Redemption Through the Eyes of the Redeemed

For many companies and corporations, hidden messaging is one of the easiest ways to sell a product. In some movies and shows, that same form of subliminal messaging is an easy way to promote an agenda. Could it be possible that the subliminal messages filtering through movies and shows have negative messages or agendas behind them? The answer can be found by realizing the importance of analyzing the types of messages that are being passed through those outlets, then, seeing how those messages are played out in the movie *Mr. Church*, and, finally, seeing what kind of positive message could be conveyed instead. In the movie *Mr. Church*, there are many hidden messages that have positive connotations, such as the themes of forgiveness and redemption; but, there are a few hidden messages that relay negative messages like the disregard of consequences as the result of rebellion. These messages can affect an audience much deeper than just watching the film, which is why it is so important to point them out.

For starters, the importance of analyzing the messages conveyed through entertainment media is mainly the result of how receptive children are to what they see on a screen. So why does a child automatically interpret the message from a movie as one they should immediately apply to their life? The answer to the previous question lies deeper than initially believed. In the book, "Hidden Messages: What Our Words and Actions Are Really Telling Our Children", by Elizabeth Pantley, William Sears, M.D., states that "A child's self-image is affected- for better or worse- by the messages he or she receives from parents and caregivers" (Pantley 11). By a parent
allowing a young child or teenager to watch a film or movie, the child will initially believe that the parent would never show them anything that goes against the morals or standards that the parent has raised them to believe; therefore, the young person may not realize that a negative message is one they should not use as an example to follow. In "Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Messages of Children's Films," written by Keith Booker, he noted the fact that "children find slapstick violence quite entertaining, especially as animated characters can emerge unscathed from such violence" (Brooker 2). This is important to recognize given the extreme, yet highly probable "what if", after seeing Daffy Duck get slapped on the head with an iron skillet. What if a kid decided to slap their friend on the head with one expecting the same results from the film? It is important to note that problems like these occur often, and if kids do not understand the consequences of their actions, then these problems will occur more often than they do now.

Secondly, it is easily seen that while Mr. Church has received great reviews, not all messages relayed from the film are positive. For example, when Charlie, one of the film's main characters, goes off to college, winds up getting pregnant, and having to drop out, the film never really shows a negative side to that. Having to drop out of college, due to an unplanned pregnancy is never easy and the film neglects to show the hardships that follow such an act. The film strongly neglects to show the frustration that follows after losing thousands of dollars, struggling to find employment, and the setbacks from having an unexpected person to take care of. The film, instead, chose to focus on the idea that someone else would always be able to assist in the time of need, rather than include the struggles that would most likely occur in real life.

Finally, while the film did not always relay the best notions, it provided some very positive life lessons, of which the viewers should have taken note. The movie settles around the theme of showing the importance of having family around at a time when needed most. In the
family, Charlie says the quote, "I had nowhere to go and for the first time, I realized I had no one" (Beresford). This is a very important quote that the director made sure to get across in the film. Every person, in their life, at some point, has felt alone. This phrase from the film allows for a connection from everyone in the audience to those acting on the screen. Throughout the rest of the film, it takes course in showing a sense of redemption that can be known by having experienced it before. After Charlie had her feud with the drunken Mr. Church, then had the accident outside of the grocery store, the audience sees Mr. Church rush into the hospital to help take care of her, demonstrating his love and forgiveness with no strings attached. This message of redemption is an important one that anyone at any age, from young to old, should and needs to hear. Understanding the value of having family and friends is a message that will never grow old.

All in all, when watching the film Mr. Church, the negative messages are present, but the most important and positive message of all, forgiveness, is there and is strong. The message of forgiveness is present from beginning to end, providing a much stronger theme for the movie, making it easy for the audience to notice. At some point in the film, each character exhibits some form of giving and receiving forgiveness. In life, it is inevitable that a person will have to forgive someone and receive it in return, and that is what makes this movie so relatable to any audience.
Works Cited

Beresford, Bruce, director. *Mr. Church*. Amazon Prime Video, 2016.
