issued hunting licenses to limit the slaughter of waterfowl. The ancient Romans, Greeks, Assyrians, Chinese, and Indians also safeguarded wildlife. Around 1900 B.C., the Sumerians and Babylonians enacted the first known law protecting vegetation, setting a fine of half a mina of silver for cutting down a tree.

But perhaps no society has practiced conservation more assiduously than the English. King Ine (c. 700) issued the earliest known English environmental statute. He forbade the burning of forests and the cutting of any tree "big enough to shelter thirty swine." After 1066, the first Norman kings marked off royal game preserves; their foresters brutally enforced a ban on nonroyal hunting.

Even the Magna Carta (1215) had two sections devoted to environmental protection—one calling for reforestation along England's rivers. During the reign of Edward I (1272–1307), Parliament passed its first conservation act, abolishing the death penalty for killing a deer but establishing a fishing season for salmon. In succeeding centuries, more and more species came under official protection, with one conspicuous exception. The otherwise bird-loving Henry VIII (who ruled from 1509 to 1547) pledged a bounty as encouragement to his countrymen to "kill and utterly destroy all manner of Crows."

Broad as early English conservation laws were, there were major gaps. They ignored nongame animals. They protected trees, which are marketable, but neglected noncommercial vegetation. Though conservationists rallied to defend individual species that became endangered, they paid little heed to the surroundings. Not until the 20th century did the total "environment" become an issue.

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *Cézanne's Role*

"Cézanne and the Continuing Cubist Controversy" by Carol Donnell-Kotrozo, in *Art International* (Jan.-Feb. 1981), Via Maraini, 17-A, Lugano, Switzerland (CH-6900).

In recent decades, the reputation of French post-impressionist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) has been caught in a crossfire—between art historians who credit Georges Braque with the invention of cubism and those who tout Pablo Picasso.

Cézanne's omission of detail and his penchant for rendering areas as planes of color have long reminded critics of the cubists' efforts to reduce nature to its basic geometric forms—rectangle, sphere, cone, and cylinder. An influential art historian, William Rubin of New York's Museum of Modern Art, has persuasively argued that most of Cézanne's "distortions" of nature flowed from the same conscious wish to de-

emphasize the world around him.

Rubin challenges the conventional view that Picasso fathered cubism in the early 1900s and that Braque merely helped him refine it. He has demonstrated that back in the late 19th century, Cézanne employed a technique of overlapping and linking geometric planes in steplike configurations, called *passage,* that violated fundamental rules of perspective. This technique ultimately became a pillar of cubism. *Passage* was absent in Picasso's works as late as 1908 but appeared in paintings by Braque, whom most scholars agree was influenced by Cézanne.

Donnell-Kotrozo, an Arizona State University art historian, disputes this portrayal of Cézanne as protocubist. To be sure, Cézanne found the strict "model-copy" relationship of the 18th- and 19th-century naturalists inadequate, she writes. He believed that faithfulness to Nature's every detail prevented a painting from fusing into a coherent whole. His reorganization of nature—his omissions and simplifications—represented an effort to transmit nature's effect on him to the viewer, not a rejection of the world around him.

At the core of the Cézanne controversy is a philosophical dispute over the nature of progress in art, says Donnell-Kotrozo. Rubin and his adherents imply that the greatest artists *consciously* contribute to some "preordained pattern of evolution." Alternatively, she suggests, every stylistic invention may be viewed as "a probe that reaches to the limits" of an artist's imagination. By allowing hindsight to color their theories, art historians belittle the motives and personal achievements of the unsuspecting artist.

## *Tastefully Tacky*

"The Movie Palace and the Theatrical Sources of its Architectural Style" by Charlotte Herzog, in *Cinema Journal* (Spring 1981), Film Division, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. 60201.

During the 1920s, when motion pictures became America's favorite entertainment, the ultimate in movie-going was the movie palace. Built between 1913 and 1932, these palaces typically seated 1,800 to 2,500 viewers and featured plush interiors, doormen in resplendent uniforms, and sometimes stage shows and orchestras. The palace was a uniquely American contribution to show business architecture, writes Herzog, an art historian at William Rawley Harper (Illinois) College. But it reflected its ancestry—the vaudeville theaters, traveling shows, and penny arcades where movies snared their first skeptical audiences during the 1890s.

The first movie exhibitors thought that they were taking a chance on a "new-fangled invention." Most of them hedged their bets by retaining their stage attractions. Even proprietors of the first full-time movie theaters adopted a low-risk strategy, keeping alterations in their converted stores to a minimum. To lure pedestrians inside, they borrowed the circus technique of displaying flashy banners and posters outside.