

# Parenting ideologies, infant feeding & the media

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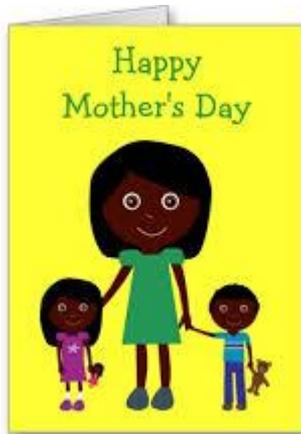
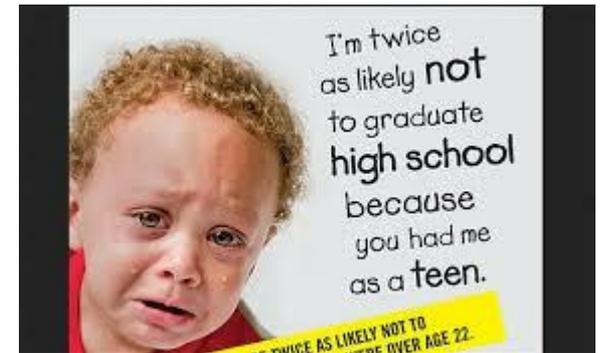
University of Bradford

# Lots of things to consider...

- Complexity and nuance
- Parenting ideologies
- Feminism
- Neoliberalism and health promotion
- Structural issues
- *Is breastfeeding an individual or societal issue?*



# 'Good Mother' Mandate



# 'good mothering' starts early



# Intensive 'good' parenting culture

- *“Anyone currently caught up in the maelstrom of parenting a small child in the UK will be acquainted with the shibboleths of contemporary maternal culture: ‘natural pregnancy’, ‘natural birth’, postpartum bonding fostered by ‘plenty of skin-to-skin contact’, ‘baby-led weaning’, ‘baby-wearing’, ‘co-sleeping’ and, above all, on-demand breastfeeding at least until the age of two, as recommended by the World Health Organisation. It takes a lot of nerve for a new mother to defy these recommendations”.*
- *(The Guardian (UK), 20 September 2013).*

*“Put away the blender: the latest way to introduce food to your little darling is in chunks. No mush, no puree, no baby rice – just pieces of food, straight from your own plate. The method, coined baby-led weaning makes children less fussy and less stressed as well as healthier. Their kids eat – and wean – at their own pace from the age of six months, meaning the family can eat the same meal together (just keep it healthy).”*

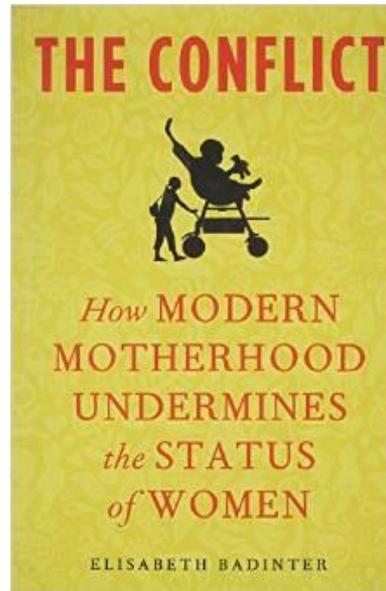
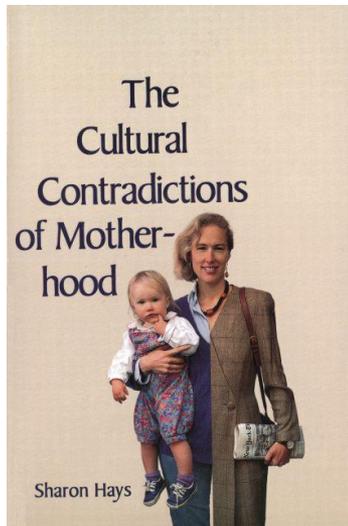
*(The Daily Mail (UK), 20 February 2013).*

*“Step away from the blender because if you are feeding your baby purely on purees from a spoon you are missing a trick to boost their speech development...Every bite, chew, lick and suck they take strengthens the vital muscles in their lips, tongue and jaw that they will soon use for talking”*

*(The Daily Mail, June 20, 2013).*

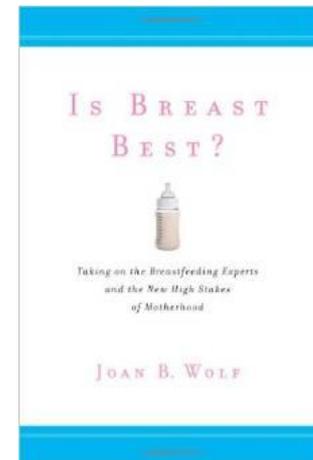
# Contemporary Mothering Ideology

**‘Intensive’  
Hays 1996**



**‘Overzealous’  
Badinter  
2012**

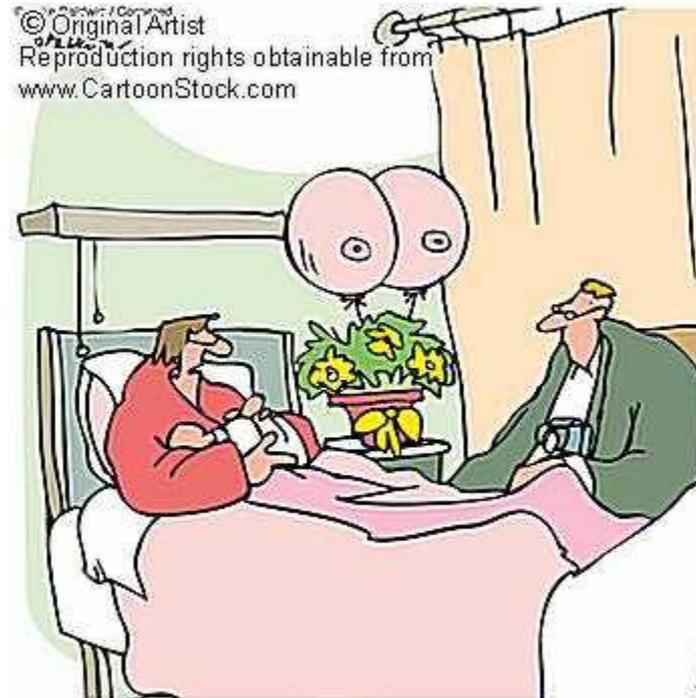
**‘Total’  
Wolf 2011**



# Paradox of Feminism and BF

- A feminist woman feeds her own child
- Empowering women to make right 'informed choice'
- Right to bf in public etc.
- A feminist woman chooses how to feed her child
- Decision based on life circumstances
- Not tied to child

# Promoting BF?



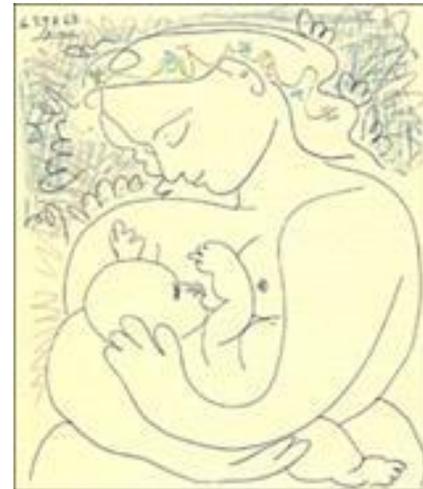
“They also left a pamphlet on the benefits of breast feeding.”

# Neoliberalism..... And health promotion

- Neoliberal framework: focus on agency, empowerment and choice (individual not institutional).....leading to “problematic developments within feminism itself: a focus on women’s agency and identity at the expense of examining framing structures”. (Phipps, 2014).
- ‘societies function best with a minimum of state intervention’ (Harvey, 2005: Phipps, 2014).
- Rhetoric of ‘informed choice’ and ‘risk’ in health promotion.

# Structural issues

- Place
  - Finance
  - Support
  - *Culture*
- 
- *Individual or societal issue?*



Thanks for listening

