

important differences. These, however, cannot be located by the devices of traditional grammar, which will yield the same description for the parallel phrases in question. Of course, one can paraphrase the difference and say, for instance, that the delivery of John's speech took place yesterday, but the content of the speech was inconsistent. The trouble is that such paraphrases are usually offered *ad hoc*, following the speaker's linguistic intuition, which, in really difficult cases, may either fail or mislead. The question then arises whether it might be possible to systematize this procedure by finding standard and uniform sets of paraphrases for each opaque grammatical construction. It turns out that transformational grammar not only answers this need but goes beyond it both in technique and scope.

5.2. If one asks the question, as Austin and Strawson do, what are facts, events, situations, states of affairs, and so on, the sensible way to start looking for an answer is to mention some particular instances that can be so qualified. The list thus obtained will show an interesting regularity. Most items on the list, if not all, will consist of a noun phrase containing a verb derivative, with or without its subject, object, or other complement. In technical terms, we will end up with a list of nominalized sentences. Austin's examples are no exceptions: *the collapse of the Germans*, and *the cat's having mange*. To these I have added *John's speech* and *John's death*. To indicate the wide variety of forms this construction can take, and the various ways in which it can occur, I give the following short list of sentences containing nominalizations:

I know *that John died*.

*His death* surprised me.

*The selection of the jury* took up the afternoon.

I deny *ever having seen her*.

*How he did it* is a mystery.

*John's being able to walk* is the result of *an operation*.

It is better *to give* than *to receive*.

I like *John's cooking*.

These few examples are enough to show, first of all, the great frequency of such constructions in every sort of discourse. Accordingly, the grammar of nominalizations is a centrally important part of linguistic theory. The reason for this frequency of occurrence is easy to see: the device of nominalization transforms a sentence into a noun phrase, which can then be inserted into another sentence; it is a means of packing a sentence into a bundle that fits into other sentences. In these terms the distinction between the nominalized sentence (italicized in the examples) and the host, or "container," sentence becomes clear.<sup>3</sup>

5.3. When nominalizations are regarded in this way, the next questions to be asked follow naturally: what are the ways of transforming a sentence into a noun phrase and what, if any, are the restrictions governing the insertion of the nominalized sentence into the host sentence. We shall see that these two points are not unrelated; container sentences are selective hosts: open to a sentence nominalized in one way, they may refuse the same sentence when nominalized in another way. Even if we confine our attention to the forms relevant to our present purpose, we can easily find some illustrations. Consider the container

. . . surprised me.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of nominalizations see R. B. Lees, *The Grammar of English Nominalizations*; Z. Vendler, *Adjectives and Nominalizations*.