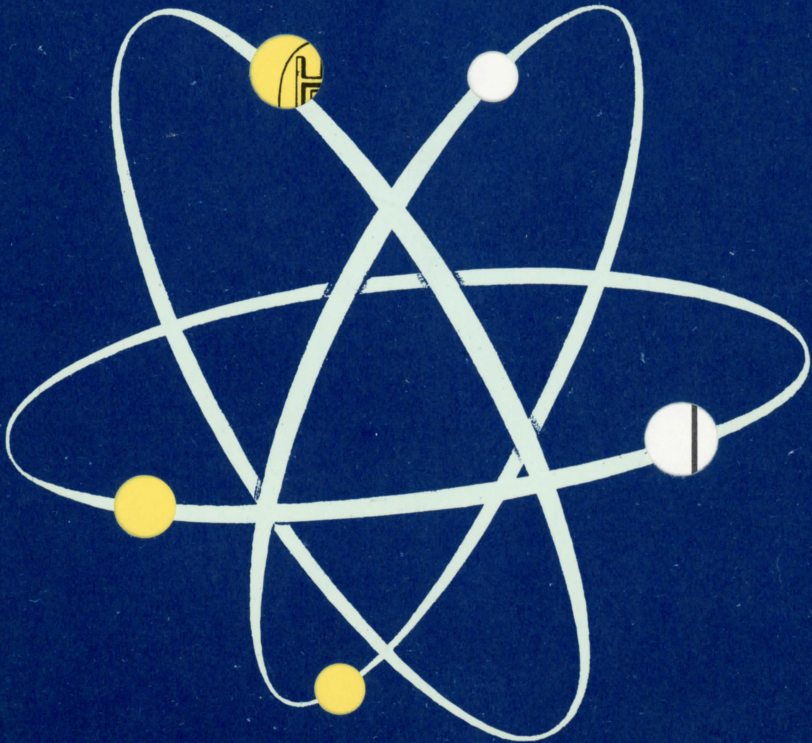


the EMOTIONAL  
CLIMATE  
OF OUR TIMES



THE HOGG FOUNDATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS



The Hogg Foundation  
for Mental Health:

1959

The University of  
Texas  
Austin 12, Texas

*Printed by*  
The University of Texas Printing Division  
*Art Work by Bruce Lynn*  
Price: 25c

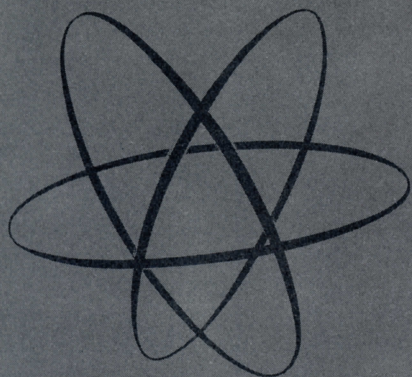
Copyright, 1959, The Hogg Foundation

# The EMOTIONAL CLIMATE

---

# OF OUR TIMES

BERNICE MILBURN MOORE AND HARRY ESTILL MOORE



Every publication is the result of the cooperative effort of a number of persons other than the writers. To these hidden resources, we wish to pay tribute: Robert L. Sutherland for his careful editorial work and for suggestions which materially improved the manuscript; Bert Kruger Smith for editing and seeing it through the press; Wayne H. Holtzman for his reading and encouraging comments; Leonard S. Cottrell who thought it merited publication; and Mary Beth Holmes Curtis who typed and re-typed until a final version was achieved. Moreover, those who heard the three lectures from which this material eventuated gave impetus toward its completion.

## A N O T E F R O M T H E A U T H O R S

**Bernice Milburn Moore**

**Harry Estill Moore**

# Introduction

● MAN'S ABILITY to adapt to change and to rise above adversity remains one of his basic characteristics. In face of astounding statistics on traffic deaths, people study safety rules and drive their automobiles in a relaxed and confident manner. Delinquency and crime rates soar, but most parents attempt to strengthen family life and to encourage their own children to move into channels of positive action. Even the all-pervasive insecurity and universal threat of hydrogen warfare remains in the background as families, service clubs, and communities go about their business engrossed in daily problems but little shaken by world conditions.

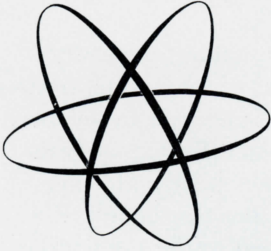
However, the insulation is by no means complete. As Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore and Dr. Harry Estill Moore have found in their study of the emotional climate of today, many people do become acutely aware of the larger world in which they live. Furthermore, cultural and technological changes in that world reach down to the small group life of the individual through changes in livelihood and in values of living.

Psychologists accustomed to reporting on precisely designed experimental studies saw the need themselves for a broad view of the emotional climate in which we live when they first asked Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore to present this topic at one of the affiliated meetings of the American Psychological Association in New York City in September, 1957. International House of New York City invited her to repeat the paper for the benefit of students from many nations who attend a symposium of lectures. Dr. Moore and her husband, Dr. Harry E. Moore, extended and developed this subject for presentation at a meeting on social change sponsored by two affiliates of the National Education Association.

Although the Hogg Foundation's publications generally report or summarize research or describe a demonstration project in mental health services, we, too, feel the need occasionally to catch a larger view of the trend of our times. Our publication of the address of Eduard Lindeman, *Mental Hygiene and the Moral Crisis of Our Time*, brought so many responses that it was reprinted three times. We hope the present paper will serve a similar need.

Dr. Harry E. Moore is professor of sociology at The University of Texas, editor of *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, and author of the research monograph, *Tornadoes Over Texas; A Study of Waco and San Angelo in Disaster*, as well as of other books. Dr. Bernice M. Moore serves as Consultant in Home and Family Life Education, the Texas Education Agency, and as Assistant to the Director of the Hogg Foundation in the areas of community programs and professional education.

ROBERT L. SUTHERLAND, *Director*  
The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health



## THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE OF OUR TIMES

MAN IS BESET with emotional problems and social decisions which have their origin in the complexity of a world bound only by the infinite. Human uncertainty and social anxiety do not arise from the disintegration and deterioration of society but from the constantly increasing breadth of horizons on all fronts which leave us without orientation from the past.

Man knows more; therefore, he is faced with more problems. Where the world of our grandfathers was limited largely by the family and the village, today planetary space is our outward reach. Security given the nation by 3000 miles of open water has been replaced by the insecurity of knowledge that an intercontinental missile requires less than three hours to deliver in one blast more devastation than all the bombs dropped by all the planes in World War II. We are faced with something of the same sort of expansion which came to Medieval Europe with the discovery of the New World. Reaction in both cases has been highly emotional in content.

Security in this country previously rested not only on geographic distance but upon the ascendancy of our technological knowledge over that of the rest of the world. Now that other nations are achieving more "leads" than "lags" in their scientific development, our belief in our superiority seems to be shattering. This may well be called the Era of the Great Doubt, often accompanied by the Great Fear.

Change and dynamics are the catchwords as well as the watchwords of the day. These are, at one and the same time, words which indicate the achievements of our era and the problems of our lives. Our multiple satellites, our intercontinental missiles, our jet planes, our automobiles and boats, our refrigerators and washing machines, and even our air-conditioners, all have the "forward look" of *motion*, with man only slightly in the foreground.

In 1857 a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* wrote, "The world has advanced from a speed of five miles to twenty or more." He was talking about railroads. Now man has propelled new worlds into outer space, and has invented ways

to destroy his own world even before he is able to bring it into "harmonious order."

## • Fear in Many Forms

Anxiety has long been recognized as an emotional state definitely limiting realization of potentials of persons. Moreover, it often results in strange and obstructive behavior. Group action on our national scene would seem to reflect widespread free floating anxiety and disruptive fear.

Millicent C. McIntosh has described the century as one in which too much has happened too quickly for assimilation. Perhaps this is at the root of our seeming slowness in making a transition from an individualistic philosophy to one of "concern and responsibility" among persons and nations. This also may be at the root of our tendency to concentrate our science and technology in the direction of destruction out of our mounting alarm over the possibility that one day we will be overwhelmed by might greater than our own.

No wonder we are persons in a world afraid; a world in which there is magnificent promise overshadowed by the peril of total destruction. As Dr. Albert Schweitzer has written in his "Declaration of Conscience," we have the power to make this planet unfit for human habitation as well as to bring about actual disintegration of the world of matter. Radioactivity may bring catastrophe to the human race even as the fission of the atom may bring about decimation of the globe.

C. Wright Mills has expressed this pervading anxiety in a slightly different vein. He feels that leaders of world powers "are possessed by the military metaphysic, according to which all world reality is seen in military terms, and the most decisive features of reality are held to be in the state of violence and the balance of fright."

Within the United States, sectionalism—another symbol of uncertainty—with its wasteful and restricting tenets once again seems to be appearing on the scene. Not only is this phenomenon discernible in the Old South over issues basically settled long ago in the Civil War, but in other geographic and cultural areas stemming from entirely different issues. Perhaps a legislator made the most irresponsible statement of this unrest when, discussing a problem in education, he said he felt it had been a mistake ever to form a federation of states into a union. Howard W. Odum has based his description of the hazards of a sectional rather than regional approach to social and political problems on research and study. The region, he emphasized, is geared to contribute its strength to its nation even as it retains its distinctive differences. This, he continues, is quite apart from earlier—and even present—sectionalism which protects its differences in non-contributing solitude. In sectionalism there is a lack of communication with other regions and avoidance of involvement in common purposes. In region-

alism there is interdependence recognized as the paramount reality of the nation as a whole, and the regions themselves draw richness and strength from the unity of diversity.

Expression of a similar apprehension in relation to man, himself, is the thesis of William H. Whyte, Jr., in his *The Organization Man*, where he sees the search for a new security as engulfing the individual in a sea of "brotherhood"; individuality crushed out in "committees" and through consensus. Man, then, he and others fear, is attempting to find safety in the anonymity of "the lonely crowd," as another contemporary writer has described the process toward commonality.

Even more specifically, more persons than we like to admit suffer from anxiety, chronic worrying, and indecision. Dr. Robert H. Felix has called modern society "tension ridden." Persons flying into rages, using alcohol heavily, suffering from hypertension, coronary, and arterial diseases, are all around us. For too many, Dr. Felix says, life is not a pleasure but a burden, resulting from narrow self-interest rather than from a sense of usefulness and purpose. Norman Cousins has noted this peril on the international front and points out that perhaps our greatest modern danger lies in a "saturation of tensions" which could well result in an all-out nuclear war.

"Saturation of tensions" between nations and within persons is directly related to current problems in communication. Blocked access to free interchange of ideas, aspirations, and values among world powers has indeed contributed to mounting distrust not only between protagonists but between allies and friends. Moreover, each man is the center of a world defined by the outreach of his own lines of communications. As these lines have stretched further and further and have brought more and more information, as well as misinformation, many find it almost impossible to assimilate all we need to know, and most know they can never know all there is to know. Some are so overwhelmed by the immensity of what man has wrought, they believe we cannot be expected to make rational decisions in a period of such intense emotional stress. Some have become frustrated and have withdrawn into veneration of the past. Some few, at least, seem to be trying to find escape from their feeling of impotence by turning to charismatic leaders—the "father who knows all, promises all, and assures protection to all."

Customs and behavior patterns have changed as well as technology; many people have become alarmed and fearful that new problems accompanying new ways of living have contributed to the disappearance of basic morality. They would submit that current society is in a state of *anomie* in a period of fluctuating values. Perhaps what is occurring, and some do find it confusing, is the lag in our ability to apply our basic values to drastically changed conditions. We are now in an intense struggle to turn the inventions of creative man into use for his betterment the world around rather than for his destruction. The well-being and

survival of men have always been basic concepts in our morality, but the application of concern and compassion have apparently become more difficult. Nonetheless there is evidence that we are on the verge of developing “a new philosophy” concomitant with the reality of change.

## • The Poles of the Positive

Although society is faced with many difficult decisions, there are at hand opportunities and privileges to use toward the solution of man's problems of living with mankind. Apparent in the emotional climate of our day are factors which offer hope rather than despair. And all of these have evolved through the process of definite and even rapid change.

Peter F. Drucker has pointed out that more and more we are coming to understand the fact that the whole is *more* than the sum of its parts. Psychologists use the term “Gestalt.” Social scientists talk of patterns of culture and the total situation. Students of aesthetics use the words “art form.” Physical scientists have discovered the principles of fusion from their adventures into fission and see in these tremendous promise for man. All of these—from the behavioral and social sciences, from physical science, and from the arts—are concepts of configuration, of unity, of purposiveness in the universe. Though the world is now still divided into many parts, the eventual sum of them as a totality is faintly visible on the horizon.

Growth, change, and development, Drucker continues, are now considered the normal and the real, and we see in their *absence* the imperfect, the decaying, and the dead. Florian Znaniecki, the sociologist, has stated in essence that a static situation is an aberration and the dynamic is the normal. Eric Fromm has described this same concept of the “processual” nature of life and the universe in psychological terms when he says the process of birth, of becoming, is continuous. To grow, to develop, one gives up certainty and takes “a jump into the act of commitment, concern, and love” of one's fellowmen. And herein is pointed out the road to the ultimate diminution of conflict between men.

More specific evidences which offer encouragement and promise for the future are all about us. The American family, and its way of living, is not the least of these. More persons are married than ever before. Divorce rates are about half what they were a short ten years ago. Children are being born in larger numbers, and the greatest increase is coming in the families of the “solid” middle class. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, are rearing their children, developing their homes, making their decisions, and in many instances, earning their family living, as partners. Of course these changes have required redefinitions of roles within family life and have changed patterns of relationship between husbands and wives and their children. In spite of the current popular-



ized attack on "togetherness," a new unity and strength in the family appears to be near achievement.

Some seem unhappy and concerned today because marriages appear to them to be made at too early an age. This is somewhat ironical in light of the cry in the 1920's that the way to put out the fire of the "flaming youth" was family subsidy for early marriage! Age of marriage is dropping, but at the same time many more young married are completing their education as husband and wife heading toward a common goal. Some worry over the immaturity of the young married, but they forget that necessary steps toward maturity have always come in marriage regardless of age!

Some decry the fact that too many children are being born for schools to absorb and communities to handle. Yet under pressure of numbers, coupled with demands on the international scene, schools, colleges, and universities are undergoing a healthy reexamination of what they are teaching, how they are doing it, and what changes can well be made to the advantage of all. This examination offers promise for the greatest resurgence in the quality of education in decades.

Statisticians and demographers a few short years ago were contemplating the tragedy of shrinking population and a withering market. Today, the United States Department of Labor has developed a Manpower Planning Commission to help meet the demands of a growing population with its inevitably expanding market.

The desire and expectation of thousands upon thousands of high school youth who look to a college or university education are decried by the chronic pessimists; yet an educated electorate has been considered the life blood of democracy ever since the days of Thomas Jefferson and is more imperative in a world which demands that tremendous numbers be able to understand what political and social leaders mean and what scientists and inventors create. Theirs is the imperative to keep ideas and machines in full operation.

Not too long ago, disharmony between religion and science was considered inevitable. Today, as Peter Drucker has pointed out, youth find it difficult to understand the points of disagreement between the two sides of the famous Scopes trial of thirty years ago. Dr. Robert Felix has cited a new strength in man in this day when he says he has never seen a really well integrated person who has not resolved the question of his own religious beliefs; and this is in dramatic opposition to those who would have us believe that man is in search of an easy security and "peace of mind" through a superficial religious dogma. Dr. Blake Smith has explained the resurgence of interest in religion as an outgrowth of understanding on the part of man that to control his science and technology, his basic religious values offer both strength of purpose and hope for eventual attainment in terms of the dignity of man.

The growing trend to negotiate disagreements between nations is evident even

in the heat of extreme crisis between the dual ideologies paramount in the world today. Between management and labor, this pattern of negotiation has replaced the tragedy of brutality between the teammates of production in a technological age. Even the machinery of our government has grown flexible enough within the past thirty years so that recessions may be stopped before they become depressions; unemployment is cushioned with guaranteed compensation for set periods; life savings are protected in banking institutions; and new jobs are ever beckoning the displaced as services expand.

Not the least of the essence of health and hope in our day is the easy access of needed information on which to make decisions. When a problem becomes imperative or a demagogue develops a crisis out of a current issue, the nation of listening, seeing, and reading men hears the forum of debate via radio, watches the exponents and proponents of different points of view in action, and reads commentary and news stories upon which to react—to level off the angle of danger. Dictatorships and disaster to democracy can come only when channels of communication are closed or when only one side of a problem can be ventilated by open airing. Evidence is on every hand of how this safeguard has operated again and again in the past decade.

Justice Felix Frankfurter has stated that critics of the Supreme Court have every right to voice disagreement with the court's rulings. To quote him, "Criticism need not be stilled. Active defiance or obstruction is barred." (*Austin Statesman*, October 6, 1958.) Frankfurter continued that the supreme law of the land as declared by the Supreme Court does not require immediate approval of it, nor does it deny the right of dissent. What more can any nation ask in strength than the right of dissent and of disagreement with even its highest tribunal? Herein is the essence of maturity in an institution and a nation!

To imply that our times are free of problems is obviously erroneous. To imply we have time to search out ultimate solutions is also false. However, it has always been a characteristic of man to be able to live with problems and to work out their solutions at one and the same time. This is an essential of the dynamic of change. Rarely does a person or a nation have time to plan out what it will do in the face of a crisis or a problem. When the time arrives, mobilization of resources, energies, imagination, and creativity becomes a step toward alleviating the tension of the problem. Hope for the nation and the world lies in a conscious steady increase in our ability to face difficulties, to experiment and try solutions in the face of need and danger.

## • The Role of Education

How to be assured that men of our times will be capable of meeting major crises and minor problems is, then, an imperative question. And herein lies the role of education.

Education at home in the family, at church in the congregation, and at school in the class, is being geared to the development of normal and healthy personalities. Again, one of the refreshing facets of the emotional climate of our times is recognition of normality as an entity for study. Marie Jahoda, for the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health, has just produced a volume, *Current Concepts of Mental Health*, which examines this comparatively new approach. Edward Joseph Shoben, Jr., has contributed to the growing acceptance of the fact that some of us are not "less pathological" than others but are essentially mentally healthy. In fact, he states well the case for a move "Toward a Concept of the Normal Personality."

Shoben says that families, churches, and teachers, the main agents of education and socialization, would find it hard to believe that their function is to "minimize inevitable pathological traits" rather than to facilitate positive growth. He describes qualities of the normal personality as: self-control through learning that postponement of satisfaction is often essential to achievement of desirable rewards; self-responsibility gained through taking the consequences of one's behavior; social-responsibility achieved by recognizing that each personality is the product of association with others; and finally the acceptance of democratic social interests and ideals as guides to living. Shoben maintains that these criteria of mental health issue from the basic nature of man.

Education toward the normal personality as described by Shoben is a far cry from education for "adjustment." Adjustment implies the static, the set, the unchanging, and this has relevance since the human being seems capable of becoming adjusted to even the most degrading of situations. The ideal for education in a world of rapid, and often bewildering, change with an opportunity for assimilation of that change, is development of a personality capable of "adjusting," changing, growing, and developing in order to fit into whatever new patterns are evolved and in order, as well, to help bring into being new situations and new behavior where they are indicated. Teaching not the *what* but the *how* and the *why*, then, is the essence of education for change. Flexibility is the security of our age.

Education today cannot be circumscribed. It cannot be defined wholly in terms of present day needs and certainly it should not be defined in terms of the rigidity of the curriculum of the past. A century ago education was designed for a very small minority who were seen by inheritance to be the destined leaders. These young men were given intimate acquaintanceship with the history and traditions of western civilization. But, they never became contemporaries with themselves, as J. Frank Dobie has described those whose total orientation is to the past, with little concern for the realities of the present and the possibilities of the future.

Leadership today is not only ascribed but more and more often it is achieved.

This has become possible because of the breadth of our educational curriculum and because the great majority of our people are educated at least to some degree. Among other things, this implies that in terms of numbers of students taking mathematics or physical science, we are producing many more than we did fifty years ago. Also, it is equally true that we are educating the few to even higher levels of creativity than ever before. We are producing still other thousands who have specialized in the arts, the humanities, in the social sciences, in the life sciences, and in crafts and technologies which are demanded by our complex culture. Our society has grown more and more complex only as we have been able to develop more and more specialties and specialists. Division of labor is the cornerstone of creativity, not of drudgery. The peculiar excellence of our educational system has been that its curriculum has been broad enough to furnish stimulation to those who are gifted in almost any direction and to be a great help to those who have some ability but no special competencies.

To be sure, the carrying out of these educational objectives has varied in quality with different school systems, but there is evidence of more than moderate success. We are indeed a knowledgeable nation in number of persons participating in good music, in the enjoyment of literature, in appreciation of art. Some, in other countries, do show special excellence in the creative arts and in the sciences. We, too, have imaginative and inventive minds, and today there is intense interest in opportunity for more to be discovered and developed. The present emphasis on excellence in education toward higher quality performances in whatever area of study will speed this trend. However, at the same time, it should not be overlooked that in other countries it may be true that *some* do know more of some things, but in our nation, *more* know some of more things.

It is no doubt true that we have not used to the fullest what we have learned. Particularly in the behavioral sciences have we seemed reluctant to put into use what we do know. Even at this moment there seems to be a growing tendency to attack these same sciences and their research and clinical findings through the demand by a highly audible minority for the "back-to-woodshed" concept of physical punishment as the road to self-discipline; the return to fear and force as the way to control men who differ in opinions on social problems; the abandonment of education in human relations by business and industry as "too soft" an approach to problems between persons; the return of women to a subservient relationship with men through reiteration that today's women are "demascuizing" or even killing the men of the nation in their new roles as co-equals.

Whether the behavioral sciences will have courage to meet the current criticism and whether they will be put to further use in meeting problems of men and nations remains an unanswered question. Perhaps this reluctance stems from our fear of invading the privacy of the person; perhaps it comes also from

the lower visibility of the products of these sciences and the complexity of the human beings with whom they work; perhaps it arises directly from the knowledge that when change of behavior is involved in new principles, attack will always follow by those who would not change. However, it needs to be noted that this same reluctance does not extend to the propagandist and advertising experts who have profited so handsomely by its application!

## • The Emotions of Man

Emotions have long been considered the antithesis of reason, yet each is a part of the wholeness of man. Neither is, nor can be, separated one from the other. Wisdom is the delicate blending of both aspects of behavior.

Emotions may be damaging to the self and society if their expression and their intensity do not fit the situation to which they are applied. Fear offers a case in point. As long as it combines with means to an end which are inflammatory on the one hand, or deadening on the other, it does not fit into reality and may be disastrous. Fear which intensifies sensitivity to need for caution, which alerts the total human being to proceed with intelligent care, is healthy and useful.

For a time, the climate appeared to be near smothering the right of dissent through appeal to fear; to be abolishing the right of the minority through labeling that minority with frightening words which in truth did not apply. But the air has somewhat cleared.

The emotional climate of our day is still a composite of alarm, hostility, and "the more gentle emotions." But our fear is beginning to give faint evidence of a return to what is reasonable and protective. Man will survive if he can only give himself time to further his use of love, basic trust, confidence, and the compassion of tolerance. These he may gain through new understanding of himself and his fellows, and, by putting into practice his basic morality, of the essential dignity of all men.

Man is gaining faith in himself as a feeling-reasoning entity. Man is coming to have greater trust in his fellowman as he learns to be more sure of himself. Man is gaining confidence in his ability to control his ingenious creations for the survival and well-being of all men. Man is the creation of his Creator, but, also, he is the creator of his own destiny.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cerf, Bennett, "The Arts in Modern Society," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, June 1957, pp. 93-103.
- Cortes, Don, "What's Wrong with the American Woman?" *Atlantic*, Vol. 200, No. 2, August 1957, pp. 55-57.
- Cousins, Norman, "The Schweitzer Declaration," *The Saturday Review*, May 18, 1957, pp. 13-16.
- Drucker, Peter F., "The New Philosophy Comes to Life," *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 215, No. 1287, August 1957, pp. 36-40.
- Felix, Robert H., "How to Live with Job Pressures," *Nation's Business*, Vol. 44, No. 9, September 1956, pp. 38-39 plus.
- Fromm, Eric, "Man Is Not a Thing," *The Saturday Review*, March 16, 1957, pp. 9-11.
- Hacker, Helen Mayer, "The New Burdens of Masculinity," *Marriage and the Family*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, August 1957, pp. 227-233.
- Libby, W. F., Harrison Brown, and John Lear, "Forum on the Schweitzer Declaration," *The Saturday Review*, May 25, 1957, pp. 8-14.
- Lindeman, Eduard C., *Mental Hygiene and the Moral Crisis of Our Time*. Austin, Texas, The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Revised Edition, 1956.
- Maisel, Albert Q., "Divorce Is Going Out of Style," *Reader's Digest*, August 1957, pp. 35-39.
- McIntosh, Millicent C., "The Contemporary Paradox," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, June 1957, pp. 92-95.
- Merton, Robert K., *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1949.
- Mills, C. Wright, "Characteristics of Our Day," Public Lecture, The University of Texas, October 23, 1958.
- Odum, Howard W. and Harry Estill Moore, *American Regionalism*. New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1938. See Chapter I, "The Implications and Meanings of Regionalism."
- Pollard, Ernest C., "Fall-Out Fever," *Atlantic*, Vol. 200, No. 2, August 1957.
- Schweitzer, Albert S., "A Declaration of Conscience," *The Saturday Review*, May 18, 1957, pp. 17-20.
- Shoben, Edward Joseph, Jr., "Toward a Concept of the Normal Personality," *The American Psychologist*, Vol. 12, No. 4, April 1957, pp. 183-184.
- Small, S. Mouchly, "Psychiatric Evaluation of the Educator's Role in Mental Health," *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. 41, No. 1, January 1957, pp. 61-65.
- Smith, Blake, *Religion and Life*, Radio Series, Station KTBC, Austin, Texas, October 25, 1958.
- Weeks, Edward A., Jr., "A New Century Beckons," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, June 1957, pp. 60-66.
- Whyte, William H., Jr., *The Organization Man*. New York, Simon Schuster, 1956.

