

京大過去問 2004年 第2問 A

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With the rapid expansion of cameras and consumer photography today, it may be difficult to imagine a world without photographs. We have grown up with it, and the taking and viewing of photographs has become a part of everyday life. It is important to stress, however, that in the early days photography was something wonderful and new. Once the technology had been perfected, what was this thrilling new medium going to be used for? The technology, it seemed, preceded the purpose. For the early pioneers, it was enough to demonstrate that it worked, and that the natural world could be “frozen”. (1)Their photographs didn't tell us much new about the world, other than that it could now be photographed. Once the novelty wore off, however, photography began to open up a visual world as never before.

Photography allowed people to see places they would not otherwise have been able to see. For example, few people were able to travel to Egypt themselves, but thanks to photography, they were now able to see such wonders of the world as the pyramids. In addition to places, people could now see people. (2)Nowadays, we are entirely used to seeing photographic images of the politicians and the celebrities of the day. Of course, this has been the case only recently. Until photography, most Americans had never seen a “true likeness” of their President.

From *Visual Culture* by Richard Howells, Polity Press.