

live at the Rotary Club, there is Shirley and Frank, Shirley and Frank what is going on? This is cargo-cult journalism adapted to a local situation.

This was a misreading of CNN itself, by the way, which has to be credited with considerable prepared programming, a world-wide bureau system which is impressive, and carries an awful lot of foreign-produced material. Instead, the jargon of McLuhan was used to justify the purity of the instant -- a convenient philosophy by which we could dismiss the need to have foreign bureaus, learned correspondents, proper archival systems, foreign teams which developed experienced and seasoned editors. Out went the documentary units, out went the special report units, out went the CBS Special Report units -- exchanged for swivel-chair journalism, worship of the moment and hotdogging in front of the domes of the Dhahran Hotel.

But competition requires differentiation. I believe that for sheer competitive reasons, after the fever of the Gulf, you are going to see the special report and documentary units rescued from the trash bin. You are going to begin to see the competition which advertises the breadth and depth of a correspondent. There will be a yearning, and I can sense that already in the backlash against the Gulf coverage, for the Cronkite model rather than the "here I am in Afghanistan" anchor. And people will remember that Murrow did indeed speak live from the roof of Broadcast House, but he spent two hours writing the script. Journalism professors might even begin mentioning William Shirer and Howard K. Smith. I think and I hope the shift will occur, not for nostalgic reasons, but because this is the correct anti-zapper strategy. Differentiation and quality, the wise news director will realize, are the correct commercial strategies in the area we face. You will begin to advertize your stable of correspondents, their depth, their knowledge, and that way begin to win the affinity of your audience.

I am not unhappy that the press is opening their veins publicly about the Gulf War, although I am unhappy about that bleeding through into Canada. One should never discourage doubts in an industry so resistant to self-examination. The military of both sides certainly made short shrift of the hubris of the livingroom war. I think by the time I left for the summer, half the footage shot in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait by pool crews, still hadn't cleared the Pentagon. The sheer mass of the stuff never reached the public.