

In Defense of the Poor

Image:

Networked Edition



(written response)

Introduction

This piece reimagines Hito Steyerl's "In Defense of the Poor Image" (2012) through the variation-based form of Raymond Queneau's Exercises in Style (1998). Each fragment adopts a digital genre that embodies Steyerl's concept of the poor image:

low-quality,
over-circulated,
collectively authored.

In performing these shifts in tone and medium, the text explores how degradation becomes a form of dissemination and how theory, like the poor image, survives through mutation.

1. Forum post



pixelmutant commented on [Why do we still care about HD?](#)

reddit

I just uploaded a 240p version of an old film. It's fuzzy, it's cropped, it's been re-encoded half a dozen times. But you can still feel everything. Maybe truth doesn't need to be high-definition.



upvote



replies

[View more on Reddit](#)

2. Tweet post



John Kappa 

@johnkappa

poor images unite! pixelated ≠ powerless.
visibility is a commons, not a commodity.
#FreeTheImage #ResolutionIsClassWar

12:30 PM · Apr 21, 2021 · [Twitter Web App](#)

3. Comment thread



4. Meme



5. Youtube reupload

In Defense of the Poor Image (low quality copy)




User deleted

16.7M subscribers

Join

Subscribe

 205K



 Share

 Save



4.7M views 2 months ago

Reuploaded from someone else's reupload. Audio's bad but message hits. ...

Each fragment here is a node in Steyerl's network: *unstable, derivative, and plural*. Like Queneau's stylistic exercises, these formats test how repetition generates new meaning. The low-fidelity text mirrors Steyerl's poor image.

It's not a failure of clarity, but a shift in authorship and value.

To circulate is to survive. In this re-presentation, degradation becomes a method of writing itself.

References:

- Queneau, R. (1998) Exercises in Style. Translated by Barbara Wright. New York: New Directions.
- Steyerl, H. (2012) 'In Defense of the Poor Image.' In: The Wretched of the Screen. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 31–45.