

# The *Frozen* Formula: A Reading of the Film's Calculated Rise to National Popularity

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*Once upon a time there was a man with an odd sounding name. This man loved to tell stories and dreamed of bringing happiness to all the world, especially its children. The man started his own company and as he grew in success his company also grew. From this company came many stories and songs. These stories and songs gave the world joy and wonder. One day, this man's company, long after he was gone, created a story and songs so wonderful it took the world by storm- a snowstorm as a matter of fact. This creation, so intense, so satisfying, amassed immense popularity with old and young alike. People everywhere were so taken by the company's new masterpiece that they couldn't control themselves; they couldn't let it go. But why?*

## I. Introduction

On November 27, 2013 popular culture in America was forever altered with the release of Walt Disney Animation Studios' *Frozen*. Cruising along a highway paved of dollar signs, the Walt Disney Company (Disney) has long established its reign on not only the animated film industry but all aspects of popular culture. With release after release of feel-good films filled with loveable characters and good messaging or life lessons, Disney has virtually cornered the market in movies. Disney's line of princess movies has done exceptionally well with lasting impacts. From this good fortune, the funny, musical, and tear-jerking film *Frozen* emerged. Instantly Disney had hit it big as box office totals and music downloads soared, and merchandising and society became flooded with the film's imagery, lyrics, and quotes. Four years later, *Frozen* and its showboat of commercialization is still going strong with short clip reincarnations and

a barrage of material culture. How is it though that this 109-minute children's film has so entirely and effectively permeated American culture and why can people not "let it go"? What is it about *Frozen* that makes it so popular and transcendent? It is this crucial question which this paper will attempt to answer.

Spawned from a classic, but drastically different fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, *Frozen* is evidence of the classic Disney touch which turns horrific or despairing original stories into warmhearted and loveable animated gems. Classics such as "Cinderella" or "The Little Mermaid" with grotesque plotlines that sour even an adult's stomach, are proof of the magical transformation Disney employs on its capitalist quest. This metamorphosis, however, is not where *Frozen* is set apart- though it shares in its own shapeshifting process. It is rather this new creation, the film itself, which is unique among its predecessors but for an entirely new Disney-devised make-over scheme, is the first of its kind. With the advent of *Frozen*, Disney created and rewrote an entirely new code for storylines and filmmaking. Harnessing underlying elements of American culture which establish appeal, Disney has created its own formula for destined successful films. Through the use of a devised formula composed up of an attractive icy aesthetic and catchy music, blatant girl power or feminist shadowing, and perfectly imperfect imperfections, Disney's *Frozen* is a road map for calculated success and ineradicable popularity.

## II. Film Summary

Set in a northern Nordic land surrounded largely by mountains and water, *Frozen* instantly has all the makings for a grand adventure. Opening with a chilly and vaguely ominous opening chant scene which showcases manly ice cutters working in a barren and unforgiving icy wasteland, *Frozen* instantly seems to tell its audience how exactly it got its name. Progressing on to introduce the main characters of royal sisters Anna and Elsa, the latter and older shows off her magical powers. Proud of the joy she and her younger sister get from the conjured snowflakes, ice skating rinks, and snowmen, Elsa freely exercises her powers. As

rambunctious Anna eggs on her magical sister, disaster strikes when Elsa's rescue attempt shoots frosty ice into Anna's head leaving her unconscious. The tone of anxiety increases as the family must race to the mountains seeking a cure by the hands of rocky trolls. With Anna's memory erased of all her sister's magical powers, Elsa is solemnly ushered into hiding her powers and ultimately herself. In a musical montage the sister's age distanced from one another as Anna grows lonelier upon failed attempts to connect with Elsa whose life inside her bedroom becomes totally encompassed by fear of her powers and her proposed inability to control them. This sad downward spiral concludes with the tragic death of their parents, the King and Queen.

Musically ringing in the current day, Elsa's coronation as queen, Anna happily laments and hopefully looks towards the day's events where she will finally be surrounded by people and life will fill the castle for the celebration. Despite Elsa's trembling hands, all goes as planned until lonely Anna literally tries to reach out and connect with her sister. Icy sparks fly as Elsa fears losing control and hurting someone she cares about. Instantly taking flight from her confused kingdom, Elsa leaves a snowy and frozen landscape in her wake. Desperate to not lose her sister again, Anna immediately sets out on mission to find Elsa and consequently thaw the kingdom. In her absence, Anna leaves her newfound love, Prince Hans, in charge.

As Anna traipses and trudges through the snowy mountains to find Elsa she meets a menagerie of characters. Serving as reluctant but humoring guide, ice cutter Kristoff and his jolly reindeer Sven accompany Anna. Shortly after this team-up, a snowman from Anna and Elsa's past-named Olaf comedically lends his services to the mission. After a few hiccups, Elsa is finally found in her sparkling and majestic, self-created ice castle perched atop a peak. Anna's hopeful reconciliation does not go as plan when Elsa is overcome by fear and strikes Anna again-this time in her heart. Now Kristoff, Sven, and Olaf set out to cure Anna before she becomes solid ice with a true love's kiss. Meanwhile, Anna's supposed true love Prince Hans has led his own mission and captured Elsa in chains as he returns her to the palace prison. Moments grow short as Anna is raced back to town to kiss Hans and be saved but her

"true love" denies her for his evil scheme to take over her kingdom of Arendelle.

Events continue to worsen as Hans informs Elsa that Anna has died at her hand. Now heartbroken with the idea that her fears have become reality the escaped Elsa lies at the hands of Hans who raises his sword to strike and likely kill her. Simultaneously, the near-frozen-death Anna is weakly making her way to Kristoff who she realizes she loves when through the hurricane-like blizzard she spies Elsa in trouble. Turning away from nearing Kristoff, Anna rushes to Elsa and just in time stops Hans' blade with her now ice figure. All quickly resolves itself as Elsa's tears of love for her frozen sister help save Anna. With her newfound love and happiness, Elsa thaws the kingdom and can control her powers as all rejoice with the reunited sisters.

### III. On the Surface: The Icy Aesthetic and Catchy Music

Quite unlike anything else Disney has produced, *Frozen* is a film where severe weather is the cause for the story's movement and progression. The icy settings which fill nearly every scene of the film are one of the key reasons for its popularity. This first taste of *Frozen* that viewers get, the aesthetically pleasing and captivating landscapes of ice and snow are the initial draw and reasoning for the film's popularity. The surface layer of Disney's calculated formula for success and wide-spread popularity is rooted in *Frozen*'s icy theming. Whether allowing the perverse delight of glimpsing a potential apocalyptic future, discovering a secret and elaborate culture previously unknown, or seizing upon a favorite American holiday season and its connotations, *Frozen* is a snowy solution that reacts with and engages viewers' most basic desires and likes.

Today's America has relatively little to fear in comparison with its early days when the environment held great power over its subjects. As progressive and accomplished as America has become in terms of subduing and conquering its surroundings and nature, there are still the cataclysmic natural disasters which can subdue this great nation. Powerful workings of nature, like blizzards constantly pose a threat to a species so concerned with climate change and the threat of an ice age. No matter what an individual might fear

most, one still cannot help being drawn to glimpses or previews of a devastating fate. *Frozen* provides exactly this opportunity. Similar to how different types of apocalyptic films draw large audiences who might hope for some clue as to what might be coming in the future, *Frozen* gives a glimpse- if highly comical and fantastical- into a possible fate which Earth might face.

Just as people are drawn to the dangerous, lands or worlds different from that of their own are equally alluring. Set in a fictitious but realistic and plausible place, *Frozen* offers viewers a landscape, culture, and people much like themselves but different enough to prove interesting. Strewn with slightly Nordic symbols, architecture, and customs *Frozen* gives viewers a glimpse into a possibly secret land and culture which they do not know about or understand. The combination of fjords, climbing mountains, and simultaneous environments of snow and summer situates the imaginary kingdom of Arendelle as some place made up of a mixture of recognizable features mashed into a single location.

The icy aesthetic of *Frozen* also attracts a number of fans for its obvious Christmas connotations. Released in late November a few days after Thanksgiving, *Frozen* had the perfect timing and story to be the year's great Christmas movie. With several states in America no stranger to snow before or shortly after Thanksgiving, many could empathize with the frosty and glistening white landscapes of the film. Chilled from the trek to the theater, viewers relished the idea of enjoying wintry landscapes but without the necessary parkas and snow boots. With the conclusion of Thanksgiving as the official start of the Christmas season, the icy aesthetic and well-timed release date of *Frozen* likewise gave Disney the advantage for enthusiastic viewers. Following Thanksgiving many Americans rush the next day to put up their Christmas decorations, find the perfect tree, and most of all start wishing for snow to fall to make the dropping temperatures bearable. Disney used these customs to its advantage with the release and story of *Frozen*. As Anna hopes her and Elsa will finally come together and celebrate the coronation as many gather to celebrate the holidays, snow and ice come into play ultimately uniting them. The attractive winter weather of *Frozen* draws even more fans for the characters it allows to come forth. As a reindeer,

Sven, is a popular symbol of all things winter and Christmas. Born literally from the snowy landscape *Frozen* displays, Olaf the snowman (also a popular symbol of winter and Christmas) attracts viewers with his adorable laugh and key quotes; he *is* the attractive icy aesthetic come to life. For Disney who sees its own fair share of financial boom during the holiday season, *Frozen* is the goldmine they couldn't resist creating.

Sparkling icy scenes and all that they entail are not the only surface element which keeps people enamored with Disney's *Frozen*, the catchy songs are another of Disney's calculated candy for the masses. In typical Disney fashion, an impeccable score is a crucial element to a moving and successful film. Even more a necessity however, are the handful of songs sung by the main characters which no one can help but subconsciously memorize. The catchy, uplifting and emotional melodies of *Frozen* are yet another cog in the wheel of Disney's formula of success for this film.

Employing popular music's long-utilized concept of "earworm" where through a devised equation of repetitive lyrics and rhythms a song essentially forces itself into popularity, Disney's *Frozen* is filled with repetitive and catchy lyrics set to their equal in musical notes (*Music in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Encyclopedia*, 353-355). Thanks to *Frozen*, the phrases "let it go", "for the first time in forever", and "do you want to build a snowman" will never be the same or able to be spoken without the remaining lyrics or tune continuing on in one's mind. The characters which sing their perfectly apportioned are as much to thank for sealing the deal on the song's and film's success: confident and beautiful Elsa's "Let It Go", Anna dealing with loneliness and heartbreak in "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?", and Olaf's cheery but naïve dreams of his future warm weather enjoyment in "In Summer". The combination of each of these elements illustrate the crucial role *Frozen*'s songs play in unraveling Disney's formula and the film's incredible popularity.

#### **IV. Secondary Level: Girl Power and Feminist Shadowing**

Just within the past few decades feminism and notions of "girl power" have overwhelmingly taken hold of American society and, more importantly, popular culture. From songs by female

singers giving words of empowerment, to newly evolving leading ladies in television and film, popular culture is craving strong females who are fearless and can get things done. Never one to look a proverbial “gift horse in the mouth”, Disney seized upon this notion and incorporated it into its carefully constructed formula for *Frozen*. As the world continues along with a policy of every (wo)man for themselves, parents seek out positive and empowering role models and messages to pass along to their daughters. Disney comes to these parents’ rescue and presents *Frozen* as the answer to all their problems.

In striking contrast and as evidence to Disney’s new formula, *Frozen* is virtually the first movie of its kind to not only have two strong female leads, but also to convey the acceptability of single women going about their lives without the constant thought of getting a man or marrying. This solidarity in female solitude is pivotal to understanding *Frozen*’s wide spread appeal. This effect is especially amplified when this female self-sufficiency is doubled, as two same-sex individuals use each other for strength. In the wake of their parents’ tragic deaths shortly into the film, Anna and Elsa must at relatively young ages face a world and ruling a kingdom alone. This heartbreaking development is a powerful deployment utilized by Disney as it instantly causes audiences of all ages to empathize with the characters and connect to the film. Disney’s tear-jerking apparatus does not stop there, however. As young sisters moving forward in life parentless, Anna and Elsa’s aloneness is multiplied by their own emotional distance. Following up on an earlier established precedent, Elsa has physically distanced herself from Anna prior to their parents’ deaths. This type of familial separation consequently strikes a chord with many Americans who suffer troubles with their relations. Shameless, Disney exploits audiences’ emotions as they identify with *Frozen*’s story and increase its popularity.

More than anything, popular culture adores a character that can overcome despite oppression. Here too, Disney has carefully crafted *Frozen* to satisfy and appeal. Plagued by inter-family disaster and separation, Anna and Elsa early on and throughout the film are resilient. Though disheartened by her sister’s distance, Anna insists on making her own entertainment as a child and

later young adult. Often expressing her boredom and loneliness like in the song “Do You Want To Build a Snowman?”, Anna prevails and maintains her hope for a sister reunion and company as evidenced in the tune “For the First Time in Forever”. Not content to stop there, Disney has also formulated Anna with a perseverance to quickly dive headfirst into a mission to find Elsa after she flees to the mountains in escape. Clad only in her party dress and a cape, Anna is an inspiration to all as she seems relatively impervious to her snowy surroundings- and more importantly frostbite and hypothermia.

The equal parts envy and admiration Disney calculatingly incites in *Frozen*’s audiences for its characters overflows from Anna onto Elsa. The elder and more responsible sister, Elsa must shoulder the burden of her misunderstood powers. In thought protecting Anna and those she loves, Elsa resigns herself to a solitary existence. Admirably, Elsa bears her confinement with strength and gracefully “weathers the storm” in a way that film viewers aspire to in their lives. Elsa’s, and largely *Frozen*’s, popularity stem from the extraordinary way in which she ultimately overcomes her fears heroically through the discovery of her sister’s love as a means to control her powers.

Wasting nothing, Disney utilizes the heartbreaking, raw emotions left in viewers from Anna and Elsa’s complex loneliness to turn *Frozen* into a tale of girl power and feminist ideas. Scared of herself and the power she possesses, Disney has created in Elsa a prime figure ready to self-realize her greatness and potential. Like many females who are told by society to control themselves and cover up their true selves, Elsa is constantly pushed to “conceal, don’t feel” so her powers remain hidden and less dangerous. As the women’s movement and feminism has pushed itself to the forefront, strong and dynamic women are feared as much as they are revered. Such a powerful character, for both of these reasons, is who popular culture wants to see and experience. In actualization of this popular role, Elsa in her Grammy and Academy Award-winning song “Let It Go” is virtually transformed at the hands of her newfound freedom to be herself. Originally frightening herself and others with her powers and unknown potential, Elsa hides herself away, though secretly yearning to be set free. It is in

her eventual self-created freedom, that Elsa embraces her powers and potential- as many female viewers wish to do themselves. This means of living vicariously and the great role model which Disney gives to viewers through Elsa, are key to *Frozen*'s astounding popularity, especially among females who crave their own freedom to be themselves.

## V. The Connecting Glue: Perfect Imperfections

Finally, each part of Disney's carefully calculated *Frozen* is held together by one crucial element: its precisely designed imperfections. Without this common glue linking them all together, neither the icy scenes, catchy songs, compelling characters, or empowering female messages would rise *Frozen* to the excessive popularity it holds today. The common misconception of perfection as the key to success no longer applies or is effective in a recognizably flawed and criticized American society- imperfection is what sells. As popular culture seeks out the unique and different, those who can reach self-actualization in their imperfections are now attractive and desirable. Disney has designed the characters and story line of *Frozen* to be perfectly imperfect, which is the greatest key to the film and its resounding success.

Often in an attempt to spur on conflict, Disney has allowed in many of its movies a family or social structure that is removed from the ideal- namely in the form of one long-deceased parent. With *Frozen*, however, Disney utilizes a plethora of dysfunctions to shatter a family unit in a manner similar to many modern American families. For a few brief moments of a single scene at the beginning of the film, the royal family of Arendelle is perfect and happy. Following this short stint of perfection, the remainder of the film focuses on and is a driving force of the story of a family unit plagued by imperfections. With the deaths of father and mother, Anna and Elsa's family unit is instantly shattered and not heeding to the ideal structure. From this fracture, the family structure is further distorted as the two remaining members, sister and sister, are physically and emotionally separated. For two members of the same family to be so distanced from one another, far from what is considered perfect, the family unit of *Frozen* is one that instantly gleams audience sympathy and empathy. This personal connection which many Americans

feel towards this element of *Frozen* reflects the common and convoluted structures which often make-up American families- broken, blended, or likewise.

With the haunting echo of the scripted and rigid Victorian era or poised and charismatic early to mid-twentieth century still ringing, many Americans look to shake off such structured behavior. Anna, younger and naïve, is the personification of this changing focus and values. Bubbly and bumbling, Anna repeatedly stumbles and stutters through the film in a manner that many audience members see themselves going through their own lives. When Anna, singing and unaware, falls off the dock into a rowboat and then drags her handsome would-be rescuer into her clumsiness, each viewer recalls their own stumbles and embarrassment in front of a crush or attractive individual. Anna's completely disheveled hair upon waking up on coronation day likewise resonates with many viewers who envy the sexy bedhead look. Whether she is attempting and failing to climb a cliff wall, goofily daydreaming of meeting her true love, or stammering out unexpected and jumbled phrases when nervously speaking, Anna's abundant imperfections that leave her far from graceful and perfect are all purposefully placed by Disney to appeal to the masses. Anna allows viewers to vicariously live through her as she seemingly flaunts her imperfections without embarrassment which many self-conscious Americans dream of doing themselves.

Where Anna's planted imperfections are readily apparent, Elsa's are hidden beneath an attractive surface. While Anna showcases her freckles and red hair, Elsa is a frosted Barbie doll come to life. Whether in her concealing and proper queenly attire or in a glistening and sleek ice dress and sheer cape, Elsa is arresting in beauty and elegance. A supermodel and the envy of females everywhere on the exterior, Elsa's apparent perfection is reversed into a self-conscious and conflicted chaos on the inside which is perfectly contrived by Disney to resonate with viewers. The mere fact that Elsa has ice powers she was born with is an imperfection all its own. This inherent imperfection is utilized by Disney to its advantage. As many viewers identify themselves as being born with their own unique and natural talents, a personal connection is made to Elsa while she struggles

between suppressing and showcasing her gift. When Elsa's powers are viewed as an oddity or out of the norm, she is encouraged to keep them, and consequently her true self, concealed as others fail to understand their beauty. Feeling equally misunderstood by others, audience members relate strongly to Elsa.

To top off the "imperfection" of her magical but alluring powers, Elsa also is inwardly wrought with a mess of conflicting emotions. In one scene after another, Elsa can be seen feeling a constant rollercoaster of emotions such as fear, insecurity, confidence, and power. For example, at the beginning of the film, Anna and Elsa are playing among Elsa's snowy creations when suddenly the positive mood shifts as Anna is knocked unconscious by Elsa's powers. Additionally, later in the film, Elsa's triumphant scene of self-expression as she builds a shimmering ice palace comes to an abrupt halt when Elsa becomes flustered and afraid upon Anna showing up and trying to bring Elsa back to Arendelle to undo the damage she has caused. Finally, at the end of the film, in a matter of minutes Elsa goes from heartbroken crying over Anna's frozen figure to being encompassed by intense love as she thaws the kingdom from snow into sunshine. This exhibition of such a wide range of emotions in a short time period causes many viewers to identify with and understand Elsa in a way that those around them do not. Carefully crafted by Disney, *Frozen's* Elsa elevates the film's popularity through the intense personal connection many viewers make to the gifted, misunderstood, and emotionally complex character.

While the inner and outer turmoil *Frozen's* leading ladies experience at their own faults seems to take center stage, Disney makes certain to not exclude the males from its contrived and appealing imperfection. Though obviously taking the backseat to the females in a revolutionary and surprising twist, the male characters in Disney's *Frozen* do not let their own imperfections be outshone. The most imperfect and skillfully contrived character present in Disney's *Frozen* comes in the form of Prince Hans of the Southern Isles. *Frozen* would not have truly been fulfilling the template of its princess movie predecessors if there had not been a prince figure present. While Prince Hans fill this royal call in name, Disney's calculated design of the character upsets the traditional standard. Unlike his fellow

characters, Prince Hans' imperfection stems less from a deeply flawed and complicated personality and speaks more to the contrast between his officially named role and the plot's necessity of a villainous archetype. Prince Hans begins as Anna's destined true love- thus fulfilling the assumed typical Prince/Princess love story- but ends in a perfectly calculated twist as her sister's would-be murderer. With Prince Hans as an outwardly and presumably perfect character contrasting against his very imperfect inner villainy, Disney expertly formulated the moment when the audience let out a gasp as their mouths dropped open when Prince Hans refuses Anna a life-saving true love's kiss. Previously, no other Disney film had presented such a shocking about-face which kept audiences re-watching and obsessing over the film as they were repeatedly confounded for having missed any potential warning signs of this treachery.

Where Prince Hans is intentionally written imperfect to highlight his dual statuses ("Prince" and villain), Disney's *Frozen's* Kristoff shares in the female characters' flawed personalities. While Prince Hans acts as a deeply flawed being, Kristoff-like Anna and Elsa- is perfectly contrived to be imperfect in his personal nature. An iceman, adopted troll, and best friend to a reindeer, Kristoff is hardly a Prince Charming or knight in shining armor. Crafted by Disney in a fashion very similar to Anna, Kristoff stumbles over his words and limbs throughout the film in a relatable and likeable manner which appeals to audience members. As cute and clumsy as Prince Hans is composed and groomed, Kristoff fills the true love role in his own gruff and comical princely fashion. Kristoff is designed by Disney to be the perfect man via his awkward faults and is the perfect compliment to Anna, his equally imperfect counterpart in the film. *Frozen's* flawed leading man is a product of Disney's cunning calculation as he lends yet another level for audiences to identify with and further seal the film's formulated popularity.

## VI. Other Opinions

A film of great popularity, Disney's *Frozen* has puzzled others as they try to unravel its incredible success. Skirting around the obvious contrived formula Disney has put forth in the film, *Frozen* critics believe to have each found their own reasoning for the film's popularity. Taking a more critical and decisively feminist approach, University

of California's Madeline Streiff and Lauren Dundes of McDaniel College discuss *Frozen* in terms of gender-stereotyping. Seeing Elsa and *Frozen*'s storyline as achieving popularity for its lack of romance and use of a uniquely powerful female character, Streiff and Dundes assert, "...Elsa is just a variation on the archetypal power-hungry female villain whose lust for power replaces lust for a mate and who threatens the patriarchal status quo. The only twist is that she finds redemption through gender-stereotypical compassion" (Streiff and Dundes 9). Using a different reading, clinical psychology professor Maryam Kia-Keating and Children's Digital Media Center researcher Yalda T. Uhls examine *Frozen* through the lens of children's culture. Focusing specifically on females and preschool age individuals in a *The Washington Post* article, Kia-Keating and Uhls state that *Frozen*'s success stems from four key elements: (1) Elsa's passionate emotional similarity to that of a preschooler, (2) the rampant imagination of preschoolers can identify with magic, (3) a genuine sisterly connection that family-driven preschoolers understand, and (4) "The sing-along music seals the deal". Perhaps the most compelling and unique assessment of *Frozen*'s popularity comes from Michelle Resene of the University of Connecticut. Resene examines in her *Disabilities Studies Quarterly* article *Frozen*'s success and popularity in terms of its representation of Elsa as disabled and Disney's first princess to be such "...her status as a much-beloved princess figure allows the animators at Disney to position disability as a universal experience and in turn to create empathy for PWDs both on and off screen".

## VII. Conclusion and Wrap-Up

Today a multi-billion dollar company, Disney maintains a firm hand in all aspects of popular culture. At the same time a theme park, television channel, and consumer product tycoon, Disney has had its greatest success as a film maker. Constantly imagining tales of fantasy and magic, Disney has become a well-oiled machine in turning out films instantly devoured by American society. Though well-versed in making popular movies, with the creation of *Frozen*, Disney has charted and formulated its way into new territory.

Unlike any other film before it, Disney's *Frozen* has achieved a far-reaching and lasting popularity, thanks to careful calculation and

planning. In making *Frozen*, Disney utilized and exploited the underlying characteristics of American culture to create a film destined for success and incredible popularity. Whether it's manipulating a snowy world to inspire post-apocalyptic or ice age possibilities, sharing a world and culture in an attractive appeal to those with wanderlust, or pumping viewers up with wintry and holiday implications, Disney focuses on an icy aesthetic on its road to success with *Frozen*. Also skyrocketing *Frozen* to popularity on the surface level, catchy songs fill the film and viewers' subconscious. Going deeper, *Frozen*'s secondary level focuses on Disney's cleverly designed messages of girl power or feminist overshadowing. Invoking intense loneliness at the hands of strained familial situations, Disney's makes use of *Frozen* characters as alone in the world, these singular and steadfast female characters ultimately draw audiences in as they overcome obstacles and oppression- eventually reveling in their own self-created freedom to be themselves. The essential element that holds all of Disney's contrived aspects of *Frozen* and cements the film's popularity comes into play through perfectly constructed imperfections. Connecting on a deeper level to many viewers, Disney uses *Frozen* to bring the modern, nontraditional American family structure to life, show the faults or imperfections many repress in a character's open display, and recognize the complex mess of emotions that viewers undergo daily beneath a perfected outward appearance. The clever mixture of an attractive icy aesthetic and catchy music, girl power messaging or feminist shadowing, and perfect imperfections, gives Disney's *Frozen* a formula for success and absolute popularity. To put it in the film's wording, Disney's *Frozen* is a movie that "For the First Time In Forever" will not allow American culture to "Let It Go".

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