



Loonatoona

written by Shockadelic

***Concept: 4.5**

'*Loonatoona*' is a truly crazy ride: on the surface, it might look like a completely nonsensical set of sketches, featuring bizarre characters. While it is certainly that and more, most of these scenes are carefully crafted, completely non-PC parodic representations of the monotony and absurdity of day to day life.

Storyline: 3

As said before, the plot is made out of mini sketches, featuring characters from an ordinary family in the Australian town of Loonatoona, and their interactions with others during a normal day of their lives. Ultimately, the entire story arch can be simplified to something like 'husband believes wife is cheating on him, while son does inappropriate things at school, and daughter spends time with friends instead of attending class', but matters are much more complex than at first sight. Every scene has its purpose and underlying theme which it parodies, and the often nonsensical mix of elements characterizing many of the scenes is purposely placed, rather than being simply random. Or, at least this is how it feels.

Characters: 4

Bobby, the family's youngest, attends the last school day before summer holiday kicks in. He doesn't exactly go around causing trouble, like Lambing, one of his classmates, does; however, he has a number of strange fetishes, as well as a constant urge to have sex with other boys. His big sister, Miranda, ditches school in favor of spending most of her time with her best friends, smoking weed and wandering around aimlessly in their truck. Bazza is the typical corporate man, working a 9 to 5 job: his day is ruined not by a customer coming to have his rabbit suit repaired whilst wearing it and nothing else, but by the constantly ramifying allegations that his wife is cheating with a cowboy. This is partly true, as Susan does get rather charmed by the aforementioned cowboy character while on her shopping run, with whom she goes for a swim, alongside Rex, her pet koala. The four main characters, as well as the extensive set of supporting ones, are over-the-top, engage in strange actions and conversations, which might not seem that dubious on second thought- once one realizes just how stereotypical their representations are (in a good way), everything might not seem as chaotically impossible as it first looked.

***note that each category uses a rating scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest**



Dialogue: 4.5

The dialogues are a big success of the screenplay. Besides the fact that most of the lines and conversations are incredibly funny, a lot of them inappropriately so, with frequent puns and references to pop culture, there is a heavy dose of irony in the manner in which they are delivered. Even though the film deals with themes such as underage gay oral sex at school, or the principal who locks himself in his office to masturbate in peace for hours in the wake of a huge hard-on he got whilst spanking a 17-year-old boy for calling him “a wanker”, all swear words without exception are censored by loud ambient noises. Moreover, when the content of some characters’ dialogue is anticipated, repeated or simply meaningless, the film uses variations on ‘yabba yabba’ to suggest this.

Commerciality: 2.5

The commercial appeal of *‘Loonatoona’* is a debatable subject. First of all, the rather chaotic, absurd nature of most of the events, as well as the extreme sexualization of most of the scenes (although no bad language or explicit content is actually shown) might be off-putting for some. Secondly, quite a number of the film’s jokes, puns or visual representations are of Australian social matters, firms or other particularities, which means that an international audience might at times be left guessing when faced with a very context-specific moment.

Subject’s genuineness: 5

Despite being ultimately a parody of daily life in a small Australian town, the screenplay manages to feel extremely fresh and novel in its approach. Everything from the way the characters are built and developed, the inappropriate, politically incorrect scenes, as well as a few gimmicks utilized (such as sound effects/music from popular productions such as Hitchcock’s *‘Psycho’*, *‘The Twilight Zone’* or *‘Doctor Who’*, or the ‘telepathic’ manner in which some of the characters placed in entirely different scenes communicate with each other in real time) is very genuine and gives the whole project a special atmosphere which sets it completely apart.

Array of meanings for the script: 4

Some of the elements of the script do indeed feel purposely random, such as people eating cereal with tomato juice, meat pies with whipped cream on top, or having a pet koala, many scenes have actual substance. *‘Loonatoona’* often parodies otherwise banal, cliché events such as birthdays (called “unbirthdays”), taking the perfect family photo, or the group of men hungrily gazing at the hot office girl- and does all these in an intelligent way. The gossip society, whose leader, Mrs. Grimsteynes has 781 voice messages on her phone at one point, perfectly encapsulates a widespread reality. Instead of singing the national anthem *‘God Save the Queen’* at school, a song by Abba is played instead, which at least contains the name of the country, as opposed to the former. The TV show which Bobby is watching at one point makes fun of typical stereotypes in the

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film industry, namely how the antagonist, after having captured the hero, takes a long time to articulate his goals and makes a condescending speech, often giving the hero the time needed to

retort and thwart his plans. All of these and many more are scenes oozing with delicious underlying contexts, serving as a criticism of today's society and culture. As an entirely subjective matter, it's a shame that the author didn't also have a poke at religion.

Attractiveness for public: 4

Making sense out of this project is a difficult task, as it might seem very content-rich and enjoyable for some, while others might see it as complete nonsense. A sort of combination between an early Coen brothers work (such as *'Raising Arizona'*) and a Lynchian *'Twin Peaks'*, but at the other end of the spectrum, mixed in with a specifically Australian flavor, is a good way to describe this project, or at least parts of it. As for a videogame comparison, one could say that *'Loonatoona'* is the Australian equivalent of the *'Postal'* series. Depending on the open-mindedness of the audience, it should be a 'love it or hate it' affair.