Article

Aristotelian Time, Ethics, and the Art of Persuasion in Shakespeare's Henry V

Christopher Crosbie

Department of English, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8101, USA;
christopher.crosbie@ncsu.edu

Abstract: In his response to the Dauphin, his threats before Harfleur's walls, and his St. Crispin's Day oration, Henry V deploys what we might call proleptic histories of the present as a means of rhetorical persuasion. Henry invites his audiences, that is, to imagine themselves in the future, understanding the present as part of their own history. Henry's invocation of an imagined future that understands the present as a theoretical past betrays a surprising indebtedness to Aristotle's notion of time as "a measure of change with respect to the before and after." Drawing on Aristotle's theory that time depends upon a perceiving mind and that those unconscious of change mistakenly "join up the latter 'now' to the former and make it one," this essay argues that Henry succeeds in altering his auditors' behavior, and thus generating the history he desires, by merging their shared, lived present with his own fictive temporalities. A mode of persuasion famous in its ethical ambivalence, Henry's rhetoric reveals how the very ontological assumptions governing perceptions of time may be manipulated, for good or ill, amid audiences who fail to critically envisage their own counterbalancing, imaginative histories.

Keywords: Shakespeare; time; Aristotle; ethics; rhetoric; *Henry V*

1. Introduction

Shakespeare's *Henriad* famously trades on the inexorable movement of time, and the need for great personages to "redeem" the time, as a means of constructing the *mythos* of one of England's most iconic historical figures (see, for instance, Hunt 1984; Farrell 1987). Coincident with this particular indebtedness to the theme of temporality is Henry V's own use of historicity and shifting temporal frames as a mechanism for rhetorical persuasion within the play which bears his name. How, we may ask, do these two dependencies on figurations of the temporal work together, and what, in the end, might such a unified dramaturgical strategy suggest about the role temporal consciousness plays in shaping ethics and the forms of communal identities those ethics sustain? In short, how does Henry V's persuasive rhetoric, so dependent as it is on constructing narratives of imagined futures and histories, itself contribute to the narrative mythmaking found in Shakespeare's popular history play, a mythmaking that assumes much about shared ethical values? The particular mechanisms of Henry V's persuasive rhetoric warrant renewed attention for they reveal how latent, often unexamined assumptions about the very nature of time can be manipulated, for good or ill, in order to construct new senses of communal identity, value, and even history. So crucial is this constellation of concerns to Shakespeare's project that the dramatist returns to it at every critical flashpoint of the play. In Henry's response to the Dauphin, his threats before Harfleur's walls, and his St. Crispin's Day oration, Shakespeare's king deploys proleptic histories of the present as a means of rhetorical persuasion. Henry invites his audiences, that is, to imagine themselves in the future, understanding the present as part of their own history.[1] Appearing at some of the most significant junctures of the play, the king's rhetorical strategy emerges as part of his attempts to affect his auditors, to persuade them to conform to his vision of preferred behavior,

something he accomplishes with remarkable facility. For such modes of persuasion to work within the world of the play, Shakespeare markedly draws upon shared cultural assumptions about the nature of time, helping to render plausible the general assent to—or, at least, a general refusal to countermand—Henry's version of events among his auditors. But what animates this vision of temporality, and how does this intellectual substructure give shape not only to Henry's persuasive rhetoric but also to the play's representation of the communal and ethical stakes intrinsic to how one registers time itself?

In order to understand the mechanics governing the shifting temporalities within Henry's rhetoric, it is essential to recuperate the Aristotelian assumptions about time—alien to our age, quotidian for Shakespeare's own—that organize Henry's treatment of pasts, presents, and futures—even imagined or theoretical ones. As we will see in a moment, Aristotle understands time neither as a framework within which things happen nor as itself a substance that can be known but rather—in what might seem a disorienting kind of formulation—as "a number [or measure] of change in respect of the before and after" (Hussey 1983). Although not mind-dependent for its existence, Aristotelian time, given its emphasis on numbering—or measuring—change, accords the perceptive faculties a prominent place, a theoretical move that requires Aristotle to examine the issue of what happens when a mind—when, say, asleep, in a trance, or perhaps simply deep in thought— stops consciously registering degrees of change. A mind that temporarily stops perceiving motion or change, according to Aristotle, joins a more distant future to the present moment, eliding the intervening time, in effect fusing otherwise asynchronous moments into a cohesive single unit, a single "now." Perhaps surprisingly to modern audiences, Henry's rhetoric functions in just such a way, for as he captivates his auditors' attention with compelling narratives of imagined futures, he elides the intervening time (and, famously, often his own culpabilities) in order to merge fictive outcomes with the lived present. As Henry invites his auditors to set themselves in relation to the final measurements as instantiated in his fictive futures, he conditions the ways in which they will measure change in the present: he deploys, in short, the measurement of change to effect change. Such clever machinations establish Henry as a shrewd manipulator within the world of the play, but they also reveal something of how Shakespeare approaches the nexus of rhetorical persuasion, time as the measurement of change, and the construction of communal and ethical value. For throughout *Henry V*, Shakespeare exposes how the measurement of change always contains, implicitly or explicitly, an underlying *ethos*, one that can be purposefully deployed for political ends within persuasive rhetoric. In this, Shakespeare's history play reveals how what otherwise might seem as merely a descriptive process indeed can carry prescriptive freight, not only in terms of how one should assess the past but also, by extension, regarding how one should constitute present communities and broader systems of moral value.

2. Aristotelian Time and Temporal Thinking in Early Modern England

The Aristotelianism still regnant when Shakespeare wrote *Henry V* posited an understanding of time distinctly foreign to modern conceptions, and to understand the shifting temporalities of Henry's rhetoric we must first briefly attend to Aristotle's rather novel approach to a concept that, however fundamental to daily life, can nonetheless prove resistant to simple definition. Aristotle provides his account of time in Book 4 of the *Physics*, and he begins by detailing "a series of aporetic arguments" meant to expose errors latent within common assumptions about the nature of time (Shields 2014). One might be inclined to define time as simply the past, present, and future, but each of these categories, Aristotle argues, actually breaks down any attempt at logical definition. The past, Aristotle observes, once existed but now no longer does, while the future does not exist yet even though it eventually will. How can that which has no being (the past and future) join with that which has being (the present) as parts which, together, define time? Aristotle cannot countenance this logical impossibility. Moreover, if the non-being of past and future trouble Aristotle, so too does the present, what the philosopher dubs the "now." For since time is continuous, a

previous "now" could logically never perish without destroying as it were other "nows" along with it, another premise Aristotle deems unacceptable.[2] If we cannot define time by appealing to what appears a commonsense understanding of past, present, and future, Aristotle muses, how else might we then think of this subject? In his assay at a definition, Aristotle settles, then, on the claim that time is the measure of change in respect of the before and after.[3] In this schema, time is not a kind of metaphysical or ontological space within which things happen, nor (even as it depends on change as central to its being) is it simply the presence of change itself, something that ticks along mechanistically, independent from perception.[4] Rather, time for Aristotle exists as the measurement of the changes that occur—whether in terms of substance, quality, quantity, or place[5]—amid beings and things. Grounded in this way in the material and substantial even as it is indebted to a perceiving, quantifying mind for its existence as a measurement, Aristotle's conception of time both resists accusations of being merely subjective in nature and affirms temporality as in its way ontologically real.[6]

Although Aristotle considers time as not entirely dependent upon the mind for existence—change, that is, exists whether we perceive it or not, and time consequently is not merely the projection of our minds onto an external reality—Aristotelianism nonetheless treats the role of the perceiving mind with especial importance. In a brief but evocative passage in the *Physics*, Aristotle posits that for the person who loses consciousness, the present and the (more distant) future merge, as it were, into one "now," an experience that (for that perceiver) elides the (most immediate) future and gives the sense of time as not having passed at all. "For when the state of our own minds does not change at all, or we have not noticed its changing," explains Aristotle, "we do not realize that time has elapsed any more than those who are fabled to sleep among the heroes in Sardinia do when they are awakened; for they connect the earlier 'now' with the later and make them one, cutting out the interval because of their failure to notice it. So, just as, if the 'now' were not different but one and the same, there would not have been time, so too when its difference escapes our notice the interval does not seem to be time".[7]

Although Aristotle adduces sleep as his primary example of how people may "connect the earlier 'now' with the later and make them one, cutting out the interval because of their failure to notice it," later commentators such as Simplicius observed how this state may occur even while awake. As Carolyn Dinshaw notes when examining Simplicius' commentary, "Supernatural sleep, ordinary sleep, absorption in deep thought, intense longing, inebriation—a wide range of conditions in fact brings out life's essential asynchrony."[8] At first glance, deep thought or intense longing may seem of quite a different order than that of sleep or inebriation, the former a kind of excess of cognition, the latter something of an escape from it. However, within this Aristotelian tradition, such concentrated cognition can render one insensible of the passage of time—or, more accurately, insensible of the existence of change—and it is not surprising that the enthralled mind, such as one captivated, say, by compelling, persuasive rhetoric, may experience through the imagination a very real sense of lost time.

Aristotle's figuration of time as a *measure* of change foregrounds the mind's interpretative role, but it also invites endlessly ramifying questions—ethical, social, and political—about the import of the changes in question and of the means employed while measuring them. Aristotle links his discussion of time squarely into his larger considerations of potentiality (*dynamis*) and actuality (*energeia*), the philosopher's account for the continuum of different states of being. A block of marble, for example, initially holds the potential to become an ornamental frieze, the bust of an author, or the basin of a fountain; its instantiation into one of these ends marks its shift from potentiality to actuality (see Cohen and Reeve (2021)). The measurement of change registers such traversals. True not only of changes to material form but also amid qualities and states of being, this continuum serves as a way of understanding a host of matters dealing with change, many of which (implicitly or explicitly) carry significant ethical ramifications as well. What, for instance, does it mean to say a person or community has the potential to achieve a particular quality or state,

or that one *lacks* such potential? How does one account for the *reasons* for the ultimate actualizations (again, of a person or community) that took shape while the myriad other potentialities did not? These are no mere scholastic niceties, for if, as Aristotle avers, time itself is the measure of change, and if we may thus think of Aristotelian time as a kind of first writing of history, much ethical and social import remains at stake in how we account for the movement from potentiality to actuality in our personal, communal, and even national histories. Time as the measure of change, I would like to suggest, is neither esoteric scholasticism nor apolitical philosophy, but rather a way of conceptualizing temporality that can carry profound social consequence—and that may be manipulated in the service of political ends that seem to the inattentive or unwary as, in a manner, simply natural. With "measurement" as its central component, Aristotelian time invites close examination of the role and function of the intervening, interpretative work done by individuals and communities, work that perforce carries a subjective dimension and remains susceptible, therefore, to various conditioning influences.

For all the ways such theories may even still sound like the esoteric material of abstract philosophy, unlikely to be directly connected to the concerns of everyday life, the Aristotelian sense of time as the measure of motion or change, in fact, received considerable attention across a diverse array of early modern discourses and simply existed as an integral part of the intellectual framework of Shakespeare's world. In a detailed rumination in 1594 on the absence of "mutation" in heaven, where "all do rest," for instance, Alexander Hume invokes the notion that "time is the measure of motion" in order to reveal how "in eternal things," by contrast, "there is no time" (Hume 1594). In a similar fashion, readers of Philemon Holland's 1603 translation of Plutarch's *Morals* would be reminded that "time according to the definition of Aristotle is the measure of motion and the number in regard of prioritie and posteriority,"[9] while those opening Augustine's *City of God* would likewise find that time is "never ... extant without motion," a statement Vives glosses in 1610 by noting that "Aristotle defined time [as] the measure of motion."[10] Parishioners listening to William Jones reflect on the mysteries of the Incarnation in 1614 could hear how "Time saith Aristotle is the measure of motion, but Paul...shewes us more strange philosophy," namely "that it is the measure of the first Mover itself."[11] Further, even as late as 1631 William Twisse calls his contemporaries "to give congruous respect" to Aristotle's definition of time as articulated in the *Physics*.[12] Informing not only popular translations of classical and medieval texts but also contemporary explications of Scripture within which the salvation of souls remained at stake, Aristotelian notions of time were treated frequently as simply a known quantity, unlikely to be misapprehended.

One rhetorical practice equally familiar to early moderns was the use of temporal shifts—imagined futures, or vividly-rendered alternative presents, for example—as a means of persuasion, but underappreciated in existing scholarship is just how fully Aristotelian time has afforded weight and dimension to those powerful modes of address. In his perceptive analysis of rhetoric in *Henry V*, Joel B. Altman examines the king's penchant for employing the common rhetorical strategy of amplification, a method that depends, first, upon dividing one's subject into segments for particular use, distinguishing between matters such as "kinds and species" or "antecedents and consequences," and, second, upon "presencing" (Altman 1991). A term evocative of immediacy and temporal draw, "presencing" consists of "exhibiting one's subject in images that possess a certain illustriousness ... so that what obtrudes upon the audience's attention will not only appeal to the ear but be 'displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind,' as Quintilian puts it."[13] As Altman observes, "Dividing and presencing ... are not mutually exclusive faculties: the partitive acts of the one, when the poetics is working well, become the participatory offerings of the other, imparting to the imagination the vivifying nourishment that allows it to compose powerful and satisfying illusions."[14] The rhetorical modes examined by Altman share marked affinities with the broader "temporal consciousness" of early modern England elegantly diagnosed by J.K. Barret, who observes how Shakespeare's contemporaries frequently would "lay bare considerations of the future through their extensive

experimentation with literary techniques for capturing, pacing, arranging, and reimagining linear time."[15] These modes of manipulating temporality for rhetorical or literary effect participate in what George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie* identifies as "chronographia," or "Counterfeit Time" (Puttenham 2016), extending from the mere invocation of, say, the seasons within a poetic work into the more nuanced employment of temporal shifts, elisions, and extensive fabrications as a method for working on the imaginations of others.[16] In this process, the era's underlying Aristotelian notion of time, itself so invested in what happens when we register temporality in segmented or asynchronous ways, lends a deeper philosophical framework and an ostensibly latent naturalism to such rhetorical and cultural constructions.

3. Henry V's Temporal Rhetoric and the Measurement of Change as Means of Persuasion

From the outset of the play, Shakespeare establishes that Henry's rhetoric of persuasion depends upon both a concept of time as the measurement of change and a mode of shifting temporalities that conjoins an imagined future to the present, all as a means of conditioning current behavior. Consider, for instance, the king's reply to the Dauphin's insulting gift of the tennis balls. After the Ambassador declares that the Dauphin thinks Henry "savor[s] to much of [his] youth" and advises the English king "There's naught in France/That can be with a nimble galliard won" (1.2., 251–53), Henry counters by recasting the measure of the present time. "[W]e understand him well," declares Henry in reply, "How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,/Not *measuring* what use we made of them" (267–69). The language here subtly signals Henry's sense of time as conditioned by the measure of change, but also introduces the crucial notion that such measurement, for all of Aristotle's directness on the matter, can in fact be contested among varying interpreters. Henry's past, he asserts, has been mismeasured by the Dauphin, but change, and thus the time itself, has flowed differently for the English.[17] Henry takes pains at this early stage to recalibrate the measurement of his own changes, to rewrite his own history for not only the French but the English as well. This sense of how the measurement of change may be contested sets up Henry's first major oration, becoming the very substructure for his vivid account of the ultimate stakes in his verbal skirmishes with the Dauphin, as the king's rhetoric quickly shifts to detail at length how this present moment will be remembered in the future as a pivotal event in the auditors' own history. "[F]or many a thousand widows/Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands," Henry intones, "Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;/And some are yet ungotten and unborn/That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn"(1.2., 285–88). Henry's initial examination of the mismeasurement of change helps establish the controlling conceits of his intense, subsequent oration in which he imagines a catastrophic future for the French, a proleptic history of this very moment designed to recast the Dauphin as, in fact, the frivolous, foolish one.

But why is Henry's rhetoric so potent here, and why does it, for all its own troubled ethics, carry such a sense of moral force within the world of the play? Henry's rhetoric here is not simply clever, nor does he overwhelm his listeners with a kind of amplification that subdues merely through the cascading of words. Rather, it is Henry's particular mode of dividing temporal moments and presencing his preferred vision of the future that helps carry the day, and this mode works so profoundly because Henry, in essence, manipulates his auditors' imagination so they, like Aristotle's sleepers in Sardinia, conjoin the latter "now" (that is, the fictitious one Henry has just presenced for them) with the present, making them one. In an instant, Henry transforms the just-delivered gift of tennis balls into the stuff of imagined future–history. Subtly eliding the intervening time that stands between the discovery of the tennis balls and this extensive lamentation of the widows, Henry also notably omits his own declaration of war, the uncertainty it brings, the casualties on both sides, and all the many events that might otherwise compromise his narrative in order to render his fictive future as an accomplished fact, one that recasts the present moment according to Henry's own interpretative designs. Indeed, the English king permeates his

entire narrative with the assumption of a change-already-accomplished: "[T]ell the pleasant prince this mock of his/*Hath turned* his balls to gunstones," he began, and he concludes, with the full force of his proleptic history brought to bear, that the Dauphin's "jest will savor but of shallow wit/When thousands weep more than did laugh at it" (282–283, 296–297). The power of Henry's moral persuasion lies in the fact that, by presencing his preferred vision of the future, he both elides the problematic ethics of his own accomplished and impending actions and exerts force upon his auditors to make his envisaged future real by altering their dispositions and actions in the current "now." Shakespeare suggests Henry operates in such a purposeful mode, rooted in shared assumptions about time as the measure of change throughout the scene, even to its very end. For upon the Ambassador's exit, Henry reveals his intent that through such imagined histories he "hope[s] to make the sender blush" at this "merry message," but with the rhetoric of his proleptic histories over, he also, notably, returns to the ordinary sequencing of time: "Therefore, my lords, *omit no happy hour*/That may give furth'rance to our expedition" (1.2., 299–302).

Shakespeare provides the most intense instance of this kind of rhetorical strategy in Henry's speech before the walls of Harfleur, and, if here the king elides a much smaller period of the immediate future, his mode of rhetorical persuasion nonetheless again depends upon the compression of time in order to elicit the particular actions and qualities he desires from his auditors. After inquiring "How yet resolves the governor of the town" during the momentary parley and promising that he "will not leave the half-achievèd Harfleur/Till in her ashes she lie buried" (3.3.1, 8–9), Henry narrates a terrifying vision of the devastation awaiting the French civilians if a peaceful accord cannot be reached in this single moment. The sheer savagery of Henry's disturbingly memorable rhetoric—shrieking daughters, infants on pikes, aged heads dashed (3.3., 35–38)—provides a signal example of Altman's sense of "presencing" not only of "powerful . . . illusions" generally but also of the kind of "ever-expanding fantasies of vulnerability and savage projection" characteristic of much of Henry's rhetorical strategies seen elsewhere in the play as well.[18] Note, however, just how deeply this amplification also depends upon the rather subtle segmentation of time itself. For as Henry manifests his theoretical future as present, he elides details about the precise instance when "the gates of mercy shall be all shut up" (10) and when his soldiers will slip from under his command, merging instead a vividly rendered later "now" with the current one into a seamless whole. As Henry offers no other details about the gates of mercy which passively close, the soldiers who slip from command of their own accord, he quietly drops from the measurement of change everything but this single moment, the slightly-more-distant future, and the governor's own decision. What is more, at the moment, Harfleur theoretically retains the potential for holding the invaders at bay or, at least, losing the battle while still avoiding such supposedly inevitable war crimes. Henry's oration, however, tellingly delimits the range of possibilities, presupposing that Harfleur holds the potential for only two possible outcomes: immediate surrender or the horrific fiction he has just instantiated within the minds of his rapt audience. By rhetorically conditioning, first, what changes are even possible and, second, how those changes will be measured, Henry creates a vision of the present time that, as he has it, should change only in the measurable ways he himself most prefers.

Henry imbues his persuasive rhetoric with temporal dimensions in order to convey a sense of naturalness, even inevitability, to the outcomes he desires, but he also notably aims to provoke the kinds of emotive responses and moral evaluations he needs to both attain acquiescence and maintain his own self-conception as a noble ruler. In this, Shakespeare's history play trades on the kinds of affective outcomes to imaginative temporal shifts that J. K. Barret has persuasively examined at length in other early modern literature. In her perceptive reading of *Cymbeline*, for example, Barret diagnoses what she calls "anticipatory nostalgia," a mode where "Shakespeare's characters themselves look forward to looking back when they can imagine the link between present experience and its eventual reconstitution in words."[19] For the characters populating Barret's *Cymbeline*, this kind of proleptic history offers pleasure, but the same temporal-affective mechanism is equally

operant in Shakespeare's history play where the king effectively invites the governor to imagine a future moment when the present will be his history—all in order to invoke *now* the sense of feeling he would have *then* should he not capitulate. "What say you?," asks the king, "Will you yield, and this avoid?/Or, guilty in defense, be thus destroyed?" (3.3., 42–43). Following Barret, we may think of this moment as producing a kind of anticipatory relief, perhaps even a strange sense of redemption or liberation, all in the precise moment the governor has considerable cause to despair. Henry's oration presences for his adversary not only the terror of destruction but also the weight of unbearable guilt, a guilt created by his decisions as imagined within Henry's fiction and a measure of change the governor can avoid—in a sense undo—within his present, lived moment. Henry, we may say, measures a fictitious version of change in order to prompt his auditor in the actual "now" to willfully choose a different actualization, and the fulcrum for this clever rhetorical spin exists not in the abstract or theoretical but in the affective and moral dimensions of the governor's very real, lived experience.

Throughout the play, Henry further imbues his figurations of time with ethical valences by conditioning not only how moments of transition should happen but also, more grandly, how such measurements of change should be recorded as a kind of first draft of history–and then deployed in the service of future community-formation. Henry's St. Crispin's Day oration serves as the paradigmatic example of the temporal reach of this rhetorical mode. As J. K. Barret notes in passing, Henry's speech depends heavily upon persuading the soldiers that "their present action will grant them a place in the nation's collective future memory."[20] A nation's "collective future memory" coalesces, of course, into (at least one version of) "history," and, here, we see in its starkest form the way that Henry's manipulation of time-as-a-measure-of-change may give rise to a larger historical consciousness and communal identity. Henry's speech on the eve of battle offers a proleptic history of the present, which, true to form, merges a later "now" with the present in the service of attaining his own ends. Alison Thorne rightly deems "Henry's ingenious manipulation of his audience's temporal perspective" as mimicking of "the peculiar motivational logic of the chronicle play" where victory is "something long since achieved and sanctified by memory" (Thorne 2002). Even without such a turn to the metadramatic, though, the oration's logic also works wholly within the fiction itself, drawing persuasive force from the implied, shared understanding of how time can operate. For in the history Henry fashions on the eve of battle he may obliquely invoke the possibility of death, but he notably elides serious consideration of that potential outcome, opting instead to make present a future in which his audience "outlives this day, and comes safe home" (4.3., 42). (There are neither grieving nor mocking widows here.) In this imagined future, his audience—markedly intact and capable of ambulation—"will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named," will "strip his sleeve and show his scars" (43, 48). The process of healing already done, the initial wound itself effaced into a receding past—indeed the threat of dying or returning with no arm at all utterly abolished—Henry's history conflates distant future with present in such a way that marks the measure of change as one that solely confers honor, pride, and even security. Through this presencing of an ennobling, rousing future, Henry compresses time, charts the measure of change from advent of battle to eventual reward, eliding the trauma, uncertainty, and death in between, inviting his auditors to likewise take a measure of the day, with this imagined future fully present in mind, and decide their own fate.

The measurement of change in Henry's St. Crispin's Day speech is, by design, both dream-like and personal—the happy soldier will "remember, with advantages,/What feats he did that day" (51–52)—but it is also communal, national, and historical, already marked, in Henry's telling, within the annals of English history.[21] Henry's vision of an idealized future again aims to place his auditors in a mode like Aristotle's "sleepers of Sardinia," who merge the later now to the present and make them one, his speech directing attention to one kind of change and, thus, one measurement of time. In this regard, it is no accident that Henry describes the present day he and his soldiers currently occupy as "that day," as he conjures a vision of success already accomplished, rewards already

awaiting distribution. Henry's dream of a future where their shared present is in the past, however, serves to propel his soldiers forward, toward generating the change that will ostensibly fit the promised measurement. Here, Westmorland's enthusiastic reply is further telling, for when he declares, "Perish the man whose mind is backward now" (73), he registers not just a rejection of his earlier backward glance to "those men in England/That do no work today" (18–19) but also a redoubled sense of forward progress toward the glorious future imagined by the king. In Westmorland's "now," there is only what lies ahead, awaiting collection; the future, to his mind, is clearly very much present. Indeed, the language of measuring change as the means for evaluating the present moment continues to predominate, as Westmorland signals a renewed interest in attaining the magnitude of honor the king has prompted him to seek.[22] "[W]ould you and I alone,/Without more help, could fight this royal battle," he declares, as Henry notes the altered proportions: "Why, now thou has unwished five thousand men!/Which likes me better than to wish us one" (75–78). What began in Henry's speech as an elision of the immediate future as a mode of rhetorical persuasion develops here into a robust, distributed reassessment of the *qualitative* measures that might also give the present time its distinctive nature and, just as importantly, the sense of value it confers. Henry tethers his imaginary future-history to the particular needs of his present "fellowship" and "band of brothers" (40,61), but he also gestures outward to the reciprocating communal bonds found in nationhood, envisaging a broader—and remarkably univocal—commemoration that will annually reaffirm, rather than mis-measure, the nature of this moment and his army's deeds.[23]

4. *Henry V*, Time, and the Ethics of (Re)Measurement

The Aristotelian notion of time helps explain the structure and persuasive force of Henry's rhetoric within the fictive world of the play, rendering as it does a way of registering temporal changes that seem natural, perhaps inevitable, as well as morally compelling, even as it masks the subjective and political dimensions of such measurements. However, this representational strategy by Shakespeare also coexists—sometimes in tension and, at others, in concert,with various other modes of temporality which remain active within, and around, the play as well. Henry, as we have seen, fuses distant future with the present in order to enthrall his auditors and offer a measure of change that subtly delimits alternatives and advances his own objectives. This process trades upon the era's shared conception of time and, in this way, conveys a sense—however suspect such a determination might be upon closer inspection—of Henry's subjective preferences as, in their own way, emerging organically within the very operations of the world he and his auditors inhabit. In this, Henry's rhetoric benefits from the subjective nature of the kind of "measurement" in question but also from the burgeoning sense in the era of measurement as simply a record of natural processes.[24] Henry's rhetorical strategy, of course, likewise exists within a chronicle play, one where the outcome of the battles depicted as uncertain are indeed already known, here the imagined, distant past gaining dramaturgical power from foregone conclusions. The surrounding apparatus of the Chorus, in many respects, also serves to fashion time itself around the mythologizing of the king. The Chorus, which notably shares many representational strategies with Henry himself (see Danson (1983), similarly compresses the temporal, "jumping o'er times/Turning th' accomplishment of many years/Into an hourglass" (Prologue, 29–31). More than simply the brevity requisite for any sweeping narrative, the Chorus' compression equally seeks to shape perception, blending temporalities as it invites the audience to, at once, "Suppose you *have seen*," "do but think/You *stand . . .* and *behold*," and "work, work your thoughts *and therein see* a siege" soon to be, but not yet, enacted on stage (III. Cho. 3, 13–14, 25). When the Chorus declares, "Now entertain *conjecture* of a time," Shakespeare notably deploys a word that, as the *OED* reminds us, simultaneously means a "forecast" and "conclusion," its root evocatively signifying "a throwing or casting together." *OED* (2022). In these, the temporal resonances work together to further bolster the kind of mythmaking wrought by the king through his cleverly designed blendings of futures, pasts, and presents amid his rhetoric of persuasion.

Shakespeare's play, of course, does not offer unalloyed support to the king's rhetoric and his self-interested use of time, provocatively opening up as it does the possibility of resistance to such measurements of change and to Henry's coincident attempts to draft his own history. Two of the most famous, and most pointed, challenges to Henry's self-mythologizing come from the skepticism of Williams on the night before Agincourt and the play's epilogue, both of which offer for consideration trenchant critique of the hermetic narrative Henry has been at pains to advance. Significantly, both broach such counter-narratives by destabilizing, each in its own way, Henry's hegemonic control over the recording of time. By pointing to the end of days and final judgment, Williams, for instance, reminds the disguised king that there will be a final measurement, a "heavy reckoning" (4.1.132), that lies beyond human power to manipulate; like Macbeth's Porter, who proposes that one cannot equivocate one's way into heaven, Williams recalls that clever oratory alone cannot, in the end, ensure a favorable judgment. If Williams' assessment does not predominate the play, remaining an outlier amid the abundant other assessments (mostly by Henry himself), he does disrupt the notion that measurement must take shape as the king directs it. Perhaps even more subversively, he offers a model of what liberty of thought and time to reflect might afford those who otherwise might fall for the mystifications of enthralling, unrelenting rhetoric from above. The Chorus, too, presents for consideration details that surely provoke reevaluation of Henry's measurements. For shortly after declaring that "Small time; but in that small most greatly lived/This Star of England" (Epilogue, 5–6), the Chorus, recalls how the nation's subsequent leaders "lost France and made his England bleed" (12).[25] Ending on a markedly qualitative measure of not only the king but also the history recorded around his lifespan, the epilogue invites the audience themselves to reassess, to take a fresh measurement of the motions they have just witnessed.[26] In the moment, Henry may well marshal the era's shared notions of time as a measure of change to move his auditors and make his aims seem reasonable, even natural, but his project of writing that narrative larger, into the materials of chronicle itself, runs into intractable problems, as history is forever being re-written, the measurements of change always subject to re-evaluation.

Shakespeare's *Henry V* presents nothing so didactic as a kind of homiletic warning against the potential deceptions of persuasive rhetoric, but it does reveal how the measurement of change, the registering of time itself, draws upon—yet also simultaneously can create—senses of shared ethical value, offering to make the subjective and political appear, in their way, natural. In *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man*, Paula Blank persuasively concludes that Shakespeare insists "we reconsider the terms of measurement that help regulate our experiences" and that he anticipates, in this way, Wittgenstein's claim about how philosophy serves to "fight against the fascination which forms of expression exert upon us."[27] Understood as the measurement of change, Aristotelian time sits well with the myriad other forms of measurement so comprehensively detailed in Blank's study, as it likewise exerts (often subtle) conditioning forces within the world of Shakesperean drama. *Henry V*, a compelling case study of the work Aristotelian time can do, accomplishes more than depicting how communities, or nations, may coalesce and, then, attempt to write their own (self-mythologizing) histories: it equally manifests how the active measuring of change itself may be deployed to fashion communities in the first place, the ethical valences of such measurements serving as an essential mechanism for communal identity.[28] Amid this process, Shakespeare's play persistently recalls to audience attention, even if sometimes only obliquely, the crucial importance of attending what is not said, what is elided, glossed over, or otherwise written out of the recorded measurements. In this, Shakespeare's *Henry V* makes visible, even among its other hagiographic impulses, the rhetorical, ethical, and communal stakes of attending to the full measurement of one's past, present, and potential futures.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author has declared no conflict of interest.

Notes

1   On this narrative mode, see Barret (2016).

2   For a concise, lucid explication of Aristotle's knotty arguments here, see Shields, 243–253.

3   Translations vary on two key terms here, sometimes offering "number" in place of "measure," and "motion" instead of "change." Perhaps not surprisingly, the complexity of each term, and its relation to the other, has occasioned much critical comment. See, for instance, (Bostock 1980; Coope 2005).

4   As Shields explains, for Aristotle, "Time is not a substance; nor does time subsist, waiting for changes to take place within the framework it provides . . . .Time is not a receptable, waiting to be filled with changes: time is a measure belonging to change itself" (252).

5   On these four types of change, see Barnes (2000).

6   Aristotle's "dominant thought is that time may exist without existing independently . . . .Time is, rather, a certain sort of being, namely a being in the category of quantity. Hence, time is always a quantity of something: time is, namely, a quantity of change" (Shields 252). See also Sachs (1995), who observes, "Since time is a number as counted, temporality is present only to a being that can count and depends on the soul."

7   McKeon (1941), Hussey's translation here is slightly more cumbersome; compare 218b21.

8   Dinshaw (2012) On Augustine's similar contributions to the sense that "time lacks empirical content" and that the "passage of time is . . . a concept realized by mental action," see Kastan (1982). Although Kastan leaves Augustine's clear debt to Aristotle unmentioned here, he nonetheless helpfully recalls the theologian's conception of time as dependent upon a kind of mental "extension" by which "movement is measured" (10–11).

9   *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals vvritten by the learned philosopher Plutarch of Chaeronea* (London: 1603), 1024.

10   *Of the citie of God vvith the learned comments of Io. Lod. Viues* (London, 1610), 412–13.

11   *The mysterie of Christes natiuitie A sermon preached in the parish church of All-Saints in Dorchester* (London: 1614), Br.

12   *A discovery of D. Iacksons vanitie* (London, 1631), 150.

13   p. 18.

14   p. 18.

15   p. 9.

16   On *chronographia* as a recurring "persuasive tactic in Shakespeare" and as one of "the temporal strategies of Shakespeare's rhetors" that "can be both toxic and intoxicating, infect the mind with 'pestilent speeches' . . . and 'ravish like enchanting harmony,'" see MacDonald (2021). See also Tiffany Stern, who argues that "Chronographic description was sometimes employed as part of characterisation," a "descriptive art" that treats "time as a delightful illusion . . . bound to be at odds with 'real' time." "Time for Shakespeare: Carsten and Frith (2016).

17   Indeed, whereas in *1 Henry IV*, Hal's intended reformation takes on a contrastive quality ("like bright metal on a sullen ground" [1.2.205]), in *Henry V*, Shakespeare emphasizes the sense of temporality intrinsic to the changes registered in the king, a feature indicated, for example, through Canterbury's assessment that "Never was such *sudden* scholar made" (1.1.32, emphasis added).

18   p. 18.

19   p. 148.

20   p. 171.

21   Jonathan Baldo notes how Henry even extends the scope of his grand vision further, by attempting to "yoke one of the most celebrated victories in English military history with the ecclesiastical calendar" in order to "weave together ecclesiastical, patriotic, and even private forms of memory into a unified and centralized national memory," see Baldo (1996).

22   On "the readiness of Westmorland's mind" as "result[ing] from his felt experience of the moment," see Smith (2014).

23   On Henry's speech a "moment of social remembering, framed as reminiscence in the future tense," see Dawson (1999). Noting how the king's oration generates "social cohesion" within the world of the play, Dawson further argues that it serves "to shape historical consciousness" within the space of the theater, a signal instance of how "[n]arrative and performance are represented as co-extensive with historical understanding" (54–55). See also Brian Walsh, who reads the scene as illuminating how "history requires regular expediture of effort, including the continual involvement of an audience that enables the story to take place." As Walsh rightly notes, history, like theater, depends upon considerable supplementary work in order "to fill in the gaps that result from imperfect memory or imperfect means of representation" (Walsh 2009b).

24   On this "quantitative epistemology" and the coincident emphasis on "the extensive measuring and accounting of the world," see Dear (1995), 1. For the early modern impulse toward standardizing measurements–and alertness to the inconsistencies, subjective elements, and other problems of standardizations–see Blank (2018). On a corollary sense, voiced by Thomas Sprat to the Royal Society in the later seventeenth century, that rhetoricians and orators should"[bring] all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can," see Mann (2012).

25   In this, the Chorus pointedly contrasts Henry's own more selective method for retelling history, recalling as it does the broader changes which surround the king's tenure. For all its countervailing forces, as Kastan observes, Shakespeare's play "forces us to see the history of his reign as a mere episode carved from the continuum of human time" (51).

26   As Jonathan Baldo observes, this moment opens for us "an alternative sense, several times hinted at in the play, of national memory as the product of cunning and artful manipulation" (143). On the contrast between Henry's self-mythologizing "projection of the future" and the "future already known to a theater audience that had witnessed . . . the turmoil of Shakespeare's first historical tetralogy," see Eggert (1994).

27   p. 40.

28   On the play's broader "self-consciousness about the constitution and dissemination of historical knowledge" and its investment in examining "the *concept* of history and transformations to how the past is represented and circulated," see Walsh (2009a).

References

Altman, Joel B. 1991. 'Vile Participation': The Amplification of Violence in the Theatre of *Henry V*. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42: 1–32, esp. 17–18. [CrossRef]

Baldo, Jonathan. 1996. Wars of Memory in *Henry V*. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47: 132–59, esp. 156. [CrossRef]

Barnes, Jonathan. 2000. *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 75–79.

Barret, J. K. 2016. *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, esp. 20–21 and 147–76.

Blank, Paula. 2018. *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 14–40.

Bostock, David. 1980. "Aristotle's Account of Time". *Phronesis* 25: 148–69, esp. 152–57. [CrossRef]

Carsten, Janet, and Simon Frith, eds. 2016. Hourglasses, Sundials, Clocks, and Early Modern Theatre. In *British Academy Lectures 2014–15*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–34, esp. 27 and 29.

Cohen, Marc S., and C. D. C. Reeve. 2021. "12. Actuality and Potentiality" in "Aristotle's *Metaphysics*". In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta. Winter. Stanford: Stanford University, np. Available online: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/ (accessed on 18 January 2023).

Coope, Ursula. 2005. "The Definition of Time as a Kind of Number" and "Time as a Measure of Change". In *Time for Aristotle: Physics IV. 10–14*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 85–98, 99–109.

Danson, Lawrence. 1983. Henry V: King, Chorus, and Critics. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34: 27–43, esp. 30–39. [CrossRef]

Dawson, Anthony B. 1999. The Arithmetic of Memory: Shakespeare's Theatre and the National Past. *Shakespeare Survey* 52: 54–67, esp. 54.

Dear, Peter. 1995. *Discipline and Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dinshaw, Carolyn. 2012. *How Soon Is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 10.

Eggert, Katherine. 1994. Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*. *ELH* 61: 523–50, esp. 536–37. [CrossRef]

Farrell, Kirby. 1987. Prophetic Behavior in Shakespeare's Histories. *Shakespeare Studies* 19: 17–40, esp. 27–33.

Hume, Alexander. 1594. *A Reioynder to Doctor Hil Concerning the Descense of Christ into Hell*. Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, p. 29.

Hunt, Maurice. 1984. Time and Timelessness in *1 Henry IV*. *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 10: 56–66. [CrossRef]

Translated and Edited by Hussey, Edward. 1983, Aristotle, *Physics, Book IV*. In *Aristotle's Physics: Books III and IV*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 219b1.

Kastan, David Scott. 1982. *Shakespeare and the Shapes of Time*. Hanover: University Press of New England, pp. 9–10.

MacDonald, Michael J. 2021. 'A Feast of Languages:' William Shakespeare's Reception of Ancient Rhetoric. In *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Ancient Rhetoric*. Edited by Sophia Papaioannou, Andreas Serafim and Michael Edwards. Leiden: Brill, pp. 305–30, esp. 328.

Mann, Jenny C. 2012. *Outlaw Rhetoric: Figuring Vernacular Eloquence in Shakespeare's England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 206.

McKeon, Richard, ed. 1941. Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV. In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. New York: Random House, p. 218b.

OED. 2022. "conjecture, n." *OED Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available online: www.oed.com/view/Entry/39240 (accessed on 18 January 2023).

Puttenham, George. 2016. *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition*. Edited by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 324.

Sachs, Joe. 1995. *Aristotle's Physics: A Guided Study*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, p. 133.

Shields, Christopher. 2014. *Aristotle*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 246.

Smith, Matthew J. 2014. The Experience of Ceremony in 'Henry V'. *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 54: 415. [CrossRef]

Thorne, Alison. 2002. 'Awake Remembrance of These Valiant Dead:' *Henry V* and the Politics of the English History Play. *Shakespeare Studies* 30: 162–87, esp. 178.

Walsh, Brian. 2009a. Chantry, Chronicle, Cockpit: Henry V and the Forms of History. In *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*. Edited by Curtis Perry and John Watkins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 151–71, esp. 153.

Walsh, Brian. 2009b. *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 204–5.