of his solution is what Orwell scornfully called 'salvation by fretwork'—i.e. the pursuit of worthwhile leisure-time hobbies as a consolation for frustration at work.

But in contemporary America the bogey of unemployment looms larger than the cultural issues. There is throughout the book an undercurrent of serious discussion about the adverse effect of automation on employment, at least when it comes at a difficult moment economically. Both the unionists and the clerics seem agreed that the optimistic conclusion that automation does not cause large-scale redundancy is unwarranted: and there is a fairly sharp disagreement between them and the businessmen (including Catholics) as to the morality or desirability of governmental initiative in problems of re-location and retraining of displaced workers, the provision of pensions, etc. But in spite of the division over this issue, it is still seen as a small disagreement between groups who both regard themselves as part of a very united society—united in its principal aims and ideals. Frequent allusion to papal utterances on the need for co-operation between management and labour helps to solidify this impression. But it seems to me that this atmosphere of togetherness may be the very thing which inhibits positive thinking on the subject: for it is precisely this absence of any sense that the nation is really divided into two camps (roughly: the haves and the have-nots) which makes constructive analysis of any possible alternative to the present social situation impossible. An alternative vision of society is urgently needed if the problems of a technological world are to be solved in a Christian way: but is such a vision possible unless a large number of people feel that, as a class, they are under-privileged and are determined to do something about it?

BRIAN WICKER

THE OUTCASTS, by Edith Sitwell; Macmillan; 10s. 6d.

SELECTED POEMS, by Stevie Smith; Longmans; 25s.

SELECTED POEMS: YEVTUSHENKO, translated with an introduction by Robin Milner-Gulland and Peter Levi, S.J.; Penguin Books; 2s. 6d.

Dame Edith Sitwell's disapproval of the bulk of the poetry written in the last ten years is well-known, and in the preface to her own new volume she takes another crack at it—'there has been a general attempt on the part of incompetent versifiers to remove all grandeur from poetry, to flatten it down into the lifelessness of the lesser Victorian verse'. These are harsh words, but, charitably, she quotes no names. It seems justifiable to assume that her own practice is to maintain or restore the grandeur. But (alas for the poet who wrote *Façade*, *Gold Coast Customs*, *Still Falls the Rain*) the grandeur is illusory. It is no more than an apparatus of plurals, 'large' adjectives, capital letters, fleshless symbols.

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The Bee, the Lion, the Ape, the Red Woman might be the names of constellations and they are as cold, as distant, as far from moving our blood as the constellations are. The lax recitative of the verse does not help; washing in at one ear and out at the other it leaves no deposit, nothing memorable that catches the inner ear. The trouble is that verse can be rendered lifeless as much by inflating it as by flattening it, and Dame Edith's danger is the lifelessness of the lesser eighteenth century verse, abstraction and rhetoric. True enough, grandeur is possible without discarding the concrete particulars of experience, and Dame Edith, disclaiming any accusation that she wishes to avoid the everyday world, instances Wordsworth and the celandine. But with all the admiration I have for her earlier poems, I cannot find that these recent ones, with two exceptions, have any real relation to the everyday world. The two exceptions are *The Yellow Girl* and *La Bella Bona Roba*; in these the tauter rhythms and the particularity of the images revive the kind of magic of her best poems.

Miss Stevie Smith on the other hand is concerned very much with the everyday world and seems to have no hankerings after grandeur. She is *sui generis* and her poems are continuously deceptive: they look often like the smaller poems of Blake, they sound often almost like Ogden Nash. But the more you read into this volume, the more tragic the implications seem. Sadness, loneliness, suffering, the frustration of love are not lightened but intensified by the childlike rhymes and rhythms and by the childlike drawings, and though frequently they seem to be tempered by a Jane-Austenish commonsense, this again is ambiguously successful:

These thoughts are depressing I know. They are depressing,
I wish I was more cheerful, it is more pleasant,
Also it is a duty, we should smile as well as submitting
To the purpose of One Above who is experimenting
With various mixtures of human character which goes best,
All is interesting for him it is exciting, but not for us.
There I go again. Smile, smile, and get some work to do
Then you will be practically unconscious without positively having to go.

In Miss Smith's poems, if there is an enemy, it is the Christian god and his providence, in Yevtushenko's it is the briefcase politician. But even to say this is to say too much and to align oneself with the newspaper ballyhoo of the Angry Young Soviet Man. It is true that there is this suggestion in 'Zima Junction', the main poem in the selection, but it is no more than a suggestion. The poem, of considerable length, is both about a visit to his birthplace and about his search for personal values. The politician, a very minor official anyway, is an enemy not because he is a party-member—another poem 'Party Card' prevents any using of Yevtushenko as a stick to beat the Soviet with—but because he is complacent, 'a man enthroned like a committee'.

In the end it is Zima Junction which gives him an answer:

'I live quietly and crack nuts.
I gently steam with engines.

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But not without reflection on these times,
these modern times, my loving meditation.
Don't worry. Yours is no unique condition,
your type of search and conflict and construction,
don't worry if you have no answer ready
to the lasting question . . . .
Love people.
Love entertains its own discrimination'.

Knowing no Russian, I found even these English equivalents of his poems delightful and moving.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

CHILDREN AND THEIR RELIGION; by Eve Lewis; Sheed and Ward; 15s. 0d.

The best way to introduce this excellent book is, I think, to quote from the first page of the first chapter: 'I have been moved to write because I have come to see how often we fail to see that the child's capacity to understand spiritual matters develops very slowly. In our desire to help the young to love and serve God, we must remember this. Otherwise we may actually hinder spiritual development by presenting children with material for which they are not ready, or by expecting of them standards of behaviour which are far beyond any they can yet reach'. The word 'understand' is the key word in this context; it means not only to learn but to know: to grasp the object in its fullness, to feel its impact. She has come to understand the minds of children of different ages at a deep and meaningful level, and she wants to make us understand so that we may enable our children to receive their religion 'according to the mode of the receiver', as Aquinas puts it.

The author is by profession a psychologist with long experience of normal children in the schools, and of 'maladjusted' ones in a Child Guidance Clinic. She is of the Jungian persuasion, and therefore has a settled and coherent background from which to set forth her views. This means a little too much description of the various types and attitudes of children in Jungian terms, and perhaps a little more of the 'collective unconscious' than a non-Jungian can take; but her framework certainly gives confidence and shape to the whole, and we are given fascinating glimpses into the unconscious side of the child mind.

The first half of the book deals with subjects such as 'The Unconscious Mind', 'The Child's World', 'The Obligations of Parenthood', 'The Child's World and Parents', while the second half takes us by stages into the child's ideas, activities, feelings, and disturbances of emotion, at the three divisions by age: infant, middle years, and adolescence, and at each stage suggestions are given as to the kind of religious approach which would seem appropriate to each.

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