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Pictures of Sounds: Wittgenstein on Gramophone Records and the Logic of Depiction

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Abstract

The year that Ludwig Wittgenstein was born in Vienna, 1889, nearby developments already underway portended two major changes of the coming century: the advent of controlled heavier-than-air flight and the mass production of musical sound recordings. Before they brought about major social changes, though, these innovations appeared in Europe in the form of children's toys. Both appeared in Europe in time for Ludwig's childhood and both reappear in his work as an adult. The relationship between the advent of flight and Wittgenstein's claim in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that a proposition is a picture, is a topic in its own right (Sterrett 2000, 2002). In this essay, I consider the way Wittgenstein employed some kinds of sound recordings (but not others) in discussing logical form in the *Tractatus*.

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