How to cause a passive state

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It is commonly assumed that adjectival passives in German are adjective-copula constructions. Yet, they must involve at least an implicit event and an implicit agent (or cause), given that they can combine with event-related modifiers, such as manner modifiers, instruments, and by-phrases ((1)).

(1)  
   a. Der Brief ist mit roter Tinte geschrieben.  
       the letter is with red ink written  
       ‘The letter is written with red ink.’
   b. Das Haar war schlampig gekämmt.  
       the hair was sloppily combed  
       ‘The hair was combed in a sloppy manner.’
   c. Die Zeichnung ist von einem Kind angefertigt.  
       the drawing is by a child produced  
       ‘The drawing was produced by a child.’

Different syntactic, semantic, and/or pragmatic proposals have been put forward to account for the licensing of event modification, such as the possibility of phrasal adjectivisation of VPs (e.g. Kratzer 1994), pragmatic licensing (e.g. Maienborn 2007), or event coercion and pragmatic enrichment (Gese 2010).

In this paper, I will provide an account of the semantics of adjectival passives, proposing that they involve reference to event kinds rather than tokens. Event modification will be argued to target this event kind, and it will be shown that this proposal captures particular restrictions we find in the availability of event modifiers with adjectival passives in general. Finally, given that it is often claimed that by-phrases only appear with verbal but not with adjectival passives, a view that is challenged by data like those in (1-c), I will take a closer look at by-phrases with adjectival passives and show how they are different from by-phrases with verbal passives.