

<<反抗死亡>>

图书基本信息

书名：<<反抗死亡>>

13位ISBN编号：9787221006479

10位ISBN编号：7221006474

出版时间：1988

出版时间：贵州人民出版社

作者：厄内斯特·贝克尔(Ernest Becker)

译者：林和生

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作者简介

Dr. Ernest Becker (September 27, 1924, Massachusetts - March 6, 1974, Vancouver, British Columbia) was a cultural anthropologist and interdisciplinary scientific thinker and writer.

Becker was born in Springfield, Massachusetts to Jewish immigrant parents. After completing military service, in which he served in the infantry and helped to liberate a Nazi concentration camp, he attended Syracuse University in New York. Upon graduation he joined the US Embassy in Paris as an administrative officer. In his early 30s, he returned to Syracuse University to pursue graduate studies in cultural anthropology. He completed his Ph.D. in 1960. The first of his nine books, *Zen, A Rational Critique* (1961) was based on his doctoral dissertation. After Syracuse, he became a professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC (Canada).

Becker came to the recognition that psychological inquiry inevitably comes to a dead end beyond which belief systems must be invoked to satisfy the human psyche. The reach of such a perspective consequently encompasses science and religion, even to what Sam Keen suggests is Becker's greatest achievement, the creation of the "science of evil." In formulating his theories Becker drew on the work of Soren Kierkegaard, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Reich, Norman O. Brown, Erich Fromm, and especially Otto Rank. Becker came to believe that a person's character is essentially formed around the process of denying his own mortality, that this denial is necessary for the person to function in the world, and that this character-armor prevents genuine self-knowledge. Much of the evil in the world, he believed, was a consequence of this need to deny death.

Because of his breadth of vision and avoidance of social science specialization, Becker was an academic outcast in the last decade of his life. It was only with the award of the Pulitzer Prize in 1974 for his 1973 book, *The Denial of Death* (two months after his own death from cancer at the age of 49) that he gained wider recognition. *Escape From Evil* (1975) was intended as a significant extension of the line of reasoning begun in *Denial of Death*, developing the social and cultural implications of the concepts explored in the earlier book. Although the manuscript's second half was left unfinished at the time of his death, it was completed from what manuscript existed as well as from notes on the unfinished chapter.

The Ernest Becker Foundation [1] is devoted to multidisciplinary inquiries into human behavior, with a particular focus on contributing to the reduction of violence in human society, using Becker's basic ideas to support research and application at the interfaces of science, the humanities, social action and religion.

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Becker also wrote *The Birth and Death of Meaning* which gets its title from the concept of man moving away from the simple minded ape into a world of symbols and illusions, and then deconstructing those illusions through his own evolving intellect.

Flight From Death (2006) is a documentary film directed by Patrick Shen, based on Becker's work, and partially funded by the Ernest Becker Foundation

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