

A Century of Premie Hieroglyphics
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This paper tracks a century of historical re-presentations of the preterm baby as a (quasi)public figure *qua* technoscientific in(ter)vention. It does so by pondering the semiotic intents and accidents of 100 years of advertisements and graphics (culled mainly from the professional biomedical literature, in the first instance, and from popular/media spaces in the second instance). The Premie's semiotic genealogy might be seen to shift across three temporal phases/stages—proto-modern, modern, and hyper-modern—each with its prevailing logic and sentiments: 1) the preemie as historical fact (marvel/monster of nature, wonder/challenge for science); 2) the preemie as medical patient (object of care and experimentation); 3) the preemie as public persona (political subject and kinship agent). How might these three movements be juxtaposed and read in light of transitions in science and society generally? How might inscriptions of the preemie's mainstreaming over time—as so many hieroglyphics of its historical emergences and re-emergences—mirror cultural-historical developments in the 'category of the person' and 'personhood,' as conceived along 'Western' scapes?