

too chary of any influences; and ignorance of it that makes others too ready to be influenced by what is fashionable. Yet, like it or not, we are all influenced. We cannot avoid it. When the passage of influence is free it is all right; but when it is restricted by adherence to outworn tradition, or artificially stimulated by fashion, it isn't so good. And when an admired painter's manner is imitated as a device to secure success it is even worse.

These troubles will always be with us; the mere naming them will not exorcise them. This ensures that it will always take good, hard, long looking to find out whether any painting is really good enough to outlast its period.

When I was offered a travel grant in 1961 for one year's tour of Europe and America, I hadn't clarified the points I have just made, and wanted to convert its use from travel to time to paint at home. I had wanted very much to go to Europe in 1934; but I hadn't been able to go then, and now I had become reconciled to staying in New Zealand. My own painting had developed here, 'in contact with nature', but stimulated by examples from overseas. I had made a virtue of necessity, and felt a little impatient of the prevailing idea that it was absolutely necessary to go overseas to learn how to paint in New Zealand. 'Overseas' had come to me, I had made my selection from what was offered and developed my painting accordingly, though not enough. All my life I had had to spend the best of my time working at other things to earn a living for myself and my family, and I knew that now I could use a thousand pounds to better advantage painting at home than going on an expensive trip to get a closer look at what I knew well already. And, if I went, I would gravitate to the art that had already been instrumental in forming me. (Rembrandt, Constable and Cézanne, I decided I would concentrate on to avoid spreading my looking too wide and too thinly.) I was too old and too set in my ways at fifty-one, I felt, to seek to be formed again differently by what I might find that was now modern overseas.

But the then Arts Council wouldn't listen to my pleas. I discussed it with Charles Brasch, who was a member of the committee that had to consider my case. He suggested I should give him a letter to present at their next meeting. No doubt I wrote it well and made my case strongly; but they were far too addicted to the view that they could do no good to anybody except by sending him overseas. I don't believe they even thought about what I wrote. Their reply was, abruptly, that if I didn't depart for overseas the following year at the latest I would forfeit the grant. I thought rapidly: the newspapers would report my receipt of the grant; that would increase my reputation; his reputation being the chief (or only) means of selling an artist has, my sales and my income would