The Lessons of *Mr. Hublot* in Philosophy and Ethics

Zachary Hay  
March 13, 2015

**Purpose of Lesson**

*Mr. Hublot* (2013) raises many questions regarding empathy and artificial intelligence. This can enlighten and engage any classroom studying philosophy and ethics.

**Summary of Film**

*Mr. Hublot* is a Luxembourgian animated film about a man who lives in a mechanicalized future and finds companionship with a small robotic dog. The man has Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and fits in well with his highly mechanically organized world. When he takes in the robotic dog, things go well. However, the dog gets larger and larger and soon disrupts the man's organized life because of his size. In 2014, *Mr. Hublot* won an Academy Award for Best Short Film (Animated). The film runs 11:03.

*Mr. Hublot* (2013)  

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http://filmstudies.info/teaching/hay-zachary.html  
Last updated on 15 March 2015  
Photo Credit: Screen captures from *Mr. Hubble*
Lesson Plan

Part 1: Discussion

First, the instructor should begin a conversation by asking:

- Can/should artificial beings be empathized with?
- At what point do artificial beings become “conscious”?

Part 2: Screen Mr. Hubble

Next, the instructor should screen the film.

Part 3: Discussion

The instructor should continue the discussion by asking the same questions but in a new context. For example:

- Is the dog a conscious being? Why or why not?
- Is the man right to love the dog?
- Toward the end of the film, when it appeared that the man had to put the dog down, did you empathize with the dog or just the man for having to do such a thing?

Conclusion

After this lesson, the class should have a better understanding of what constitutes a living being and what deserves empathy.

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