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Pictures of Sounds: Wittgenstein on Gramophones 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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