## Contents

### Acknowledgments

ix

1. **An Unstructured Introduction to an Amorphous Area**
   
   *Percy H. Tannenbaum*

   - Background to the Conference  2
   - Conference Proceedings  4
   - The Present Volume  9

2. **Entertainment as a Sociological Enterprise**
   
   *Harold Mendelsohn and H. T. Spetnagel*

   - Historical Trends  14
   - Audiences: A Relatively Recent Social Development  19
   - The Conventions of Entertainment  24

3. **The Power and Limitations of Television: A Cognitive-Affective Analysis**
   
   *Jerome L. Singer*

   - Some General Implications of the Cognitive Point of View  32
   - Basic Cognitive Processes  36
   - Characteristics of the Information Media  45
   - The Limitations of Television Viewing  50
   - The Process of Reading  57
   - Conclusions and Research Implications  60
4. The Audience as Critic: A Conceptual Analysis of Television Entertainment  67
Hilde T. Himmelweit, Betty Swift, and Marianne E. Jaeger

Underlying Propositions 69
Methodology and Procedure 72
Perception of Programs 76
Program Styles and Their Meaning:
  The Cognitive World of the Viewer 81
The Relation of Attitudes and Stylistic Preferences to Specific Programs 85
Implications 91
Appendix A 98
Appendix B 102

5. Entertainment as Vicarious Emotional Experience 107
Percy H. Tannenbaum

Some Personal Perspectives 108
Genesis of a Theoretical Model 116
Some Research Applications 119
Production-Related Research 121
Repetitive Exposures 127
Concluding Comments 129

6. Anatomy of Suspense 133
Dolf Zillmann

The Conceptualization of Suspense 133
The Empathy Paradox in the Enjoyment of Suspenseful Drama 140
The Arousal-Jag Resolution of the Paradox 143
The Excitation-Transfer Explanation of the Enjoyment of Suspenseful Drama 146
The Research Evidence on Suspense and Enjoyment 150
A Note on Suspense Seeking 157

7. Humor and Catharsis: The Effect of Comedy on Audiences 165
Thomas J. Scheff and Stephen C. Scheele

The Catharsis Theory 166
Field Study 174
Experimental Study 175