

In the Dutch NRC Handelsblad newspaper of Friday May 23 2008 Maartje Somers interviewed UK conservative philosopher Roger Scruton. He was in Amsterdam recently for the book launch of the translation of Culture Counts. Let's not discuss the headline here: "The World Can't Do Without Snobs." What's more relevant are his remarks about internet. I will translate them back from Dutch into English. It's interesting what Scruton makes explicit here: The elite should reject not only bad taste mass media but build offline safe havens.

"Internet has revealed the worst in humans. There are plenty of images and text that make people feel good about the fact that they feel bad. A society where all children are this nihilistic, will cease to exist. High culture will not help in this case. It is most important that we leave open a safe haven for cultural asylum seekers. Without these asylum seekers everything is lost. We have to keep the light of civilization burning."

Scruton then goes on to explain why Western civilization has been open towards others whereas culture from India and China have remained closed and unchanged. What a messy collection of resentful ideas. It is interesting to see that the internet has moved on from a rather obscure academic network and funky business toy to the Bundesliga of Evil. I still do not associate the net with pop culture, but anyway. Maybe I am not enough on MySpace and GeenStijl (Dutch schockblog) to dismiss the entire internet as trash. The call to disconnect High Culture from the internet is unnecessary because the elite has its own info servants. The open computer networks were never build for the Western ruling class to start with. In essence the internet is a (military) engineering work turned social media tool.

We should see the internet as global communication platform that is transformed from its original crude machine logic to a smooth surface that helps to increase productivity. It is there for the mobile always-on work force, as Scruton says, aimed at rapid change, quick satisfaction, adverse of complexity. The elite has its secretaries to pick up the phone-and always had. What we, slaves of the networks, do is dream of an offline country life (that Roger Scruton lives on our behalf, [see his website](#)).

P.S. The irony of it all: [Roger Cruton's homepage](#) is not bad at all. Chapeau, Roger! (or should we thank your web manager?)