

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

Thread X

 user123 14 min
lol this looks like it's been saved 100x
2 Likes ↗ Reply thumb up icon

 archivist420 24 min
exactly the point. every compression = another hand that held it.
1 Like ↗ Reply thumb up icon

 hdsnob 26 min
can't u just get the original?
12 Likes ↗ Reply thumb up icon

 user123 26 min
there is no original anymore. only uploads.
24 Likes ↗ Reply thumb up icon

4. Meme



5. Youtube reupload

In Defense of the Poor Image (low quality copy)



User deleted
16.7M subscribers

Join

Subscribe

Like 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.