

## The Relationship between (In)Alienable Possession and Deverbal Nominalizers in Hungarian<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

I. This talk is primarily concerned with such Hungarian [Nominative + *-j-* +A] possessive forms relative to which the same stem has an alternative (morphologically “shorter”) possessive form. Such possessive forms are claimed to express alienable possession (see recently den Dikken 2015). We argue that Hungarian deverbal nominals—and especially the groups of T-nouns, defined in III below—are relevant to this claim, and corroborate it in a certain sense.

II. In Hungarian there are some nouns which have two different stems in the possessive paradigm: *gyapja* ‘wool.Poss.3Sg’, for instance, is an inflected version of *gyapjú* ‘wool’, and it has an inalienable interpretation since the wool belongs to a sheep. If we emphasize that the wool belongs to someone else, for instance, a shepherd, we use an alternative inflected form: *gyapjúja* ‘wool.Poss.3Sg’; this reading relies on the so-called alienable interpretation (Kiefer 1985, Laczkó 2009, den Dikken 2015). In a similar fashion, the noun *ablak* ‘window’ also has an inalienable and an alienable possessive form: *ablak-a* (that of a house) and *ablak-j-a* (that of a distributor).

III. There is a parallelism between the results of a potential eventive T-nominalization (producing ‘<sub>TEV</sub>-nouns’) and the complex-event denoting ÁS-nominalization (1a), on the one hand, and there is a “complementary distribution” between those of a potential Theme denoting T-nominalization (producing such ‘<sub>TH</sub>-nouns’ as the one presented in (1c)) and the “active key participant” denoting Ó-nominalization (1b), on the other. The possibility for the latter relationship can be raised on the basis of the following analogy. The suffix *-Ó* is primarily known as the present (or continuous / simultaneous / active) participial derivational suffix in Hungarian grammar but it also functions as an “immediate” deverbal nominalizer (Laczkó 2000). The suffix *-(Vt)t* can be regarded as its supplement on the basis of its functioning as the past (or perfect / anterior / passive) participial derivational suffix in Hungarian. It is not surprising, thus, that *-(Vt)t* is capable of deriving such noun phrases as the one demonstrated in (1c) below, which denotes the “passive key participant”, namely the Theme, of the input complex event.

- (1) A potential system of ÁS-, Ó-, T- and HATNÉK-nominalization in Hungarian
- Amerika*<sub>Theme</sub> <sup>(?)</sup>*fel-fedez-t-é-vel* / *fel-fedez-és-é-vel* új korszak kezdődött.  
*America* *up-cover-T-Poss.3Sg-Ins* / *up-cover-Ás-Poss.3Sg-Ins* new age begin.Past.3Sg  
 ‘With America discovered, a new age has begun.’
  - Péter volt *Dóri*<sub>Theme</sub> *fel-fedez-ő-je*.  
*Péter* be.Past.3Sg *Dóri* *up-cover-ó-Poss.3Sg*  
 ‘Péter was the person who discovered Dóri.’
  - Dóri Péter*<sub>Agent</sub> *fel-fedez-ett-je* volt.  
*Dóri Péter* *up-cover-T-Poss.3Sg* be.Past.3Sg  
 ‘It was Dóri who was discovered by Péter.’
  - Ili-nek*<sub>Agent</sub> *dolgoz-hatnék-ja* van.  
*Ili-Dat* *work-HATNÉK-Poss.3Pl* be.3Sg  
 ‘Ili has the urge to work.’

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IV. Let us now return to den Dikken’s (2015:138) claim on the potential morphemic status of *-j-* within the possessedness suffix *-(j)A* in Hungarian nouns which (happen to) have two possessed forms: “...Hungarian makes a morphosemantic distinction between alienable and inalienable possession—a distinction that fits in with the linguistic universal ... [proposed by Haspelmath (2008)], which says that, in languages that distinguish morphologically between the two, alienably possessed DPs are morphologically richer than inalienably possessed ones...”

We observed (see (1a,c) above) that if the third-person possessed form of a  $T_{EV}$ -noun is different from that of its  $T_{TH}$ -noun counterpart, the additional *-j-* appears with the  $T_{TH}$ -noun, where the possessor inevitably corresponds to the input Agent, and never with the  $T_{EV}$ -noun, where the possessor primarily corresponds to the input Theme (or, “at most”, to a non-prototypical Agent who can be regarded as [+affected] in Dowty’s (1991) spirit in the absence of an input object). The Agent is held to stand in a non-intrinsic relationship with the verb (that corresponds to the output possessed noun), in contrast to the intrinsic relationship between verbs and their Themes (Marantz 1984, Kratzer 1996). The appearance of the additional *-j-*, thus, is associated with the less intrinsic semantic relationship, in harmony with den Dikken’s (2015) thesis.

V. As for other types of deverbal nominalization, all  $\acute{O}_{AG}$ -noun forms with a third-person possessor (1b) contain the *-jA* allomorph of the possessedness suffix *-(j)A* in spite of the fact that this possessor corresponds to the input Theme. This fact, at first glance, seems to serve as a counterexample to den Dikken’s (2015) thesis. That is not the case, however. In these nouns, the appearance of *-j-* is motivated exclusively phonetically: only the *-jA* allomorph of the possessedness suffix *-(j)A* can be attached to nouns ending in a vowel, and  $\acute{O}$ -nouns *per definitionem* end in a vowel. The *-j-* in question, thus, in the absence of alternatives without a *-j-*, does not have the aforementioned “morphemic status” responsible for the alienable interpretation according to den Dikken (2015). HATNÉK-nouns, illustrated in (1d), however, can be characterized by the appearance of *-j-*, in total harmony with the fact that the possessor of a HATNÉK-noun corresponds to the Agent of the verbal derivational basis (and not the Theme).

## 2. Inalienable and alienable possession in Hungarian: two kinds of meaning ~ three competing variants ~ four groups of nouns

- (1) ● Inalienable/Alienable forms of the possessed noun: I. Basic data (*-j-* insertion if possible)
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a. a ház ablak-(*j)a<br>the house window-Poss.3Sg<br>'the window of the house'  | a'. a világ legjobb ablak- <sup>??</sup> (j)a<br>the world best window-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's best window'                                      |
| b. Ili talp-(*j)a<br>Ili sole-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's sole'  | b'. a világ legbűdösebb talp- <sup>?</sup> (j)a<br>the world most_smelly sole-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's most smelly sole'                          |
| c. a németek császár-(*j)a<br>the German.Pl kaiser-Poss.3Sg<br>'the Germans' kaiser'  | c'. minden idők legifjabb császár- <sup>(?)</sup> (j)a<br>all time.Pl youngest kaiser-Poss.3Sg<br>'the youngest kaiser of all time'               |
| d. az egyetem bölcsészkar-(*j)a<br>the university faculty_of_humanities-Poss.3Sg<br>'the faculty of humanities of the university' | d'. a világ legjobb bölcsészkar- <sup>(?)</sup> (j)a<br>the world best faculty_of_humanities-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's best faculty of humanities' |
| e. Ili kar-*(j)a<br>Ili arm-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's arm'   | e'. a világ legerősebb kar-*(j)a<br>the world strongest arm-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's strongest arm'   |
| f. az oroszok cár-*(j)a<br>the Russian.Pl tzar-Poss.3Sg<br>'the tzar of Russians'   | f'. minden idők legifjabb cár-*(j)a<br>all time.Pl youngest tzar-Poss.3Sg<br>'the youngest tzar of all time'                                      |
- (2) ● Inalienable/Alienable forms of the possessed noun: II. One form
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a. Ili vesé-*(j)e<br>Ili kidney-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's kidney' | a'. a világ legnagyobb vesé-*(j)e<br>the world biggest kidney-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's biggest kidney' |
|--|--|

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| b. Ili boká-*( <sup>∑</sup> j)a<br>Ili ankle-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's ankle'                       | b'. a világ legszebb boká-*( <sup>∑</sup> j)a<br>the world most_beautiful ankle-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's most beautiful ankle' |
| c. Ili has-( <sup>*</sup> j)a<br>Ili belly-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's belly'                         | c'. a világ legnagyobb has-( <sup>*</sup> j)a<br>the world biggest belly-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's biggest belly'               |
| d. Ili comb-*( <sup>∑</sup> j)a<br>Ili thigh-Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's thigh'                       | d'. a világ legszebb comb-*( <sup>∑</sup> j)a<br>the world most_beautiful thigh-Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's most beautiful thigh' |
| e. a csavar any*( <sup>(?)</sup> á)ja<br>the screw mother.Poss.3Sg<br>'the nut of the screw' | e'. a szerelő legnagyobb any*( <sup>(?)</sup> á)ja<br>the mechanic biggest mother.Poss.3Sg<br>'the mechanic's biggest nut'     |

(3) ● Inalienable/Alienable forms of the possessed noun: III. An idiosyncratic and an on-line created form with *-jA* (while a form derived by means of *-A* is phonotactically possible but not acceptable)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. Ili gyomra /*gyomorja /*gyomora<br>Ili stomach.Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili' stomach'                | a'. a világ legnagyobb <sup>??</sup> gyomra / <sup>??</sup> gyomorja /*gyomora<br>the world biggest stomach.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's biggest stomach'        |
| b. a sas karma /*karomja /*karoma<br>the eagle claw.Poss.3Sg<br>'the claw of the eagle'     | b'. a világ legélesebb <sup>??</sup> karma / <sup>??</sup> karomja /*karoma<br>the world sharpest claw.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's sharpest claw'               |
| c. Ili körme /*körömje /*köröme<br>Ili nail.Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's nail'                        | c'. a világ legélesebb <sup>??</sup> körme / *körömje /*köröme<br>the world sharpest nail.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's sharpest nail'                            |
| d. Pécs főtere /*főtérje /*főtére<br>Pécs main_square.Poss.3Sg<br>'the main square of Pécs' | d'. a világ legnagyobb <sup>(?)</sup> főtere / <sup>??</sup> főtérje /*főtére<br>the world biggest main_square.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's biggest main square' |
| e. Pécs egyik tere /*térje /*tére<br>Pécs one_of square.Poss.3Sg<br>'a square of Pécs'      | e'. a világ legnagyobb tere /*térje /*tére<br>the world biggest square.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's biggest square'  |

(4) ● Inalienable/Alienable forms of the possessed noun:

IV. And idiosyncratic and an on-line created form when phonotactics prohibit *-A/-jA* alternation

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a. a ház teteje /*tetője<br>the house roof.Poss.3Sg<br>'the roof of the house'  | a'. a cég legjobb *teteje / <sup>(?)</sup> tetője<br>the firm best roof.Poss.3Sg<br>'the firm's best roof'                           |
| b. Ili anyja /*anyája<br>Ili mother.Poss.3Sg<br>'Ili's mother'  | b'. a világ legjobb <sup>??</sup> anyja / <sup>(?)</sup> anyája<br>the world best mother.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's best mother'       |
| c. a juh gyapja /*gyapjúja<br>the sheep wool.Poss.3Sg<br>'the wool of the sheep'  | c'. a cég legjobb <sup>??</sup> gyapja / <sup>(?)</sup> gyapjúja<br>the firm best wool.Poss.3Sg<br>'the firm's best wool'            |
| d. a tűz parazsa /*parázsa<br>the fire glow.Poss.3Sg<br>'the glow of fire'  | d'. a világ legforróbb <sup>??</sup> parazsa / <sup>?</sup> parázsa<br>the world hottest glow.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's hottest glow' |
| e. a zsellérek <sup>(?)</sup> falva / <sup>?</sup> faluja<br>the cottar.Pl village.Poss.3Sg<br>'the village of cottars' | e'. a világ legjobb <sup>??</sup> falva / <sup>∑</sup> faluja<br>the world best village.Poss.3Sg<br>'the world's best village'       |

Definition of variants:

*Possessed variant 1*: [nominative form of the noun + *-jA*] unless the relevant phonotactic rules of Hungarian prohibits this (e.g., \**V+A*, \**s+jA*; Rebrus 2013), and, otherwise, [nominative form of the noun + *-A*] (NB: certain speakers refuse such variants in certain cases, which we regard as a kind of hypercorrection: they are convinced that the given variants violate certain rules they learned, in spite of the fact that they have never been taught such rules).

*Possessed variant 2*: [nominative form of the noun + *-A*] if the relevant phonotactic rules of Hungarian permits both this variant and the [nominative form of the noun + *-jA*] variant (NB: variant 2 is defined in a way that it is inevitably different from variant 1).

*Possessed variant 3*: acceptable form of the noun different from the aforementioned two possessed variants, if any (for historical reasons) (i.e., acceptable to particular speakers; NB: certain speakers consider certain idiosyncratic lexicalized possessed variants to be unacceptably archaic; e.g. *disznaja* 'his/her pig').

Table 1: Predicted variants of possessed forms depending on phonotactic and historical factors in den Dikken’s (2015) spirit, and evaluation of these predictions

|   |             |             |            |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| -A / -jA POSSIBLE?<br>IDIOSYNCRATIC FORM? | YES         |             | NO         |             |
|   | 3<br>(✓/*)  | 1<br>(*?/?) | 3<br>(✓/*) | 1<br>(?/*?) |
| YES                                       | 3<br>(✓/*)  | 1<br>(*?/?) | 3<br>(✓/*) | 1<br>(?/*?) |
| NO  | 2<br>(?/*?) | 1<br>(?/?)  | 1<br>(✓/—) | 1<br>(✓/—)  |

Table 2: Acceptability of different variants of possessed forms depending on phonotactic and historical factors

|                     |  |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| -A / -jA<br>IDIOSYN | YES  |   |   |  | NO   |  |  |  |
|                     | 3  |   | 1   |  | 3  |  | 1  |  |
| YES                 | ✓gyomra<br>✓karma<br>✓körme<br>✓fötére<br>✓tere              | *gyomorja<br>*karomja<br>*körömje<br>*fötérje<br>*térje           | ?gyomorja<br>?karomja<br>?körömje<br>?fötérje<br>*térje           | ?gyomra<br>?karma<br>?körme<br><u>①fötére</u><br>✓tere       | ✓teteje<br>✓anyja<br>✓gyapja<br>✓parazsa<br>①falva               | *tetője<br>*anyája<br>*gyapjúja<br>*parázsa<br>?faluja | ③tetője<br>③anyája<br>③gyapjúja<br>?parázsa<br>✓faluja           | *teteje<br>*anyja<br>*gyapja<br>*parazsa<br>*falva |
| NO                  | 2  |   | 1   |  | 1  |  | 1  |  |
|                     | ✓ablaka<br>✓talpa<br>✓császára<br>✓b.karja<br>*kara<br>*cára | *ablakja<br>*talpja<br>*császársa<br>*b.karja<br>✓karja<br>✓cárja | ?ablakja<br>?talpja<br>?császársa<br>?b.karja<br>?karja<br>✓cárja | ?ablaka<br>?talpa<br>①császára<br>①b.karja<br>*kara<br>*cára | ✓veséje<br>✓bokája<br>✓hasa<br>✓combja<br>①anyája <sub>nut</sub> |  | ✓veséje<br>✓bokája<br>✓hasa<br>✓combja<br>①anyája <sub>nut</sub> |  |

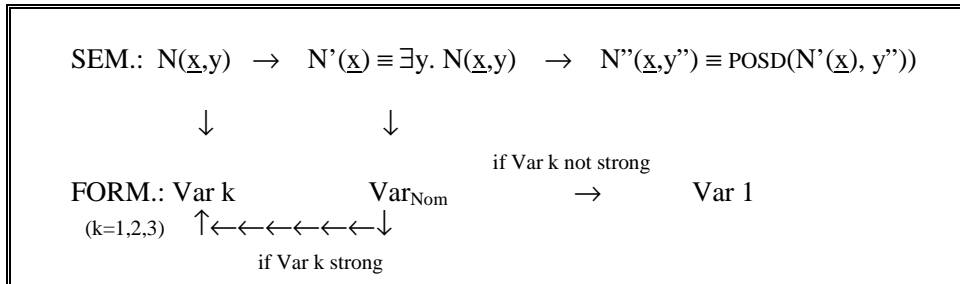
### 3. A more sophisticated picture of domains of possessed forms

Table 3: Factual variants of possessed forms depending on phonotactic and historical factors

|          |                 |              |              |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2?<br>3? | YES             |              | NO           |
|          | {3, 2, 1} → 3/3 |              | {3, 1} → 3/1 |
| NO       | {2, 1} → 2/2    | {2, 1} → 2/1 | {1} → 1/1    |
|          | {2, 1} → 1/1    |              |              |

- (5) • Generalizations (somewhat hidden relationship between v1 vs. v2,3 and (in)alienability):
- a. v1~a, v2~i, v3~i: too strong but good point of departure
  - b. v1~i, v2~a, v3~a there are such counterexamples
  - c. [v1~i → \*v2, \*v3] strong variation 1
  - [v2~a → \*v1, \*v3] strong variation 2
  - [v3~a → \*v1, \*v2] strong variation 3

- d.  $v_3 > v_1, v_3 > v_2$  hierarchy of strength  
 e.  $[v_k/v_1 \rightarrow k \geq 1]$  ina./ali. for each domain  
 f.  $v_2$  and  $v_3$  exclude each other conjecture concerning a strong constraint  
 g. meaning and form of the two kinds of possessive constructions:  
 as for forms, instead of den Dikken's (2015) *-j-* insertion, *on-line createdness*



#### 4. Deverbal nominals in the domains of competing possessed forms

Table 4: *-jA* and *-A* variants of possessed forms of productively derived nouns in the domains of Table 3: Theme-like possessor ~ inalienable, Agent-like possessor ~ alienable

|   |  |   |  |                     |
|---|--|---|--|---------------------|
|   | 3  |   | den Dikken's secondary domain<br>(e.g., <i>+á-</i> ) |                     |
| 2 | den Dikken's                               | primary domain ( <i>+j-</i> )                       | <i>ÁS(i) = -ÁsA</i>                                  | <i>ÁS(a) = -ÁsA</i> |
|   | <i>T(i) = -tA</i><br><i>SÁG(i) = -sÁgA</i> | <i>T(a) = -ttjA</i><br><i>HATNÉK(a) = -hAtnékjA</i> | <i>Ó(i) = -ÓjA</i>                                   |                     |
|   | 1  |   |  |                     |

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## Appendix

- (6) ● Is there T-nominalization at all? T-nouns derived from newly-coined verbs
- a. Jani be-lájkolta [a honlapot] / Ili-t.  
Jani into-give\_like.Past.DefObj.3Sg the homepage.Acc / Ili-Acc  
'Jani gave a like to [the homepage] / Ili.'
- b. A honlap be-lájkol-ás-á-val új korszak kezdődött Jani életében.  
the homepage into-give\_like-Ás-Poss.3Sg-Ins new age begin.Past.3Sg Jani life.Poss.3Sg.Ine  
'With a like given to the homepage, a new age has begun in Jani's life.'
- b'. A honlap <sup>(?)</sup>be-lájkol-t-á-val új korszak kezdődött Jani életében.  
the homepage into-give\_like-T-Poss.3Sg-Ins new age begin.Past.3Sg Jani life.Poss.3Sg.Ine  
'With a like given to the homepage, a new age has begun in Jani's life.'
- c. Jani volt Ili tegnapi be-lájkol-ó-ja.  
jani be.Past.3Sg Ili yesterday.Adj into-give\_like-ó-Poss.3Sg  
'It was Jani who gave Ili a like yesterday.'
- c'. <sup>(?)</sup>Ili volt Jani tegnapi be-lájkol-t-ja.  
Ili be.Past.3Sg Jani yesterday.Adj into-give\_like-T-Poss.3Sg  
'It was Ili who was given a like by Jani yesterday.'
- (7) ● Total phonetic coincidence between T<sub>EV</sub>-nouns and T<sub>TH</sub>-nouns
- a. <sup>??</sup>Más sem bánt volna jobban a likvidál-t-am-mal. **possessor: Agent**  
other either treat.Past.3Sg be.Cond better the liquidate-T-Poss.1Sg-Ins  
'No one else would have treated better the person whom I liquidated.'
- b. <sup>??</sup>Új szakaszába lépne az erőszakhullám a likvidál-t-am-mal. **possessor: Theme**  
new perod.Poss.3Sg.Ill step.Cond.3Sg the wave\_of\_violence the liquidate-T-Poss.1Sg-Ins  
'With me having been liquidated, the wave of violence would step into a new period.'
- (8) ● Is HATNÉK-nominalization a productive derivation?
- a. Rám jött a facebookoz-hatnék.  
Sub.1Sg come.Past.3Sg the facebook-HATNÉK  
'I was overcome by the desire to facebook.'
- b. Péternek gorp-hatnék-ja támadt ebben a hőségben.  
Péter.Dat gorp-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg come.Past.3Sg this.Ine the heat.Ine  
'Péter was overcome by the desire to gorp in this heat.'
- c. Veszekedés robbant ki Péter tegnapi kocsmáz-hatnék-ja miatt.  
quarrel burst.Past.3Sg out Péter yesterday.Adj go\_out\_to\_pubs-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg because\_of  
'A quarrel burst out because of Péter's desire to go out to pubs yesterday.' (based on Oszoli 2014:6/(5c))
- d. Ilire rájött az oroszlán-simogat-hatnék.  
Ili.Sub come\_over.Past.3Sg the lion-stroke-HATNÉK  
'Ili was overcome by the desire to stroke lions.'
- e. A miniszterelnököt ijedséggel töltötte el  
the prime\_minister.Acc fright.Ins fill.Past.DefObj.3Sg away  
[[mindkét koalíciós partner] alkotmány-módosít-hatnék-ja].  
both coalition partner constitution-modify-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg  
narrow-scope reading: <sup>?</sup>[FRIGHTEN > BOTH\_PARTNERS > MODIFY\_CONST.]  
'It frightened the prime minister that both coalition partners had the desire to modify the constitution.'  
wide-scope reading: <sup>?</sup>[ BOTH\_PARTNERS > FRIGHTEN > MODIFY\_CONST.]  
'In the case of both coalition partners, it frightened the prime minister that they had the desire to modify the constitution.'
- e'. <sup>?</sup>Csak [[mindkét koalíciós partner] alkotmány-módosít-hatnék-ja]  
only both coalition partner constitution-modify-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg  
töltene el ijedséggel a miniszterelnököt.  
fill.Cond.DefObj.3Sg away fright.Ins the prime\_minister.Acc  
'Only the possibility that both coalition partners have the desire to modify the constitution would frighten the prime minister.'
- (9) ● Forms of the possessedness suffix on hAtnék-nouns
- a. \*Ásítóz-hatnék-a / <sup>?</sup>Ásítóz-hatnék-ja van. a'. <sup>?</sup>Tüsszent-hetnék-e / <sup>?</sup>Tüsszent-hetnék-je van.  
gape-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg/ gape-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg be.3Sg sneeze-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg/ sneeze-HATNÉK-Poss.3Sg be.3Sg  
'(S)he has the urge to gape.' '(S)he has the urge to sneeze.'
- b. Ez Ili ajándék-a / \*ajándék-ja. b'. Ez a lámpa vezeték-e / <sup>??</sup>vezeték-je.  
this Ili present-Poss.3Sg/ present-Poss.3Sg this the lamp cable-Poss.3Sg / cable-Poss.3Sg  
'This is Ili's present.' 'This is the cable of the lamp.'