



Deep Time: How Humanity Communicates Across Millennia

Gregory Benford

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Human civilization has evolved to the point at which we have begun consciously sending messages into the far future. How should we communicate who we are, what we know, to as-yet-unmet intelligent beings elsewhere in both time and space? Will they be able to decipher what we say? And what information will we leave to Earth's occupants a million years hence? How can we address an unknown destiny in which human culture itself may no longer exist?

Combining the logical rigor of a scientist with the lyrical beauty of a novelist, Gregory Benford explores these and other fascinating questions in a provocative analysis of humanity's attempts to make its culture immortal, to cross the immense gulf that such deep-time messages must span in order to be understood. In clear, crisp language, he confronts our growing influence on events hundreds of thousands of years into the future, and explores the possible "messages" we may transmit to our distant descendants in the language of the planet itself -- from nuclear waste to global warming to the extinction of species.

We are already sending messages into nearby space; in the coming ages we will be able to launch probes accurately to other stars. Our indelible legacy to future generations, or to the next occupants of this planet, is already being constructed. As we begin our incredible journey down the path of eternity, Gregory Benford masterfully calls forth some of the intriguing, astounding, undreamed -- of futures which may await us in deep time. Human civilization has evolved to the point at which we have begun consciously sending messages into the far future. How should we communicate who we are, what we know, to as-yet-unmet intelligent beings elsewhere in both time and space? Will they be able to decipher what we say? And what information will we leave to Earth's occupants a million years hence? How can we address an unknown destiny in which human culture itself may no longer exist? Combining the logical rigor of a scientist with the lyrical beauty of a novelist, Gregory Benford explores these and other fascinating questions in a provocative analysis of humanity's attempts to make its culture immortal, to cross the immense gulf that such deep-time messages must span in order to be understood. In clear, crisp language, he confronts our growing influence on events hundreds of thousands of years into the future, and explores the possible "messages" we may transmit to our distant descendants in the language of the planet itself--from nuclear waste to global warming to the extinction of species.

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