

This leads to a pernicious form of escalation by anchor man. The roots of this lie in our home markets, however, as we've allowed the competition to theatricalize our war. Our man at the Berlin Wall has replaced our man at the Academy Awards. The affirmation of presence has become the standard of veracity. It is a competition for the back drop, the Berlin Wall or the blue domes of the Dhahran Hotel. Everybody thought it was part of a mosque, but you know the blue domes are over the pool. This is a derivative of sending the weather man to the roof of the station to deliver the news that it is snowing, applied to a global scale. I call it cargo-cult journalism.

If you remember *Mondo Cane* there was a poignant portrait of a near stone-age tribe in the Pacific whose territory abutted a US Airforce base. Seeing that huge transport planes regularly unloaded food and riches for the troops, they concluded that the control tower was what was attracting these huge silver birds with food. And the film portrays the pathetic bamboo control tower built by the villagers to attract the great silver birds to their side of the fence. In the same way our man in Amman, with a shirt with epaulettes has become the cargo-cult journalism of the satellite age. If I am standing here live, and there is a minaret behind me, then I am a journalist and you should believe me.

I think the Gulf War, to sound an optimistic note, has seen the cresting of this ersatz *live*, this three-minute Baker interview, this assumption that immediacy is veracity. Something which has delivered us to the military PR man and the government minder. The *Saturday Night Live* character with the satellite dish on his head is the beginning of society rejecting, what in retrospect will be seen as a bizarre and grotesque journalistic by-product of the competition induced by the people meter and the zapper.

Why do I think it is dying? Well first of all, everybody is going to go broke trying to conduct it. More importantly the editorial currency itself is being devalued, devalued by the sheer inflation of overprinting the bank notes -- too many pretend CNNs, every affiliate is a CNN. Everybody's out there doing the "here I am" number. Too many news directors who bought the idea that CNN, instead of being a very unique and honourable niche in television, was the only way to do television information in the zapper age. Whether it be an auto accident, a city hall, everything is live at the City Council meeting,