Narrative Events

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Narrative Events

Tilmann Köppe

What is a narrative event? A narrative event is an event that is reported by means of a narrative. Although this answer is too simple not to be true, it is not the whole story. As is often noted in narratology and elsewhere, by making an event part of the content of a narrative, one "transforms" the event in a specific manner.[1] However, talk of "transformation" is imprecise here, and the purpose of this essay is to be more specific about what happens when an event becomes part of a narrative. I'll argue that by producing an intelligible narrative, speakers are subject to a specific norm that delimits the range of descriptions under which the events covered by the narrative may be identified. I'll start by introducing the notions of "event" and "narrative" that I'll be working with. Next, I will introduce and discuss the notion of a narrative event. Finally, I'll discuss some consequences of my proposal and point to the need for further research.

A brief caveat before I start: There is a growing body of research in narratology about events as part of narratives.[2] These studies are mostly concerned with shaping conceptual tools for the characterization

of events according to, for example, their contribution to the plot, their degree of conformity to a protagonist's goals, their ethical significance, or their surprisal value or emotional import for readers or listeners of the narrative. What I will do in this essay differs from this research in at least two respects. First, for narrative events, as I will understand the term, the features just mentioned are not *essential*: none of them *constitutes* a narrative event. Thus a narrative event may or may not possess, say, ethical significance; the possession of ethical significance, or the lack of it, does not matter to the question of whether something is a narrative event or not. This is different from the norm I will propose in this essay, for being subject to this norm is indeed a necessary condition for something to count as a narrative event. Second, events that can be fruitfully characterized along the lines of their surprisal value, ethical significance, emotional import, and so forth are typically part and parcel of rather complex literary narratives.[3] In contrast, what I will say about narrative events pertains to *all* narrative events that are part of even the simplest (and non-literary) narratives.[4]

Events and Narrative

In order to get my investigation off the ground, I need to establish what I mean by "event" and by "narrative."

The question "What is an event?" is a metaphysical one, and it is best answered by saying what it takes to individuate an event.[5] To say that an event occurs is to say that something happens. It takes three terms to make such a claim: one term designating some substance, another term designating what is true of that substance, and a third term designating the interval or point in time at which what is said about the substance is true.[6] Hence, the sentence "Yesterday, the apple fell from the tree" designates an event, and so does "At the same time, its fellow apples remained on the tree."

There are of course countless metaphysical controversies about the notion of an event, all of which need to be sidestepped here.[7] For the purpose of this essay, it is sufficient if we have some rough story about what events are and if we acknowledge that they can be identified by linguistic means.

Now let's turn to the notion of narrative. A narrative is a text that presents two (or more) events as temporally ordered and meaningfully connected.

This (very informal) definition entails some elements that I will take for granted, namely, the claims that narratives are texts, that they deal with two or more events, and that these events are presented as temporally ordered.[8] What I need to be more specific about is the claim that narratives present events as *meaningfully connected*. The term "meaningful connection" is my translation of Tim Henning's term "sinnhafte Verknüpfung," and in what follows I will give a brief summary of his account.[9]

According to Henning, there are several different kinds of meaningful connections between the events a narrative is about. Two especially important ones are *explanatory* and *teleological*.

Explanatory connections are established by providing explanations. Explanations are specific answers to why-questions. If I can answer the question "Why did event *E1* happen?" by pointing to another event, *E2*, I have established an explanatory connection between the two events. This is what many narratives do. (We'll come to an example in a minute.) Explanatory connections come in different varieties, the two most important being causal and intentional. To say that two events are causally connected of course means that one event caused the other. An intentional explanation traces an event back to some person's intentional states. For instance, the question "Why did Peter arrive late?" (*E1*) may be answered with reference to Peter's erroneous belief about the course dates at some earlier point (*E2*). We say that Peter arrived late because he had erroneous beliefs about the course dates; his beliefs (at some earlier point in time), in other words, explain (or at least play an important part in an explanation of) his failure to arrive on schedule.

Teleological connections between events obtain when the probability that one event occurs is influenced by the occurrence of an earlier one. This is a more precise way of saying that one event is either some kind of obstacle to another event or helps it occur. For instance, a cloudy sky heightens the probability of rain, and the fact that you know about my plight heightens the probability that you'll help me. This last example also indicates that several different meaningful connections may ob-

tain between two specific events. Since the question "Why did you help me?" can be (at least partially) answered by "Because you knew about my plight," we also have an instance of an explanatory connection between *E1* (your helping me at *T1*) and *E2* (your knowledge about my plight at *T2*). Moreover, if we assume that your knowledge about my plight counts among the causal factors of your helping me, we have yet another explanatory connection between the two.

Henning makes it clear that explanatory and teleological connections are not the only meaningful connections a narrative may establish between events.[10] For our purposes, however, it'll do to concentrate on them. So instead of looking for other types of connections, let's consider an example. Here's a fairly simple narrative:

N1

(1) The other day, my neighbor called to ask if he could borrow my car.
(2) I gave him the keys.
(3) The next day, he used my car to rob a bank.

We may, rather broadly, identify three events here, each of which is identified by a complete, single, and (for convenience) numbered sentence.

It is fairly easy to spot meaningful connections of the sorts just described in this narrative. For instance, there is an explanatory connection between the events identified by sentences (2) and (1).[11] I gave the car keys to my neighbor because he asked me to do so, so the event identified by sentence (2) is both causally and intentionally explained by the event identified by sentence (1). Sentences (1) and (2) also specify parts of the causal history of the event specified by sentence (3) and, arguably, what is said in both (1) and (2) heightens the probability of what is said in (3), so there are additional explanatory and teleological connections in the narrative.

Narrative Events

In this section I turn to the main task of this essay, namely, an explication of the notion of a narrative event.

Let's start with a simple observation. There are several ways to refer

to the event specified by means of sentence (1) in the narrative N1 above. Among these alternatives are:

(1.a) The other day, my neighbor talked to me on the phone.
(1.b) On May 15, a man asked me a question.
(1.c) The other day, I talked to Mr. Smith.
(1.d) Last Wednesday, I was asked a favor by my cousin's brother.

Let's assume that these are different linguistic means of referring to *the same event*.[12] In (1.a), I have exchanged the phrase "called to ask if he could borrow my car" for "talked to me on the phone," which yields a different, and less specific, way of identifying what happened. In (1.b), I have exchanged "the other day" for "on May 15," which renders the point in time in question more precise, while by exchanging the substance-term "my neighbor" for "a man" and the predicate-term "called to ask if he could borrow my car" for "asked me a question" I have provided much more imprecise descriptions of the very same event. Similar things happen with regard to (1.c) and (1.d). Again, what is important is that the alternatives constitute different ways of describing the same event.

Now, what happens if you exchange the initial event description (1) for one of these alternative descriptions of the same event in our N1? Obviously, for some of them, the narrative becomes hard to understand, and it may, to some at least, even feel incoherent. Consider what happens if we replace (1) with (1.a):

N2

(1.a) The other day, my neighbor talked to me on the phone.
(2) I gave him the keys.
(3) The next day, he used my car to rob a bank.

Why does N2 sound incoherent (or almost incoherent)? Obviously, we have a hard time seeing how the events reported by N2 are connected. Since N2 differs from N1 only with respect to the characterization of the first event, it seems natural to assume that event description (1.a) is responsible for the perceived incoherence of the narrative. My thesis, then, is that in (1.a) the event in question is not characterized in a suitable way. The event is, in other words, not identified under a proper description. And we can also be more precise as to what is im-

proper. The way the event is characterized does not link it to (any of) the other events. More precisely, there is no meaningful connection to other events apparent from the description under which the event is identified.[13]

So let's generalize this to:

SC

In a narrative, events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections.

As the word "must" indicates, SC establishes a *norm* for the descriptions under which the events a narrative represents are identified. It is a norm governing the production of intelligible (coherent, meaningful) narratives. In loose connection with the idiom established in speech act theory, we may also call it a *success condition* for intelligible narratives (hence the abbreviation SC). And since we may take narratives to be intelligible by default, we may as well drop the qualification "intelligible" and say that this norm marks a success condition for narratives.

As our last step (for now), let us represent this result terminologically by stipulating that an event is a *narrative event* only if its description complies with this norm. Compliance with this norm thus constitutes a necessary condition for something to count as a narrative event.[14]

In the remaining paragraphs of this section, I'll clarify an important detail of this proposal, namely, the idea that the description under which an event is identified *indicates* its meaningful connection, and after that I'll discuss some objections to the proposal as it stands.

Let's start with the clarification. I said that the event must be identified under a description that *indicates* its meaningful connection to another event (and I also used the alternative formulation that there may be no meaningful connection *apparent* from a description). What counts as indicating a meaningful connection to another event?

There are three things to be noticed here. First, note that the initial event descriptions given in sentences (1), (2), and (3) of N1 do not *explicitly* establish the meaningful connections that obtain. For instance, there is no explicit mentioning in sentence (1) or (2) that I handed the car keys to my neighbor *because* he asked me to do so; similarly, it is not explicitly stated that any of this facilitates the event described in sen-

tence (3) and hence constitutes a teleological connection. Accordingly, we need to acknowledge that there are *explicit* as well as *implicit* ways of indicating a meaningful connection in a narrative.

Second, there are several different ways to (explicitly or implicitly) indicate a particular meaningful connection. For instance, instead of

(1) The other day, my neighbor called to ask if he could borrow my car

I might have said

(1') The other day, my neighbor called to ask if he could borrow my Volvo.

This is a different way of describing the first event (let's assume so, anyway), and if sentence (1) suffices to indicate the requisite meaningful connection to another event (be it causal or intentional or otherwise), then so does (1').

Third, according to a common proposal, "to indicate" can be analyzed in terms of *being evidence for*. Hence an event description indicates a particular meaningful connection if and only if the event description is evidence that this connection obtains. This in turn means that the event description heightens the subjective probability that the meaningful connection between the events obtains.[15]

It is a difficult question that is beyond the scope of this essay just how we know (or think we know) that there is evidence for a meaningful connection between events. Knowing such things seems to be a matter of our world knowledge. There are, of course, differences between what different people know, and there can be disagreement about whether an event description indicates a meaningful connection to other events (i.e., about whether the respective evidential relations hold). But this need not worry us too much. It is to be expected that people do agree about a lot of central cases while they disagree about their margins.[16] And I would also suggest that disagreement about whether a meaningful connection obtains between events correlates with disagreement about the intelligibility of the narrative. The less evidence people find in a narrative for the obtaining of meaningful connections, the more they will be inclined to find the narrative unintelligible. This may be true to

the extent that people who do not see any meaningful connections between events are prone to deny that they are dealing with a narrative in the first place.[17]

In the next two subsections, I will discuss some objections to SC which will help to flesh out the account in more detail.

FIRST OBJECTION

A first objection concerns the worry that what I have said does not concern *all* the events covered by a narrative, and hence that it is simply not true that the success condition SC holds. This claim can be substantiated by way of a counterexample.[18] Suppose we add an event described by sentence (1-1) to our initial narrative (N1). This yields the following short narrative:

N3

(1) The other day, my neighbor called to ask if he could borrow my car.
(1-1) I had its side mirrors painted blue early that morning.
(2) I gave him the keys.
(3) The next day, he used my car to rob a bank.

Let us assume, if only for the sake of argument, that the event described by sentence (1-1) does not harbor any meaningful connections to the other events covered by N3.[19] Also, I take it that N3 is perfectly intelligible and, again, it is supposed to show that the description of some events in a narrative is not subject to SC.

There are two different ways to deal with this objection. The first way consists in accepting N3 as a counterexample to SC, while the second way consists in not doing so.

Let's start with the first. If we accept N3 as a counterexample to the claim that, in a narrative, events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections, then arguably SC is wrong. SC states that *all* the events covered by a narrative are subject to a particular norm, and N3 provides a counterexample to this claim.[20] In response to this, we may of course weaken SC so that it doesn't claim to be true for all the events covered by a narrative:

SC$_{weak}$
In a narrative, some events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections.

Sentence (1-1) of N3 does not provide a counterexample to SC$_{weak}$. However, weakening SC in this manner comes at a price. For one, SC$_{weak}$ may be felt to be considerably less interesting than SC. I suppose the reason for this is that, being a universally quantified sentence, SC states something about the *nature* of narrative events, whereas SC$_{weak}$ does not do so in a straightforward manner.[21] For another, we would certainly want to know why only some events must be described in a certain way, and how many exactly, and which ones. What I have said so far does not give us any clue as to how these questions can be answered.

Now let us turn to the second way of dealing with the objection that there are events whose description is not subject to SC. This way rejects N3 as a counterexample to SC. The reasoning in support of this strategy is twofold. First, we need to remember that SC is a success condition, and hence a *norm*, for intelligible narratives. A norm need not be invalid just because there are instances violating it.[22] Accordingly, we may claim that the norm expressed by SC is in force *despite* N3. In other words, N3 violates the norm expressed by SC, but this doesn't show that the norm is invalid.

Second, we may look for evidence that N3 violates the norm expressed by SC. And indeed, we may have the feeling that there is something wrong with N3. I think it needs to be conceded that N3 is not incoherent, but nevertheless sentence (1-1) may be taken to interrupt the narrative and hence may be regarded as a non-narrative element within, or an interpolation to, the narrative.[23] If these intuitions have any plausibility to them, they could point to the fact that we do have, and in this case rely on, some notion of narrative that is constituted *only* by narrative events. Call it the *narrow* notion of narrative (narrative$_{narrow}$). Now, N3 does not provide a counterexample to SC as applied to *this* notion of narrative. We may want to represent this clarification in our formulation of the success condition:

SC$_{narrow}$
In a narrative$_{narrow}$, events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections.

Note that if people think that (1-1) is some kind of interpolation to N3, then we do have some independent evidence for the existence of the narrow notion of narrative. This needs to be stressed, for otherwise one may feel that the narrow notion of narrative is an ad hoc invention in order to save SC. Moreover, we might observe that readers or listeners of the narrative containing sentence (1-1) feel some kind of pressure to detect meaningful connections between the event (1-1) describes and other events. This would also indicate that they share the narrow notion of narrative—and do accept our SC_{narrow}-norm for narratives. The SC_{narrow}-norm for narratives, in other words, could be said to play a role in explaining why people are prone to look for meaningful connections. And there is yet another thing to be noticed here. At the end of the introductory passage to this essay I already hinted at the distinction between a "literary" notion of narrative and a more "basic" (or narrow) notion of narrative. Indeed, N3 is an example of a slightly more elaborate, or perhaps more "literary," narrative that contains elements other than narrative events. But one can describe the *plot* of N3, and this will yield something like N1.[24] Thus N1 could be said to be a (somewhat abstract) description of the narrative events N3 is based on.

In what follows, then, I will assume that the narrow notion of narrative isn't a mere fiction, and it is this notion I have in mind when I use the term "narrative."

SECOND OBJECTION

Let us now turn to a second objection. Consider again the following version of our narrative:

N2

(1.a) The other day, my neighbor talked to me on the phone.
(2) I gave him the keys.
(3) The next day, he used my car to rob a bank.

I have claimed above that this narrative sounds incoherent (or almost incoherent) and that this is because of the event description given in sentence (1.a). But now suppose that we repair the incoherence not by changing the event description (1.a) but by amending sentence (2) instead:

N4

(1.a) The other day, my neighbor talked to me on the phone.

(2.a) It was because of this little talk that I gave him my car keys.

(3) The next day, he used my car to rob a bank.

N4, I take it, is perfectly intelligible. So we do not have to change sentence (1.a) in order to get an intelligible narrative. Accordingly, so the objection goes, it cannot be true that events in a narrative must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections. There are other ways of rendering a narrative intelligible—other than subjecting event descriptions to SC, that is.[25] Hence SC is false.

In response to this objection, we need to remind ourselves that a particular event can be identified by different linguistic means. In particular, it need not be identified by a single, complete sentence. In the case at hand (N4), we have two sentences (1.a) and (2.a) which only *conjointly* describe two events, namely, the conversation on the phone and the transfer of car keys that took place the next day. The first event thus is not fully described until its meaningful connection to other events is fully indicated, and this is what happens in sentence (2.a).

Does that mean that we have to change our success condition for intelligible narratives? No. SC states that in a narrative (in the narrow sense of the word), events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections. This is correct as it stands.

Summary

I have argued that the events covered by a narrative (in the narrow sense of the word) are identified under descriptions that comply with a norm set up by the narrative. This norm is a success condition for intelligible narratives. It states that in a narrative, events must be identified under descriptions that indicate their meaningful connections. SC does not contain any specifications as to either which meaningful connections will be suitable or what linguistic means may be employed for the event description. The specification of these things is a matter partly of the particular narrative in question and partly of the speaker's choices and linguistic abilities. SC thus delimits the range of possible descriptions of a narrative event, but it doesn't determine them.

Some Consequences

I started this essay by citing the common idea that a narrative transforms the constellation of events it is about. The success condition I have identified may serve as a partial elucidation of what this transformation involves. In particular, it is not the events that get (mysteriously) transformed once they are part of a narrative; rather, the narrative sets up a norm to which descriptions of the events must conform.

I think, however, that what I have said in this essay far from establishes the truth of my proposal. More needs to be done in order to substantiate my claims. In particular, this holds true for the following reasons.

First, it is generally difficult to assess whether a particular norm is in force or not. In my proposal I made reference to the intuition that certain narratives are perceived as incoherent, and I have explained this incoherence with reference to a norm that is violated. In general, reference to a norm may serve to explain the way people act, or the fact that they act in a coordinate way; and it explains that there is right or wrong with regard to certain acts and choices. But, obviously, whether or not people perceive certain stretches of discourse as coherent or not (i.e., right or wrong with respect to the standard of coherence) is, first and foremost, an empirical question. It needs to be tested.

Second, there may be different explanations at hand for the perceived incoherence of a stretch of discourse. For instance, N2 may be thought to be incoherent simply because "the keys" in sentence (2) does not have a previously established discourse referent (which is why we would not expect the definite article). There are, in other words, well-established rules on how to introduce a new discourse referent in a narrative, and one may try to explain the incoherence I have detected with reference to such rules. Maybe some of these alternative explanations are simply better than the one I have provided.[26]

Third, one needs to come up with further examples of narratives in order to check the formulation of the success condition proposed here. Maybe things are much more complicated, for instance, because the success condition allows for certain exceptions in certain cases, or because it interacts with other rules (possibly of a higher or lower order), and so forth.

Fourth, I have jumped rather quickly to the assumption that what we are dealing with is a *success condition* for intelligible narratives. I have seen no need to drop this assumption in the face of certain counterexamples, but perhaps the attempt to find a success condition that governs how events in a narrative may or may not be described is misguided from the beginning. Maybe in the end all we can prove are empirical generalizations, that is, statements to the effect that, as a matter of fact, (some of the) events reported in a narrative do get described in a particular way. The substantiation of this claim, of course, requires backup too, and in this case it may be produced by analyzing larger corpora of narrative texts.

All in all, then, there is much left to be done.[27]

Notes

1. Thus, John Gibson claims that "a story is *transformed* by the narrative that recounts it" (2011: 72, his emphasis). By "story" Gibson means "what a narrative relates," i.e., a "constellation of events" (72). See also Smuts 2009: 6 for an introduction of this terminology.
2. For a recent survey of the studies I have in mind, see Hühn 2009.
3. See Lamarque 2004 for a similar line of reasoning.
4. It is of course an interesting question how the "basic" notion of narrative to be introduced in the next section and the notion of a complex "literary" narrative hang together. Often, a basic narrative can be attained by giving a somewhat abstract description of certain aspects of a complex literary narrative. Thus, a basic narrative can be thought of as constituting the *plot* of a complex literary one; see Nehamas 1983. I'll give a very brief example of this in my second response to the first objection raised against my proposal; see note 24 below.
5. To individuate roughly means to distinguish as an individual object from other objects. One needs to individuate entities in order to decide whether two entities are identical, or in order to count them.
6. A substance, in common philosophical parlance, is what can exist on its own and have properties. Thus, an apple is a substance, and it can have the property of being red, but redness is not a substance for it cannot exist without a carrier.
7. See Casati and Varzi 2010 for some discussion. A brief but insightful discussion of the notion of an event can be found in Henning 2009: 174-178. I do not consider the common narratological explanation of an event as involving a "change of state" (see, e.g., Schmid 2008: 12) particularly helpful. First, the notion of a change of state doesn't seem to be any more basic than the notion of an event; accordingly, one has difficulties explaining the notion of a change of state with-

out making use of the notion of an event—arguably, there is no change of state without an event taking place (see Koch 2012: 13). Second, according to the notion of event adopted here, there are "static" events that arguably do not involve any changes of state (see also Prince 1982: 62; Herman 2002: 39).

8. It seems to me that they are elements of most definitions of "narrative." For an elaborate defense, see Henning 2009: part II.
9. See Henning 2009: 183–90. Henning's definition of "narrative" is much more detailed, though. My account simplifies matters quite a bit, although not fatally so (or so I hope).
10. See also Velleman 2003 and Barwell 2009.
11. Meaningful connection is a symmetric relation, so whenever some event E*1* is meaningfully connected to another event E2, then E2 is meaningfully connected to E*1*.
12. Some philosophers prefer to talk of different events that involve the same substances and take place at the same time and place, though. See Goldman 1970 for discussion and a defense of this approach to the individuation of events.
13. There are, of course, connections other than "meaningful connections" in the narrative. For instance, all three sentences share the same discourse referents, which is indicated by the co-referring terms "me" and "I"" (and "my neighbor" and "he"). Apparently, however, these are not sufficient for creating a coherent *narrative* (although, arguably, they suffice to create a coherent *text*, but that of course depends on the definition of "text" involved). Note also that my diagnosis that (1.a) is responsible for the perceived incoherence of N2 seems to depend on the availability of N1 as a contrasting (and coherent) narrative. Otherwise—without N1 as contrast, that is—one might draw quite different conclusions concerning the incoherence of N2. In particular, it may be thought that the definite article ("the") in (2) is inappropriate, for at this point in the narrative there is no discourse referent available. I will come back to this observation à propos my defense against the second objection to my proposal.
14. Note that is meant to be nothing but a terminological point, clarifying the way I will use the term "narrative event" in what follows.
15. See, e.g., Mellor 2005: 79–89. Strictly speaking, evidential relations hold between facts, or propositions. Hence (the fact) that my car is parked on the street in front of my house indicates (the fact) that I'm at home. But event descriptions are not facts. So, the claim that there is an evidential relation between an event description and a particular meaningful connection should be taken to mean that the event description is about a fact (an event under a particular description) which in turn is evidence for another fact (the meaningful connection to another event under a description).
16. This is an empirical prediction which of course needs to be tested.
17. Some people may find N2 sufficiently intelligible to count it as a narrative. This might be because they assume that there *has* to be a suitable meaningful con-

nection indicated by (1.a), and hence they think that there is some evidence for a meaningful connection. Still, I find it likely that these people, when also confronted with N1, would *prefer* the latter in terms of intelligibility, and this may be due to the fact that it provides stronger evidence for a meaningful connection.

18. Strictly speaking, a counterexample cannot demonstrate that SC is wrong, for SC expresses a norm, and one cannot normally show that a norm is not in force by producing an instance that violates it. (Think of the norms governing the traffic in most countries: A driver who doesn't stop at a red light doesn't prove that it's not the case that one must stop at red lights.) However, we may argue that if it were the case that SC holds, we would see this somehow reflected in the data. Hence the existence of counterexamples is at least evidence against the obtaining of the norm (I'll come back to this in a minute).
19. We might of course easily *invent* evidence for any kind of meaningful connection between the event described by (1–1) and other events described by N3. Let's, if only for the sake of argument, agree not to do so. See also note 17 above.
20. Note that this way of dealing with the objection does not entail that sentence (1–1) is a counterexample to our partial analysis of "narrative event." The notion "narrative event" has been stipulated by me, so any event that does not fulfill the necessary condition stated does not count as a narrative event *by definition*. However, as I will argue in a minute, sentence (1–1) could be said to be a counterexample to a notion of narrative which has it that a narrative consists *exclusively* of narrative events.
21. Talk about the "nature" of narrative events should be taken in a metaphysically innocuous sense as merely involving the modal claim that narrative events *necessarily* have the feature in question.
22. However, if there are *many* instances showing that it doesn't seem to matter whether a particular norm is met or not, then this may be evidence that there is no such norm in the first place.
23. What counts as an interpolation? A possible answer is that a sentence is an interpolation if it does not comply with the SC-norm set up by the narrative.
24. For this notion of plot, see, e.g., Nehamas 1983. What I am saying here is also similar to Chatman's distinction between "satellite events" and "kernel events" in a narrative, where the latter constitute the plot of the narrative (or, in my parlance, a narrative in the narrow sense which can be abstracted from the text); see Chatman 1978: 53–54; see also Smuts 2009: 9; Bortolussi and Dixon 2003: 109–10.
25. Note that declaring (1.a) an interpolation to, and hence no part of, the narrative does not seem to be an option here.
26. Ultimately, one should ask how SC fits into a broader Gricean picture of rational, rule-governed communication. (Thanks to Tobias Klauk for this suggestion.)

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