

[8-1970]

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

EDITOR'S NOTE:

TWO MORE SHOWINGS OF "CIVILISATION"
ADDED TO SUMMER EVENING SCHEDULE

Due to the great demand for seats for the evening showings of "Civilisation," there will be four showings daily commencing Monday, August 10, at 5, 6, 7, and 8 p.m. Tickets will be used only for the 7 and 8 p.m. showings, to accommodate those who wish to make telephone reservations. The 5 and 6 p.m. films will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis.

The first film of the evening will run at 5 and 7 p.m., while the second film will be shown at 6 and 8 p.m. For example, on Mondays, #2, "The Great Thaw," will be shown at 5 and 7 p.m., while #3, "Romance and Reality," will be shown at 6 and 8 p.m., and so forth. Sundays, because of other commitments of the Gallery's auditorium, #1, "The Skin of Our Teeth," will be shown at 6, 7, and 8 p.m.

The Gallery has been showing "Civilisation" to capacity audiences since the summer schedule began on June 28. Available tickets for the two evening presentations are usually exhausted within the

(MORE)

half hour after the Gallery opens at 10 a.m., and the limited capacity of the auditorium has made it necessary to turn away people in the standby line.

The summer evening series of "Civilisation" showings was designed especially to accommodate those who were unable to come to the winter and spring daytime film showings, as well as the capital's summer student interns, and summer visitors to Washington. This expansion of the program is intended to accommodate as many people as possible during the four remaining weeks of evening showings. In order to permit the new scheduling of "Civilisation" film showings, the film "In Search of Rembrandt" will be presented at 3:30 p.m. weekdays instead of at 4 p.m.

END

For further information contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. 20565. Area Code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.

Press Reviews of CIVILIZATION written and narrated by Kenneth Clark

VOGUE January 15, 1970

Scan of photocopy of original document. The original document is located in the Press Release files.

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT...

LORD CLARK OF SALTWOOD AND "CIVILIZATION"

With mock humility and profound erudition, Lord Clark invented what he calls an "intellectual soap opera" for television: his thirteen-part series, *Civilization*, a magnificent trapeze through Western Civilization in colour and with music that was written never more than ten years before or after the scene it accompanies. Amusing and deliberate, Lord Clark talks throughout the programs, making small jokes, great generalizations, and entertaining his audiences with scholarly observations. After its run on BBC-TV last year, *Civilization* has been the hot free ticket given out by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and New York University in New York and by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. By now CBS-TV may have bought it, perhaps to make up for *The Secret Storm*. While in New York recently, Lord Clark received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from New York University at a special convocation. A life peer, Kenneth Clark has had a succession of high posts which included Keeper at the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, from which he was graduated, Director of the National Gallery in London, and Surveyor of the King's Pictures. At Saltwood in Kent, where he was photographed for Vogue in front of his castle, he has kept on with his writing, there wrote part of the commentary for *Civilization*. Lord Clark said that the BBC asked him to lunch and while they were eating smoked salmon, someone said the word "civilization," and he immediately felt a call. The BBC expected him to say "no" to another proposition: he said "no" to it but said he would do a series on civilization, which rather put the BBC out. For the next two years he travelled with two producers and a crew photographing art and architecture from the Dark Ages to the Impressionist period, but leaving out Spain, its Moors, and the German Romantics. Almost everything else, however, is on film, marvellous, chatty, a window opened by a man whose mind is an orchard of plums.



The Washington Post November 2, 1969

Our Civilization Under the Glass

By Meryle Secrest

"His biographer once asked the Duke of Urbino what is necessary to rule a kingdom. The Duke replied, 'Essere umano; to be human.'"

intensely interested in films about art. His own film, "The American Vision," made a few years ago, is a brilliant example of the genre.

Credit also goes to the gallery's new assistant administrator, Howard Adams.

inner space; that is to say, what has been learned about the unconscious in the last 100 years.

And there are some aspects of our visual

THE NATIONAL OBSERVER December 22, 1969

Art Film at National Gallery Draws Largest Crowd Since 'Mona Lisa'

WASHINGTON, D.C.

An educational film originally made for British television has turned into the sleeper of the year in two U.S. museums.

When officials of the National Gallery of Art here scheduled the 13-part film

whether the all-embracing love preached by St. Francis of Assisi or the intellectual order worshiped by the Eighteenth Century rationalists.

Each segment of the series takes up

By Meryle Secrest

"His biographer once asked the Duke of Urbino what is necessary to rule a kingdom. The Duke replied, 'Essere umano; to be human.'"

So says Sir Kenneth Clark in an intensely human, immensely informed discourse on Western man. "Civilisation," a 13-part series of one-hour films narrated by Clark and originally made for British TV, will be shown Sundays at the National Gallery of Art, beginning today.

At one point, the narrator discusses what the term civilization means to him:

"I have tried throughout this series to define civilization in terms of creative power and the enlargement of human faculties; and from that point of view, slavery is abominable. So, for that matter, is abject poverty."

The series, when shown in Britain, attracted a wide following and universal admiration; not only for its grandeur of sweep but the erudition, clarity, imagination and wit with which it has been carried out by its author and chief narrator, Sir Kenneth Clark.

Clark begins with the thesis that one can learn most about a civilization through its arts: "If I had to say which was telling the truth about society, a speech by a Minister of Housing or the actual buildings put up in his time, I should believe the buildings."

Through a highly effective combination of art, architecture, the filming of locations all over Europe, newsreels, political satire, music, poetry and history, Sir Kenneth develops a panoramic view of the history of Western man that takes one, in its 13th and final sequence, up to the present day.

Beyond this point, Clark refuses to speculate. However, the novelist J. B. Priestley, who wrote an otherwise favorable review of the series, suggested that Sir Kenneth could have concluded with a 14th program on the dehumanizing aspects of present-day society.

"He might have added that there seem to be among us now . . . creatures from other planets . . . They want to put an end to the human race. So they are building larger and larger . . . intricate machines, ready to take us over soon. At the same time they are working hard to persuade us that we are machines and second-rate at that."

Priestley believes that the series is in itself a contribution to civilization.

"It represented a bold step in civilizing television itself," he writes.

An ironic note is that "Civilisation" has not yet come to the American television screen, although one of the commercial networks is said to be interested in it.

So, in this country, what was designed to be shown on the color TV screen has to be presented as a film; as a public service by a cultural institution.

The National Gallery of Art is showing the series without charge on Sundays at 5:30 p.m. through Dec. 14. The opening film will be seen today at 5:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and again at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 8. On succeeding Sundays, two films will be seen and performances will be repeated on demand.

Credit for the fact that Washington is seeing this series (similar showings are being held concurrently in New York) goes to J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery, who is

interested in films about art. His own film, "The American Vision," made a few years ago, is a brilliant example of the genre.

Credit also goes to the gallery's new assistant administrator, Howard Adams.

"I had the good fortune to be having dinner one evening with Mary Lasker," he said. "She had just returned from London and was talking about this fantastic series she had seen. So I got in touch with the BBC next day."

The National Gallery of Art knew of the existence of the series, since it had supplied color transparencies to the BBC for the films. The National Gallery is interested in developing its own series, modeled on "Civilisation" but less grand in scope. It would focus on individual artists.

"We would like to find a way to create a series of smaller vignettes of film interpretation of the great artists which could become part of a great film library on the arts," Adams says.

In narrating "Civilisation," Clark's great gift is that he is not only enormously well read, but also can knit together disparate elements to make a coherent whole. He can look at a carving in the nave of Chartres cathedral and make you see how it personifies the spirit of an age.

He pulls out a few sentences from the dazzling storehouse of his mind and makes the listener immediately curious to know more about the subject.

His lectures are of the kind one would hope to find in a graduate seminar. Yet his thesis is so winningly illustrated and clearly and persuasively developed that the viewer does not need special knowledge to be challenged by the ideas.

In an age of specialization, when most people seem to be focusing on a narrower and narrower fragment of the whole, Sir Kenneth Clark proves that it is still possible to see the history of civilization in terms of a single, unifying vision.

If one has any quarrel with the series at all, it is that painting, sculpture, architecture, music, philosophy and even poetry do very well as sources of references. But literature seems to get the short end of the stick.

But perhaps this is the weakness of the television medium itself; it cannot project what is seen by the inner eye.

Priestley is perhaps right in pointing out that Clark has not taken into account the enormous strides man has made into the exploration of



Sir Kenneth Clark

inner space; that is to say, what has been learned about the unconscious in the last 100 years.

And there are some aspects of our visual heritage whose absence from the series is inexplicable: Venice and the court at Versailles, under Louis XIV, for instance.

Clark, who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth, is the son of a well-to-do thread manufacturer who was brought up with the idea that "to look at pictures and admire them was a reasonable activity."

At Oxford, he wrote a book on Gothic revival in his last year. His wife relates: "He told me about it when we were walking out. I didn't like to admit I didn't know what Gothic revival was in case I lost my place in the queue."

Clark began by wanting to be an artist. But in an interview printed in *The Listener*, the BBC magazine, he states that he gave it up because "I'd just this much sense: if an Englishman can write a bit and paint a bit, if he has any sense he'll be a writer, because that's our medium."

At the age of 30, he was made director of London's National Gallery. Twelve years later he retired to become Slade Professor at Oxford University.

In 1953, he became chairman of the Independent Television Authority and when he retired as chairman in 1957, he lectured on art for the next eight years for the ITV.

He is an authority on the Italian Renaissance and has written a book on the subject. He has another on Ruskin and a book on the nude in art that has become a classic.

This book arose out of a series of lectures he gave at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1953.

People like to remind Sir Kenneth Clark that, about three years ago, he expressed the gloomy view that television was likely "to exclude solemn topics, that can only be stated in measured terms."

He then thought that television tended "to cut off its audience from some of the greatest achievements of the human spirit."

It is fitting that he has magnificently disproved his own theories. As a great humanist, he led us to contemplate those values upon which a civilization worthy of the name has to depend. In his concluding film, "Heroic Materialism and the Awakened Conscience," Clark says:

"At this point I reveal myself in my true colors, as a stick-in-the-mud. I hold a number of beliefs that have been repudiated by the liveliest intellects of our time.

"I believe that order is better than chaos, creation better than destruction . . . On the whole I think that knowledge is preferable to ignorance and I am sure that human sympathy is more valuable than ideology.

" . . . And I think we should remember that we are part of a great whole, which for convenience we call nature. All living things are our brothers and sisters. Above all, I believe in the God-given genius of certain individuals, and I value a society that makes their existence possible."

An educational film originally made for British television has turned into the sleeper of the year in two U.S. museums.

When officials of the National Gallery of Art here scheduled the 13-part film, *Civilisation*, for a seven-week run, two parts at a time, they modestly hoped it would fill the gallery's 300-seat auditorium on Sunday afternoons. The first afternoon, 24,000 people showed up, thousands of them waiting outside in the rain for hours. Officials quickly decided to show the film one segment a week on an expanded five-times-a-day, seven-day-a-week schedule.

Now in its seventh week *Civilisation* continues to draw the largest crowds to the gallery since the Mona Lisa was here six years ago. Among the 14,000 a week to queue up have been Government workers on their lunch breaks and peace marchers in town for the Nov. 14 mobilization. Museum officials are at a loss to explain the series' popularity except to ascribe it to word-of-mouth advertising and "the power of a very fine cultural film."

Civilisation features gorgeous footage of some of the greatest works of art in the Western world. But its real attraction is the running commentary delivered from the banks of the Seine, from Ravenna, from Monticello, and from dozens of other locations in 11 countries by art historian Sir Kenneth Clark. A humanist as well as scholar, Sir Kenneth argues in the film that the race has taken giant steps toward civilization in periods when men have striven for "something extra,"

by St. Francis of Assisi or the intellectual order worshipped by the Eighteenth Century rationalists.

Each segment of the series takes up one period—the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Romantic Era—and explores it in terms of its artistic accomplishments, which Sir Kenneth regards as more trustworthy than the pronouncements of its statesmen.

The National Gallery obtained the film after a friend of director J. Carter Brown saw the series on the BBC. Because Sir Kenneth had delivered a series of lectures at the gallery in 1953, the BBC readily agreed to make the film available. Under the sponsorship of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and New York University, the film is also being shown in New York City, where four extra showings a week have been added.

So far there are no plans to show *Civilisation* anywhere else in the United States. But one major television network is investigating the possibility of putting it on the air.

In the meantime the National Gallery will continue to pack them in, but a spokesman admits that, in a nice sort of way, the film has become something of a nuisance.

With the series here one-half complete, gallery officials last week expressed the hope that the audience may soon begin to dwindle. "After all," one spokesman said, "even *Hair* can't go on drawing huge crowds forever." —B.M.

The Washington Post November 4, 1969

'Civilisation'

By Phil Casey

The National Gallery of Art, which apparently figured it had a nice, quiet cultural festival on its hands, was wrong as it could be.

About 10,000 extra persons showed up and wanted to sit down in the gallery's 303-seat auditorium Sunday night to watch showings of the first program in a 13-part series of films and narration called "Civilisation"

J. Carter Brown, director of the National Gallery, noting immediately that he had a popular hit on his hands, decreed there shall be frequent showings of each of the films daily and Sunday, so that some of the thousands who want to see the series can see it.

Brown, who is getting the series free from the BBC, wishes that TV, either educational or network, would buy the series and show it

to all of the people who apparently are eager to see it.

He has no control over that, but he can show the films as frequently as possible, and he is doing that, ever since he came face to face with what happened Sunday night.

"Civilisation" is a series of 13 one-hour films narrated by Sir Kenneth Clark and made originally for British TV. The plan had been to show the series only

on Sundays and Saturdays, but Brown has given up that dream and he's glad civilization is such a hit.

This week, through Friday, the first program will be shown daily at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Then, on Saturday, the program will be shown at 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

On Sunday, programs two and three in the 13-part se-

ries will be shown together. Each show consists of two one-hour films. The shows begin at 12:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

These programs will be shown through the following week: at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and at 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 15.

The gallery will advertise a schedule of all programs and showings from now on. There is no charge. Free numbered tickets will be available in the gallery each day for the shows that day.

Last Sunday was an astounding day at the gallery. Normally, for a Sunday at this time of year, about 8,000 persons are counted visiting the gallery. On this occasion there were 22,000 persons, and Brown has a deep impression that about half of them wanted to go to the movie.

United States Distributor for BBC-TV

TIME-LIFE FILMS, 4 West 16th Street, New York 10011 (212) 691-2930

The Grand Tour

"One has to face it," said British art historian Sir Kenneth Clark not long ago. "TV is an entertainment medium. I heartily sympathize with the viewers. I always switch off very serious programs." The next thing anyone knew, Sir Kenneth had produced and narrated for BBC television a series of thirteen 50-minute films on the history of Western civilization from the fall of the Roman Empire through the nineteenth century, ordinarily a very sober subject indeed. But in Clark's able hands, his basically serious subject was transmitted into high entertainment so smoothly that some 1.5 million fascinated English families tuned in the series week after week.

Now Clark's films—all in color—are being shown to jam-packed audiences in New York City's Town Hall and Washington's National Gallery, and there is a good prospect that one of the big U.S. commercial networks—which seemed to evince little interest in the series at first—may be showing it early next year. "It's the hottest show in town," says Carter Brown, director of the gallery, who was nearly bowled over when thousands of people queued up for the 300 seats in the museum's theater one Sunday afternoon. "It's even beating out 'I Am Curious (Yellow)'."

Chatty: Much of the reason for the series' box-office success is the 66-year-old Clark himself. He not only planned and wrote the scripts for all of the films, but also stars in each one as a witty, chatty and grandly intelligent tour guide with a sure dramatic touch. In the opening film, "The Skin of Our Teeth," the camera leads the viewer to the top of Skellig Michael, a jagged rock with the wind whistling around it that rises out of the sea off the coast of Ireland. There, Clark explains, a handful of Celtic Christians huddled in their stone huts through the Dark Ages, and civilization itself seemed to hang on by its fingertips. But Clark has

a profound sense of humanity, its grandeur and its ironies. "Charlemagne never learned to write," he notes dryly after crediting the great conqueror with saving Western civilization. "He just never got the hang of it."

Some further observations from Clark's film history: ■ "In the nineteenth century people used to think of the invention of printing as the lynchpin in the history of civilization. Well, fifth-century Greece and twelfth-century Chartres and fifteenth-century Florence got on very well without it. . . . Still, on balance, I suppose that printing has done more good than harm."



■ "New York . . . took almost the same time to reach its present condition as it did to complete the gothic cathedrals. At which point a very obvious reflection crosses one's mind; that the cathedrals were built to the glory of God, New York was built to the glory of mammon; mon-

ey, gain, the new God of the nineteenth century."

The idea for the series came first from David Attenborough, head of BBC-TV, three years ago, as the BBC was preparing to start transmitting in color. "My simple ambition," says Attenborough, "was to set on the screen the loveliest things to look at and to hear." The BBC approached Clark, who had already prepared 60 programs for them. "In the course of the conversation," Clark recalls, "They used the word 'civilization.' When I heard that word, it seemed to me that that might be worth trying. That's all there was to it."

The BBC assigned Clark two producers and a three-man camera crew to make the series. For two years they traveled 80,000 miles in eleven countries, filming paintings, sculptures, churches, palaces and landscapes. By coincidence, the crew arrived in Paris in May of 1968 when hundreds of Sorbonne students went to the barricades. "It made it very interesting," says Clark, "being there shooting a piece on the French Revolution while a real revolution was going on."

What the series adds up to is a wide-angle view of Western civilization accompanied by Clark's personal, witty and ever trenchant commentary. "I suddenly realized when I was writing," he explained last week, "that these were the things that I have always believed, but was too timid to say out loud. One of the nice things about growing older is that you gain the courage of your convictions."

Now the courage is spreading to U.S. TV. "It's an extraordinary effort, and Clark emerges as a major television personality, a cross between Maurice Evans and Alistair Cooke," says Mike Dann, senior vice president in charge of programming for CBS. "We're looking for a place to put it on Sunday afternoons." After the pro football season, of course.

SOME COMMENTS FROM 'CIVILIZATION' BY SIR KENNETH CLARK



Charlemagne

THE MIDDLE AGES: "The old idea that he [Charlemagne] saved civilization isn't so far wrong because it was through him that the Atlantic world re-established contact with the



Lorenzo de' Medici

THE RENAISSANCE: "Well, it is certainly incorrect to say that we are more graceful than other animals, and we don't feel much like immortal gods at the moment. But in 1400



Voltaire

THE ENLIGHTENMENT: "The smile of reason may seem to betray a certain incomprehension of the deeper human emotions; but it didn't preclude some strongly held beliefs."

Bouquets and Brickbats

One of the characteristics differentiating man from beast is an intelligent interest in the past.

Accordingly, the National Gallery of Art is to be applauded for making it possible for Washingtonians to see the British Broadcasting Corporation's excellent thirteen-part documentary, "Civilisation," which charts the cultural accomplishments of man over the past two millennia.

By the same token, it is some sort of commentary on the three major networks and their sponsors that Sir Kenneth Clark's production, which was considered eminently suitable for general audiences in Britain, should be regarded

over here as not America's cup of tea.

The implication, of course, is that the series is too high-brow — or that Americans are too low-brow — to make such a long series either interesting or commercially feasible. The television moguls, of course, may be correct.

But the 10,000 people who showed up Sunday in quest of the 303 seats available obviously disagree. The crush was so great that the gallery, which had planned free Sunday showings through December 14, has decided to provide multiple daily screenings through that date.

Get on down there. It beats "Laugh-In."

The Rambler Ponds 'Civilisation'

By JOHN SHERWOOD

"If I had to say which was telling the truth about society, a speech by a minister of housing or the actual buildings put up in his time, I should believe the buildings."

—Sir Kenneth Clark.

With the above in mind, the Rambler passed by the Rayburn Building with head bowed and one eye closed because his thoughts were on a visit to Chartres Cathedral, and sights like the grand House Office Building are very bad indeed for visions like Chartres.

He was going to see an hour-long movie, and it was free. But it was being shown in the National Gallery of Art, which meant that culture might be involved, and since the Rambler doesn't generally go for public culture he walked in feeling a little uncomfortable.

The color film was the second in a 13-part series produced by the British Broadcasting Corp., and it seems it is the biggest smash hit here since Mona Lisa came to town. Entitled "Civilisation" it takes on one immense subject and the Rambler wondered how much different he would come out from the man who went in.

"We thought that we would show maybe one of the films, or perhaps at the most two," explained the Gallery's Bill Morrison. "But the response has been unbelievable. We're on No. 2 now, showing it several times throughout the day, and expect to be showing the whole thing into 1970. If only it could somehow be shown on TV."

SITTING DOWN in the 300-seat theater the Rambler was taken right into a cathedral of the Middle Ages in the No. 2 program, called "The Great Thaw." Soon a man appeared on the screen talking about the 11th century's "outpouring of energy" and describing it as "a Russian spring."

It was Sir Kenneth Clark, narrator and writer of the mammoth documentary that dares to cover the trek from the bleak Dark Ages of Europe to the New York cathedral skyscrapers built "to the glory of Mammon—money, gain, the new god of the 19th century."

The Rambler liked the man on the spot and immediately agreed with a written description of him: "He is the perfect intellectual pin-up—so subtly suited in autumn colors, tie carefully chosen to go with the silk handkerchief—his rosy complexion

He showed a figure of a saint who had been martyred because she refused to worship idols. Now, alas, he said, here she was a saintly relic turned into an idol herself.

Charting the ideas and events that have led Western civilization from the collapse of Greece and Rome to our own century, Clark, in this episode, which is being shown through this week, was taken most by Chartres Cathedral.

There was no fancy camera work, but the eye looked lovingly upon the carvings and the stained glass as chants illuminated the narrative. The buildings were put up by man to God, but it seemed to the Rambler as if God had a hand in the creation. Certainly no man could do the same today.

The packed theater was suspended in the glory of Chartres. There was not talking. No fussing about. No chomping of popcorn and sticky candy. The gentle voice of Clark carried them through as if they were special guests on a very special, magical mystery tour.

Most of the priceless objects that adorned Chartres in the 12th century are gone now, but Morrison piped up to tell the Rambler that the Gallery had a French Romanesque chalice that was used at Chartres by four generations of French kings.

It was in the Widener Collection, and the Rambler asked to see it. Morrison led the way to a remote room on the lower level and there, behind a glass case, sat one of the finest chalices in the world. It is priceless and it is something to watch for a very long time.

Commissioned about 1140, it was first used by Abbot Suger, the most powerful political figure in France at the time. It has a fluted bowl, a single piece of carved sardonyx which dates back to ancient Rome. On the base of it are gold-embossed medallions.

The Rambler was aware of his heavy breathing while looking at the chalice, and the film he had just seen had brought it all the more to life.

UNABLE TO LEAVE the Gallery without stopping by to visit an old friend who wears a halo over his head, the Rambler headed for the self-portrait of French impressionist Paul Gauguin and thought of the legend behind those sullen eyes and longed for a thatched hut in the South Pacific.

The walk down the steps of the Gallery was slippery in the soft rain and, once outside, the Rambler looked around in

Charlemagne

Lorenzo de' Medici

Voltaire

THE MIDDLE AGES: "The old idea that he [Charlemagne] saved civilization isn't so far wrong because it was through him that the Atlantic world re-established contact with the ancient culture of the Mediterranean world."

THE RENAISSANCE: "Well, it is certainly incorrect to say that we are more graceful than other animals, and we don't feel much like immortal gods at the moment. But in 1400 the Florentines did."

THE ENLIGHTENMENT: "The smile of reason may seem to betray a certain incomprehension of the deeper human emotions; but it didn't preclude some strongly held beliefs—belief in natural law, belief in justice, in toleration, in humanitarianism. Not bad."

bleak Dark Ages of Europe to the New York cathedral skyscrapers built "to the glory of Mammon—money, gain, the new god of the 19th century."

The Rambler liked the man on the spot and immediately agreed with a written description of him: "He is the perfect intellectual pin-up—subtly suited in autumn colors, tie carefully chosen to go with the silk handkerchief—his rosy complexion and silver hair are those of some endearing though awe-inspiring uncle. He is shrewd, sarcastic and witty; he is also kind . . ."

There was a point he made, going from one great Gothic cathedral to another, that the Rambler thought was especially fine because it was the kind of thing that separated the brilliant production from one of those TV features on the royal palaces.

UNABLE TO LEAVE the Gallery without stopping by to visit an old friend who wears a halo over his head, the Rambler headed for the self-portrait of French impressionist Paul Gauguin and thought of the legend behind those sullen eyes and longed for a thatched hut in the South Pacific.

The walk down the steps of the Gallery was slippery in the soft rain and, once outside, the Rambler looked around in vain, with his mind still swimming among the towers of Chartres.

He tried to avoid the Rayburn House Office Building on his return voyage, but something drew him there.

My God, it's so awful.

It is a checkered vest with popped buttons and a fat, stale cigar with the paper band still on. God does not figure in it at all.

Staten Island Advance November 2, 1969

Civilization parades for film maker

BARRY LEO DELANEY

CURATOR OF ART
STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM

Something to watch for in the near future is a new film series written and narrated by Kenneth Clark (Lord Clark of Saltwood) entitled "Civilization." Although the art of the film is normally outside the scope of this column, this particular group of 13 filmed programs from the British Broadcasting Corp. is, I believe, an important exception.

The subject that Lord Clark has chosen to treat in this series is nothing less than the last 1,600 years of Western European civilization, together with its colonial expansion and development in the Americas over nearly five centuries. The forces and events that have shaped our present-day society are analyzed in these films through an examination of the great artistic achievements of the past.

The concepts presented are modestly described by Lord Clark as "a personal view." In addition to being one of the world's foremost art historians, Lord Clark has had extensive experience in the fields of film and television. Between 1934 and 1941 he was the director, and later chancellor, of the film division, house publicly, in the British Ministry of Information.

He was also chairman of the Independent Television Authority in Great Britain from 1954 to 1957. For nearly 40 years he has held numerous important museum posts in England, including that of director of the National Gallery in

London during the decade between 1934 to 1945. He has also been the author of several books on the history of art.

This impressive background has now been brought to bear on what is surely one of the most outstanding series of educational films that has ever been produced. "Civilization" was first shown on the BBC television last spring and is now being previewed in the United States at New York University's Town Hall in midtown Manhattan. The film showings are being jointly sponsored here under the auspices of NYU and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, through the benefaction of Charles B. Wrightsman—a trustee of both institutions—and with the cooperation of Time-Life Films, distributors in this country for the BBC.

The present audience is an invited one, consisting primarily of members and patrons of the Metropolitan and the faculty, students and alumni of the university. The demand for the free tickets was so overwhelming that extra showings have had to be scheduled. Even so, virtually all of the seats for the six screenings each week on successive Tuesdays and Wednesdays through Dec. 9 have now been promised.

There seems little doubt, however, that these films are ultimately destined for some more widespread public distribution, perhaps on one of the major television networks, and probably within the next year or so. Furthermore, the series will almost certainly be made available to high

schools and colleges. It is likely that everyone will have some opportunity to see these films eventually. A companion volume is also already on the presses.

To make the series Lord Clark traveled some 80,000 miles in Europe and America with a team of technicians, shooting thousands of examples of architecture, sculpture, painting, and allied arts. The production team wandered from Istanbul in Turkey to our own state of Virginia, recording the greatest artistic achievements of our civilization. All of this was accomplished within two years.

The first 50-minute film is entitled "The Skin of our Teeth." It picks up the thread of western history where it was broken off after the decline of Greco-Roman civilization, starting in the 4th century A.D. In this picture the precarious survival of our western civilization after the fall of the Roman Empire is traced until its stabilization under Charlemagne (742-814), king of the Franks, and first of the so-called Holy Roman emperors. The title was suggested by the contention that civilized man survived during this period only just by the skin of his teeth.

In the narration Kenneth Clark proposes that there is a decided difference between a culture and a civilization. He contrasts the energy and will of the barbarian invaders from the north with the original stability and permanence of the old Roman Empire. He touches lightly upon how confidence in the seemingly solid, but actual-

ly very fragile, Roman civilization was gradually undermined. Finally, as we all know, it crumbled and fell.

The result was four centuries of chaos. The Vikings, for example, may have had a unique culture, but it is questionable whether they ever had a civilization. Under Charlemagne the Atlantic world re-established contact with the ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean region, and western civilization began anew.

The remaining 12 films examine this civilization. In the end, there will doubtlessly be many nagging implications for our time. In the middle of the 20th century we are asking ourselves, "Can man survive?" let alone his civilization. Can we learn to control our own technology or will it destroy us?

Art may not be able to provide the answer to these questions, but it is often able to diagnose some of the ills. One is reminded of the work of the late Edward Hopper (1882-1967) where man's loneliness and isolation from his fellow men is so frequently a theme. The painting "Western Motel" of 1937 is characteristic. (It is now on loan from the Yale University Art Gallery to the Metropolitan for the exhibition "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-70.")

The boredom and despair of the lone central figure in the anonymous motel room is an indictment against the transitory and unsettled nature of much of modern Western civilization.

The Washington Post November 10, 1969

Around Town

"Civilisation"

If there is one thing the National Gallery of Art needs less than another, it is probably an enlargement of the line already waiting for tickets to see the British Broadcasting Corporation film called "Civilisation." We have no wish to add to the Gallery's problems; yet we cannot refrain from telling readers they ought to run, not walk, to the nearest Gallery entrance. "Civilisation" is a series of 13 one-hour motion pictures in color narrated by Sir Kenneth Clark and made originally for British TV. The first of that series, shown last week three times a day, gratis, in the gallery's lecture hall, is nothing less than superb in every respect.

The photography of classical and medieval works of art and architecture is almost flawless in its brilliance and beauty. And Sir Kenneth Clark's commentary on the tissue margin by which the civilization responsible for those glorious achievements escaped extinction must be characterized as supremely civilized—or, as he no doubt would

prefer it, supremely civilized. He takes his hearers gently by the hand and leads them through a creative evolution in a manner that is at once scholarly and simple.

The National Gallery is, of course, a thoroughly appropriate place for the showing of these films. We cannot help wishing, however, that they could be shown as well on television networks so that people all over the country could view them and glimpse the wonders of which man has proved himself capable. In this time when so many—and so many of the young in particular—are experiencing a sense of despair about Western culture and the values of civilization, and are so recklessly ready to tear down all that has been built up in the past, this record of man's accomplishments, of man's limitless reach for beauty and for creativity, has something to say of immense significance.

"Civilisation," Sir Kenneth Clark says, rests upon a "sense of permanence." The past affords a lamp for the future. If it is wise for men to be dissatisfied, it is folly for them to lose hope.

The Daily Times Mamaroneck, New York, November 3, 1969

"CIVILIZATION" FILM SERIES TO GO ON VIEW

Thomas P. F. Hoving, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and James M. Hester, president of New York University have announced special showing "Western Motel" of 1937 is characteristic. (It is now on loan from the Yale University Art Gallery to the Metropolitan for the exhibition "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-70.")

The boredom and despair of the lone central figure in the anonymous motel room is an indictment against the transitory and unsettled nature of much of modern Western civilization.

The films will be shown under joint auspices of the Museum

and the University at Town Hall, NYU's midtown cultural arts center, to an invited audience consisting principally of friends and patrons of the Museum, and faculty, students and alumni of the University. Special showings have also been scheduled at Town Hall for metropolitan area high school students.

The demand for tickets has been so great that extra showings of the series have been added to the two showings originally scheduled. More than 11,000 recipients of invitations have responded with requests for more than 40,000 tickets.

Lord Clark, the renowned art historian, presents in the series a personal view of the forces and events that have shaped

present-day Western civilization as seen in the artistic achievements of the past 16 centuries. On Tuesday, Nov. 18, he will speak in person at the 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. showings.

To make the film, Lord Clark and a team of technicians devoted two years and traveled some 80,000 miles in Europe and America to shoot thousands of examples of sculpture and architecture, theater and painting, books and artifacts. The production team traveled from the Hebrides to the Mediterranean, from Istanbul in the east to Virginia in the west, to film such significant artistic achievements as the interior of Chartres Cathedral and the ceiling of the Sisten Chapel.

Scan of photocopy of original document. The original document is located in the Press Release files.