

Title:

The Anime That Makes Fun Of Itself: "Lucky Star"

Word Count:

528

Summary:

The Japanese anime industry often does not like to make fun of itself, because self-deprecating humor is rarely appreciated in Japanese culture. Occasionally, such things tend to slide by without causing too much of a stir, but up until the release of "Lucky Star," there has never been an anime that has consistently used the anime industry and its fans as a source of humor.

Keywords:

stress relief, social anxiety, stress and anxiety, stress, anxiety

Article Body:

The Japanese animation industry has the occasional tendency to make a mockery of itself intentionally, if only to achieve some sort of comic effect. One may also theorize that moments of that sort also come as a form of stress relief for writers and animators, who often bear the brunt of their own jokes. For the most part, this type of humor has been minimal in the anime industry, used sparingly to avoid the chances of giving off the impression of attacking their fans, who tend to be stereotyped as having some stunted form of social anxiety. It is rare that an anime actually appears to dedicate entire segments to the above form of mockery. The oddly titled "Lucky Star" is probably the most effective example of it.

"Lucky Star" is, at the very core, a show about nothing --- in the same way the US sitcom "Seinfeld" was. The basics of it follows the lives, trials, and tribulations of four Japanese high school girls throughout high school. There is no overarching theme (aside from frequently recurring discussions about chocolate cornets), no final goal to attain (unless graduating high school counts), and no real antagonists or causes of stress and anxiety to be found. The girls frequently make observations about a number of things, though anime, video games, and the nature of the fans of the above are frequent topics. Yet, the jokes are always good-natured and never outright offend the fan base that and industry that they poke fun at. The fact that some of the topics and "criticisms" voiced by the characters apply to "Lucky Star" itself makes the show even more entertaining to watch.

However, the show does not end there. Other things are also used to provide the

humor on the show, most of which revolve around things somewhat appropriate for the age group of the characters. For instance, while waiting in line in an early episode, the discussion shifts from food at the school cafeteria to lunch habits to experiences about waiting in line. In another, the nature of the girls' different study habits and reactions to the usual stress and pressures that come with high school takes the spotlight. The extreme differences between them can sometimes be shown in a very comedic side-by-side comparison. The discussions are utterly and completely random, in keeping with the general idea that the show portrays a perfectly ordinary set of high school girls. This tone is set from the very first conversation of the first episode, which shifts topics from eating various desserts to how to properly cook ox tongue.

There is, however, some slightly darker and less good-natured humor in a segment of "Lucky Star" that shows at the end of each episode. The segment, known as "Lucky Channel," often has darker comedic styles, with some events using outright physical abuse in the comedy. Arguably, the segment's characters (who almost never appear in the main show itself) are used to poke humor at the perceived stress, anxiety, and relative paranoia of Japanese pop idols. The borderline depression and vaguely sardonic wit of one of the "Lucky Channel" characters emphasizes this, albeit in an oddly comedic manner.