



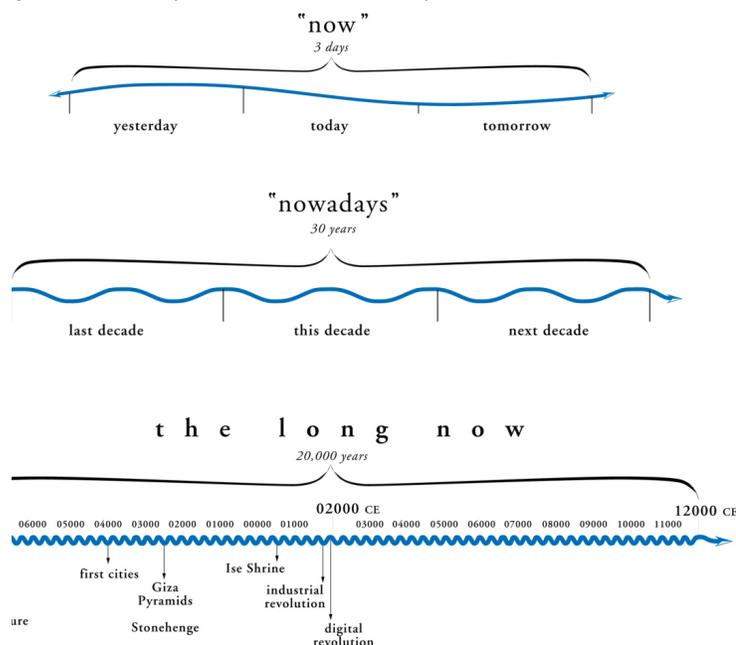
Background on *Dreamwalker* by August Schulenburg: The Anthropocene

Anthropocene is an unofficial geologic chronological term. The era’s parameters are nonspecific. It is marked by the period humanoids began dramatically affecting Earth’s ecosystem. The supposed reason our epoch has acquired a new name is that future geologists will be able to spot a fundamental discontinuity in rock strata. It is also a socio-political term that calls humanoids to become self-aware and promote biodiversity. Schulenburg, on his website, states:

“We need a new ethics in this epoch called the Anthropocene; a Declaration of Interdependence that acknowledges our mutual responsibilities to each other as sailors on this wounded ship; a way of living in The Long Now that shifts our consciousness away from valuing short-term personal material gain; and towards long-term communal vitality.”

The group “Planet Under Pressure” released an introductory video at their 2012 conference titled “Welcome to the Anthropocene”. Which you can view here: <https://vimeo.com/39048998>

Schulenburg asks himself and his readership to question how they view time and the consequences of their actions. Schulenburg also touches on “The Long Now.” The Long Now is public non-profit with a focus on expanding the common understanding of time, based in Western society. The group proposes achieving this by moving us from a millennial clock to a ten-thousand year clock (ie. 1996 to 01996).



Schulenburg supports the idea that if human persons weigh their actions on a larger scale than their lifetime, towards a ten-thousand year scale, we will make different decisions; “different” being more environmentally and socially conscious. These more “conscious” decisions would then affect non-human persons. A non-human person, as defined by the Institute of Ethics and Emerging Technologies, is:

“A number of non-human animals, including the great apes, cetaceans (i.e. dolphins and whales), elephants, and parrots, [that] exhibit characteristics and tendencies consistent with that of a person’s traits like self-awareness, intentionality, creativity, symbolic communication, and many others.”

Environmental consciousness is a prevalent theme in Schulenburg’s other works (ie. Tidal Devices), but there are no direct ties to Dream Walker and this theme. However, the idea of consciousness and cause-and-effect are both at the heart of this play’s protagonist Richie and his development into a super-human. This development makes him non-human, but more human than any other person we see in this world. It calls into question how we identify humans, animals, the mentally handicapped, and the gifted.

Work Cited

Schulenburg, August. “Battlestar Earth.” August Schulenburg. WordPress, 04 Jan. 2014. Web. 08 Feb. 2015.

Welcome to the Anthropocene. Welcome to the Anthropocene. Planet Under Pressure, 18 Mar. 2012. Web. 8 Feb. 2015.

The Long Now. Digital image. The Long Now. The Long Now, n.d. Web. 8 Feb. 2015.

Dvorsky, George. “Rights of Non-Human Persons.” IEET Program. Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, n.d. Web. 08 Feb. 2015.