On the Event-Structural Properties of the English *Get*-Passive

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An important discussion in theories of argument structure concerns the explanatory division of labor between thematic properties and event structure. English *get*-passives, analyzed in much previous work as differing thematically from *be*-passives, provide an interesting test case. We present an analysis of *get*-passives centered on the proposal that they contain additional event structure (realized as *get*) relative to their *be* counterparts. We employ *by*-adjuncts to identify the different event structures in passive types, and use other diagnostics to support our analysis. Further discussion considers the prominent proposal from previous studies that *get*-passives differ thematically from *be*-passives in (sometimes) assigning an Agent role to their surface subjects. We show that contrasts between *get* and *be* on this dimension are a consequence of event-structural differences between the two. The result is a unified analysis of the *get*-passive that has implications for the role of event structure in understanding the syntax and interpretation of arguments.

Keywords: get-passive, event structure, argument structure, voice alternations

1 Introduction

In this article, we examine *get*-passives like *John got arrested by the police*, in relation to both passives with *be* (*John was arrested by the police*) and causatives with *get* (*Mary got John arrested by the police*). Our main goal is to provide a syntactic and semantic analysis of the *get*-passive that accounts for its similarities to, and differences from, these other two types of clauses. Our primary proposal is that the *get/be*-passive distinction is event-structural. We pinpoint event-structural differences between these clauses, in ways that connect with other structures realized with *get*; and we show that the posited difference in the event structure of *get*- and *be*-passives explains a number of observations, both novel and drawn from the literature, in a synthesis that goes beyond what prior analyses of *get*-passives have achieved.

1.1 Event Structure and Argument Interpretation

Our focus on event structure connects with broader currents in the study of argument interpretation, but departs from the particular perspective adopted in previous analyses of *get*-passives. Previous work has concentrated on thematic properties of such passives (often, but not always, with reference to apparent differences with *be*-passives), examining two main syntactic issues. The first concerns whether *get* is a raising or a control verb in *get*-passives; see, for example, Lasnik and Fiengo 1974, Haegeman 1985, Fox and Grodzinsky 1998, Huang 1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006, Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012, and Thompson and Scheepers 2013. The second concerns the argument structure of the participle complement of *get*, with the specific goal of determining whether the complement is a "verbal" or "adjectival" passive; studies addressing this question directly include Haegeman 1985, Fox and Grodzinsky 1998, Alexiadou 2005, 2012, McIntyre 2005, 2012, Brownlow 2011, Reed 2011, and Thompson and Scheepers 2013. Many studies address both questions, as will this article, ultimately.

Setting aside for the moment the specific conclusions that the previous literature on *get* has reached, it should be clear that both of these questions are concerned with possible *thematic* differences between *get* and *be*. First, if the *get*-passive involves *get* as a control verb, then on standard assumptions the *get*-passive differs thematically from the *be*-passive, in that its surface subject is associated with two thematic roles: one inherently due to the position where it is merged, and one by virtue of controlling PRO. The *be*-passive surface subject, on the other hand, bears only one thematic role. Second, if the *get*-passive is built on an "adjectival passive" (and not a "verbal passive"), then the Agent *the police* in *John got* [*"Adjectival" arrested*] *by the police* is licensed thematically in a different way than *the police* in *John was* [*"Verbal" arrested by the police*], on the (again standard) assumption that adjectival passives do not license Agents in the same way as eventive passive participles.

In principle, the control vs. raising and verbal vs. adjectival oppositions should make very different predictions. Yet evidence for choosing among competing analyses of the *get*-passive has been difficult to come by. In part, this is because the large literature regularly reports contradictory judgments on relevant data (as Brownlow (2011), Reed (2011), Alexiadou (2012), and Thompson and Scheepers (2013) closely review); what exactly counts as a *get*-passive is likely a contributing factor as well (see below). If the general orientation of our article is correct, a further source of uncertainty arises from a focus on possible thematic differences—not event-structural ones—in ways that we will explain.

As prior literature on the *get*-passive is both extensive and complex, the discussion to come will abstract on the ideas that motivate previous approaches, rather than undertaking a point-by-point assessment of every proposal. This allows us to move directly toward identifying the event-structural properties of the *get*-passive that we believe are essential. In doing so, we note that while the specifics of previous proposals have concentrated on the *get*-passive's thematic structure, a number of them do point to the possibility that the *get*-passive includes interesting event-structural properties relevant to understanding it (Brownlow 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012,

McIntyre 2012). While those proposals are not developed with a focus on the details of event structure, and in some cases draw conclusions that differ from those advanced here, the intuitions behind them provide the point of departure for the present study.

The general question addressed here is where to locate the burden of explaining differences between *get*- and *be*-passives. In principle, the explanation for a given set of effects in argument structure could take very different forms. Two primary types of explanation involve semantic (i.e., thematic) role properties, on the one hand, and, on the other, properties that concentrate on event structure (i.e., events and states), the relationships between these (e.g., "Cause"), and the relations of arguments to these eventualities. Representative versions of more syntactically oriented event-structural views can be found in Borer 2005, Ramchand 2008, Schäfer 2008, Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, and Schäfer 2015, Wood 2015, and Wood and Marantz 2017; an important overview and synthesis of this tradition is found in Marantz 2013b. The results reported here contribute to the move in the direction associated with these lines of work. This is not to say that thematic relations (and the interpretation of arguments more generally) are unimportant; as will be seen below, questions about thematic interpretation are crucial to understanding the *get*-passive. Rather, our broader point is that the thematic aspects of interpretation cannot be understood without reference to how they relate to eventualities (and the relations between eventualities), as is expected from an event-structural point of view.

1.2 Specific Claims

Our discussion proceeds in three steps. In section 2, we motivate a syntactic analysis for the *get*-passive in which *get* is realized in a verbalizing structure (v/Voice). The *get*-passive is analyzed as an intransitive version of the *get*-causative, an idea adapted from prior work. We also set out evidence from argument licensing in *get*-passives to demonstrate that the participial complement of *get* is an eventive (i.e., "verbal") passive, whose structure is identical to the participle that appears in corresponding *be*-passives.

The core prediction of this analysis is that *get*-passives contain an event that is not found in corresponding *be*-passives. In section 3, we examine this prediction, developing a diagnostic (a type of *by*-adjunct) that produces novel *get*/*be*-passive contrasts, effects that are explained by the presence of an additional eventuality in the former. We adduce additional patterns from other aspectual modifiers that support this conclusion.

In section 4, we take up the claim from previous work that *get*-passives are thematically different from *be*-passives. This claim ultimately rests on the frequently discussed judgment that in *get*-passives like *John got VERB-ed*, *John* is interpreted as (potentially) bringing about what befalls the bearer of the name *John*, in a way that is supposed to contrast with *be*-passives like *John was VERB-ed.* In brief, this is the idea that the surface subject can be a (secondary) Agent in *get*-passives, but not in *be*-passives. We show that there is no reason to believe that *get*-passive subjects are thematically different from their *be*-passive counterparts. The arguments focus on what has been the strongest (and therefore most interesting) implementation of the Agent intuition,

in which the *get*-passive surface subject is assigned a thematic role by virtue of being the external argument of *get* and thus is assigned two thematic roles. Examination of adjunct diagnostics purported to furnish evidence for a thematic analysis of *get*-passive subjects reveals that such adjuncts do not require the surface subject to be a thematic Agent. In support of this conclusion, we provide further evidence that the typical *get*-passive has only a raising structure in which the subject receives one thematic role. There is no reason to believe that *get*-passives ever involve control and an additional thematic role for the subject.

While there may be no thematic difference between *get*- and *be*-passive surface subjects, there is indeed something behind the "Agent intuition" mentioned above. We approach this in connection with facts about the licensing of adjunct modifiers—in particular, rationale clauses. Our analysis of these effects holds that the Agent intuition in *get*-passives arises by implicature. It involves what we refer to as an event's *Responsible Party*, a notion we adapt from the literature on control. We propose that certain parties (typically entities) may be contextually interpreted as responsible for an event, in a manner that can be distinguished from an asserted (Agent or Causer) thematic role. The crucial connection is that the *get*-passive event structure makes a Responsible Party interpretation of its surface subject contextually salient (but not entailed); in the absence of that additional event in *be*-passives, the availability of a Responsible Party interpretation for surface subjects is more limited. Returning to adjuncts, the contrasts in Responsible Party interpretations are reflected by interactions with particular modifiers like rationale clauses. In summary, this part of the analysis shows that interpretive contrasts between *get*- and *be*-passive surface subjects are pragmatic in nature, but ultimately reduce to event-structural differences.

Section 5 provides a general summary and concluding remarks.

2 *Get*-Passive Preliminaries: Syntax and Argument Structure

In terms of scope, we restrict our attention and claims to typical *get*-passives like (1a) and, in particular, to the contrasts between these and *be*-passives like (1b), contrasts that we approach with reference to *get*-causatives like (1c).

(1) a. Mary got arrested by the police.
    b. Mary was arrested by the police.
    c. Susan got Mary arrested by the police.

We will sometimes adduce other *get*-complements for purposes of illustration. However, we do not intend to make any claims about the full range of contexts in which *get* is realized. While this restriction in focus is particularly clear with nonparticipial complements (*Ziggy got tired/ into the cookies*), it also applies to certain cases in which *get* is followed by (what appears to be) a "past participle." Multiple syncretisms in such participle forms are well-attested, as discussed in Embick 2003, 2004, for instance. Thus, some *DP got "Participle"* strings that resemble (1a) might involve (e.g.) adjectival or stative passive complements to *get*; our proposals do not address these.

Turning to our primary focus, there is good reason to believe that the *get*-passive should differ from the *be*-passive in its event-structural components, given two basic observations.

Observation 1 is that *get* is realized in a verbal structure that is always semantically eventive; in contrast, *be* does not realize a semantically eventive head.[1] An instantiation of this contrast is the fact that when *get* has an adjective as its complement, the phrasal structure is interpreted as a dynamic event of change. The counterpart with *be* and the same adjectival phrase is stative.

(2) a. Mary got sick.   Eventive
    b. Mary was sick.   Stative

For this general way of thinking about *get* and eventivity, see McIntyre 2012 and references cited there.

There is also a syntactic difference between the items *be* and *get.* The former has the syntax of an auxiliary. It therefore raises to T (and from there to C in, say, questions). In contrast, *get* has the syntax of a main verb (Haegeman 1985). We will nevertheless treat both *get* and *be* as realizations of verbalizing v heads. In doing so, we set aside the general question of exactly what features distinguish *be* from *get* (and these in turn from, say, *have*); we also set aside the (by no means trivial) question of why certain instances of v have the syntax of auxiliaries, and others that of main verbs. For the first of these questions, an approach along the lines of Myler 2018 could be extended to investigate *get*'s connections with other parts of the English light-verb/ auxiliary system, but we will not attempt to do this here.

Observation 2 is that the participle XP of the type that appears in passives can be eventive, independent of what embeds the participle. This can be demonstrated by manipulating a reduced relative clause. A *be*-passive with an eventive interpretation is given in (3a). The corresponding reduced relative is given in (3b); it has the same eventive interpretation as the *be*-passive in (3a), even though (3b) lacks the *be* embedding structure. The pair shows that the event in passives is introduced by the structure realized as the participle, on the assumption that the reduced relative does not involve "superficial" deletion of a *wh*-element and *be* (see Bhatt 1999, Iatridou, Anagno-stopoulou, and Izvorski 2001, and references there).

(3) a. The man was [arrested by the police yesterday].   Eventive *be*-passive
    b. The man [arrested by the police yesterday] . . .   Reduced relative

As for *be* in eventive passives like (3b), we adopt the view that *be* realizes verbal structure associated with copular clauses more generally; see below.

Putting Observations 1 and 2 together, the intuition is that there should be two "primary" events in the *get*-passive: one associated with the structure realized as *get*, and the other with the structure realized as the participle.[2] The qualification to "primary" events here reflects caution about the details of (sub)event semantics. It may be the case, for example, that there are reasons for treating *get* or the participle component as associated with multiple eventualities. Our point is that there must be *at least* one additional event in the *get*-passive relative to the *be*-passive,

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[1] Although compare "agentive *be*," as in *John is being really annoying today.* This does not affect our main point.
[2] As a terminological note, we are assuming a theory with Late Insertion and thus speak of "the event associated with the structure in which *get* is realized" and so on. Occasionally, we will simplify references like this for the sake of brevity: for example, "the *get* event." This should be understood as shorthand for the longer, more precise description.

while in the *be*-passive there should only be the event(ualities) associated with the participle structure.

While intuitions like those just outlined are noted in the literature on *get* (Brownlow 2011, Alexiadou 2012, McIntyre 2012), the main focus of these works is not on event structure per se, but on thematic properties, or on the variety of complement types that *get* occurs with. Our goal here is thus to examine this intuition directly and focus on differences in event-structural properties of *get*- and *be*-passives. We first motivate a syntactic structure for the *get*-passive and then (in section 3) examine the predictions this structure makes concerning "extra events."

2.1 The Structure of the Get-*Passive in Outline*

The syntactic analysis of *get*-passives has two main ingredients, relating to Observations 1 and 2.

The first ingredient is the *get* component. We take *get* to be realized in a structure containing a verbalizing head v, along with a Voice head that can either introduce an external argument or not (Voice[±Ag(entive)]). The v head takes a phrase containing the participle as its complement and is interpreted as eventive. In the particular view to be implemented, the v in the *get*-passive is the intransitive variant of the transitive v found in *get*-causatives; on this, see Haegeman 1985 and the discussion of Icelandic in Sigurðsson and Wood 2012 (the latter also contains several important comparative observations).

The second ingredient is the structure realized with the participle. We take this to be identical to the participle structure found in eventive passives with *be*. With respect to argument structure, this substructure includes the head Voice[+Ag] that introduces the semantics of agentivity (and corresponding *by*-phrases), as well as the structure responsible for licensing internal arguments in actives and eventive passives. A consequence of this analysis is that (all else being equal) we expect that any argument that can appear in eventive passives will also occur in *get*-passives.

Combining the two ingredients produces (4). The only head in (4) that we have not mentioned is the X head, to which the internal argument *several people* has moved. Its inclusion is motivated in section 2.3.2.

(4) *The* get-*passive* (TenseP, etc., not shown)
    a. Several people got arrested.
    b.
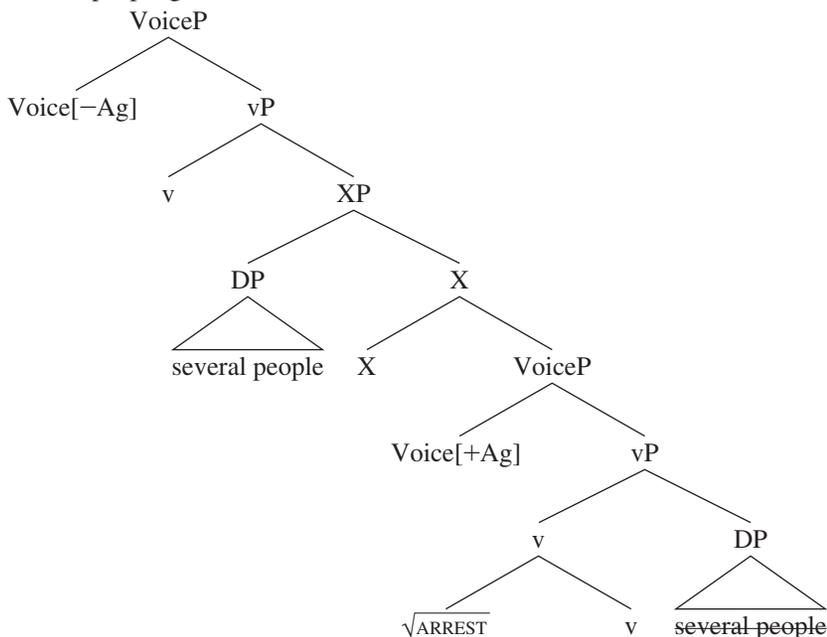
    In the rest of this section, we expand on the details of the structure in (4), before turning to its interpretation (and contrasts with the *be*-passive) in section 3.

2.2 *The* Get *Component*

We start with the embedding structure realized with *get*, making use of a simple adjectival complement *sick* in order to examine it first separate from the participle. In (5), *get* exhibits a transitivity alternation, similar to the type seen with certain "change of state" (or causative/inchoative) verbs like *open.*
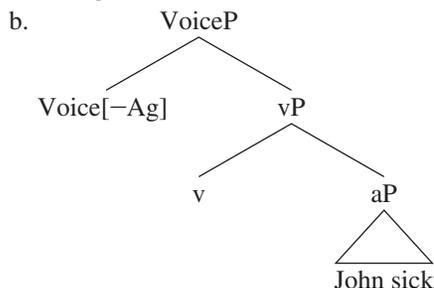
    (5) a. John got sick.
        b. The rotten food got John sick.

    Following work in the tradition of Kratzer 1996 (see, e.g., Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, and Schäfer 2015, for additional development and references), we assume that a Voice head plays a crucial role in such alternations. This head is specified as agentive or not: [±Ag]. The [−Ag] variant is exemplified in (6).

(6) *[−Ag] (anticausative)*
  a. John got sick.
  b.

```
              VoiceP
             /      \
      Voice[−Ag]     vP
                    /  \
                   v    aP
                        /\
                    John sick
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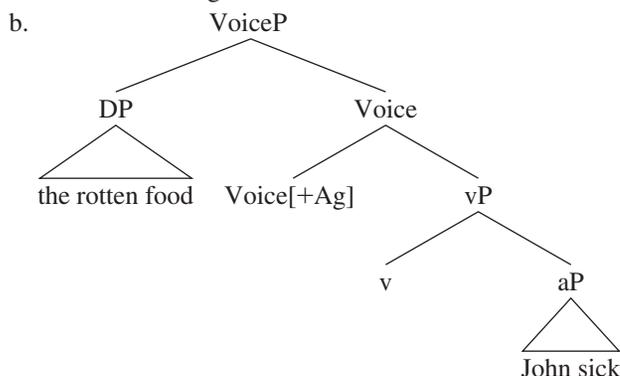
The *get*-causative is the [+Ag] variant in (7) (where case will be assigned to the direct object as well).

(7) *[+Ag] (transitive)*
  a. The rotten food got John sick.
  b.

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                  VoiceP
                 /      \
               DP        Voice
               /\        /    \
   the rotten food  Voice[+Ag]  vP
                              /  \
                             v    aP
                                  /\
                              John sick
```

The complement of the *get* component is given as an aP, though this could be an oversimplification; the complement structure contains, by assumption, whatever structure is below the copula in examples like *John is sick.*

Building on (6)–(7), both the intransitive and transitive versions of *get* can also have participial complements. These are the *get*-passive and *get*-causative, respectively.

(8) a. John got arrested by the police.
   b. Mary got John arrested by the police.

That is, on our analysis, the *get*-passive and *get*-causative involve the same alternation as in (6)–(7), but instead of an aP complement to *get*, these have a participial structure, to whose properties we now turn.[3]

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[3] While the v/VoiceP pronounced as *get* has both transitive and intransitive variants, it cannot be passivized. Consider the attempted passivization with the aP complement of (5a) in (ia) and with a participle complement in (ib).

2.3 The Participial Component

We propose that the participle in the *get*-passive has the same structure as that found in its *be*-passive counterpart. In this regard, our conclusions are similar to a proposal developed for one type of *get*-construction by Alexiadou (2012), who follows one line of earlier work in treating certain *get*-passives as having an eventive passive participle.

   The idea that *get*-passives have eventive participles differs from one advanced in Fox and Grodzinsky 1998 and related work, in which the *get*-passive participle is treated as an "adjectival passive" (see Wasow 1977, Levin and Rappaport 1986; see also Siewierska 1984, on *get*). More recently, implementations of the claim that the *get*-passive involves a special, or different, participial structure have assumed developments of the adjectival view such that the *get*-passive participle is a kind of resultative or stative passive, of the types discussed by Kratzer (2001) or Embick (2004) (e.g., Alexiadou 2005, Brownlow 2011, McIntyre 2012).

   The argument in the previous literature for a stative ("adjectival") participle in the *get*-passive concerns its argument structure—specifically, the status of implicit Agent arguments. The relevant data are complicated, in part because the literature on *get* has utilized diagnostics that are disputed independently in the *be*-passive literature (e.g., Bhatt and Pancheva 2006). We return to those issues in detail in section 4. Here, we present a different set of arguments against a stative passive analysis, and in favor of an eventive passive participle complement of *get*.

2.3.1 Argument Licensing in Get-*Passives*   In this section, we introduce clear evidence for an eventive participle in *get*-passives, based on well-known contrasts between eventive and stative passives in (internal) argument licensing.

   These differences involve what Levin and Rappaport (1986) call the *Sole Complement Generalization.* In brief, this generalization states that given a multiobject verb, only the arguments that can be present in a monotransitive clause are available in a stative passive. As illustration, the sole argument that appears in the monotransitive variant of ditransitive *sell* is the Theme argument (10a), not the Goal (10b). The stative passive participle (11) is possible only with the Theme argument, repeating the pattern found with the monotransitive. In contrast, either argument can be found with the eventive passive participle (12).

   (9) The salespeople sold the cars to the customers.

   (10) *Monotransitive*
      a.   The salespeople sold the cars.
      b.   *The salespeople sold the customers. (on the Goal reading of *the customers*)

(i) a. The shellfish got John sick./*John was got(ten) sick by the shellfish.
   b. Mary got John arrested./*John was got(ten) arrested by Mary.

How to account for when Voice[+Ag] can and cannot appear in passives is an interesting question, but it is independent of our specific focus on *get*-passives.

(11) *Stative passive*
    a.   . . . recently sold cars.
    b. * . . . recently sold customers.

(12) *Eventive passive*
    a. The cars were sold to the customers by the salespeople.
    b. The customers were sold the cars by the salespeople.

Importantly, the effect does not seem to be defined in terms of thematic role label. According to a standard description, the sole argument that appears in the monotransitive variant of ditransitive *feed* is the Goal argument (14a), never the Theme (14b) (the pattern opposite to *sell*'s). In this case, the adjectival passive participle can occur only with the Goal argument, repeating the pattern found with the monotransitive (15). Again, either argument can raise to subject position with the eventive passive participle (16).

(13) The grandparents fed the vegetables to the babies.

(14) *Monotransitive*
    a.   The grandparents fed the babies.
    b. *The grandparents fed the vegetables.

(15) *Stative passive*
    a. * . . . recently fed vegetables.
    b.   . . . recently fed babies.

(16) *Eventive passive*
    a. The vegetables were fed to the babies by the grandparents.
    b. The babies were fed the vegetables by the grandparents.

These patterns provide a way of probing the participle found with *get*-passives. If the *get*-passive participle were a stative passive, then only a limited range of object arguments should be found in *get*-passives, relative to eventive passives with *be*, as in (11) and (15). However, *get*-passives are grammatical with the arguments that are disallowed with monotransitives (and hence stative passives) (17)–(18). This is a clear argument against building the *get*-passive with a stative passive complement of *get*.[4]

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[4] Prior work has considered examples related to ours but has gone in a different direction. For example, *Mary got sold a car* is reported as ungrammatical in Siewierska 1984 and Alexiadou 2005. Why some *get*-passives like these might sound odd "out of the blue" deserves investigating. Contextual and other factors make these examples much better; consider *Mary got sold a lemon* (*lemon* = 'bad car') or *John got sold a false warranty.*

    Quite generally, we expect there to be pragmatic effects related to the choice between use of *be* and *get* counterparts, due to the fact that in most scenarios, either could in principle be employed. This results in competition-for-use effects, meaning that the choice of the *get*-passive is nonneutral. Anticipating sections 3–4, on our account the *get*-passive produces implicatures both about the surface subject and about the Agent of the passive participle. We believe these implicatures (and perhaps other factors, such as verb class) play a role in the out-of-the-blue (un)naturalness of some examples with *get*-passives.

(17) a. The special cars got sold to the wrong customers by the new salespeople.
      b. The wrong customers got sold the special cars by the new salespeople.

(18) a. The special vegetables got fed to the wrong babies by the grandparents.
      b. The wrong babies got fed the special vegetables by the grandparents.

Strictly speaking, this reasoning provides evidence *against* a stative passive analysis for the *get*-passive participle. While this is not an argument *for* an eventive passive treatment, an eventive passive structure provides the only explanation we are aware of for these argument-licensing facts. An eventive passive analysis also makes sense of the simple fact that the *get*-passive freely licenses agentive *by*-phrases, something that is unexpected in an adjectival passive structure.

(19) Mary arrested the criminal.
      a. The criminal was arrested by Mary.   Eventive
      b. *The criminal is arrested by Mary.   Stative
      c. The criminal got arrested by Mary.   Get

Although *by*-phrases are sometimes found with stative passives, there remains a basic contrast to the effect that *by*-phrases are freely available for Agents of eventive passives, which is not the case for stative passives; and *get*-passives pattern with eventive passives in this respect.[5] An eventive passive analysis is thus a significant improvement on versions of the "adjectival" *get*-passive analysis, in which an overt *by*-phrase is licensed for the participle by a free process of θ-Transmission (Fox and Grodzinsky 1998), which evidently occurs only in the context of *get.* Given that (intransitive) *get* does not license Agents/Causers in the absence of the participle (cf. **John got sick by Mary/the rotten food*), it is necessary to impose what appear to be ad hoc restrictions limiting Agent relations to *get*-passives, if the adjectival passive analysis is to be maintained.

In summary, an eventive passive substructure for the *get*-passive straightforwardly accounts for its argument structure properties, with respect to the licensing of both internal and external arguments (*by*-phrases). These properties are inconsistent with the stative passive alternative.[6]

2.3.2 The Structure of the Participle   We represent the eventive passive XP complement of *get* as in (20).

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[5] On this point, Bruening (2014) draws a number of conclusions based on grammatical examples of stative passives with *by*-phrases. However, the availability of *by*-phrases with statives is systematically restricted, in ways that suggest other factors are in operation. One generalization that appears to be on point is pursued by McIntyre (2015), whose notion of "state relevance" is directed at the idea that modifiers in stative passives need to elaborate on the state that is produced, not the event that produces it, an effect not observed with eventive passives (see Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou, and Schäfer 2015, for application of state relevance to Bruening's data).

[6] As noted in section 1, we do not claim that *get* can never take a stative passive complement. *Get* does, after all, combine with different stative predicates (e.g., adjectives); see Alexiadou 2012 and McIntyre 2012 for pertinent discussions. Our claim is that typical *get*-passives have eventive passive participles.

(20) *Syntax of the eventive passive substructure (the participle under* be *or* get*)*
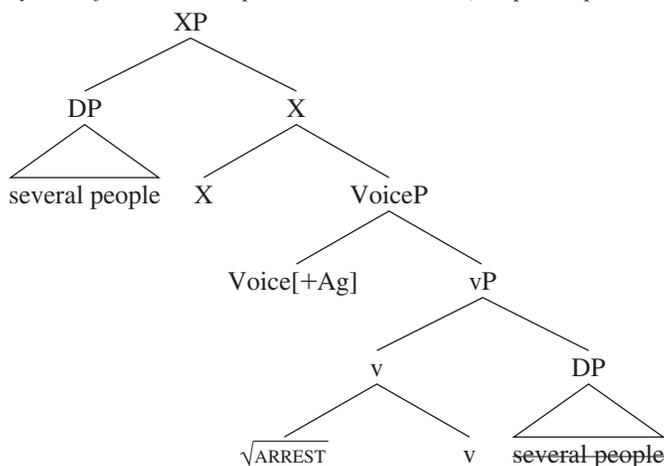
Either the structure in (20) can combine with the structure that is associated with the copula, in which case a *be*-passive is produced; or it can be embedded under the structures (transitive and intransitive) realized as *get*, producing a *get*-causative or *get*-passive, respectively.

As shown in (20), we assume an approach to eventive passive substructures in which the Agent-licensing semantics are introduced by the head Voice[+Ag], but in which no external argument has been merged (see Embick 1997 and related work). The details of the passive interpretation (e.g., whether it is brought about by existential closure or by other means, or how *by*-phrases function) could be implemented in a number of ways that are compatible with this approach. We have also not specified a locus for the participial morpheme (by default, *-ed*) that occurs in these structures; again, this can be treated in various ways that are compatible with our analysis.

There are a few points to be made concerning the head X in (20), whose specifier hosts the internal argument after movement. The first is that such a position, in between the thematic base position for an internal argument and the surface subject position, is also observed in eventive passives, as in the expletive passive in (21b).

(21) *Two eventive passives*
   a. Several people were arrested by the police at 4:37 p.m. yesterday.
   b. There were several people arrested by the police at 4:37 p.m. yesterday.

Both of the passives in (21) can be shown to have eventive semantics (Embick 1997), another reason for thinking that *be* (often regarded as stative) is essentially semantically vacuous in eventive passives (see Bjorkman 2011 for a generalization of this idea). In (21b), *several people* occupies the specifier position of XP, as it does in (20). In (21a), *several people* has raised further, to the specifier position of TP.

The XP position is also evident in *get*-causatives. Example (22b) shows that movement of the internal argument to XP is obligatory in *get*-causatives.

(22) a.   Mary got John arrested by the police.

    b. *Mary got arrested John by the police.

The movement of the internal argument is also necessary for *be*-passives like (21b); compare
There were arrested several people by the police at 4:37 p.m. yesterday. The appearance of the
internal argument in a high position is thus not specific to *get* structures. In particular, the contrast
in (22) is not a reason to think that objects originate "high" in the *get* structure, given that the
same effect is also observed in *be*-passives.

    In sum, whatever the nature of the movement to XP, it seems to be obligatory and to occur
in the eventive passive substructure, regardless of what the participle is embedded under.[7]

    With this syntactic structure in hand, the main questions to address are how the *get*-realized
substructure is interpreted and how it relates semantically to the participial substructure. We turn
to these matters next.

3 Event Structure in *Get*-Passives

Our primary goal in considering the interpretation of *get*-passives can be broken down into two
parts. The first—and most important—is to demonstrate that *get* in the *get*-passive is associated
with the introduction of event structure that is not found in corresponding *be*-passives. To this
end, in section 3.1 we show how certain *by*-adjuncts interact with the event structure that is
realized by *get*, a result that is corroborated by further diagnostics.

    A second goal, addressed in section 3.2, centers on the relation between the structure realized
by *get* and the event structure of the passive participle. The main idea is that in the *get*-passive,
the *get* structure stands in a relation of causation to the participial structure (see Brownlow 2011,
Alexiadou 2012, and McIntyre 2012 for similar conclusions). Concretely, and illustrating with
(23a), the proposed analysis involves the predicates and relations in (23b).

(23) a. John got arrested.
      b. . . . $\exists e_1 \exists e_2$ End$(e_1,e_2) \wedge$ arrest$(e_2) \wedge$ Patient(john,e_2)

The *get* structure is interpreted as an event e_1; in addition to this, there is an event e_2 associated
with the participle. The event e_1 Ends in the event e_2; this representation makes use of a Process
semantics (e.g., Pietroski 2005). Finally, the surface subject (in (23b), *John*) is interpreted as the
direct object argument of the passive participle, in this case as a Patient.

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    [7] In the *get*-passive, it is not possible to leave the argument in the "intermediate" position, for example, with a
there-expletive surface subject: *There got several people arrested by the police.* This observation instantiates the general
idea that it is the "copular syntax" of the *be*-passive that licenses *there*. Expletive licensing is not expected with auxiliaries
or with light verbs across the board (cf., e.g., *There has a boy a new book*).
    Bruening and Tran (2015) argue that contrasts between *be* and *get* with expletive *there* suggest that a Patient argument
raises to subject position in *be*-passives, but not in *get*-passives. As Bruening (2019) discusses, their conclusion is based
in part on the premise that *there*-insertion is possible only in positions in which arguments cannot be base-generated.
From this it is supposed to follow that verbs that allow *there*-insertion do not have thematic positions for external
arguments. But what follows about verbs that *dis*allow *there*? Consider that verbs like *seem* do not have base-generated
external arguments, but also disallow *there*: *There seems a goose to have eaten a slug.* It does not follow from this
example that *A goose seems to have eaten a slug* is derived without raising. The relevance of *there*-licensing to the
argument structure and syntax of *get*-passives is thus not clear.

A few notes are in order concerning the relations in (23b). First, the events are related by Process-semantics End, rather than (e.g.) introducing a predicate Cause. On this, see Schäfer 2008 and A. Williams 2015 for relevant discussion and perspectives in the domain of change-of-state verbs. Nothing crucial hinges on this decision, given what we address here. Whether End or Cause is posited, a number of further questions could be asked—for example, concerning how the relation in (23) is related to the one found in, say, change-of-state contexts, or where an event is related to the state that it terminates in. For our purposes, it suffices to suggest that the same relation End (/Cause) appears in both, with interpretive differences between the two arising from the differences in the eventualities that are related.

Our main aim in this section is to identify systematic event-structural differences in *get-* and *be*-passives, differences that are suggested in prior work but that have not been motivated with diagnostics that distinguish the passive types. Our discussion of the semantics is more modest in scope: we aim to make claims about the semantic composition explicit enough to be assessed, such that the components provide a step toward a fully compositional analysis.

3.1 Detecting Event Structure in Get-*Passives*

In section 2, we noted that *get* is eventive in ways that *be* is not, citing contrasts between examples like *John got sick* and *John was sick.* Related examples with aP complements confirm the eventivity of *get* by itself—for example, in "event pairing" scenarios.

(24) [Every time the bell rang] John's face got/was red.

With *get*, the interpretation of (24) is that John's face turned red on every occasion of the bell ringing; with *be*, on the other hand, each bell-ringing occurred within a time period during which John's face was in the red state. That is, the *get*-clause involves an event, one that is not present with *be*.

While interpretive contrasts with adjectives are clear and well-known, it remains a challenge to formally detect a *get*-related event in passives and to distinguish it from the event that is associated with the participle. In this section, we examine a particular *by*-adjunct modifier that produces the relevant contrasts, and then adduce additional diagnostics that achieve a similar effect.

3.1.1 By-*Adjuncts*   Consider the contrast between (25a) and (25b), which involve an aP complement. The *by*-adjunct cannot modify the *be*-stative (25a), where the adjective *wet* is embedded under *be.* In contrast, the *get* variant in (25b) is compatible with *by*-modification.

(25) a. *The Xbox was wet [by being left next to an open window and getting rained on].
      b. The Xbox got wet [by being left next to an open window and getting rained on].

Use of *by* in (25) draws on prior work in which *by*-adjuncts are used to detect event-structural and other differences between different predicate types in complex verbal structures. In particular, (25) extends A. Williams's (2009) demonstration that the *by*-adjunct in (26) does not modify either of the lexically given predicates (cf. Dowty 1979).

(26) Ozzy sang his throat hoarse [by not resting between songs].
(A. Williams 2009:694)

In detail, the *by*-adjunct in (26) modifies neither the main verb *sing* ((27a) is certainly not entailed by (26)) nor the adjective *hoarse* (27b).

(27) a. #Ozzy sang [by not resting between songs].
b. #Ozzy is/was hoarse [by not resting between songs].

Rather, the *by*-adjunct in (26) must modify an (unpronounced, non-lexically-given) "third event" that relates the main verb and the result (the *singing-hoarse*).

Along these lines, we observe that in contrast to (27b), the *get* variant can combine with a *by*-adjunct.

(28) Ozzy got hoarse [by not resting between songs].

This contrast follows from the presence of event structure in (28) not found in its *be*-clause counterpart (27b). In the remainder of this section, we build on these initial observations to show that whereas in *be*-passives *by*-adjuncts can only modify an event associated with the participle, in *get*-passives these adjuncts can modify a distinct event. In our analysis, this distinct event is the event associated with *get*.[8]

The pair in (30) illustrates a first contrast, with (29) as a point of reference.[9]

(29) They dried out the pineapple [by leaving it outside in the sun for hours].

(30) a. The pineapple was dried out (by the sun) [by being left outside for hours].
b. The pineapple got dried out (by the sun) [by being left outside for hours].

The pair in (30) is of note because the adjunct *by being left outside for hours* receives a different interpretation in each example. The baseline active (29) has a *by*-adjunct that specifies the *manner* or *means* (MM) by which the pineapple was dried out. The *be*-passive (30a) has a *by*-adjunct that is interpreted in the same way as in (29): it describes the manner or means by which the pineapple was dried. However, the *by*-adjunct does not have this reading with the *get*-passive in (30b). Instead, here the adjunct specifies *how it came to pass* that the pineapple was subjected to drying out: informally, it was "due to" (DT) the pineapple's being left out in the sun that the drying-out event took place. We adopt the (default) assumption that the same *by*-adjunct appears in (30a–b), such that the different interpretations depend on the event modified: the lexically specific participle *dried out* in (30a) vs. a lexically underspecified event that is in a cause-like relation with an embedded event in (30b). That is, (30) shows that with the *be*-passive, the *by*-adjunct modifies how the drying out occurs, just as with the active, whereas with the *get*-passive, the adjunct modifies a distinct event, associated with *get*, which is one that brings about the drying-out.

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[8] Previous discussions of *get*-passives have noted the potential use of *by*-adjuncts to distinguish among passive types; for example, Brownlow (2011) points to the use of *by* as an event modifier. McIntyre (2012) also notes such adjuncts, but in relation to thematic properties, not event structure.

[9] We switch to the passive in the *by*-adjunct in (30) to control for Voice-matching preferences.

The same reasoning extends to other kinds of examples with *by*-adjuncts. First, with animate subjects, consider a scenario in which John is part of a team of bank robbers, and—due to his above-average height—he is the only one visible to security cameras. In this scenario, the *get* version in (31) is possible, but the *be* version is not.

(31) John got/*was arrested (by the police) yesterday [by being too tall].

In the *get*-passive, the *by*-adjunct specifies how John's arrest came about: it was due to his height. In the corresponding *be*-passive, the *by*-adjunct can only be interpreted as the manner or means by which the arrest unfolded; John's being too tall is consequently nonsensical.

Further examples repeating the *get*/*be* differences with animate subjects are these:

(32) a. Mary got/*was hit by a car [by zigging when she should have zagged].
    b. Bill got/*was apprehended [by forgetting to put his disguise on when he went out].
    c. Susan got/*was promoted [by sealing the Throckmorton deal].
    d. Fred got/*was hit by lightning [by wearing a metal hat].

Notably, the *get*/*be* contrasts are independent of subject animacy: the same pattern can be produced with inanimate surface subjects.

(33) a. The pencils got/*were broken [by being too long for the box they were in].
    b. The liver got/*was pounded [by being in a pile with the cutlets].
    c. The mechanism got/*was fried by the oven [by absorbing too much heat from it].

That is, it is not the surface subject's properties that are responsible for the *get*/*be* contrasts.

In utilizing *by*-adjuncts, it is important for our general point that there is no prohibition against *by*-modification with the *be*-passive (as already seen in (30a)). Consider the grammatical (34) (compare (31)).

(34) John was arrested [by being lured into a carefully prepared trap].

In (34), the *by*-adjunct can be understood as a possible *by*-MM of an arresting event, and so it is felicitous. It is therefore the particular content of the *by*-adjunct (along with the lexical semantics of the participle) that produces incompatibility with the *be*-passive in (31)–(33).

Adapting an observation made in prior work further supports the idea that *by*-adjuncts can modify different events in *get*- and *be*-passives. *By*-adjuncts combine best with manner-neutral complex events, because the *by*-adjunct specifies *how* an event produces an end state (Dowty 1979, Kearns 2003, Sæbø 2008). Thus, *by*-adjuncts are generally deviant with activities (35a), as comparison to events with end states makes clear (35b–c).

(35) Mary . . .
    a. ??/*pounded the metal [by hitting it with a tuba].
    b.   pounded the metal flat [by hitting it with a tuba].
    c.   flattened the metal [by hitting it with a tuba].

As expected, *be*-passive counterparts to (35) also display the contrast (though they are unwieldy for other reasons); compare (35a) with (36a), and (35b–c) with (36b–c).

(36) a. ??/*The metal was pounded [by being hit with a tuba].
     b.   The metal was pounded flat [by being hit with a tuba].
     c.   The metal was flattened [by being hit with a tuba].

This pattern is expected if *by* is associated with the event structure realized with the passive participle in (36).

   Interestingly, the *get*-passive corresponding to (36a) is also deviant.

(37) ??/*The metal got pounded [by being hit with a tuba].

We have already established in (36a) that *by* is not a natural modifier of activity *pound.* Following our earlier reasoning, the deviance of (37) stems from the fact that the modifier is also inappropriate for the *get* event: that is, being hit with a tuba is not a plausible factor in explaining how it came to pass that the metal was subjected to a pounding. Notably, *get pounded* can be modified with a *by*-adjunct if the *by*-adjunct has a reasonable *by*-DT interpretation, as in (38a). For this case, we imagine a scenario in which there are two piles: a pile of items to be pounded and a neutral pile. If the metal in question accidentally comes to be in the pound-flat pile, then (38a) is felicitous: the *by*-adjunct expresses how the metal came to be subjected to a pounding. Still following the same reasoning, the corresponding *be*-passive with *pound* remains deviant (compare (35a) and (36)), since being in the wrong pile is nonsensical as the means of the event of pounding (38b).

(38) a.   The metal got pounded [by being in the wrong pile].
     b. ??/*The metal was pounded [by being in the wrong pile].

   The *by*-examples discussed in this section are selected to highlight *get*/*be* differences: the lexical predicates and contents of the *by*-adjunct are directed toward this specific goal. In particular, the examples examined to this point show the *by*-adjuncts modifying the topmost event: that is, the participle event in *be*-passives, and the *get* event in *get*-passives. We will return to a related point in section 3.1.2. For now, we note that while *by*-adjuncts can clearly modify the *get* event, they can also be interpreted low in *get*-passives, with the participle event. This is clear from (39), where the *by*-adjunct does not specify a natural DT interpretation, but can be construed with the participle.

(39) The metal got . . .
     a. ??/*pounded by the workers [by being hit with a tuba].
     b.   pounded flat by the workers [by being hit with a tuba].
     c.   flattened by the workers [by being hit with a tuba].

   In sum, the contrasts produced by *by*-adjuncts derive from event-structural differences between *get*- and *be*-passives. With *be*-passives, *by*-adjuncts are interpreted as the manner or means by which the event associated with the passive participle unfolds; with the *get*-passives examined above, *by*-adjuncts are generally associated with the higher *get* event and are interpreted as expressing how it is that that event came to pass. Exactly why *by*-adjuncts do what they do is a complex matter; there is a large and rich literature on *by*-adjuncts that we cannot hope to do justice to here (see, e.g., Dowty 1979, Kearns 2003, Sæbø 2008 for representative discussion). For our purposes,

what is important is that *by*-adjuncts are able to modify an event in *get*-passives that is not present in *be*-passives, producing systematic differences of a type predicted by the analysis in section 2.

3.1.2 Further Diagnostics   The distribution of *by*-adjuncts provides evidence for an event in the *get*-passive that is absent in the *be*-passive. Looking beyond *by*, we now consider whether related contrasts may be detected with other modifiers (we thank reviewers for emphasizing the importance of this point). Though preliminary, the results of this section corroborate what is found with the *by*-adjuncts, in ways that could be extended in several directions.

The logic behind the observations that we bring together is the same in each case, despite individual complexities that arise with the different tests. The basic idea is to employ modifiers that are (or can most easily be) associated with the highest event in the clause they appear in. The expectation is that such modifiers will target aspectual(/Aktionsart) properties associated with the participle with *be*-passives (which will thus be the same as in the corresponding active); with *get*, on the other hand, these modifiers should interact with the *get* event, not the event associated with the participle.

The particular modifiers we focus on produce ambiguities with accomplishment predicates. When attached high, these modifiers can fail to produce the same ambiguity in *get*-passives that they do with *be*-passives and actives. This is because, we believe, the *get*-passive is not an accomplishment, even when the predicate that it embeds is.[10]

The attachment height of the modifier is crucial to this line of reasoning. If we are correct, both *be*- and *get*-passives contain the same eventive passive vP and attendant lower material. Thus, modifiers that are able to target the participial structure should exhibit the same behavior in both environments. We expect to find differences only in interactions with the highest eventuality. A complication arises from word order possibilities that interact with height of attachment. Many often-used diagnostics for Aktionsart—for example, the phrases *in an hour* and *for an hour*—are most natural postverbally. It is difficult to ensure that this type of postverbal adjunct attaches high, and not to the embedded passive vP, particularly given the (relatively) free ordering of adjuncts (e.g., *Mary got/was arrested (in an hour) by the police (in an hour)*). Consequently, we focus on adjuncts that are readily interpreted as attaching high.

A first test is *almost*-modification. In the context of accomplishments, *almost* produces an ambiguity between the onset of an event and attainment of the state produced (see McCawley 1971); compare ambiguous accomplishment-verb (40a) with unambiguous activity-verb (40b), which has only the 'onset' reading.

(40) a. The angry llama almost flattened the beautiful cardboard box.
          ⇒ almost-onset; almost-flat
     b. The angry llama almost kicked the beautiful cardboard box.
          ⇒ almost-onset

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[10] On this theme, see Reed 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Alexiadou 2012, and McIntyre 2012 for the suggestion that *get* is an achievement verb. For us, what is important is not that *get*-passives are interpreted specifically as achievements (we are neutral on this point); what matters is that they differ aspectually from their corresponding *be*-passives and actives.

Almost-modified *be*-passives show the same ambiguity; see (41a). However, the corresponding *get*-passive appears not to be ambiguous in the same way; see (41b).

> (41) a. The beautiful cardboard box was almost flattened by the angry llama.
>   ⇒ almost-onset, almost-flat
>   b. The beautiful cardboard box almost got flattened by the angry llama.
>   ⇒ almost-onset

That is, for *get*-passives the almost-onset reading is readily available, while the almost-state reading is either unavailable or, at the least, more difficult to access than with *be*-passives.[11]

This difference suggests that *be*-passives are interpreted in the same way as corresponding actives under *almost*-modification, while *get*-passives are not. The pattern makes sense if the highest event in the *get*-passive—that is, the event most easily modified by high-attached *almost*—is not itself an accomplishment. It should be noted that it is *get*-passives that lack the accomplishment interpretation, not all structures in which *get* is realized. When the complement of *get* is a gradable adjective, for example, the *almost* ambiguity is present; for example, in *Mary almost got rich/drunk/free of the trap* both almost-onset and almost-state readings are available. This is because in the AP example, the highest event *is* interpreted as a (complex) accomplishment (see section 3.2 for further comments). *Get*-passives like (41b), however, do not appear to be interpreted in this way, even when the participial component is itself an accomplishment predicate.[12]

The modifier *again* produces a similar effect. We start from the observation that *again* (even in its postverbal position) is ambiguous between a repetitive and a restitutive reading with accomplishments.

> (42) The robot workers kicked/flattened the metal sheet again.

With activity *kick*, *again*-modification indicates repetition of kicking events. With accomplishment *flatten*, *again*-modification has the event-repetition reading, but also has a restitutive reading in which the flat state is restored.

Turning to *be/get* differences, consider a scenario in which there are metal sheets that are manufactured perfectly flat, that is, without having undergone a flattening event. Then consider a situation in which the edges of such sheets curl up due to environmental conditions, and the utterance in (43).

> (43) The damaged sheets got/were flattened again by the robot workers.

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[11] The difference in relative word order between *almost* and *be/get* does not seem to be at issue here; *be*- and *get*-passives differ in the same way in the perfect.

  (i) a. This box has almost been flattened by llamas on several occasions.
       b. This box has almost got(ten) flattened by llamas on several occasions.

[12] McIntyre (2012) also examines *almost* in connection with the *get* event. As in the case of his use of *by*-adjuncts, his argument goes in another direction, concerning a possible thematic role for the surface subject of *get*-passives. On this, see section 4.

In (43), the restitutive reading of *flatten* is readily available with the *be*-passive; however, this reading is much more difficult, or unavailable, with *get* (repetitive *again* is, of course, available). Following the same reasoning outlined with *almost*, we suggest that that this is because in the *get*-passive, *again* is most easily associated with the higher *get* eventuality, which does not have a state associated with it.

A final diagnostic that produces this type of effect is *for X* temporal phrase modification. As noted in Dowty 1979 (and much subsequent work), *for*-modification produces ambiguity in verb phrases that contain states in addition to events, such as accomplishments: *for X* can specify either a time period during which multiple events take place (in (44), multiple openings) or the duration during which the target state produced by the event obtains (in (44), a time frame of the open state).

(44) The test robot opened the door [for three hours].
⇒ three hours of opening events; door maintained in open state for three hours

Passive counterparts of (44) are given in (45). The continuations in (45a–b) are designed to facilitate the repetitive action and state duration interpretations, respectively.

(45) The door got/was opened by the test robot (for three hours) . . .
    a. to test the new hinge system.
    b. to let the fumes out.

Though the readings can be subtle, the *be*-passive retains the ambiguity described for the active. In contrast, the state duration reading is more difficult to detect (or simply unavailable) with *get*. Once again, this pattern receives a natural explanation if the most natural attachment of *for X* adjunction is high (i.e., with the *get* event) and if the *get* event (unlike the lexical vP) lacks a target state.

In summary, three modifiers that are known to diagnose aspectual(/Aktionsart) distinctions exhibit a pattern in the two passive types that converges with our *by* diagnostic. As we noted earlier, these results are intended to be preliminary and to complement the (to our minds convincing) findings with *by*-adjuncts. As noted in the discussion of *by*-adjuncts, it is possible that some of the adjuncts considered immediately above may attach both high and low, in ways that are likely influenced by contextual factors and by speaker-specific coercion differences. Moreover, the complexities involved in judging these adjuncts in familiar uses—that is, with "simple" verb phrases—are well-known; and relatively speaking, their behavior in complex (multiverbal) event structures, such as *get*-passives, is understudied. Nonetheless, taken together with the *by*-adjunct, the differences are expected if *get* and *be* differ in event structure along the lines we have proposed.

3.2 Get *and Its Relation to the Participle*

In this section, we outline the interpretive relation between the two components of the *get*-passive—that is, *get* and its relation to the participial component. We take it that—at a minimum—*get* realizes structure that is interpreted as introducing an event that is distinct from the event associated with the participle. The first question, then, is how these events are related.

We will make use of a Process version of the semantics connecting the *get* event e_1 to the participial event e_2, relating them with the predicate End (Pietroski 2005, A. Williams 2015). As a first step, we note that the Process semantics is typically applied to the analysis of change-of-state verbs; the relevant part of the semantics for *The door opened* is illustrated in (46), with an opening event e that Ends in a state S.

(46) $\text{open}(e) \wedge \text{End}(e, S) \wedge \text{Theme}(\text{door}, e)$

The interpretation of (e.g.) *Mary got sick*, with a phrasal aP complement, can be handled similarly: the relation End relates an event e (associated with *get*) to the state S (associated with the aP complement) that it ends in. To be clear, here it is more natural to think of the state *sick* as identified with the state S associated with *get*; the event component is not further modified.[13]

(47) $\text{End}(e, S) \wedge \text{sick}(S) \wedge \text{Theme}(\text{mary}, e)$

A detailed examination of "simple" change-of-state predicates like *open* and complex predicates like *get sick* would likely reveal a number of other ways of connecting these interpretations.[14]

Our syntactic analysis of the *get*-passive treats it as an intransitive version of the *get*-causative; aside from Voice (and case) properties, all other components of the structures are the same. Exploiting this, we begin by examining aspects of the *get*/participle relation that are more easily observed in the *get*-causative.

Get-causatives involve (informally) an indirect type of causation. As can be seen in (48), the *get*-causative can be true in a number of different scenarios—here, scenarios that differ crucially in terms of how directly Mary brings about John's arrest.[15]

(48) Mary got John arrested by the police.[16]
    a. Mary (the mayor) ordered the police chief to arrest John.
    b. Mary called the police and conveyed information that induced them to arrest John.
    c. Mary happened to leave contraband and money on a table that John happened to be found near, with the result that the police arrested John.
    d. John looked out the window during the crucial step of his robbery, due to his having detected Mary on the street a block away, with the result that he was distracted in a way that culminated in his arrest.

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[13] So, (46) could in principle be modified so that *open* is predicated of the State eventuality in this way as well.

[14] For example, there are possible connections with the idea that Root meanings are accessible only in particular locality domains, like those proposed in Embick 2010; see Marantz 2013a. In *get aP* (e.g., *get sick*), the state is associated with a Root that appears in an aP where the Root meaning has been determined; on the other hand, a corresponding verbalized Root (e.g., *sicken*) would allow direct interactions between the Root meaning and the verbalizer. A related point that could be investigated further is why certain *get aP* combinations sound odd out of the blue—for example, ?*The window got open* (but cf. *They finally got the window open*).

[15] By way of contrast, other periphrastic causatives do not involve this degree of indirectness; for example, a *have*-causative—*Mary had John arrested by the police*—can be used in the context of (48a) (and possibly (48b)) but not (48c–d).

[16] There seems to be some variability in judgments; for example, a reviewer reports difficulty with the interpretation of *get* given in (48a), preferring *have*. Additional context appears to make the active involvement of Mary more salient: for example, *Mary got John arrested by the police [before putting herself up for the election]*.

While Mary is actively and intentionally interested in bringing about John's arrest in (48a–b) (though to different degrees), this is certainly not true for (48c–d); yet the *get*-causative is felicitous in all of these scenarios.

The indirectness of causation in *get*-causatives is reflected in the fact that the causative subject of *get* can be inanimate, or some abstract quality.

(49) a. [The faulty seals on the bags] got John arrested.
    b. [Susan's brilliant piece in the *Times*] got Mary elected.
    c. [John's annoying behavior] got everyone into trouble at the match.
    d. [The abstractness of her thinking] got Susan noticed by Mary.

The *get*-causative involves transitive *get* (i.e., Voice[+Ag]). This Voice head introduces an external argument whose interpretation will be represented with a relation *Causer*.[17]

The main question is how *get* is related to the participle, which is interpreted as an eventive passive. Our proposal is that the *get* event e_1 Ends in the participle event e_2, as shown in (50a) for (49a).

(50) a. ... Causer(seals,e_1) $\land$ End(e_1,e_2) $\land$ Arrest(e_2) $\land$ Patient(john,e_2)
    b. 'The faulty seals on the bags are the Causers of an event e_1 that ended in the event
       e_2 of John's arrest.'

Likewise with animate subjects: for example, in *Mary got John arrested by the police*, the semantics relating *get* to the participle says that Mary is the Causer of an event that ends in an event of John's arrest.

Given the syntactic analysis in section 2, the interpretation of a *get*-passive simply involves omitting the Causer from (50), yielding (51).

(51) a. John got arrested.
    b. ... End(e_1,e_2) $\land$ Arrest(e_2) $\land$ Patient(john,e_2)

That is, while the *get*-causative introduces both a higher event and a Causer on top of an eventive passive, the *get*-passive has only the eventuality-introducing part.

The approach pursued here takes seriously the view that parts of the interpretation of *get* are shared in different structural contexts (cf. Brownlow 2011, McIntyre 2012). However, the adjectival *get sick* and eventive *get arrested* complements differ. The former involves an event that ends in a state. The latter involves a *get* event e_1 that ends in the participle event e_2, as in (51). The intuition is that in each case, *get* is associated semantically with an event that is related by End to the eventuality that is introduced with *get*'s complement. On this view, the interpretive differences between the adjectival and participial structures arise from the differences in the eventualities (state vs. event) that are related by End. This point could be explored in a deeper investigation of how causation is represented, but goes beyond the concerns of this article.

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[17] We employ *Causer* rather than the more specific *Agent* for the reasons discussed in the text. As we will show later, it could just as well be represented as Causer(/Agent), since animate *get*-causative subjects can be interpreted as true Agents under certain circumstances.

3.3 Interim Summary

The approach we have just outlined to the event structure of *get* builds on the analysis developed in section 2, which takes *get* to introduce an event. There are two key components of this analysis. The first is that the *get*-passive has an event beyond that found with *be*-passives. The second is that the event in question has no asserted Causer(/Agent). While different choices can be made with respect to representation, it is these two points that are crucial to understanding the *get*-passive interpretation, as we will show in section 4.

Before we move on, there is one more aspect of the interpretation of *get*-passives still to be discussed. This concerns the status of *by*-phrase Agents in *get*-passives like *John got arrested by the police.*

(52) a. John was [arrested by the police].
     b. John got [arrested by the police].

The analysis developed in section 2 provides a straightforward treatment of the Agent of the event associated with the participle. If the participle in the *get*-passive is an eventive passive, then whatever analysis one adopts of the agentive interpretation of the *by*-phrase in (52a) can be extended to (52b) to produce (53), with the Agent related to the event named by the participle.

(53) . . . $\text{End}(e_1, e_2) \wedge \text{arrest}(e_2) \wedge \text{Patient}(\text{john}, e_2) \wedge \text{Agent}(\text{police}, e_2)$

That is, the agentive interpretation of the participle is straightforward on an account that builds the *get*-passive out of the eventive passive, as developed in section 2, but not on accounts that posit a stative passive participle.

This facet of agentivity is, of course, only part of the picture. One of the most widely discussed aspects of *get*-passives concerns apparent Agent-like properties for the surface subject. A central claim of this article is that *get*-passives show only the thematic relations in (53). This view contrasts with analyses in which *get*-passive surface subjects can sometimes receive an additional ("secondary") agentive thematic role beyond the one associated with the participle. The tension between these views is the focus of the next section.

4 Interpreting Surface Subjects in *Get*-Passives

It has often been observed that the surface subject (SS) of the *get*-passive is (potentially) understood as being actively involved in bringing about the event described by the participle, in a way that contrasts with the interpretation of the SS in corresponding *be*-passives (Lakoff 1971, Arce-Arenales, Axelrod, and Fox 1994, Huang 1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006, Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012, McIntyre 2013, Thompson and Scheepers 2013, Bruening and Tran 2015, among many others). For instance, many speakers report that, given the pair in (54), Kane may be interpreted as somehow responsible for the foul on himself in the *get*-passive (54a), but not in the *be* counterpart in (54b).

(54) a. Kane got fouled.
     b. Kane was fouled.

We agree with this intuition; it appears to be well-founded, although we believe it is more subtle than one would be led to think given its treatment in prior literature. Unpacking the nature of the intuition is a primary goal of this section.

The proposal that we develop and defend departs from previous work specifically with respect to how the judgment associated with (54a) is to be derived. An important line of prior work proposes that the effect in (54) requires an analysis in which the *get*-passive SS is associated with two thematic roles: an Agent role, by virtue of its being an external argument of *get*, which establishes the "responsibility" of the surface subject; and a second role that it receives from the participle (e.g., Patient or Theme). Approaches of this type are developed in different ways—and sometimes for different varieties of *get*-constructions—in Lasnik and Fiengo 1974, Huang 1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006, Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, McIntyre 2012, and Alexiadou 2012.

The implementation of a dual-role analysis requires control by the SS of a null embedded argument, or something that produces a similar effect, like binding of a special, obligatorily null reflexive. While the formal details and implications of dual-role analyses have not always been fully worked out, the basic idea is that *Kane got fouled* in (54a) can be interpreted as something like 'Kane got himself fouled'. For present purposes, we represent the item in question as PRO-Refl; see Brownlow 2011 and Reed 2011 for discussion of the special properties PRO-Refl would need to possess.[18]

(55) John$_i$ got arrested PRO-Refl$_i$ by the police.
     (*John* is interpreted as Agent of *get* and Patient of *arrest*.)

If the *get*-passive has (anything like) the argument structure in (55), then it differs thematically from the *be*-passive. Given the analysis developed above, the intuition illustrated in (54) and the conclusions we have drawn from it to produce (55) thus require careful examination.

We proceed in two steps. First, in section 4.1 we show that *get*-passive subjects are not thematic Agents, contra the dual-role analysis summarized in (55). In this discussion, we consider both general properties of Agents and the diagnostics most frequently adduced in support of a thematic analysis of the *get*-passive SS. We argue that only the raising analysis is possible for typical *get*-passives. There is no evidence that they also have a dual-role thematic structure.

Second, we turn to explaining the intuition reported for pairs like (54a–b). In section 4.2, we introduce the notion Responsible Party (RP) (drawing on literature on control), which, we argue, provides a new route to understanding the interpretive properties of the SS of *get*. An RP is identified pragmatically where certain parties or properties are contextually understood as responsible for an event occurring, or for bringing it about. We argue that an RP interpretation

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[18] One pressing question is how to restrict the distribution of this element to participles that are embedded under *get*, to prevent it from occurring in other environments that are otherwise similar. For example:

(i) a. Mary had herself/*Ø arrested by the police.
    b. John made himself/*Ø out to be the best candidate.

While we will not focus on this issue in the discussion in the main text, so as to concentrate on the broader claims about agentivity, this pair highlights a basic difficulty in implementing a dual-role analysis.

may arise as an implicature, distinguishing it from Agent role entailments. The main question is why an RP interpretation is more readily available for the SS with *get*-passives (54a) than *be*-passives (54b). We derive the contrast from the event-structural differences between the two passive types. In brief, the additional event associated with *get* produces an interpretation in which some entity besides the Agent of the embedded event is a salient RP. In contrast, in the *be*-passive the most natural interpretation identifies the RP with the Agent of the participle event.

4.1 Arguments against an Agentive Analysis of Get Subjects

Here, we demonstrate that the intuition that *get*- and *be*-passives can differ in SS interpretation (see (54)) does not require additional thematic roles (in the technical sense) in the *get*-passive. In defining this position, we probe the agentivity intuition on its own in section 4.1.1 and then reassess the diagnostics purported to provide evidence for an Agent role in section 4.1.2. Finally, we provide evidence in section 4.1.3 against the claim that *get*-passive SSs ever have an Agent role; this argues against the idea that *get*-passives are ambiguous between single-role and dual-role structures.

4.1.1 The Agent Intuition: Some Preliminary Considerations   The strongest approach positing *get*/*be*-passive thematic differences assigns an Agent role to the SS of the former, but not the latter. Several considerations suggest that this cannot be true of the *get*-passive SS across the board. After showing that the *get*-passive SS need not be interpreted as an Agent, we provide evidence suggesting that it is never interpreted in this way.

   The view that the SS in the *get*-passive is "doing something agentively" typically invokes an intuition that the SS is in some way responsible for what befalls them—by extension, that they brought the event about. We begin by observing that such interpretations are subject to contextual manipulation without too much effort (see also Lakoff 1971). For example, the interpretation can be canceled (56a). Moreover, (56b) shows that the *be*-passive is compatible with a following assertion that its Patient is somehow responsible for what happened to them, even though its SS does not bear an Agent role.

   (56) a. The pedestrian got hit by the car. The pedestrian was not at fault; the driver was.
         b. The pedestrian was hit by the car. The pedestrian was definitely at fault.

   While such examples prompt a range of complex questions about intentionality and related notions, given (56) the "responsibility" interpretation of the SS cannot be an asserted aspect of *get*-passive meaning. This is unexpected if "responsibility" is a facet of meaning of the thematic role (i.e., an aspect of the entailed participant role) assigned to an external argument of *get* (cf. (55)). Consider further in this light the *get*-passive in (57), in contrast to subject control *promise* or *want* in (58).

   (57) Completely unbeknownst to her, Mary got promoted at the meeting last week.

   (58) a. #Completely unbeknownst to her, Mary promised PRO to fix the printer.
         b. #Completely unbeknownst to her, Mary wants PRO$_i$ to be assigned t_i the Throckmorton account.

The example in (57) is unremarkable, which, to repeat, would be surprising if the responsibility associated with the SS derived from an asserted Agent thematic relation. By contrast, the control examples in (58), in which the SS uncontroversially bears a thematic relation to the embedding verb, are infelicitous. These examples are felicitous only if we coerce scenarios that (e.g.) involve lack of knowledge on the part of the SS—for example, regarding (58a), if Mary promises to fix device 427 at a meeting, not knowing that said device is the printer. Even in these contexts, the SS of the control verbs in (58a–b) is still interpreted agentively, again in contrast to (57).

Pursuing this reasoning further, we observe that a typical Agent is not compatible with an interpretation in which it does absolutely nothing. Once again, the SS of the *get*-passive does not behave like the SS of an agentive transitive or unergative.

(59) a.   Without doing absolutely anything, Mary got elected by a landslide.
    b. #Without doing absolutely anything, Mary punched John on the arm.
    c. #Without doing absolutely anything, Mary ran across the finish line.

So, to the extent that the *get*-passive SS appears to be "involved" in the action defined by the participle, it does not have properties of a typical Agent.

However, these initial observations should be considered in light of the earlier point concerning the indirectness of *get*-causatives. Consider (60).

(60) Completely unbeknownst to her, Mary got John arrested by the police last week.

Indirectness might provide a means of explaining the contrasts observed with the passive in (57) and with the control verbs in (58). It is conceivable that the SS of the *get*-passive is a Causer, one that is coreferential with an embedded PRO-Refl. However, due to the indirectness of the causation, the interpretation of the SS does not necessarily require active or intentional involvement in bringing about the event associated with the participle, thus producing the contrasts above.

It is consequently important to be precise about what a dual-role analysis predicts. Taken at face value, a PRO-Refl approach treats *get*-passives with a responsibility reading as equivalent in interpretation (and syntax) to *get*-causatives with overt reflexives.[19]

(61) a. Mary got (PRO-Refl) arrested by the police.   *Get*-passive
    b. Mary got herself arrested by the police.   *Get*-causative

If the contrasts identified in (57)–(60) are due to indirectness of causation, they should appear in *get*-causatives and *get*-passives alike. In particular, these two *get* structures should have essentially the same entailments concerning the properties of the SS.

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[19] We note that reflexive examples like *Mary got herself arrested* have at least one reading where Mary is not responsible for, or a causer of, her own arrest, but *is* affected by it: the interpretation is something like 'Mary only went and got herself arrested'. It appears the reflexive must be unstressed for this reading to be available, suggesting the reflexive could be treated as something similar to an ethical/affected dative; for various points of view on related datives, see Bosse, Bruening, and Yamada 2012 and Horn 2013. To the best of our knowledge, such readings have not been addressed in previous work on the *get*-passive.

However, this expectation is not borne out. This is clear first from the absence of contradiction under negation with the *get*-causative in (62a) vs. the presence of contradiction with the *get*-passive in (62b).

(62) a.   Mary didn't get herself arrested, but she got arrested all the same. *Get*-causative
     b. #Mary didn't get arrested, but she got arrested all the same.   *Get*-passive

Moreover, denial of involvement leads to contradiction with the causative (63a), but not with the passive (63b).

(63) a. #Mary got herself arrested by the police; she didn't (do anything to) get herself arrested though.   *Get*-causative
     b.   Mary got arrested by the police; she didn't (do anything to) get herself arrested though.   *Get*-passive

If the SS of the *get*-passive were a Causer (or Agent), along the lines of PRO-Refl analyses, it would be necessary to explain why the *get*-causative entails the *get*-passive, but the *get*-passive does not entail the *get*-causative in (62)–(63). On the other hand, the lack of entailment is expected if the SS in *get*-passives is not assigned a second role as an entailed semantic argument of *get*, as in raising analyses of the type developed here.[20]

Additional evidence that the *get*-passive is not a covert reflexive variant of the *get*-causative comes from contrasts in interactions with *by*-adjuncts (64).

(64) a. Mary got arrested (by the police) [by being too short].
     b. Mary got herself arrested (by the police) [by being too short].

Passive (64a) is felicitous in a situation in which (e.g.) Mary's shortness precluded her from seeing approaching detectives. This is not the interpretation of (64b), however, which requires an "agentive *be*" interpretation (∼ 'Mary got arrested by acting too short'; cf. *Mary got (herself) arrested by being too inquisitive*). Quite generally, differences of any kind with *by*-modifiers are unexpected on the dual-role analysis.

4.1.2 On Two Apparent Diagnostics of Agentivity   The prior literature frequently invokes two diagnostics as arguments for a thematic difference between the SSs of *get*- and *be*-passives.

The first is based on the claim that the SS in the *get*-passive can control the PRO of a reason/rationale clause, while the SS in the *be*-passive cannot (65a); instead, it is said that in the *be*-passive, there is a preference for control by the (implicit) Agent, a reading that is in turn dispreferred in the *get*-passive. Second, it has been claimed that the SS in the *get*-passive (but not the *be*-passive) can be modified by so-called Agent-oriented adverbs such as *deliberately* and *on purpose* (66) (e.g., Lakoff 1971, Lasnik and Fiengo 1974, Fox and Grodzinsky 1998, Huang

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[20] The dual-role analysis is also not possible for inanimate subjects (contra Huang 1999). This can be seen from the nonequivalency of the following pair:

(i) a. The new computers got damaged by the electrical surge.
    b. The new computers got themselves damaged by the electrical surge.

For related discussion of inanimate subjects, see also Brownlow 2011, Reed 2011, and Alexiadou 2012.

1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006, Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012, McIntyre 2013, Thompson and Scheepers 2013, Bruening and Tran 2015).

(65) a. Radicals must get/??be arrested [PRO to prove their machismo].
     b. Radicals must be/??get arrested [PRO to keep the Commies from overrunning the US].
        (adapted from Lakoff 1971:155)

(66) The pedestrian {deliberately/intentionally} got/*was hit {on purpose}.
     (adapted from Lakoff 1971:156)

In this section, we demonstrate that neither (65) nor (66) provides evidence for a different thematic status for the SS in *get*- and *be*-passives. Before we proceed, though, a note is in order about what we are arguing for and against. While we reject the conclusion that (65) and (66) are relevant to identifying thematic argument structure, we maintain that data of this type do demonstrate that the SSs in *get*- and *be*-passives exhibit complex interpretive contrasts that require explanation. After examining thematic properties here, we will demonstrate in section 4.2 that these interpretive contrasts derive from event-structural differences, in line with our general approach.

Starting with (65), *rationale clauses* (RCs) (also known as *reason clauses*) are adjuncts that provide an explanation for the fact or proposition expressed by their target (matrix) clause (for recent discussion, see A. Williams 2015, Green 2018). The RC in (67), for example, explains why it is that the fact expressed by the main clause was brought about: the *state of readiness* explains why it is that *filling the car* was undertaken.

(67) Mary filled the car with supplies [PRO to show everyone that she was ready].

RC adjuncts, as opposed to superficially similar modifiers such as Goal clauses, can include *in order to* (see Landau 2013, Green 2018, and references cited there).

The literature regularly claims that (65) provides evidence that the *get*-passive SS is an Agent of *get*. This claim is based on the following premise:

(68) *Premise:* RC PRO can only be controlled by certain grammatically represented Agent arguments.

If (68) were correct, the apparent contrast in (65) would constitute an argument that *get*- and *be*-passives differ thematically.

However, the literature on control has demonstrated on independent grounds that (68) does not correctly characterize the potential referent of RC PRO and that RC data are significantly more complex than (65)-type examples might indicate (see Reed 2011 for related discussion, but different conclusions). For one, the *be*-passive SS can control RC PRO, as has long been noted (69). If control of RC PRO depended on an Agent role, such examples should be ungrammatical; they are not.

(69) a. Mary$_i$ was arrested (by the police) [PRO$_i$ to impress her$_i$ radical friends].
        (based on Lakoff 1971:156)

   b. Mary$_i$ was vaccinated (by the doctor) [PRO$_i$ to protect herself/her$_i$ against rabies].
      (based on Wechsler 2005:187, (20a))

Second, control of RC PRO does not even require a syntactically represented argument, an observation that also has a long history.

(70) a. The shop window has a big sale sign in it [PRO to attract customers].
        (Farkas 1988:36)
     b. Grass is green [PRO to promote photosynthesis].
        (E. Williams 1985:310)
     c. Flamingoes are pink [PRO to attract the opposite sex].
        (Roeper 1987:299)
     d. Badgers have long claws [PRO to allow for rapid digging].
     e. The thermostat is on low [PRO to save money].

In (70), RC PRO can be understood as controlled by the fact expressed by the main clause itself (as in, e.g., (70b)) or by a party that is responsible for the relevant state of affairs obtaining (as in, e.g., (70e)); none of these predicates license agentivity syntacticosemantically.

   Turning to (66), a common idea is that adverbs such as *deliberately*, *intentionally*, and *on purpose* are grammatical with a *get*-passive SS, but not the SS of *be*-passives, from which it is concluded that the *get* SS is (or can be) an Agent (for relevant discussion, see Lasnik and Fiengo 1974, Huang 1999, Butler and Tsoulas 2006, Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012). The reasoning rests on a premise similar to (68), namely, that such adverbs require a grammatically represented Agent.

   This premise is again incorrect: these particular adverbs are not restricted to hosts that have an Agent thematic relation. First, these adverbs are possible in examples like *The shop window has a big sale sign in it deliberately/intentionally/on purpose* (see Farkas 1988, A. Williams 2015: 292), where there is no grammatically represented Agent. Moreover, it has long been observed that the relevant adverbs can be construed with the SS of the *be*-passive (Jackendoff 1972, Zubizarreta 1982, Roberts 1987, Farkas 1988). In (71), for example, it is perfectly reasonable to understand that Martin Luther King underwent an arrest deliberately, intentionally, or on purpose.

(71) MLK was {deliberately/intentionally} arrested last night {on purpose}.
     (based on Jackendoff 1972:83)

Since the SS in the *be*-passive in (71) is clearly not an Agent, the behavior of these adverbs in (66) does not force the conclusion that an Agent relation is assigned to the *get*-passive SS.[21]

   In summary, we conclude that these diagnostics do not provide evidence that an Agent thematic role is assigned to the subject of the *get*-passive.

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   [21] Bruening and Tran (2015) (and Bruening (2019); see also footnote 8) also conclude that adverbs like *deliberately* (etc.) do not diagnose an Agent role. They suggest that *deliberately* is sensitive to the relative height of the hierarchical position where an argument is generated. Specifically, the idea is that this type of adverb is grammatical with *get*-passives because the SS is generated as an external argument (one that receives no thematic role), but ungrammatical with *be*-passives, where the SS is a raised internal argument. On that view, examples like (71) are not expected.

4.1.3 Single vs. Dual-Role Analyses   If RC control or adverbs like *deliberately* (etc.) required control by a grammatically represented Agent, then some *get*-passives would require a dual-role analysis. As shown above, this premise is false; that is, these adjuncts do not provide evidence for a dual-role analysis for the *get*-passive.

What remains to be considered is whether or not *get*-passives sometimes have such a structure—that is, whether it can be shown that their SSs are ever assigned an Agent thematic role. It is in principle possible that *get*-passives are ambiguous, with both raising and dual-role structures. Although differing sometimes in focus, a view found in the previous literature takes exactly this line (Brownlow 2011, Orfitelli 2011, Reed 2011, Alexiadou 2012, Sigurðsson and Wood 2012). It is thus necessary to examine the possibility that *get*-passives in some cases involve a PRO-Refl structure, whose Agent external role produces the RP intuition.

On the dual-role analysis, the SS is associated with two thematic roles (one Agent role, by virtue of being an external argument of *get*, and one Patient(/Theme), associated with the participle). Thus, the *get* SS should test positively for diagnostics that identify Agent roles in some cases, in contrast to *be*; that is, if a diagnostic *requires* that the SS be interpreted as an Agent, then *get*-passives should allow this if they have a dual-role structure, whereas *be*-passives should not. Or, in another direction, if it can be established that the SS of *get*-passives never shows the properties of a true Agent, we will have clear evidence that these passives have only the single-role analysis.

With this goal in mind, instrumental *with*-PPs provide a clear diagnostic of grammatically represented agentivity (for early discussion, see Fillmore 1968). Modification with instrumental/manner *with*-phrases specifies how it is (i.e., with what) an Agent brings about an event. Such PPs are possible with passives but not unaccusatives.

(72) a.   The window was broken by Susan [with a large stick].
      b.   *The window broke [with a large stick].

Instrumental *with*-PPs very clearly identify SSs in reflexive *get*-causatives as Agents, as shown in (73).

(73) a.   Mary got herself chased by the dogs [with a T-bone steak].
      b.   Bill got himself kicked by the toddlers [with an annoying whistle].
      c.   Sally got herself hit by a car [with the new AutoDrive device].

Consider (73a), for instance. In the paraphrase of interest, Mary employs a T-bone steak in order to get herself chased by the dogs. This and other *with*-examples also may have an irrelevant possessive reading (i.e., for (73a), Mary or the dogs were in possession of a T-bone steak when Mary got herself chased). Other manipulations, such as fronting the *with*-clause, may help to highlight the relevant reading: for example, in (73c), in a scenario in which Sally is trying to get hit by a car, *[With the new AutoDrive device], Sally got herself hit by a car in a matter of minutes.*

If *get*-passives have a dual-role analysis in addition to a single-role raising structure, then they should be possible with the same range of interpretations identified in (73). The point of the dual-role analysis is, after all, to say that the SS of *get*-passives can be both an Agent of *get* and a Patient of the participle. Crucially, the PRO-Refl structure, with the corresponding Agent

interpretation of the subject, would be required for *with*-instrumentals, since *with* requires an Agent. However, the *get*-passive variants of (73) in (74) are deviant on the instrument reading.

(74) a. *Mary got chased by the dogs [with a T-bone steak].
    b. *Bill got kicked by the toddlers [with an annoying whistle].
    c. *Sally got hit by a car [with the new AutoDrive device].

The relevant reading for our purposes, in which the SS is an Agent in order to license the *with*-instrumental as it does in (73), is not available. Thus, there does not seem to be any positive evidence that the *get*-passive has a dual-role structure in addition to the raising one; if it did, the required agentive reading should produce or coerce grammatical interpretations for (74), but this does not happen.[22]

Taken together, the arguments presented above show that the basic interpretive facts for *get*-passives do not require an analysis in which the SS is assigned an Agent thematic role (see also Lakoff 1971 and Haegeman 1985 for this conclusion). Given the evidence examined immediately above, it is possible to form a stronger conclusion: that typical *get*-passives never have a dual-role structure in addition to the raising one. In light of this conclusion, the intuition that the SS in the different passives does not have quite the same interpretation thus requires a new, nonthematic approach.

4.2 Get-*Passive Event Structure and Responsible Parties*

We are now in a position to return to the responsibility reading that seems to arise with the SS of *get*-passives, apparently in contrast to that of *be*-passives. Here, we develop three points. First, we introduce the notion of *Responsible Party* (RP) and show that this is the entity that controls RC PRO. We argue that the Agent-like interpretation of SSs of *get*-passives is an RP reading, and that the RP interpretation that appears in the passive is pragmatic, not thematic.

Next, we argue that RP interpretations arise in systematically different ways in *get*-passives and *be*-passives as a result of their event-structural differences. The logic involves two parts. First, the *get*-passive includes the extra (Agentless) event, such that the RP in the *get*-passive can be responsible for the higher event, not the participial one. Second, the only available Agent role is associated with the more deeply embedded event, prompting the possibility that some other entity can be understood to be responsible for the complex *get*-event structure.

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[22] Connecting this discussion with section 3.1.2, we note that *with*-clauses are also useful in showing that the highest event differs in *get*- and *be*-passives. Alexiadou (2012:1085) observes the deviance of examples like *#John got killed with a gun* (judgment reported there). A difficulty with such examples is that the *with*-phrase might be able to attach both high with *get*, where it should be deviant, and low, with the participle, where it might be acceptable: for example, *Ronnie got poked with a stick by the annoying camper*.

With a related kind of *with*-phrase, fronting can be employed to force the *with*-phrase to have a high interpretation.

(i) a. [With a subtle twist of the chisel], the locked drawer was/??got popped open by the able thief.
    b. The frisbee landed at Mary's feet, and [with a flick of the wrist] it was/??got set into flight again.

Although the fronting induces its own complexities, the *get/be* contrast is clear for many speakers, and it makes sense if this kind of *with*-phrase must associate with the *get* event in (ia) but the participial event in (ib).

These *with*-phrases do not, strictly speaking, specify instruments; rather, they specify something more like the manner in which the event is effected. Intuitively, while it is sensible to modify the lexical predicate in such a way, this type of modification does not make sense with the *get* event (recall *by*-MM vs. *by*-DT in section 3).

Finally, to illustrate the merits of the RP-based approach, we examine and explain several *get/be* contrasts, both new and drawn from the literature, that have not previously received a unified analysis.

4.2.1 Responsible Parties and Rationale Clause Control   The idea that events have RPs is prominent in analyses of RC control (see Landau 2013, 2017, A. Williams 2015, Green 2018). It is traditionally observed that control of RC PRO involves (perhaps a special type of) nonobligatory control. Unlike with other kinds of nonobligatory control, determining possible controllers of RC PRO can involve identifying some notion of responsibility on the part of the controller (Farkas 1988, Landau 2000, 2013, A. Williams 2015, Green 2018).

Against this background, we adopt the working definition in (75).

(75)   A *Responsible Party* (RP) is an individual (fact, property) that is explanatorily responsible for bringing about a situation.

RPs are the controllers of PRO in RCs, as stated in (76), which replaces the falsified (68).

(76)   RC PRO is controlled by the RP of the clause that the RC modifies.

As discussed at length in A. Williams 2015, while identification of the controller of RC PRO is often *related* to thematic or grammatical notions like Agent or SS, *responsibility* must be kept independent of argument structure properties of the controller.

In a given main clause, there may be (at least) three possible controllers of RC PRO (see A. Williams 2015): an Agent (77a); an SS (77b); and, as already discussed, (the fact expressed by) the modified or "target" clause itself (e.g., in *Grass is green [PRO to promote photosynthesis]*). In addition to these three possibilities, RP controllers of RC PRO may be identified contextually (see below).

(77)   Mary$_i$ was arrested (by X$_j$) . . .
       a. [PRO$_j$ to prove a point to the opposition].
       b. [PRO$_i$ to impress her radical friends]. (cf. (69))

How thematic and grammatical properties play a role in determining RPs is a complex question. Of particular importance to our concerns, grammatically represented information plays a role in determining what is "by default" identified as the RP. Adapting and extending proposals by A. Williams (2015), in typical active transitives that do not have an RC, the RP is identified with the Agent (78a) by default. Similarly, the most natural interpretation identifies the Agent as the RP in the passive (78b).

(78)   a. Mary arrested John.   By default, Mary = RP
       b. John was arrested by Mary.   By default, Mary = RP

In both the active and the passive, the Agent is consequently a natural controller of RC PRO.

(79)   Mary$_i$ arrested John/John was arrested by Mary$_i$ [PRO to impress her$_i$ superiors].

While Agents are natural controllers of RC PRO, it is not the case that the control relation is automatic, or asserted in a way that cannot be canceled. Passives show particular flexibility with respect to possible RPs. The RP can be identified with the Agent, as in (80) (in this case, an implicit Agent), but Lasnik (1988) observes that even in the presence of an overt grammatical *by*-phrase (an overt Agent/Causer), it is possible to identify (what we are calling) the RP with a contextual entity, as in (81).

(80) The ship was sunk [PRO to deter the protestors].   Agent of sinking = RP

(81) The ship was sunk by a torpedo [PRO to prove a point].   Causer = torpedo
                                                                Whoever ordered the sinking = RP

The passive SS can also be interpreted as the RP, as in (82) (recall (71)). On the other hand, a direct object Theme/Patient cannot be the RP antecedent of RC PRO (83).

(82) John$_i$ was arrested by Mary [PRO$_i$ to impress his$_i$ radical friends].   Agent = Mary
                                                                                    John = RP

(83) Mary arrested John$_i$ [PRO*$_i$ to impress his radical friends].   John ≠ RP

In general, it appears that the set of possible RP PRO-controllers is typically more limited in actives where the SS is the Agent, so that identifying a distinct RP in such examples requires additional work, as in (84). This type of example involves what could be called an "author" reading (see E. Williams 1985 and Landau 2013 for anticausative and related cases): in (84), the RC PRO can be understood to be controlled by whoever is in charge of plotlines in the story in which John is a character.

(84) John sank the ship in Episode 2 [PRO to motivate the confrontation in Episode 8].
                                                                                    Agent = John
                                                                            Writer of the series = RP

In contrast to (84), when the SS is not the Agent, as is the case with passives like (82), the extra coercive work/special author interpretation is not required. Rather, the SS can be interpreted as an RP in ways that depend on the extent to which it makes sense lexicosemantically and contextually for it to be responsible for the occurrence of the event.

Two conclusions from this review will play an important role in understanding argument interpretation in *get*-passives. The first is that RPs control RC PRO. The second is that, while the RP may coincide with the Agent of the RC's target clause, especially in certain grammatical contexts, this is not always the case. The identification of a particular argument as the RP arises in interaction with agentivity, subjecthood, verb meaning, and world knowledge.

4.2.2 The Get-*Passive Surface Subject as a Possible Responsible Party*   As an example of the contrast in SS interpretation with *get/be*-passives, consider (85) (recall also (54)): speakers commonly report that with *get*, Kane may be responsible for his own injury, but with *be*, he cannot easily be interpreted as responsible.

(85) a. Kane got injured.
    b. Kane was injured.

In the previous section, we reviewed the observation that both grammatical and contextual factors are involved in identifying RPs. The view we will develop is that the *get/be* contrast in (85) derives from the fact that the SS of *get*-passives is more easily identified as an RP than the SS of *be*-passives. In addition, the RP interpretation is an implicature, not a thematic relation like Agent, Patient, and so on (i.e., the RP is not asserted or entailed). It follows from this kind of RP analysis (but not from the thematic analyses of *get*-passives already reviewed) that, while it is possible to identify a *get*-passive SS as the RP, this interpretation is not part of the assertion of the *get*-passive; thus, it may be canceled in context or may not arise for other reasons.

An initial point that supports an RP analysis is based on the *get*-passive examples in (86), in which Mary can be understood to be responsible for her own arrest. Her identification as the RP can be canceled explicitly, as in (86a–b); or, given context, the RP interpretation might be dispreferred for other reasons (86c).

(86) Mary got arrested by the police.
    a. Mary got arrested by the police; she didn't (do anything to) get herself arrested though.
    b. Despite not doing anything/deserving it in any way whatsoever, Mary got arrested by the police last week.
    c. Context: We are watching Mary standing on a corner, minding her own business.
      ⇒ Oh wow, did you see that, Mary just got arrested by the police.

The question that remains is why the RP interpretation is so readily identified with the *get*-passive SS, but not with the *be*-passive SS—or, more generally, how (and why) the passive types differ in terms of how they relate to RPs.

The different syntactic and event structures developed in this article for *get*- and *be*-passives provide a path toward such an explanation. Consider the relationship between event structure and RP identification in *be*-passives; with these, the event structure is that of the participle (i.e., that of the corresponding active). On simple assumptions, this might involve a representation like (87b).

(87) a. Mary was promoted by her project manager.
    b. . . . promote(e) ∧ Patient(mary,e) ∧ Agent(project manager,e)

In the *be*-passive, the event introduced by the participle is associated with an Agent. In the absence of further context, it is most reasonable, given lexical semantics and world knowledge, for the Agent of the passive event to be identified as the RP. The choice of verb in (87) is deliberate: it is extremely difficult (short of "author" or related readings) to identify a Patient of a promotion as the RP in (87). This situation contrasts with those in which the SS of the *be*-passive can be identified as the RP: for example, *Mary_i was arrested [PRO_i to impress her radical friends]*. This interpretation requires an appropriate verb meaning, as well as sufficient context to make it

plausible that the SS is responsible for the relevant event. From these observations, it should now be clear that in many of the examples we have discussed, it is the reason/rationale provided by the RC modifier itself that provides the relevant context for identifying a particular entity as the RP.

On the view we have developed, the *get*-passive involves an additional event relative to the *be*-passive. With this in mind, compare (88) with (87). As discussed in detail in section 3, the additional event (i) is distinct from the participial event, and (ii) does not have an Agent associated with it.

(88) a. Mary got promoted by her project manager.
b. ... $End(e_1,e_2) \wedge Promote(e_2) \wedge Patient(mary,e_2) \wedge Agent(project\ manager,e_2)$

The *get*-passive representation has different consequences for identifying RPs from the corresponding *be*-passive. In (88), the participle is associated with an Agent, just as it is in the *be*-passive in (87). However, the participial event (e_2) and its Agent are now embedded under the *get* event e_1; moreover, in the *get*-passive, the *get* event is in an End relation to e_2. The embedded Agent of e_2 is consequently not the Agent of the highest event in the *get*-passive. As a result, the event structure of this type of passive provides a linguistic context in which the embedded Agent is plausibly not the RP, in contrast to the *be*-passive. While the event e_1 in (88) lacks an entailed participant role that can be easily identified as the RP, (animate) SSs are in general easily identified as RPs (see section 4.2.1). Thus, an animate SS is a very natural candidate for an RP interpretation in the *get*-passive. The interpretation is then one in which the SS is responsible for the event e_1 that ends in e_2; that is, the SS is responsible for bringing about what happens to it.

While the *get*-passive structure establishes a linguistic context that regularly prompts identifying the RP with the SS, it is important that our analysis does not require that the SS of *get* be interpreted in this way, since identifying the SS as the RP arises pragmatically. The observation that an animate SS can be readily identified as a salient RP in the *get*-passive is certainly robust. However, in an out-of-the-blue situation, all else being equal speakers do not in fact typically judge the SS to be responsible for bringing about whatever happens to it; for example, they do not judge Mary to be responsible for bringing about her own arrest in (89).

(89) Mary got arrested by the police yesterday.

Instead, identifying the SS as an RP requires context, or facilitation by adjuncts like RCs. This contextual activation of the RP notion once again reinforces the idea that the interpretation is not thematic.

This analysis also makes sense of the fact that competition-for-use effects appear to play a role in facilitating identification of the *get*-passive SS as the RP. Many speakers seem to identify the "secondary agent" reading of the *get*-passive SS only when presented with a *be*-passive minimal pair—for example, *Mary was arrested by the police yesterday* alongside (89). Since a *be*-passive can typically be used in the same context as a *get*-passive, and since the RP is readily identified with the Agent in *be*-passives in the absence of qualifying context, a plausible pragmatic reason for choosing to use a *get*-passive may be to distance the passive Agent from being identified

as the RP; and it is precisely in such circumstances that the *get*-passive SS is so easily interpreted as responsible.

Finally, the behavior of inanimate SSs in *get*-passives further supports this line of reasoning, illustrating both the flexibility and scope of application of the notion of RP. Examples such as (90a) illustrate that an inanimate SS clearly cannot be intentionally responsible for what happens to it. For contrast, an animate subject is provided in (90b).

(90) a. The new dumpster got bumped into by a parking car yesterday.
b. Mary got bumped into by a parking car yesterday.

While Mary might be understood as trying to get bumped into in (90b), this is impossible for the inanimate dumpster in (90a).

On the other hand, in a scenario in which the dumpster has a property that facilitates the bumping into, the property itself can be understood as responsible for the overall event. Suppose, for example, that the new dumpster is larger than it should be for the space it occupies. Under these circumstances, if we said *As expected, the new dumpster got bumped into by a parking car yesterday*, this specific property of the dumpster is understood to be responsible for what happens to it. The effect can be made more salient for (90a) with a *by*-adjunct that specifies the relevant property.[23]

(91) The new dumpster got bumped into by a parking car yesterday [by PRO being too big for the space that it is in].

In summary, the event structure of the *get*-passive gives rise to an implicature that some argument besides the embedded Agent of e_2 may be responsible for the occurrence of the overall event e_1. The SS of *get* can then be interpreted as an RP of this event, in ways that account for intuitions related to agentivity that have been central to prior accounts, but not fully explained by them.

4.2.3 Surface Subject Responsible Party Interaction with Modifiers   It follows from our analysis that, while the *get*-passive SS is more readily interpreted as an RP than the SS of the *be*-passive, the latter is still a potential RP, given the right combination of lexical semantics and context (generally facilitated with an RC). Previously discussed examples have already illustrated this point. We have shown that in certain cases the SS of both *be* and *get* can be judged as the RP, as in *Mary$_i$ got/was arrested [PRO$_i$ to impress her radical friends]*. On our analysis, *get*- and *be*-passives can behave similarly in this case because the Patient argument can be relatively easily understood to be responsible for bringing about the event named by this kind of verb. Intuitively, there are things that an animate SS can do to induce being arrested. Thus, when the RC provides a context that facilitates an interpretation of the SS of a *be*-passive as the RP, we get an interpretation in which this argument controls RC PRO.

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[23] A question that therefore arises for the *animate* SS examples is whether it is the SS itself that is the RP, or a property of the SS. It seems both are possible. That is, in *Mary gets arrested to impress her friends*, Mary is the RP; but in *John gets arrested because he is too tall*, it is a property of John that is the RP.

The deliberate selection of verb types in which the *be*-passive SS can be understood as controlling RC PRO further confirms this reasoning.[24]

(92) a. Mary was photographed at the clinic [PRO to promote awareness of the situation].
  b. John was examined by the doctor [PRO to prove his fitness for the expedition].
  c. Susan was recorded at the rally [PRO to be able to study her material].
  d. Bill was served last [PRO to show his respect for the guests].
  e. Jane was interviewed first [PRO to demonstrate the proper technique].

Of course, the *get* counterparts of these examples allow SS control of RC PRO, and more straightforwardly so. While the *get*- and *be*-passives may be competing pragmatically here, both are in principle possible.

This is not the whole picture, however. Verbs whose undergoers cannot be interpreted as bringing about the participial event produce robust differences between the *get*- and *be*-passive SS, as (93) illustrates.[25]

(93) a. John got/?*was defeated in Round 2 (by Mary) [PRO to give Toby a chance to play].
  b. John got/?*was named best gardener (by the committee) [PRO to impress his parents].
  c. Mary got/?*was outperformed (by John) [PRO to convince people to bet against her].
  d. Mary got/?*was congratulated (by the students) [PRO to strengthen her negotiating position].
  e. John got/?*was noticed (by his boss) [PRO to get her to promote him].

The lexical semantics of these verbs is such that the SS cannot be coerced into being an RP of the event named by the participle. Construing the *be*-passive SS as controlling RC PRO is consequently infelicitous: in (93b), for example, it is infelicitous to think of the Patient-SS John (and not the Agent) as being responsible for a naming event, as would have to be the case with the *be*-passive. In contrast, the *get*-passive SS can be construed as the RP in (93), even if different levels of coercion might be required. For (93b), a natural understanding is that John (e.g.) did whatever was necessary to become top gardener. In the analysis we have developed, this is because it is possible to interpret John as being somehow responsible for an event that ends in a naming event, in the manner that our semantics for the *get*-passive specifies. As a result, given appropriate context, the SS can be interpreted as the RP for the *get* event, and thus can be interpreted as the RP for RC PRO. Along these lines, consider (94).

(94) Mary got/?*was selected at random [PRO to improve her cover].

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[24] Some speakers report that they find these examples marginal, suggesting that there is much to be investigated concerning what factors affect possible SS interpretations. See Green 2018 for related discussion.

[25] As with (92), some speakers report finding some of the examples in (93) difficult to interpret. This is to be expected for the *be* cases, for the reasons noted above. With *get*, difficulty in making the SS an RP seems to stem from difficulties in understanding the relevant actions as plausibly being under the control of the SS; see the discussion around (94).

When Mary is the SS of *get*, she can be understood as contriving to be "selected at random" in some way. Knowledge that random selection cannot be controlled by the Patient of the selection makes the most plausible interpretation one in which selection at random is a farce, such that Mary does control the process in some way. Though heavy coercion is required with *get*, it is important that this interpretation seems to be simply unavailable with *be*.

A separate but noteworthy consequence of our approach is that RPs must be possible with eventualities that do not have a grammatically represented Agent. One class of example that supports this conclusion was already introduced in section 4.1, namely, target clause control as in (70): for example, *The thermostat is on low [PRO to save money]* (70e). One might think, though, that the availability of target clause control is a peculiarity of copular or possessive sentences, given the type of examples normally discussed in this literature, and that such control is not generally an available interpretation.

The question at hand is thus whether RCs are available with unaccusatives. Our analysis treats the *get* component of the *get*-passive as a type of unaccusative, and one of the best-known effects associated with RCs is their apparent contrasting availability in unaccusatives and passives (Roeper 1987, Bhatt and Pancheva 2006).

(95) The boat was sunk/*sank [PRO to collect the insurance money].

Once again, however, what is exemplified in (95) is not a broad-stroke problem with the argument structure of the main clause verb, or with the demands of RC PRO. The problem is that the situation specified by the particular RC in (95) makes identifying the SS as the RP impossible and favors a reading that identifies the RP with the Agent of the sinking. These properties make the RC in (95) incompatible with an unaccusative. RCs that do not favor the Agent in this way are perfectly compatible with unaccusative verbs, as shown in (96). As discussed above for inanimate SSs of *get*-passives, in (96) the RC can plausibly associate with RPs that are contextual authors or designers, rather than specifically Agents.[26]

(96) a. The boat sank in Act 1 [PRO to move the queen to murder in Act 3].
         (adapted from E. Williams 1985:311)
      b. The new model of cork sinks [PRO to prevent surface clutter].
      c. CheezyBreezy melts quickly [PRO to reduce cooking time].
      d. The new laptops shut down automatically [PRO to prevent circuit damage].

Unaccusatives can thus have RPs, as expected from our analysis of RP effects with *get*-passives.

In summary, the event-structural difference between *get* and *be* affects the possibility of interpreting an SS as the RP in the two passive types, a contrast that is particularly salient under modification with RCs. With *be*-passives, the RP is most straightforwardly identified with the Agent of the passive participle event. Identifying the SS as the RP for such events is (relatively) restricted due to (i) interactions with the Agent of that event, as well as (ii) the meaning of the particular verb. Particular combinations of verbs and RC contents are therefore typically necessary for identifying the SS as the RP. With *get*-passives, on the other hand, RPs are associated with

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[26] See also A. Williams 2015 on passive/middle contrasts with RCs.

the higher *get* event. The *get* event (i) has no Agent and (ii) has no lexical semantic properties. Thus, the *get* event admits a different, wider range of RPs than corresponding lexical verbs in active and *be*-passive counterparts, explaining the different responsibility possibilities of SSs with *get*- vs. *be*-passives.

4.2.4 The Implicit Agent   The RP analysis also explains another type of *get*/*be* contrast that has figured prominently in previous literature. The relevant effect is illustrated in (97) (see also (65b)), where the judgment is that reported in Fox and Grodzinsky 1998:327.

(97)   The ship was/*got [sunk (implicit Agent$_i$)] [PRO$_i$ to collect the insurance money].

The apparent inability of the implicit argument of the *get*-passive to control RC PRO in (97) leads Fox and Grodzinsky (1998) to argue that the participle in *get*-passives is an adjectival passive. As reviewed in section 2, their idea is that adjectival passives lack an Agent, and for this reason, the *get*-passive (participle) does not provide a suitable controller of the RC.

We have already provided arguments against the adjectival analysis (section 2) and reviewed the reasons for rejecting the premise that RC control requires Agents (section 4.1). At the same time, there are clearly once again interpretive effects in (97) that are consistently reported and require explanation.

In our view, the effect that arises in (97) relates directly to the source of *get*/*be* contrasts with RCs described in section 4.2.3: RCs pattern differently in the two passive types because the RP is associated with the *get* event in *get*-passives but with the participle event in *be*-passives.

With *be*-passives, the event modified by the RC is the one associated with the participle. The default interpretation is one in which the RP for that event is the Agent, even if the Agent is implicit. In *get*-passives, on the other hand, RCs associate with the event introduced by *get.* The most salient interpretation is thus not one in which the RP is identified with the (embedded) participle Agent; if anything, using the *get*-passive instead of the *be*-passive may produce the implicature that the RP for the event is precisely not the embedded Agent, as noted earlier.

If this reasoning is correct, then the effect in (97) is the product of an implicature and, as such, should be cancelable. Various tests confirm that this is the case. One involves contrastive question/answer pairs.

(98)   Q: Did they sink the ship to scare the workers?
       A: No, the ship got sunk [PRO to collect the insurance money].

Here, a natural interpretation is that the perpetrators of the sinking are collecting the insurance money.

Manipulating the kind of event given by the matrix main verb, as in previous sections, also proves informative. There are perfectly good examples in which an embedded or implicit Agent is the most natural antecedent of RC PRO in a *get*-passive.

(99)   a. Mary got promoted [PRO to strengthen the leadership team in sales].
       b. The statues in Sector A got repaired early [PRO to impress the first customers].
       c. Mary got arrested [PRO to make a point to the dissidents].

There are a number of reasons *why* different manipulations make it easier to identify the embedded Agent as the RP in the *get*-passive, and we cannot address all of them. However, at least one effect of this type ties in with the discussion of RCs above. As noted earlier, RCs are possible with unaccusatives; recall (96b), for example, repeated here.

(100) The new model of cork sinks [PRO to prevent surface clutter].

In this and other unaccusative examples, an RP reading is more easily accessible for habituals than for one-off episodic interpretations; compare (100) with (101).

(101) ?(At the demo last week), the new cork sank [PRO to impress the dignitaries].

Interestingly, *get*-passives behave similarly; in (102) and (103), for instance, the (b) versions are easier to interpret with the relevant RP reading than their (a) counterparts. (Compare (102) with (97).)

(102) a. ?The boat got sunk [PRO to collect the insurance money].
     b. One boat gets sunk weekly [PRO to collect the insurance money].

(103) a. ?The boats got painted last week [PRO to impress the visitors].
     b. The boats get painted weekly [PRO to impress the visitors].

It is striking that *get*-passives and unaccusatives might be subject to similar aspectual effects, especially given our analysis of the syntax of *get* in *get*-passives. One path for future work to pursue, suggested to us by a reviewer, would be to explore the hypothesis that states, quite generally, stand in a different kind of relation to RCs than episodic events. In this light, compare the examples in (70), which all involve states, and the present tense generic examples in (96b–d), which describe properties of the subject; as the reviewer points out, these become unacceptable if changed to past tense with a specific time.

Whatever may come of more detailed investigation of these and other interpretive effects, it should be clear that the occasional difficulties in identifying the participle Agent as the RP in *get*-passives align with the predictions of the event-structural analysis that we have proposed.

4.3 Review of Main Points

The primary focus of this section is the intuition that the SS of *get*-passives is interpreted differently than that of corresponding *be*-passives. We believe that the intuition that *get* SSs are (sometimes) interpreted as responsible for bringing about what befalls them is valid. However, we have argued for a novel approach to the effect.

In section 4.1, we argued against the dual-role analysis of *get*-passive SSs. This part of the discussion shows that diagnostics that purport to provide evidence for a thematic surface subject—most notably, control of RCs—in fact point to a new, nonthematic pathway to understanding the interpretation of *get*-passive SSs. Building on this conclusion, in section 4.2 we showed how interpretive differences between *get*- and *be*-passives follow from our event-structural analysis, along with the independently motivated notion of Responsible Party.

5 Summary and Conclusions

The goal of this article has been to take a syntactic structure for the *get*-passive that is derived from components seen elsewhere—eventive *get* and an eventive passive participle—and to use this as a window on its interpretive properties. We have paid particular attention to the event structure of the *get*-passive, compared with that of the *be*-passive. Following the analysis of *get*-passive syntax in section 2, the main thrust of our arguments in sections 3 and 4 has been that while most prior work has probed the two passive types for thematic differences, our account (i) motivates an event-structural difference and (ii) shows how the intuitions about interpretive properties of arguments in *get*-passives are conditioned by this. As part of this discussion, we argued against the idea that there is a thematic difference between passive types—in particular, against the idea that typical *get*-passives have a dual-role structure in addition to a raising one.

The essential insight of the event-structural analysis is that the *get*-passive contains an event over and above what is found in corresponding *be*-passives; this is the structure realized with *get*. The *by*-adjuncts discussed in section 3 detect the meaning contributed by this structure. The behavior of other aspectual modifiers provides additional support for this view. Various directions could be taken in formally relating the *get* and eventive passive participle components. We set out a representation in which the *get* event ends in the event introduced by the participle. While this part of the analysis could be developed further in different ways, as could a number of questions it implicates about the types of causative relations that are found in grammar, the analysis captures the essential facts about the *get*-passive, and paves the way for more sustained investigation of both this passive's semantics and the behavior of structures in which *get* is realized more generally.

In section 4, we analyzed interpretive contrasts in passive types and connected them with event structure, without invoking thematic contrasts. Our discussion focused on intuitions and diagnostics frequently invoked as part of prior analyses of apparent *get*/*be*-passive differences. The most interesting of these concern rationale clauses. We argued that RC PRO is controlled by Responsible Parties. Key to this is the way in which possible RPs interact with grammatical representations. Our syntactic and event-structural analysis establishes a linguistic context in which *get*- and *be*-passives may systematically differ in terms of whether their SSs or implicit Agents are likely/possible RPs, thus accounting for the intuition that *get*-passive SSs are somehow responsible for what they undergo. In addition to its role in explaining a range of facts connected with *get*, the recognition of RPs and their interaction with linguistic structure could be fruitfully extended to a number of domains, most obviously to many passive-like structures (i.e., structures lacking external arguments) across different constructions and languages.

By way of general conclusion, one of the most important questions under investigation in theories of argument structure concerns the relative contribution of event-structural and thematic aspects of meaning in any given interpretation. The analysis developed here shows how an event-structural approach to the *get*-passive leads both to new insights about its composition and to explanations for a number of observations that are more satisfying than those provided by alternative approaches.

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