victims of infanticide from antiquity into the middle ages. The father was reborn in his son; such rebirth was denied mothers of daughters. In adolescence, a daughter rejects the mother, as if by taboo. Sensual and emotional energies flow towards men, the 'worthy.' A reuniting with the mother is achieved in female bonding, either as comrades or mates, the author believes. Reference material for this section includes Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath and Margaret Atwood.

'Violence: The Heart of Maternal Darkness' confronts the pathological stress in institutional motherhood. A case history of infanticide emphasized the pressures, the community indifference, that broke the mother of eight.

Exploitation and callousness cheapen life. Women bonding together, trusting in instincts, tenderness, passion, and applying intelligence, experience and education will find the courage to confront the human battle. The goal is not to abolish motherhood, but to elevate it to the realm of difficult but chosen work.

Ourselves and Our Children, by the Boston Women's Health Collective, Random House, 1978, pp. 288, paperback $8.95.

Brenda Roman

Most books on raising children make me feel guilty. Their questions nag. Is it because I'm overprotective that my children are fearful at night (the unreconstructed Dr. Spock)? Do I listen actively enough to them (Dr. Thomas Gordon)? Do I provide enough order in their young lives (Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs)? Although these experts raise unsettling issues, they all seem to have missed something – that most of us are parenting under bad working conditions.

Ourselves and Our Children: A Book by and for Parents grants these conditions at the outset. We are parents, they say, 'in a society which gives us too little support: we worry because we are alone on the job in certain important ways.' A major theme of the book is that we cannot parent alone, that we need support, not only from friends and relatives, but from the society as a whole.

We are alone on the job both because the raising of children is considered to be a private, family responsibility which must not interfere with the important business of our society and because our work lives are organized inhumanely. The 'myth of separate worlds,' whereby employees are required to act on the job as if they have no other loyalties, no other life, keeps parents from being able to work out a balance between time inside and outside the family.

The authors don't just analyze these problems; they present the testimony of parents who are trying to meet them on a daily basis – the mother training as a child therapist who asks to work near her home and whose supervisor advises her to 'never again mention in this program that you are a mother,' the father who phones in to work, saying that his car is stalled, because he can't tell his employer that he's helping his son with a school exhibit on the Hopi Indians.

It doesn't have to be like this, the authors say. They point to societies such as Sweden and the Soviet Union which take collective responsibility for child care and cite creative measures taken in those countries to reduce the separation between children's lives and the work lives of their parents. But how can we bring about such collective responsibility here?

Although the writers locate the problems accurately in the 'structures of work and profit,' they quickly move to more manageable problems – 'the condition of our neighborhoods' and 'the isolation of the nuclear family.' It is hard to do otherwise. The problems – and the power that stands in the way of solving those problems – are enormous. But creating our own support networks, organizing on a local level to demand that supermarkets remove candy machines and hoping that a 'parently consciousness' will emerge among decision-makers once there are more women in the work force are not enough. Such solutions point to a concern I have with the focus of the book.

Some of the authors wrote *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women,* the audacious women's self-help book that expressed some of the aims of the women's movement in the 1960s. But the 'ourselves' have changed. In this book women as mothers are subsumed under the cross-gender category 'parents.' Just as we for so long have felt that our humanity was unrecognized in the term 'mankind,' so here we may well feel unrecognized in the category 'parent.' Our experiences as mothers are different from those of fathers. In the last analysis it is *we* who are today alone on the parent job.

Despite their wholly admirable vision of shared parenting in a context of supportive services, the authors, by concentrating on 'parents,' have bypassed the opportunity to particularize our struggles as mothers and to help mobilize the power of the women's movement (in concert, as such a large struggle must ultimately take place, with other movements for social change) to make our society truly responsive to human needs.

The Battered Woman, by Lenore E. Walker, Harper & Row, 1979, pp. 270, hardcover $14.95.

Eleanor Ross

In the course of my work as a public health nurse, I have been visiting weekly a hostel for women (and their children) who are leaving their marriages. Seventy-five percent of these women are battered.

What is a battered woman? According to author Dr. Lenore Walker, she is one who is 'repeatedly subjected to any forceful physical or psychological behavior by a man in order to coerce her to do something he wants her to do without any concern for her rights.' This includes wives or women who have intimate relationships with the men involved. To be classified as 'battered,' a woman must go through the assaulting cycle at least twice.

Historically, wife beating has been considered an acceptable resolution to marital disagreements as long as the violence is confined within the home. Only recently has the practice come into the public consciousness. Hostels or safe houses for battered women are now springing up all over North America, England, Western Europe and Australia to provide a place of refuge for these women and their children.

Laws are gradually being changed to assist the battered wife and books like Dr. Lenore Walker's are being written. Several years of intense research have gone into the wife beating theories she has developed. There is the 'learned helplessness' syndrome, which keeps the battered woman trapped in an impossible relationship. The 'cycle theory of violence' has three distinct phases: the tension-building phase; the brutal, acute battering incident; followed by the loving, contrite behaviour phase. All this is well illustrated by sad and rather horrifying first-person case histories.

The myths about abused women are many and persistent: she is usually seen as poor, uneducated and with few job skills. It is assumed that she can always leave home, and that this syndrome affects only a small percentage of the population. In fact, according to Dr. Walker, 'most battered women are from middle-class and higher-income homes and many are highly competent workers and successful career women.' Like rape, wife beating is a seriously under-reported crime. Statistics are difficult to obtain because battering generally occurs at night, in the home, without witnesses. Yet Dr. Walker maintains that a battered woman is psychologically unable to leave after being assaulted and that she cannot end her victimization without assistance.

Dr. Walker goes on to describe the characteristics of the battered woman and her man. Low self-esteem is something they both have in common. Women become victimized by feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Marriage does not appear to offer equal power to men and women. Dr. Walker states that 'the marriage license in our society also seems to serve as a license to violence.'

The law tends to perpetuate the notion of male supremacy and does not in fact protect married women. Dr. Walker be-