The Terras are so named because they wish to remain dominant on this planet. Their horizons are terrestrial. To the Cosmists, this attitude is provincial in the extreme. To the Terras, the aspirations of the Cosmists are fraught with danger, and are to be resisted at any cost. The survival of humanity is at stake.

There may be a way out of this moral dilemma. With 21st century space technology, it may be entirely feasible to transport whole populations of Cosmist scientists and technicians to some distant planet, where they can build their artilects and suffer the consequences. However, even this opinion may be too risky for some Terran politicians, because the artilects may choose to return to the Earth, and with their superior intellects, they could easily overcome the military precautions installed by the Terras.

4. SUMMARY

This article claims that intelligentists will be able to construct true electronic (optical, molecular) brains, called artilects, within one to two human generations. It is argued that this possibility is not a piece of science fiction, but is an opinion held by a growing number of professional intelligists. This prospect raises the moral dilemma of whether human beings should or should not allow the artilects to be built, and whether they should or should not be allowed to modify themselves into superbeings, beyond human comprehension. This dilemma will probably dominate political and philosophical discussion in the 21st century. A new branch of applied moral philosophy needs to be established to consider the artilect problem.

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REFERENCES