

**Drama That Evolves into Reality:
Exploring the Word “Few” from Shakespeare to Churchill’s Wartime Speeches**

Satoko Horie

This study originated from an assumption that Shakespeare’s works might have potentially influenced Churchill over envisaging the main pillars of key rhetoric and structures when he prepared his speech manuscripts.

We studied Churchill’s speeches mainly drafted during the period overlapping World War II and found that the frequency of the word “few” increased significantly in some speeches delivered immediately after Churchill took office as England’s prime minister in May 1940; these speeches were recognized as monumental masterpieces of twentieth-century history.

We then moved on to examine Shakespeare’s 39 works focusing on the word, using the same method of counting their frequency, which revealed a similar characteristic in Shakespeare’s *Henry V*. Occurrence of the word “few” in *Henry V* is more than twice the number in any other play. Our findings strongly suggest that the word “few” is frequently used and stressed to show the negative aspects at the beginning of both masterpieces and then is dramatically switched in a paradoxical fashion to manifest utmost spirituality to unite those who do not have enough power to protect the homeland, a parallel between Churchill’s speeches and Shakespeare’s drama.

As Churchill was familiar with Shakespeare’s works and could recite scenes from his plays by memory since his youth, it enabled him to invigorate the very same spirit that Shakespeare pioneered. Thus, we are able to witness the spirits that once seemed to live only in the realm of pure imagination or literature evolve into our real world.