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Ernest Becker papers 6909763

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Description is written in: English.

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027
Business Number: (212) 854-5153
Fax Number: (212) 854-1365
rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu
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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Becker, Ernest
Title:	Ernest Becker papers
ID:	6909763
ID:	MS# 1567
Date [inclusive]:	1952-1977
Date [bulk]:	1962-1974
Physical Description:	9 linear feet 3 document boxes 5 notecard boxes and 2 record storage cartons
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Becker's papers consist primarily of correspondence and notes on cultural anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Boxes of notecards and annotated books are also included in the collection.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Name of Collection; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Ernest Becker was born in Springfield, MA in 1924. He served in World War II and shortly afterwards, attended Syracuse University in New York. In his early 30s, he pursued a graduate degree in cultural anthropology at his alma mater. He received his Ph.D. in 1960, and soon after, became a professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC, Canada. His main interest was in philosophical anthropology-relating to the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to the study of human beings.

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Biographical / Historical

Becker was the author of several books. His topics included the science of man, mental illness, and the fear of death, Two months after his passing, he won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction for his book, The Denial of Death.

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Biographical / Historical

He was married to Marie H. Becker. In late 1972, he was diagnosed with colon cancer and died in March 1974 at the age of 49.

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Summary

The collection contains many of Becker's notes and lectures on cultural anthropology, sociology, psychiatry, and psychology. His correspondence consists of letters to close friends, and colleagues about his works, as well as letters to potential publishers. His observations, notes and lectures are typed on notecards along with related newspaper clippings. He also recorded his thoughts on the inside covers and the first few pages of various books. There are also two personal journals from the 1950s.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in six series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

File created. XML document instance created by Catherine C. Ricciardi EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-05-27 2011-06-02 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located off-site. You will need to request this material at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

M2003-2004-443: Source of acquisition--Marie H. Becker. Method of acquisition--Gift; Date of acquisition--2004.

Processing Information

Papers processed by Marilyn Chin (Queens College, 2011).

Processing Information

Finding aid written by Marilyn Chin (Queens College, 2011) February 2011.

Accrual

No additions are expected

Processing Information

Collection is processed to folder level.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared.
Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Related Materials

Selected Related Material-- at Columbia

[Otto Rank Papers](#), Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Becker, Ernest

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1966-1974

Scope and Contents

In this series, there are letters between Becker and his friends and colleagues in the academic field and in the publishing arena.

Title/Description	Instances	
Letters from or to Ernest Becker , 1966-1974 <u>Physical Description</u> : 3 folders	box 1	folder 1 to 3
Letters Regarding Albion Small, 1965-1969	box 1	folder 4

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Series II: Published Materials, 1962-1977

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence and published reviews related to his various books.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence and Reviews		
Angels in Armor, 1968	box 1	folder 5
Beyond Alienation, 1965-1969	box 1	folder 6
The Birth and Death of Meaning, 1962-1972	box 1	folder 7
The Denial of Death, 1972-1977	box 1	folder 8
Lost Science of Man, 1965-1971	box 1	folder 9
Revolution in Psychiatry, 1962-1967	box 1	folder 10
The Structure of Evil, 1965-1970	box 1	folder 11
Book Reviews		
The Imperial Animal, 1971-1972	box 1	folder 12
Zen: A Rational Critique, 1961-1967	box 1	folder 13
Published Articles, 1962-1977	box 2	folder 1

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Series III: Academic Materials, 1958-1973

Scope and Contents

This series consists of Becker's lectures, notes, semester schedules, course outlines, and reading lists.

Title/Description	Instances	
Lecture on the History of the Human Sciences, 1963	box 2	folder 2
Notes on Anthropology, 1958-1959	box 2	folder 3
Course Outlines, Semester Schedules, and Reading Lists, 1966-1973	box 2	folder 4

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Series IV: Personal Materials, 1958-1973**Scope and Contents**

This series contains Becker's bound journals from the 1950s, a typed biography and personal journal, and resumé.

Title/Description	Instances	
Becker's Biography and Resume, undated	box 2	folder 5
Private Journals, 1952-1958 (2 bound journals, unfolded), 1952-1958	box 2	
Private Journal Duplicates, 1964-1969	box 2	folder 6

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Series V: Research Notecards (5 Notecard Boxes), 1966-1972**Scope and Contents**

This series consists of Becker's typed, 3 x 5 notecards detailing his cultural anthropological observations along with some newspaper clippings. There are also notes about mental illness, history of disease, origins of social evils, the purpose of culture, and abstract concepts of sociology.

Title/Description	Instances	
Photocopies of Newspaper Clippings	box 2	folder 7
Notes on Education on Mental Illness, Denial of Animality, 1970	box 3	
Lectures at UC Berkeley, CA on Theology, Evil, and Social History, 1966-1972	box 4	
Lectures at UC Berkeley, CA on the Problem of Human Nature, 1967?	box 5	
Notes on Social Evil: Origins of Inequality and Facism, 1970	box 6	

Notes on Anthropology, Sociology, Purpose of Culture and box 7
Abstract Concepts of Sociology, 1968-1970

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Series VI: Annotated Books, 1915-1968

Physical Description: (2 record storage cartons)

Scope and Contents

This series consists primarily of books that contain annotations by Becker.

Title/Description	Instances
Series VI: Annotated Books, 1915-1968	box 8
Series VI: Annotated Books, 1915-1968	box 9

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