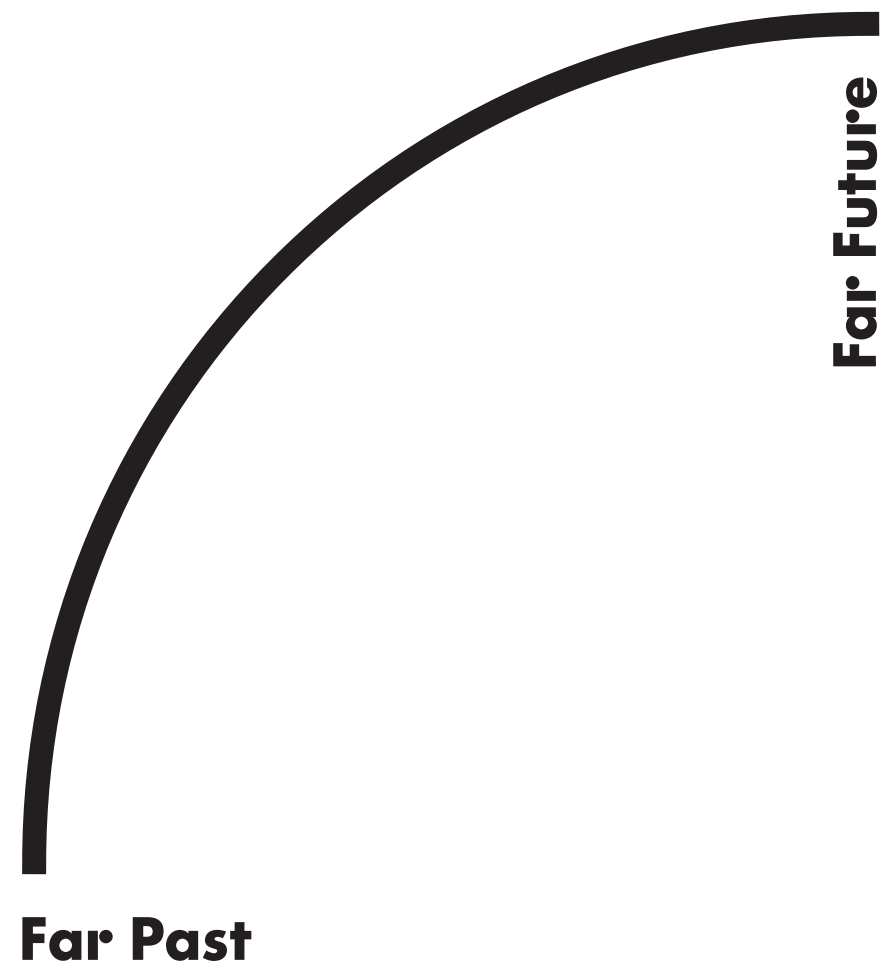


● Fig. 01: A Series



Now what is existent in the adventures of Don Quixote? Nothing. For the story is imaginary. The acts of Cervantes' mind when he invented the story, the acts of my mind when I think of the story -- these exist. But then these form part of an A series. Cervantes' invention of the story is in the past. My thought of the story is in the past, the present, and -- I trust -- the future.

But the adventures of Don Quixote may be believed by a child to be historical. And in reading them I may by an effort of the imagination contemplate them as if they really happened. In this case, the adventures are believed to be existent or imagined as existent. The child who believes them historical will believe that they happened in the past. If I imagine them as existent, I shall imagine them as happening in the past. In the same way, if any one believed the events recorded in Morris's News from Nowhere to exist, or imagined them as existent, he would believe them to exist in the future or imagine them as existent in the future. Whether we place the object of our belief or our imagination in the present, the past, or the future, will depend upon the characteristics of that object.

Take any event -- the death of Queen Anne, for example -- and consider what change can take place in its characteristics. That it is a death, that it is the death of Anne Stuart, that it has such causes, that it has such effects -- every characteristic of this sort never changes.

"Before the stars saw one another plain" the event in question was a death of an English Queen. At the last moment of time -- if time has a last moment -- the event in question will still be a death of an English Queen. And in every respect but one it is equally devoid of change. But in one respect it does change. It began by being a future event. It became every moment an event in the nearer future. At last it was present. Then it became past, and will always remain so, though every moment it becomes further and further past.

For the
timeless never
changes.

"Before the stars saw one another plain"

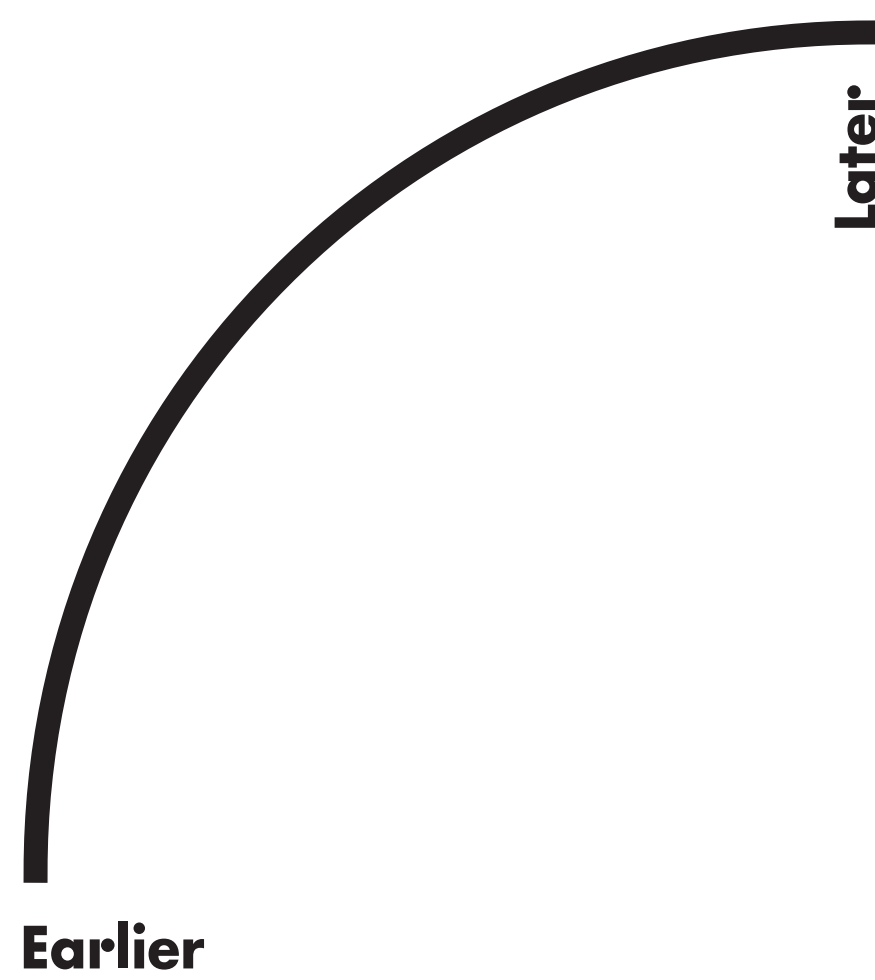
Example: "Your breakfast this morning," we can say to an inquirer, "is past; this conversation is present; your dinner this evening is future." We can do no more.

If I imagine them as existent, I shall imagine them as happening in the past. In the same way, if any one believed the events recorded in Morris's News from Nowhere to exist, or imagined them as existent, he would believe them to exist in the future or imagine them as existent in the future. Whether we place the object of our belief or our imagination in the present, the past, or the future, will depend upon the characteristics of that object.

Let us suppose that the distinction of past, present and future does not apply to reality. Can change apply to reality? What is it that changes?

Thus the answer to the objection is that, just as a thing is in time, it is in the **A series**. If it is really in time, it is really in the **A series**. If it is believed to be in time, it is believed to be in the **A series**. If it is imagined as in times it is imagined as in the **A series**.

● Fig. 02: B Series



● Fig. 03: C Series



It may seem that this can easily be explained. Indeed it has been impossible to state the difficulty without almost giving the explanation, since our language has verb-forms for the past, present, and future, but no form that is common to all three. It is never true, the answer will run, that **M** is present, past and future. It is present, will be past, and has been future. Or it is past, and has been future and present, or again is future and will be present and past.

"Before the stars saw one another plain."

● Fig. 04

