

Some Notes on the ‘Relative Pronoun’ *Than* in Shakespeare’s Plays

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0.

William Shakespeare is a master of language and his English has attracted the concern of linguists. Some analyze his English sentences in a philological frame, and others analyze them in a theoretical frame.

The relative pronoun is one of the most researched topics in Shakespeare’s English. The relative pronoun is a kind of pronoun which has functions of both conjunction and pronoun. Although Araki and Nakao (1980) and other articles have been studied major relative pronouns, such as *who / who(so)ever*, *which / which (so)ever*, *what / what(so)ever*, *that*, little work has been presented on so-called pseudo-relative pronouns, such as *as*, *but*, *than*.

This article deals with the forms and functions of the relative pronoun *than* with correlative expressions in Shakespeare’s plays.¹⁾ I will not review the usages of the relative pronoun *than* in this paper because of limited space. See Ogawa (2002a) for the usages of *than* in the Early Modern English and in the Present-Day English. In section 1 I classify the forms and functions of the relative pronoun *than* (= *then* in the Early Modern English). I describe the features of the relative pronoun *than* in section 2. In section 3 I describe the features of the existential *there* construction with the relative pronoun *than*. And I describe some features of

the constructions which do not have fully realized constituents in section 4. Features of derived constructions by deletion and substitution will be described in subsection 4.1. And in subsection 4.2 I describe the features of the construction which do not have a typical *X-er* element. Note that *X-er* is an abstract form of *more*, or any form of the comparative degree.

1. Functions of *Than*

I classified the behavior of *than* on the basis of the grammatical function and the type of antecedent in Ogawa (2002a). They are (a) [Subject] and <Human>, (b) [Subject] and <Thing>, (c) [Object] and <Human>, (d) [Object] and <Thing>, (e) [Complement] and <Human>, (f) [Complement] and <Thing>. In this section I will classify examples in Shakespeare's plays into the function type which the relative construction has. The relative pronoun *than* occurs in several kinds of structure. For example, (i) *X-er N than*, (ii) *X-er of N than*, (iii) *X-er*, (iv) *no X-er N than*, (v) *no X-er of N than*, (vi) *no X-er*. Structures (iv-vi), which have the adjective *no*, are the counterparts to (i-iii).

(i) *X-er N than*

(a) [Subject] and <Human>

- A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here. (MND 3. 1. 88)
- They choose their magistrate, And such a one as he, who puts his "shall," His popular "shall," against a graver bench Than ever frown'd in Greece. (COR 3. 1. 104-107)

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>

- I fear we should have seen decipher'd there More rancorous spight, more furious raging broils, Than yet can be imagin'd or suppos'd. (1H6 4. 1. 184-

186)

- Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen ; (LLL 5. 2. 258)
- There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. (HAM 1. 5. 166-167)
- I have seen better faces in my time Than stands on any shoulder that I see Before me at this instant. (LR 2. 2. 93-94)
- whose course will on The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs Of more strong link asunder than can ever Appear in your impediment. (COR 1. 1. 69-72)

For the rest of examples I only list the relevant information.

TIT 2. 3. 40-42, AYL 5. 2. 56-58, H5 4. 8. 3-5, HAM 1. 3. 123-126, TN 3. 2. 78-80, CYM 1. 1. 93-95, CYM 2. 3. 132-133.

(c) [Object] and <Human>

- I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall, (3H6 3. 2. 186)
- One sees more devils than vast hell can hold ; That is the madman.²⁾ (MND 5. 1. 9-10)
- he's a better woodman than thou tak'st him for. (MM 4. 3. 162)
- I have no words, My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain Than terms can give thee out ! (MAC 5. 8. 6-7)

(d) [Object] and <Thing>

- And he shall be Vincentio of Pisa, And make assurance here in Padua Of greater sums than I have promised. (SHR 3. 2. 133-135)
- A greater power than we can contradict Hath thwarted our intents. (ROM 5. 3. 153-154)
- Prove that ever I loose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, (ADO 1. 1. 250-252)

- Plutus himself, That knows the tinct and multiplying med'cine, Hath not in nature's mystery more science Than I have in this ring. (AWW 5. 3. 101-104)
- We cannot call her winds and waters signs and fears ; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. (ANT 1. 2. 147-149)
- And to add greater honors to his age Than man could give him, he died fearing God. (H8 4. 2. 67-68)

For the rest of examples I only list the relevant information.

R3 1. 3. 167-168, R3 5. 3. 216-219, TIT 2. 1. 85-86, JN 3. 4. 170-171, JN 3. 4. 170-171, R2 3. 2. 91-92, MV 1. 1. 122-125, MV 2. 2. 94-95, MV 2. 2. 97-98, MV 5. 1. 273-275, 1H4 5. 4. 21-23, WIV 3. 2. 54-56, WIV 4. 5. 59-61, 2H4 1. 2. 3-5, ADO 1. 1. 15-17, H5 1. 1. 79-81, AYL 1. 2. 3-4, AYL 3. 2. 164-166, AYL 4. 1. 54-56, TN 3. 2. 5-7, TN 3. 4. 179-182, TRO 3. 1. 156-158, TRO 3. 2. 84-86, LR 1. 2. 11-15, MAC 4. 3. 46-47, COR 2. 2. 57-59, CYM 5. 1. 29-30, WT 4. 4. 403-404, TEM 1. 2. 171-174.

(e) [Complement] and <Human>

- He is a better scholar than I thought he was. (WIV 4. 1. 80-81)
- Do you not think he thinks himself a better man than I am ? (TRO 2. 3. 144-145)
- And if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be plough'd. (PER 4. 6. 144-145)
- Be of comfort, My father's of a better nature, Sir, Than he appeares by speech. (TEM 1. 2. 497-498)
- Abusing better men than they can be Out of a foreign wisdom, (H8 1. 3. 28-29)

H8 (3. 2. 273-274) also belongs to this type.

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>: no example

(ii) X-er of N than

(a) [Subject] and <Human>: no example

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>: no example

(c) [Object] and <Human>

· In brief, a braver choice of dauntlesse spirits Than now the English bottoms
have waft o'er Did never float upon the swelling tide To do offense and scathe
in Christendom. (JN 2. 1. 72-75)

(d) [Object] and <Thing>

· for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have
in my whole five. (ROM 2. 4. 72-73)

· Never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do, nor can do
more than I do with her, I thank heaven. (WIV 1. 4. 127-130)

· What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more Of mortal griefs than do thy
worshippers? (H5 4. 1. 241-242)

· I have told more of you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your
own behalf; and thus far I confirm you. (TIM 1. 2. 92-94)

· This man is better than the man he slew, As well descended as thyself, and
hath More of thee merited than a band of Clotens Had ever scar for. (CYM 5.
6. 301-304)

(e) [Complement] and <Human>: no example

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>: no example

(iii) X-er than

(a) [Subject] and <Human>: no example

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>

- These miseries are more than may be borne. (TIT 3. 1. 243)
- There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory, more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. (MV 3. 1. 39-42)
- For more is to be said and to be done Than out of anger can be uttered. (1H4 1. 1. 106-107)
- The brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent any thing that intends to laughter more than I invent or is invented on me: (2H4 1. 2. 7-9)
- But more in Troilus thousandfold I see Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be; (TRO 1. 2. 284-285)
- There is more owing her than is paid, and more shall be paid her than she'll demand. (AWW 1. 3. 103-105)
- He had so, looking as it were—Would I were hang'd but I thought there was more in him than I could think. (COR 4. 5. 157-159)

(c) [Object] and <Human>

- It is much that the Moore should be more than reason; but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for. (MV 3. 5. 40-42)

(d) [Object] and <Thing>

- He may mean more than we poor men do know: (1H6 1. 2. 122)
- Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend More than cool reason ever comprehends. (MND 5. 1. 4-6)

- Giving to you no further personal power To business with the King, more than the scope Of these delated articles allow. (HAM 1. 2. 36-38)
- This honest creature, doubtless, Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds. (OTH 3. 3. 242-243)
- Five justices' hands at it, and witnesses more than my pack will hold. (WT 4. 4. 283-284)
- My sovereign, I confess your royal graces Show'r'd on me daily have been more than could My studied purposes requite, which went Beyond all man's endeavors. (H8 3. 2. 166-169)

For the rest of examples I only list the relevant information.

2H6 4. 1. 129-130, 2H6 5. 1. 215, 3H6 3. 2. 96, R3 1. 2. 223, R3 2. 3. 36-37, R3 5. 3. 237-239, R3 5. 3. 314, TIT 2. 3. 213, TIT 4. 3. 46-49, TIT 5. 3. 125-127, JN 2. 1. 157-158, JN 4. 2. 32-34, R2 2. 1. 255, ROM 2. 4. 147-149, MND 1. 1. 176, MV 2. 9. 27, MV 4. 1. 315-316, 1H4 2. 5. 466-467, WIV 4. 5. 107-109, 2H4 1. 1. 31-32, 2H4 1. 2. 7-9, ADO 4. 2. 60, H5 1. 2. 172-173, H5 4. 1. 129, TN 1. 5. 178-179, TRO 4. 2. 51-52, AWW 1. 3. 103-105, AWW 4. 3. 80-81, AWW 5. 3. 256, LR 1. 4. 118, LR 1. 4. 119, LR 1. 4. 120, LR 1. 4. 122, LR 1. 4. 123, LR 2. 4. 266-267, MAC 1. 4. 20-21, ANT 1. 4. 58-61, COR 2. 2. 126-127, TIM 3. 4. 22-23, PER 3. 1. 34-36, WT 2. 3. 189-190, WT 3. 2. 32-37, WT 4. 4. 204-207, WT 4. 4. 215-216, WT 4. 4. 386-388, TEM 5. 1. 242-244, H8 5. 2. 91-92.

(e) [Complement] and <Human>: no example

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>: no example

(iv) no X-er N than

(a) [Subject] and <Human>: no example

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>

- Hang him, baboon ! his wit's as thick as Tewkesbury mustard, there's no more conceit in him than is in a mallet. (2H4 2. 4. 240-242)

(c) [Object] and <Human>: no example

(d) [Object] and <Thing>

- Ay, if 'a have no more man's blood in his belly than will sup a flea. (LLL 5. 2. 691-692)
- Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has ; (TN 1. 3. 83-84)
- Thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows, an asinico may tutor thee. (TRO 2. 1. 43-44)
- I'll have no more pity of his age than I would have of- (AWW 2. 3. 239-240)

(e) [Complement] and <Human>: no example

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>

- The vows of women Of no more bondage be to where they are made Than they are to their virtues, which is nothing. (CYM 2. 4. 110-112)

(v) no X-er of N than

(a) [Subject] and <Human>: no example

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>

- A man throng'd up with cold, my veins are chill, And have no more of life than may suffice To give my tongue that heat to crave your help ; (PER 2. 1. 73-75)

(c) [Object] and <Human>: no example

(d) [Object] and <Thing>: no example

(e) [Complement] and <Human>: no example

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>: no example

(vi) no X-er

(a) [Subject] and <Human>: no example

(b) [Subject] and <Thing>

- So, so, now sit, and look you eat no more Than will preserve just so much strength in us As will revenge these bitter woes of ours. (TIT 3. 2. 1- 3)
- I'll drink no more than will do me good, for no man's pleasure, I. (2H4 2. 4. 119-120)
- And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them, (HAM 3. 2. 38-40)

(c) [Object] and <Human>: no example

(d) [Object] and <Thing>

- Good mother, be content, it is no more Than my poor life must answer. (R2 5. 2. 82)
- No more than I am well acquitted of. (MV 5. 1. 138)
- Or were you both our mothers, I care no more for than I do for heaven, So I were not his sister. (AWW 1. 3. 163-165)

- He hath, my Lord, but be you well assur'd, No more than he'll unswear.

(OTH 4. 1. 30)

- Most royal Majesty, I crave no more than hath your Highness offer'd, Nor will you tender less. (LR 1. 1. 193)

- Though I am satisfied, and need no more Than what I know, yet shall the oracle Give rest to th' minds of others—such as he, (WT 2. 1. 189–191)

For the rest of examples I only list the relevant information.

R2 3. 4. 91, WT 5. 1. 218–220.

(e) [Complement] and <Human>: no example

(f) [Complement] and <Thing>: no example

2. Features of Structures and Functions

2.1

Some interesting features should be noted with the type of structure from the classification in Section 1³⁾ Table 1 shows the number of occurrence in the structures (i-vi). First, the number of examples with the structures (i) and (iii) is 60 and 63 and this is in the proportion of 46% to 49%. The difference between these two structures is that the structure (i) has *X-er* N for the comparative degree form and the structure (iii) has *X-er* for the comparative degree form without an explicit noun.

One feature is that both structures are used with almost equal frequency in the above examples.

Next, while the number of examples with the structure (i) and (iii) is 60 and 63 and this is in the proportion of 46% to 49%, the number of examples with the structure (iv) and (vi) is 6 and 11 and this is in the proportion of 33% to 61%.

From this observation the structure without the explicit noun (vi) is much preferred

to the structure with the explicit noun (iv) when the negative adjective *no* is required.

Then the number of examples with the structures (i-iii) is 129 and that with the structures (vi-vi) is 18, and this is in the proportion of 88% to 12%. The adjective *no* occurs with the comparative degree form in the structures (vi-vi). The second feature is the tendency not to prefer the negation on the word/phrase level.

Last, note the number of examples with the structures (ii) is 6 and (iv) is 1, and this is in the proportion of 5% to 6%. This means that the partitive expression (*no*) *X-er of N* is not preferred. This is the fourth feature.

	without <i>no</i>	with <i>no</i>	Total
X-er N than	(i) 60 (46%)	(iv) 6 (33%)	66 (45%)
X-er of N than	(ii) 6 (5%)	(v) 1 (6%)	7 (5%)
X-er than	(iii) 63 (49%)	(vi) 11 (61%)	74 (50%)
Total	129 (88%)	18 (12%)	147 (100%)

Table 1

2.2

From the observation in Section 1 other interesting features should be noted with the function and the type of antecedent. Table 2 shows the number of occurrence.

First the number of examples with the function [Subject] is 26, that with the function [Object] is 114 and that with the function [Complement] is 7. This is in the proportion of 18%, 77% and 5%. The kind of relative clauses in which the antecedent is [Object] is much more preferred to the relative clauses in which the antecedent is [Subject] in the relative clause with *than*. This is the first feature.

The second feature is the preference of the type of antecedent, <Thing>. The

number of examples with the type of antecedent, <Human> is 14 and that with the type of antecedent, <Thing> is 133. This is in the proportion of 10% to 90%.

The third feature is the preference of function [Complement] when the type of antecedent is <Human>. When the type of antecedent is <Human> the number of examples with the function [Object] is 6 and with the function of [Complement] is 6 and this is in the proportion of 43% to 43%. On the other hand when the type of antecedent is <Thing> the number of examples with the function of [Object] is 108 and with the function of [Complement] is 1 and this is in the proportion of 81% to 1%. This is an interesting phenomenon. From this the following tendency will be observed. When the function of relative clause is [Complement], the <Human> is chosen as a type of antecedent without any restriction. But <Thing> has the tendency of being avoided in such a case. This may be due to some restriction.

	Human	Thing	Total
Subject	2 (14%)	24 (18%)	26 (18%)
Object	6 (43%)	108 (81%)	114 (77%)
Complement	6 (43%)	1 (1%)	7 (5%)
Total	14 (10%)	133 (90%)	147 (100%)

Table 2

3. Existential *There* Construction

Some examples with comparative *than* have existential *there* constructions. Six examples have a gap of [Subject], and four examples have a gap of [Object] in the subordinate *than* clause.

The examples with a gap of [Subject] are as follows :

- There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory, more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. (MV 3. 1. 39-42)
- Hang him, baboon! his wit's as thick as Tewkesbury mustard, there's no more conceit in him than is in a mallet. (2H4 2. 4. 240-242)
- There is more good toward you peradventure than is in your knowledge to dream of. (H5 4. 8. 3- 5)
- There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. (HAM 1. 5. 166-167)
- There is more owing her than is paid, and more shall be paid her than she'll demand. (AWW 1. 3. 103-105)
- He had so, looking as it were—Would I were hang'd but I thought there was more in him than I could think. (COR 4. 5. 157-159)

And the examples with a gap of [Object] are as follows:⁴

WIV 4. 5. 59-61, TRO 4. 5. 240, AWW 1. 3. 103-105, AWW 4. 3. 80-81, TEM 5. 1. 242-244

The existential *there* construction has been one of the topics which attract many scholars. Milsark (1974) is a full-dress research in the Transformational Grammar.

One of the controversial point is the status and behavior of the expression which occurs after the verb. Some argue that the expression functions as [Subject] even though it occurs after the verb (post-verbal position)

The first thing to note is that the compared element is *conceit* in 2H4 (2. 4. 240-242) and the element occurs (not directly) after the verb *is* in the main clause and before the verb *is* in the comparative subordinate clause. The position in the subordinate clause is a typical subject position. And the main clause and the subordinate clause have a parallel construction. So this will be another point to

support the argument that the post-verbal expression in the existential *there* functions as subject.

The second to note is an exceptional example of *MV* (3.1.39-42). Only in this example the existential *there* occurs both in the main and subordinate clause. In the other five examples the existential *there* occurs only in the main clause and do not occur in the subordinate clause.

I may conclude that the latter construction is unmarked and the former is marked. Then why is the *MV* (3.1.39-42) marked? Note that there are two comparisons which are coordinated, but no coordinator occurs in this example. So the additional *there* in this example will help us to understand the two comparisons properly.

The third to note is the verbal expression in the existential *there* construction. Much research has proposed that in this construction not only the verb *be* but also the other verbs of ‘existence’ (e.g. *exist*, *live*, *stand*) or ‘appearance’ (e.g. *appear*, *occur*, *arise*) occurs. All the 10 examples have the verb *be*. The kind of verb in the existential *there* construction in the Shakespeare’s work should be studied further.

4. Some Marked Constructions

In this section some examples will be described which have not fully realized constituents.⁵⁾

4.1

Several patterns of deletion are noticed in the subordinate *than* clause. The deletion operation works when the main clause and the subordinate clause have a parallel structure and the recoverability of deletion is not violated.

First observe typical deletions. VP-deletion occurs in *3H6* (3.2.186), *R3* (5.

3. 216-219), and *TEM* (1. 2. 171-174). Clause Deletion occurs in *COR* (157-159) and *WT* (4. 4. 215-216).

Next observe interesting examples of deletion.

- More hath he spent in peace than they in wars. (R2 2. 1. 255)

In R2 (2. 1. 255) only the verb *spent* is deleted. This behavior will be explained functionally. In pre-deletion construction, *spent* is the only old information and the rest *they* and *in wars* are new information. This is compatible with the Constraint on Deletion proposed by Kuno (1978). The same can be said to the example of *CYM* (2. 4. 110-112).

There are several examples of *Do*-Substitution. They are *JN* (3. 4. 99-100) and *JN* (4. 2. 32-34), *WIV* (1. 4. 127-130) and *WIV* (2. 2. 116-117), *H5* (1. 1. 79-81), *H5* (4. 1. 241-242), *LR* (1. 2. 11-15) and *PER* (2. 1. 63-65).

4. 2

The following examples have not the typical comparative expression, *X-er*, but have the morpheme *other* in the antecedent of the relative clause.

- And not a man of them brings other news Than they have learnt of me. (2H4 Introduction 38-39)
- But if he had not been in drink, he would have tickled you othergates than he did. (TN 5. 1. 190-192)

Notes

1. For the abbreviation of the title of the play, see Araki and Nakao (1980: xiii-ix)
2. The antecedent is *devils* and I take this as animate being and classify this as

〈Human〉 in dichotomy.

3. The following example has an apparent similarity with the examples observed in this section. But I conclude that this *than* is not a relative pronoun but a conjunction.

(i) She is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested. (OTH 2. 3. 319–322)

Other relevant examples are as follows :

JN 2. 1. 446–447, WIV 1. 4. 127–130, JC 3. 2. 36–37, TN 3. 4. 316–317, TRO 5. 2. 192–193, ANT 3. 1. 21–22, PER 2. 2. 34, PER 4. 2. 7–9

4. For the examples with a gap of [Object] I only list the relevant information.

This is because only the subject occurs in typical existential *there* construction.

See Takami and Kuno (1999) for the existential *there* construction which takes the object element.

5. There are interesting examples in which no parallel construction is observed between the main and the subordinate clause. Note that both the main and the subordinate clauses are semantically parallel and deletion of the element will not violate the Recoverability Condition on Deletion. So deletion is possible in the subordinate *than* clause.

· They say all Lovers swear more performance than they are able, and yet reserve an ability that they never perform ; (TRO 3. 2. 84–86)

· This man is better than the man he slew, As well descended as thyself, and hath More of thee merited than a band of Clotens Had ever scar for. (CYM 5. 6. 301–304)

Text

G. Blakemore Evans (textual editor) (1997) *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd edition. Boston : Houghton Mifflin.

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