The Quest to Beat Matt Turk

The documentary I am here to talk about is titled *The Quest to Beat Matt Turk* by Summoning Salt. It is a film about the world record history of the fastest times to beat the 14 fights of the video game *Mike Tyson’s Punch Out!!* (Summoning Salt, 2020). For those who do not know, *Mike Tyson’s Punch Out!!* is a classic video game released in 1987 for the NES. It is about a fighter named Little Mac progressing the various boxing circuits and finally beating the champion, Mike Tyson. To become to new champion Little Mac uses jabs, uppercuts, blocks and dodges. Also, because the game was developed by Nintendo all the fights are refereed by Mario. The documentary follows the world records of the fastest times to knock out these fighters, requiring great skill and precision. Simply put, during the start of the start of competitive times getting set in the game in about 2002 Matt Turk was essentially the only competitor gaining every record for the 14 fights. The documentary uses a third person narrative style of the chronological events between 2010 and 2015. During this time frame two main competitors arise named Sinister1 and Zallerd1 these two players go on a “quest” to beat or tie all of Matt Turk’s records set a decade prier. The film, *The Quest to Beat Matt Turk* and its maker Summoning Salt is innovative by being the first to create a documentary about video game world record progression and refining the style in this documentary. This means that Summoning Salt would be a well-deserved documentary hall of fame member.

The documentary utilises many auditory features to develop the atmosphere of the film. The primary and most influential one used is the soundtrack. Here is an example. (6:26). It uses is a combination of the music of the video game he is talking about, retro music and other royalty free music. This is played throughout the film to great effect. It has multiple uses, one of which is creating a calm, relaxed feeling in the viewer. He also syncs the cuts of the music with what is happening on screen for dramatic effect. Another effect of a consistent soundtrack is adding emphasis to short sections without music. This encourages the viewer to pay attention because of this. (31:02). Overall, the auditory features of the film are used to great effect and are expertly used to create a fantastic ambience. This makes summoning salt an excellent candidate for the documentary make hall of fame.

*The Quest to Beat Matt Turk* also includes many visual features including archival footage, forum screenshots and minimalist graphics. Summoning Salt’s films include a large amount of archive footage and excellently researches the information about past world records. This is used to ground what he is talking about in tangible evidence of the topic. The graphics are used to compile large amounts of info into a simple to understand table. Here are some examples (27:27, 46:44). The skill, firsthand experience and contacts required to research such a niche topic is very high to create an accurate and interesting picture of the events that took place which has been done expertly by the creator.

Different language features are also important to the style of the film. These include third person narration, deadpan humour and suspenseful pauses. The consistent, unbroken third person language used in the documentary adds an objective tone and authoritative theme to the film. It also removes focus from Summoning Salt and puts it on the people and events which he is speaking about even though he is the world record holder in multiple categories and an active member in the Mike Tyson’s Punch Out!! community. There are also occasional jokes inserted to add to the relaxed nature of the film, (27:59). Dramatic pausing is also regularly used to add suspense to whether a world record attempt was successful or not.

In conclusion Summoning Salt has made a very well put together film and has pioneered a brand-new sub-genre of documentary being that of video game world record progression. In this documentary that sub-genre has been refined to include greater insight, improved script writing and better production quality than he has previously achieved in his past films. Innovation is defined as “the introduction of something new” (Merriam-Webster, n.d).

This clearly makes Summoning salt an excellent candidate for the documentary maker hall of fame.

Reference List

Summoning Salt. (2020). *The Quest to Beat Matt Turk* [Video]. Retrieved 4 March 2022, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBR9ypSOTGQ.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Innovation. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved March 7, 2022, from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/innovation