

Persons or Things? Fetal Liminality in Japan's History

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ABSTRACT As a prenatal human bet5 een bab4 an6 embr4o, the fetus is necessaril4 an in7bet5 een entit4  
5 hose human status can be calle6 into 8uestion2 In the 9 est, this liminalit4 informs 6ebates surroun6in1 the  
ethics an6 la5 of abortion, the politics of repro6uction, an6 the 6e/elopment of feminist an6 maternalist  
i6eolo1ies2 "his paper e: amines the 1enealo14 of the fetus in the \*apanese conte: t to eluci6ate ho5 this  
liminalit4 has been ne1otiate6 in both spiritual an6 secular 6imensions2 It procee6s throu1h an comparati/e  
anal4sis of the fetus' place in the Shinto an6 , u66hist tra6itions in \*apan, an6 briefl4 e: amines ho5 these  
ori1ins are ma6e manifest in contemporar4 rituals of ; fetus memorial ser/ices< an6 the  
use of ; bri6e 6olls<2 "he paper then e: amines the chan1in1 culture of infanti6e  
in the E6o to ( ei-i perio6s, ho5 this shift precipitates ne5 6e/elopments in the mo6ern era of \*apan, an6  
ar1ues that current para6i1ms of in/esti1ation e: clu6e nuance or holistic un6erstan6in1s of maternit4 as /ali6  
contributions to fetal topolo1ies2

Keywords: natalism; fetus; Japan; Bar ara Johnson; a ortion; maternity; fetus memorial  
ser!"ies; ride#dolls; infanti"ide\$ initiation rituals\$ ; infanti"ide

"he fetus is a liminal bein1, one that is treate6 as both ob=ect an6 sub=ect b4 human bein1s  
6epen6in1 on the conte: t2 "his ambi1uit4 of the fetus is statione6 as the cornerstone of persistent  
6ebates from the political to the sacre62 It operates 5 ith the capacit4 of bein1, in one moment, neither  
person nor thin1, an6 in another, both2 In or6er to 5 holl4 in/esti1ate the fetus in an4 one particular  
culture, one nee6s to first ri1orousl4 research ho5 it is concei/e6 in both cate1ories, as 5 ell as the  
relationship bet5 een them2 ne 5 a4 in 5 hich to stu64 the fetus' state as a liminal bein1 is to  
in/esti1ate the structural relation bet5 een ob=ects an6 sub=ects that un6erpins this liminalit4, a topic  
post7structuralist theorist , arbara \*ohnson ta>es up in her 200? stu64 2 \*ohnson:s  
stu64 aims to un6ermine the percei/e6 binar4 bet5 een the cate1ories of persons an6 thin1s b4  
6emonstratin1 tensions in 5 hich 6efinable constituencies of either are sho5 n to be ineffable2 She  
obser/es that @somethin1 6efine6 as not one of them is not therefore the otherA ; \*ohnson, 200?<2 A  
fetus is an e: cellent e: ample of this >in6 of conun6rum, for li>e sla/es an6 corporations, its liminalit4  
has pro/o>e6 its allocation to it to a thir6 cate1or4, that of the , in the e4es of man4 le1al  
- "his research 5 as con6ucte6 un6er the super/ision of Br2 Co64 Poulton at the 3ni/ersit4 of Victoria pc@Ercchi '9a #B p;

histories, 4et this thir6 station neither correspon6s neatl4 5 ith the fetus+ emotional, ethical, or metaph4sical conceptions nor settles 5 hat such flui6it4 an6 interchan1eabilit4 implies about an4 6efinition of 5 hat is human?

\*ohnson uses three particular 6imensions in her anal4sisF the realit4 of rhetoric, the realit4 of materialit4, an6 the realit4 of 6esire ;\*ohnson, 200?, p2 2< ! o clear7cut 6efinitions of these lens are put for5ar6 b4 \*ohnson? "he4 thesel/es are liminal tools, 6efine6 b4 the focus of their conceptual attention, an6 each puttin1 for5ar6 @an ima1e of the relation bet5een persons an6 thin1s that i1nores the othersA ;\*ohnson, 200?, p2 G< Each 6efinition of anal4sis is e:clusi/e, an6 as such offers a uni8ue icon to represent the relation? "hrou1h intensi/e research on the scholasticism surroun6in1 the fetus in the \*apanese conte:t, o/er5helmin1 emphasis 5as foun6 to be applie6 to anal4ses 5ich surroun6e6 the realit4 of rhetoric an6 its 6iscourse, an6 the realit4 of materialit4 an6 its form? In other 5or6s, most scholars a6opt a stance of treatin1 the fetus as a person or a thin1, but sel6om ac>no5le61e its liminalit4 to the 6etriment of consi6erations of its topolo1ies in realities of 6esire, or fantas4? Bespite this, the most interestin1 relational ima1e I belie/e e:ists on the topicr sma 0 oma 0 hatf r oure:t,is ehe ms in reant

infamous of 5hich concerns "he 'eech Chil6 of creation 6eities IJanami an6 IJana1i2

\*ane ( arie ' a5, a \*apanese reli1ious scholar from Cornell 3ni/ersit4, stu6ie6 the I o=i>i-s  
'eech Chil6 in an effort to @offer a map for 6esi1natin1 a t4polo14 of sorts for ima1ination of the fetusK  
; ' a5, 2009, p2 260<2 ( oti/ate6 b4 obser/atons roote6 in the contemporar4 6ebates of abortion in  
\*apan, ' a5 note6 that the fetus 6oes not operate as a s4mbol, but rather as a me6ical, political, an6

alrees that this >in6 of nascent theo6ic4 e: ists in the same m4thos, althou1h in another passa1e in  
 5hich IJana1i an6 IJanami concei/e their le1itimate offsprin12 3nli>e 'a5, hnu>i7" ierne4 sees the  
 'eech Chil6 to represent the trans1ression of not merel4 the 1en6ere6 or6er, but the metaph4sical  
 principles :purit4+ an6 :impurit4+ from 5hich the4 ori1inate2 She 5ritesF

@In this recor6, the most important 6eities are 6escribe6 as born out of purification rites,  
 performe6 b4 their father ;IJana1i7no7 ( i>oto< 5ho 5as 6efile6 b4 seein1 the corpse of his  
 6ecease6 5ife ;IJanami7no7 ( i>oto< co/ere6 5ith ma11ots in the un6er5orl6 of the 6ea62  
 Accor6in1 to the theo1on4, 5hen he 5ashe6 his left e4e, Amaterasu7 mi>ami, the foun6in1  
 ancestors of the ro4al famil4, 5as bornL her brother, Susano7o7no7 ( i>oto, 5as born 5hen the  
 father 5ashe6 his nose2 In other 5or6s, the ma=or 6eities of \*apan 5ere born out of the 6ialectic  
 bet5een the t5o opposin1 principles of purit4 an6 impurit4, 5hich are correlate6 5ith life an6  
 6eath2 "hese oppositions in turn are correlate6 5ith the spatial classifications of the uni/erse  
 into this 5orl6 an6 the un6er5orl6A ; hnu>i7" ierne4, 19?C, p2 G6<2

, oth scholars i6entif4 ho5 the m4th structures liminalit4 as impurit4, an6 casts its creations out as  
 monsters2 "his is reinforce6 b4 the i6entification of the fisherman 1o6 of Iuc>, Ebisu , 5ith the  
 'eech Chil6 historically2 "his 'eech Chil67Ebisu continuum contains a number of commonalities, such  
 as an u1liness so 1ra/e it presents 6an1er to its 5itness, a po5er to inflict curses on the scale of natural  
 6isasters to an4 5ho 6o not issue the a6e8uate ritual performances of respect an6 ser/itu6e, an6, as  
 'a5 5rites, are @i6entifie6 b4 the mar>ers of liminalit4, 6eformit4, amorphousness, an6 se:ual  
 ambi1uit4A ; 'a5, 2009, p2 26C<2 , ecause Ebisu is a 6eit4 capable of besto5 in1 blessin1s or inflictin1  
 curses 6epen6in1 on 5hether or not he is treate6 5ell, the m4th reiterates a Shinto notion of moralit4  
 that 5arns that ina6e8uate spiritual han6lin1 of one's faile6 creation attempts sub=ects one to the ris> of  
 retribution or ;curse or 6i/ine punishment<2

&urther, the ;In/ocation of the \$o6s< foun6 in the further associates  
 impurit4 5ith the liminal2 It 6etails not onl4 that @impurit4 is the 1ra/est sin of allA, but that sins of  
 impurit4 are thin1s li>e @cuttin1 li/in1 fleshL cuttin1 6ea6 fleshL 5hite lepros4L s>in e: crescencesK or  
 an4 han6lin1, >illin1, or illnesses 6eri/e6 from corpses ; hnu>i7" ierne4, 19?C, p2 GH<2 It also 1i/es  
 recommen6ations for the rituals in/ol/e6 in the purification of such sin once contaminate6, an6 the4 all



purification are what are emanated in response. To be purified is to forget to appease the 106 Ebisu, one must handle one's failed creations by allowing them to flow back into the river leading to the underworld. Otherwise, one subjects oneself to the potential wrath of divine forces.

Ma's concern that the fetus is challenged to pinpoint symbolically stems from its treatment in abortion debates, both in Japan and abroad, which in turn come from current discussion and debate in East Asian Studies surrounding how to understand the prevalence of ;fetus memorial service rituals inspired by the , u66hist ecologies of \*iJM , osatsu. William Ma's notes that because of the widespread belief in the transmigration and rebirth of the soul as per , u66hist teachings, the finality of an abortion is severely reduced in the Japanese context, wherein parents the expectation that the fetus' entry into the underworld has merely been postponed. Ma's (1990) As such, miJugo has been interpreted as bearing many meanings, such as being an exploitive practice of promoting false ideas of fetal retribution aimed at generating capital for temples, to a ;orger maintainment to counteract the rise of the # \$ % & ;parasite sinless lifestyle, a potent healing effect for the troubled emotions of infertile couples, and a barrier against the haunting of ;heart-min and the disintegration of the Confucian familial structure in Japan. Ma's (1990, p2 DG0) At the A6ashino Inubutsu-i temple in I4oto, 10,000 to 20,000 ;5006en slats are erected in the memory of miscarried or aborted fetuses and burned each year ; , rooes, 19?1, p2 CH, suggesting that regardless of the exact symbolic meaning of the miJugo, a schism exists as to the , u66hist position of the legal and social admission of abortion as a practice and the psychosocial spiritual effects of it as a phenomenon in the lives of the people touched by its supposed spiritual impurity.

Some scholars have interpreted the miJugo rites as ways of offsetting the bad emotions surrounding the ethical ambiguity, yarmic inheritance, and impurity stemming from widespread historical infanticide and abortion before the modern period. In the late seventeenth century especially when the

religious rites are said to have been widespread facets of everyday life, and overpopulation fears and individual household strategies amid an increasing scarcity of land reinforced pre-existing permissive attitudes towards infanticide. Bri:ler, 2010, p. 20. The attitude about the status of the fetus shifted depending on socio-economic concerns of the region. For example in the 1990s, infanticide was regarded as an expectation of social responsibility because of limited food and land. As such, this corresponded with the ideology that infants were liminal beings rather than fully formed beings such as adult animals and humans. Bri:ler, 2010, p. 22. When backlash against infanticide began, the rhetoric was instead that the victims of infanticide were fully human; after all, and it was the perpetrators who betrayed themselves into the lower levels of monstrous beasts. As Arabian Bri:ler contends in his work on infanticide in Eastern Japan, fertility rates fell and rose as the result of changing images, metaphors, and understandings of human life. The pendulum of fetus from person to

the spirit 5 orl6, >illin1 them 5 as concei/e6 of as cosmolo1icall4 6ifferent from an4 other act of  
 >illin1, an6 the4 5 oul6 not recei/e a proper funeral or >u4M ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 D0<2 "his is perhaps 5 h4  
 one of the ol6est terms for infantici6e, ( ) , refers to the @returnA of the chil6 to some  
 other 5 orl6, an6 6oes not infer the connotation of /iolence that the other obser/e6 /ariants, \*  
 ) ( + , \* ) , + , an6 - . ( ) a6mit ;Bri:ler, 201G<2 3 n6er the same lo1ic  
 that consi6ere6 human status too pri/ile1e6 for ne5 borns an6 fetuses, those in6i/i6uals to 5 hom a  
 communit4 coul6 i6entif4 as repro6ucin1 5 ithout restraint 5 oul6 be lo5 ere6 to the status of animals2  
 &urthor, a couple 5 ho 1a/e birth to t5 ins 5 ere consi6ere6 closer to animals than to their fello5 human  
 bein1s2 As Bri:ler notes, ho5 e/er, it is challen1in1 to ascertain the e:act /ariance of ontolo1ical /ie5s  
 about the fetus from these more 6istant time perio6s, for historical recor6s often 1roup multiple  
 6isparate /illa1es to1ether an6 can not account for pri/atel4 hel6, eccentric, or a6/erse opinions of  
 e/er4one in rural \*apan2 Instea6, it is 6urin1 the contestation of infantici6e un6er the 1uise of nation7  
 buil6in1 6urin1 the initialiJations of the ( ei=i Restoration that the human status of fetuses be1an to  
 ta>e on 1reater emphasis in public 6iscourse2

&or e: ample, Sa5 a4ama ( i>a>o stu6ie6 paper 5 or> from the bureaucrac4 of pre1nanc4  
 sur/eillance s4stems 5 ich sho5 e6 5 hat names an6 terms 5 omen referre6 to their fetuses b4 an6 at  
 5 hat sta1e of pre1nanc42 Sa5 a4ama sho5s that certain 6imensions of materialit4 help 1roun6 the  
 rhetorical lan1ua1e surroun6in1 the fetus, such as / . + O 1 2 ;arreste6  
 menstruation<, 3 4 5 6 7 8 9: ; < = ;a thin1 5 ithout human  
 shape<, > ? ;spille6 or flo5 in1 birth< usuall4 bein1 terms applie6 to a pre1nanc4 before the D<sup>th</sup>  
 month, for once the @8uic>enin1A of the fetus be1an, often 5 omen an6 me6ical practitioners 5 oul6  
 chan1e their terminolo14 an6 be1in emplo4in1 5 or6s such as @ ;infant<, A B ;small  
 chil6<, C ;iir< an6 D ;bo4< ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 D2<2 Sa5 a4ama ac>no5 le61es that

these surveillance systems demand forensic precision, and as such it may not be the most reliable route into the inner emotional lives of the women. Similarly, a term for the fetus developed inside them. Similar to those structures of power pre-emptively determine that certain contexts use particular discourses, and so that a woman may call a fetus to her doctor may differ from what she refers to it to a close family member, a stranger at the supermarket, or herself in private. As Johnson points out, "as if concepts and abstractions act and feel and intend as people do implies one does how people act, when in fact those beliefs may inhere in a linguistic system of which its users are not conscious" (Johnson, 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, there is also the possibility that its users are conscious, and that their rhetorical talk is a deliberate guise. A woman may emotionally conceive of her pregnancy as a potential baby or person, but refer to it differently in the face of her community in order to perform the expected ideology. It may also even be the opposite case, such as that suggested by the investigation made to them in Iumamoto where sixteen women were found to be mainly in a linguistic character in parents for stranger-born children (Brierley, 2010, p. 2). Children may possess distinct attitudes from infanticide as a social phenomenon and one in which you morally or pragmatically pollute oneself with the impurity of sin.

Because of the Edo Period's cultural ratification of human status and liberal views on the permissibility of infanticide, most Japanese women raised approximately three children but gave birth to six. In order to decide which children to cull from these possibilities, elaborate and sometimes even contradictory systems were framed in a language of rationality. "The most important factors for whether a child lives or dies were related to whether the sex of a birth matched the predictions of the community, and whether or not the child's arrival came at an auspicious moment" (Brierley, 2010, p. 2). Child-rearing was often conflated with agricultural farming techniques, as both emphasized the importance of planning, timing, sequence, and matching to achieve the most prosperity. This is also why the term for infanticide, *E F <*, means "the culling of the seedlings" or "the thinning out the plants."

;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 91< As such, infant selection proce6ures 6i6 not 1o alon1 the basis of 1en6er, for  
1irls 5ere =ust as 6esirable as bo4s so lon1 as their 1en6er matche6 the pre6iction ma6e b4 a /illa1e  
soothsa4er2 Such occupations alle1e6l4 5ere in abun6ance b4 the late se/enteenth centur4 in \*apan,  
such as Chinese pro1nostication metho6s, \*apanese 4in7an674an1 masters ; GH ,

ph4sio1nomists, 1eomancers, 6ream rea6ers, astrolo1ers, an6 he:a1ram e:erts ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 9H<

bstetricians 5oul6 teach that chil6ren 5oul6 be female if concei/e6 or born 6urin1 an4 of the  
mother:s life7ears number 1D, 1H, 19, 2G, 2H, 2?, G0, G2, G6, G?, CC, or C? ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 9?<

Chec>in1 the pulse of the /ein in the ri1ht or left han6 or the lait of a pre1nant 5oman returnin1 from a  
southern 6irection coul6 count as =ust cause for se: 6etermination, as 5ell as in/esti1atin1 the e:act a1e  
6ifference bet5een the parents or their Jo6iac si1ns? If an4 of these pre6ictions 5ere 5ron1, it 5as

status b4 the ac8uirin1 or losin1 of certain attributes, such as the attribute of 1en6er, or the attribute of 6isabilit42 Attributes, ho5e/er, as \*ohnson obser/es, belon1 to non7persons because the4 onl4 belon1 to the thir6 person ;\*ohnson, 200?, p2 10<2 ften, the fact that the fetus resi6es 5 ithin the mother, a 6esi1nate6 human bein1, is not 6iscusse6 in an4 of these 6iscourses, but this fact is its 1reatest attribute of human correlation2 Interestin1l4, the 5oman in 5 hose 5 omb the fetus 1ro5s is not concei/e6 of as ha/in1 more authorit4 o/er the fetus+ future human status, 1en6er, or luc>, an6 she is not consulte6 as the ultimate 6i/iner in its future2 In fact, her relation to it as biolo1icall4 necessitatin1 its potential an6 actual e:istence as a human bein1 is sel6om mentione62 "he +fantas4+ of the fetus is constructe6 in its potentialit4 as a person, an6 it is this constructe6 personhoo6 that is 6estro4e6 in the act of infanticide2 ! o5 here is its realit4 the realit4 of another consi6ere6, let alone 8uestione62 It is omitte62

"he birth of t5 ins arouse6 pre6ominantl4 6is1ust 6urin1 the E6o perio62 Bspite bein1 in fact t5o people, t5 ins 5 ere less li>el4 to be 1rante6 human status than a premature sin1le chil62 "his 5 as because t5 ins 5 ere consi6ere6 a si1n that the mother ha6 mi:e6 the see6 of se/eral men, an6 e/o>e6 to the rural \*apanese the i6ea of animal litters2 As such, t5 ins possesse6 a 1reater 6e1ree of liminalit4 bet5een not =ust the li/in1 an6 the 6ea6 but the human an6 the animal, an6 the mothers of them 5 ere consi6ere6 literall4 animals ; L MN;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 D<2 It is possible that the birth of t5 ins 5 as a monstrosit4 because of its 1ecture to5 ar6s that of the 6ouble2 In &reu6:s stu64, he belie/e6 the human 6isli>e of the 6ouble 5 as @a /esti1ial trace of the archaic reaction 5 hich feels the +6ouble+ to be somethin1 uncann4A ;&reu6, 1919, p2 2CH<2 3nli>e the uncann4 itself, ho5e/er, in 5 hich 6rea6 an6 horror is often pro/o>e6 in its 5 itness, the 6ouble is often reacte6 to 5 ith repulsion an6 6istaste2 #e e:plaine6 that 5 hen he an6 Ernst ( ach on separate occasions mistoo> their o5n ima1e for that of another, the4 foun6 their o5n appearances homel4 an6 unpleasant2

At the same time that the 6ouble7as7t5 ins an6 their parents 5 ere repulsi/e on the 1roun6s of their pro:imit4 to animals, rural \*apanese in places such as northern "oho>u 5 oul6 practice another

ritual in/ol/in1 the 6ouble but as a means of securin1 the successful transmi1ration of 5 ron1e6 soul to5 ar6s , u66hahoo62 , ri6e 6olls calle6 5 ere ai6 to be infuse6 5 ith the spirit of the , o6hisatt/a \*iJM an6 functione6 as a spirit spouse for the un8uiet soul of a chil6 or 4outh 5 ho 6ie6 before marria1eK ;Schattschnei6er, 200D, p2 1C12 "he fi1urine use6 is the opposite se: of the 6ecease6, 4et 6espite this its li/in1 relati/es claim the 6oll:s face 1ra6uall4 comes to resemble that of the 6ea6 person o/er time an6 that it is this emer1in1 resemblance bet5een the face of the 6oll an6 that of the 6ea6 chil6 that acts as proof that the ritual has 5 or>e6 an6 the lost soul is finall4 on the correct path to5 ar6s transmi1ration2 ften these 6olls are enshrine6 5 ithin a small 1lass bo: alon1si6e a photo1raph of the 6ecease6, a placement 5 hose =u: taponition ma>es e:plicit the stren1th of this 6ouble relationship2 In this case, Schattschnei6er obser/es the s4mbolic forms of ritual ob=ects are al5 a4s 6ouble6 in this 5 a42 9 hat the hana4omenui14M 6olls 6o is ma>e an other5 ise implicit relationship e:plicit, for the4 are both representations of an absent element ;in this case the 6ecease6 chil6< an6 the thin1 itself ;Schattschnei6er, 200D, p2 1CG2 In these sense, these 6olls, as ima1es, are both si1nifier an6 si1nifie6 b4 actin1 as li/in1 thin1s 1esturin1 to5 ar6s absent thin1s2

&reu6 notes that in tto Ran>s: stu64, the 6ouble is often treat6e6 as a s4mbol of the 6ual7nature of realit4, 4et he situates it in a more 9 estern tra=ector4 as an insurance a1ainst the 6estruction of the e1o, a rene5al of our inborn 6enial of 6eath:s supreme po5er ;&reu6, 19192 As such, Ran> associates the i6ea itself of an immortal soul as the first 6oublin1 of the bo64, an6 reco1niJes its necessit4 stemmin1 from 5 hat coul6 be consi6ere6 the necessar4 thanatophobic con6ition of bein1 human2 Ran> thin>s of 6oublin1 as an attempt at ob=ectification, an6 e:plains the mummification process b4 ancient E14ptians as an e: ample of the primar4 narcissism un6erpinnin1 the human 8uest for immortalit42 \*ohnson 5 oul6 li>el4 a1ree 5 ith this >in6 of anal4sis, for in her stu64 of persons an6 thin1s in the conte:t of the 6ouble foun6 in 'acan:s mirror sta1e, she continuall4 comes up a1ainst the stran1e repetition that it appears human bein1s 6esire to become ob=ects because of the ob=ect:s abilit4 to

transcend moralit4 ur eerie fascination 5ith the inanimate is, as &reu6 5oul6 e8ui/ocate, a 6ri/e to 5ar6s our o5n 6estruction ;\*ohnson, 200?, p2 D9< As \*ohnson puts it, @the 6efinition of +person+ 5oul6 then beF the repeate6 e:perience of ! " A ;\*ohnson, 200?, p2 D9<

)et in the case of the hana4omenui14M 6olls, a process occurs 5hereb4 the ima1e in the min6 of the 6ecease6 becomes transubstantiate6 into an inanimate ob=ect, an6 place6 alon1si6e an actual ima1e or representation of the person in the state of the li/in12 "o ob=ectif4 somethin1 throu1h a representation is to li/e it a lon1e/it4 in its stillness throu1h 5hich mourners contemplate its 6ual nature? "he liminalit4 of the 6olls is that the lon1er the statues come to represent the absence of the person, the 1reater the4 appear to be ta>in1 on its characteristics? "his process is one in 5hich the realit4 of materialit4 an6 that of 6esire or fantas4 come to1ether in a >in6 of 6ance, an alchem4 of t5o ri/ers of bein12 Remar>abl4, the process b4 5hich one mourns throu1h these 6olls echoes the process throu1h 5hich fetal memorial rites are con6ucte6 in the case of the statuette6 5hich are li/en re6 bibs an6 bonnets an6 come to personif4 to mourners the i6entif4 of the aborte6 bab42 9 hat both rituals ha/e in common is the4 re/eal the contours of the liminal relationship bet5een the li/in1 an6 the 6ea6 in the absence of accessible content an6 throu1h the phenomenon of 6oublin12 9 hen a spirit is 5oun6e6, its correlate is a 5oun6 in the of the li/in1 5hose memories safe1uar6 their essence? In or6er to let the soul of the 6ecease6 transmi1rate bac> into the un6er5orl6, the li/in1 must ritualisticall4 release the hol6 5ithin "# o/er the 6ea6? "his 6oublin1 feature of the 6olls an6 the statuette6 is ar1uabl4 inten6e6 for the opposite of 5hat tto Ran> su11ests, not to safe1uar6 the immortalit4 of the e1o but to 1entl4 remo/e the e1o7li>e associations surroun6in1 a soul in the min6s of the li/in12 "he process of immortalit4, therefore, is one in 5hich structure of meanin1s are bro>en 6o5n ;6eath<, to return the forme6 K ;mista>en chil6 or chan1elin1< ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 101< bac> to the un6er5orl6 ri/ers throu1h 6en4in1 it its rite of passa1e throu1h the cosmolo1ical cate1or4 of humans ; O< P< ;Bri:ler, 201G, p2 D9<



gramaticall4 to bein1 /ie5e6 b4 the ma-orit4 as V 3 U ;crimes of the in6i/i6ual<

; , urns, 2006, p2 CD< Susan '2 , urns notes in her stu64 of cases from the earl4 ( ei=i perio6 that often in abortion or infanticide cases, authorit4 for the criminal 6ecision 5as sel6om e/er 6esi1nate6 to the 4oun1 pre1nant 5oman herself2 , urns+ anal4sis of cases in the 4ears lea6in1 up to the 1??0 statue sho5 the criminall4 persecute6 5ere 5ell7a5 are of the chan1in1 le1al terminolo14 an6 structure surroun6in1 6inctions bet5een preconcei/e6 an6 5illful mur6er ; WX an6 Y X< an6 principal an6 participant ; Z [ an6 \ [ < roles in criminal acts ; , urns, 2006< , ecause of this 1ro5in1 a5areness, the rhetoric use6 in le1al cases are less reliable sources of un6erstan6in1 ho5 historical actors concei/e6 of fetal liminalit4, because the rhetorical realit4 surroun6in1 the fetus is bein1 consciousl4 manipulate6 b4 both si6es of the =u6icial process to promote the interests an6 coerce a 6esirable outcome for the trial2

has un6er1one man4 comple: interactions 5ith this t4polo14 of the fetus in the public ima1ination2  
 Bespite this, the result has been less of an a6option of 9 estern i6eolo14 surroun6in1 6iscourses of  
 choice an6 ri1hts an6 more a resur1ence or continuation of earlier7hel6 , u66hist an6 Shinto beliefs2  
 &or e: ample, in her ethno1raphic o/er/ie5 of contemporar4 obstetric practice in \*apan, "sip4 I/r4  
 fin6s that the 5 or6 ] B ;fetus< is har6l4 e/er use6 b4 me6ical practitioners or parents in  
 contemporar4 \*apan ;l/r4, 2010< Instea6, a me6ical term calle6 ^ \_\_ ;the maternal bo64< is far  
 more common, e/en thou1h this term is applie6 to le1al circumstances, such as the title of a 1996  
 \*apanese abortion la5 calle6 \$ % % ^ \_\_ ` a b ;the ( aternal , o64 Protection 'a5< I/r4  
 notes that , the @mother7chil6A part of the title, is especial4 interestin1 because the >an-i  
 compoun6 of mother an6 chil6 forms a @mother7bab4A inte1rate6 entit4? "his in/o>es the i6ea that an  
 e: pectant mother is a special cate1or4 of persons, one 5 hose ph4sical presence on earth contains  
 another potential person2 "his material foun6ation to pre1nanc4 is e: presse6 in the \*apanese conte:t  
 therefore not as a @mother7to7beA, but as a @mother7alrea64A ;l/r4, 2010, p2 9G<

'acan once ar1ue6 that the inherent =u11le in the \*apanese lan1ua1e bet5 een an6  
 ;t5 o 5 a4s of rea6in1 an6 pronouncin1 each >an-i character< confoun6 a 9 estern ps4choanal4tic  
 process of rea6in1 +true repression-, ma>in1 the aphansis of the sub=ect in relation to lan1ua1e

metaphor of plant/cullin1, ob714ns often refer to the mother7chil6 continuum in a1ricultural terms, usin1 ima1es an6 phrases such as @to 1ro5 nice flo5ers, 4ou nee6 nice soilA ;l/r4, 2010, p2 9C<2

As a specific cate1or4 of human bein1, 5omen:s capacit4 to repro6uce has historicall4 been seen as a specific attribute throu1h 5hich the4 themsel/es achie/e personhoo62 "his i6eolo14, that 9omanhoo6 is ( otherhoo6, can be seen in the \*apanese notion of f g h ^ ;\$oo6 9ife, 9ise ( other< 5hich came to associate chil6bearin1 as a patriotic 6ut4 on behalf of the nation an6 the emperor 6urin1 the ( ei-i era2 "his pronatalist polic4 5as referre6 to as & i j k l ;Enrich the state, stren1then the militar4< ; I ato, 2009, p2 G6<2 , ecause 5omen 5ere less people if the4 5ere not mothers, mn ;test marria1es< 5ere permitte6 in or6er to chec> fertilit42 9omen 5ho coul6 not concei/e 5ere labele6 either a o C ;stone 5oman< or a p P ;fla5e6 ob=ect an6 promptl4 aban6one62 "his rhetoric seems contra6ictor4, for earlier 5e learne6 ho5 sel6om 5omen 5ere consulte6, blame6, or li/en a1enc4 in the famil4 6rama of an abortion or infanticide in the ( ei-i perio6, an6 that e/en thou1h the bur6en of the nation:s militar4 an6 pro6ucti/e prosperit4 reste6 on a 5oman:s abilit4 to repro6uce, 5omen 5ere still not entitle6 to an4 ri1hts such as the ri1ht to /ote, to be electe6, to be a la54er, or to become a member of a political 1roup ; I ato, 2009, p2 GH<2

"he notion that femininit4 necessitates procreation lets further comple: 5hen one consi6ers the ori1ins of abortion:s recent le1alit4 in \*apan in the 19C0s in the form of the !ational Eu1enic 'a52 "his la5 allo5e6 the steriliJation of alcoholics, rapists, narcotics users, robbers, lepers, an6 other members of societ4 consi6ere6 6isable6 or un6esirable2 Abortion therefore onl4 comes about as a le1al /iabilit4 in the conte:t of eu1enic 6iscourse, not as an increase6 ri1ht for its female citiJens, an6 ironicall4 6urin1 an a1e 5here pronatalist policies 5ere put in place 5ith intent on increasin1 the population to 100 million b4 196D ; I ato, 2009, p2 CC<2 /erpopulation, in fact, 5as one of the articulate6 1roun6s b4 the ( ei-i lo/ernment use6 to =ustif4 colonial e:ansion into ( anchuria b4 \*apan 6urin1 the 1920s an6

1960s, 4et 6urin1 the same perio6 the lo/ernment enacte6 policies prohibitin1 an4 contracepti/es or abortion, lo5ere6 the le1al marria1e a1e for men from 1H to 1C, an6 for 5omen from 1D to 12, an6 sou1ht to secure a tar1et of fi/e chil6ren from each couple on a/era1e ; I ato, 2009, p2 G?<2

In this stran1e turn of historical e/ents, the cate1or4 of human person un6er1oes a ra6ical shift in the conte:t of i6eal national sub=ect2 Abortion becomes a 5eapon 6esi1ne6 to structure a specific population for the future, an6 6iscussions of its ethical parameters or spiritual correlates 6isappear from

usuall4 relate6 stron114 5 ith economic in6epen6ence, an6 it is from this para6i1m of 5 hich abortion  
la5s in \*apan 5 ere 1i/en the @economics clauseA un6er 5 hich more than 900 of abortions are  
sanctione62 In the 6ebates, ho5 e/er, surroun6in1 the eu1enics of the 6isable6 an6 abortion, sociolo1ist  
Shin4a "atei5a ar6€

relation to other such 64a6s in the \*apanese cosmolo1ical milieu, such as that e:plore6 of  
purit4Eimpurit4, maleEfemale, lifeE6eath2 Its liminalit4 acts as a s4mbol to multiple sites of spiritual,  
political, an6 se:ual e:ploration2 A historical tren6 emer1es from the E6o perio6 to the ( ei-i in as the  
emphasis mo/es from families to in6i/i6uals, an6 5omen are 1i/en less ri1hts but more  
responsibilities, the 1reater the emphasis is 1i/en to fetuses7as7persons2



Schattschneider, Ellen. Resemblances of Memorial Images and the Face of Friendship in  
' ' " ! ( " : ;2002