Summary

“Technology and Ethics in the Day the Earth Stood Still” written by Aeon J. Skoble reflects on the ethical arguments found within the “The Day the Earth Stood Still.” He first discusses the use/purpose of use of the Christian allegory. Though he does recognize the connection, he rejects this interpretation on the basis that Klaatu’s message was never that we all needed to love each other or even get along- only that we cannot show aggression or threaten others. Next he moves into the discussion of the philosophy of force, aggression, and harm as portrayed within the film. He frequently refers to the “harm principle” on both a macro and micro scale within the exposition. In short, this principle distinguishes that even though you may possess the right to harm yourself, you absolutely lack the right to harm others. Furthering on, one possess the right to defend itself from aggression against someone who lacked the right to use it. (Skoble 94) The article continues on referencing several arguments of freedoms and rights, costs of war and conflict, Klaatu’s and his planets use of preemptive self-defense by coming to Earth and giving this warning. “Don’t commit aggression or Gort with retailiate.” (Skoble 97) Skoble, nearing his conclusion, pulls together his points with the discussion of, though we have in our possession a weapon of mass destruction, we might not really have the right to use it, “It would be wrong to use passersby as target practice for one’s rifle.” (Skoble 100) He had throughout the piece been discussing the rights of weapons, force, and freedoms and conclusively states that because our weapons are so powerful, we have the obligation to take care of these risks responsibly and moreover limiting or eradicating our aggression.

Paraphrase:

There were a variety of features within entertainment of the 1950s of various threats from postmodern technologies, hostile alien takeovers, crisis derived from the evolving technologies, even all out planet annihilation. These inclusions were all in a larger effort to reflect and speak to the need for a deeper understanding of the mutualism between human civilization and nature as well as shed light on the growing anxieties during to this post war period. (Huebner 17)