict that few could appear with the habitual past, but not a few. Now this is precisely the distribution one finds, as is shown below.

a. Few times would we ever miss the matinee. We used to (would) miss the matinee very few times.
b. A few times we missed (*would miss, *used to miss) the matinee.

[5]There is some evidence that language can count up to two. Many

languages, including Old English, know a dual number. In Latin, unum and duum are declined, but not the other numerals. Note that both, which can be considered the dual number of all, does not appear with the habitual:

Both times we took (*would take, *used to take) the shortcut.

[6]In Bergson, "succession" is distinguished from an ordering, a counting; it is the flow of duration which is not broken up into counted units: as to "the successive moments of our conscious life," "the oscillations of the pendulum break it up, so to speak, into parts external to one another." (1889, 1960, p. 109)

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