

## **Regardie, Israel (1907–1985)**

With a literary corpus spanning dozens of works published over a period of four decades, Israel Regardie (1907–1985) occupies a central position in the field of contemporary esotericism. Regardie's impact can be seen in two primary areas: (1) his promulgation of the Golden Dawn's (GD) magical practices, doctrines, and organizational structure; and (2) his exploration of the relationship between psychological and esoteric discourses.

Regardie was born in London to a small Orthodox Jewish family who had emigrated from Russia. After leaving London in 1921, the family relocated to Washington DC, where the teenage Regardie soon began exploring the esoteric literature on Theosophy, yoga, and occultist Kabbalah through the works of H.P. Blavatsky (1831–1891), Paul Foster Case (1884–1954), Crowley, and Charles Stansfeld Jones (1886–1950). Regardie was initiated into the Societas Rosicruciana in America in 1926, but took his first major plunge into the occult world when he left the US to act as Crowley's secretary (and student) in Paris—an arrangement that lasted three years.

The following years saw the publication of Regardie's first two books on magic and Kabbalah, *The Tree of Life* (1932) and *A Garden of Pomegranates* (1932), which spurred noted occultist Dion Fortune (1890–1946) to petition for Regardie's initiation into the Stella Matutina (SM) in 1934. Through Fortune, Regardie became acquainted with the works of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1916), and studied psychoanalysis under several prominent London analysts. In 1937, Regardie returned to America where he enrolled in the Columbia Institute of Chiropractic, graduating in 1941 as a Doctor of Chiropractic. Concurrent with his exit from London, Regardie became disillusioned with the SM, due mainly to the lack of interest in, and hostility towards, the practice of magic within the order. This led Regardie to break his oaths and publish the rituals and doctrines of the order in his four-volume *The Golden Dawn* (1937–40). Prior to

Regardie's publication, the only public exposure of Golden Dawn teachings was through Crowley's "The Temple of Solomon the King" serial in *The Equinox* (1909–13). Although posterior to Crowley's work, Regardie's compendium, now in its seventh edition, has been *the* primary vector through which the GD current was transmitted during the mid- and late-twentieth century, having a far greater reach than any similar publication. Bringing the orders teachings to tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of students worldwide over the last eighty years, it has effected a fundamental change in the GD current's mode of transmission, from hierarchical instruction to democratized self-study.

After serving in the Army from 1942–44, Regardie took up employment as an instructor of "chiropractic psychiatry" at the Los Angeles College of Chiropractic (LACC), where he taught until 1952. During his tenure at LACC, Regardie took up Wilhelm Reich's (1897–1957) somatic psychotherapy. From 1947 through 1981 he ran a licensed practice in Los Angeles blending Reichian therapy with chiropractic and yoga. Although Regardie eschewed formal participation with occult organizations after his departure from the SM, he reversed course at the end of his life when he consecrated the Vault of the Adepts in Chic Cicero's (b. 1936) temple in 1982. This act helped validating Cicero's GD lineage, which is currently the largest and longest lived GD order in the United States. Regardie's primary interaction with the occult community from the 1960s onward was, however, as an author, publishing dozens of works on the GD's history, its doctrines and practices, and Regardie's own psychologized theory of magic. It is this latter category where we see Regardie's most original impact. Psychologization is one of the dominant features of contemporary esoteric discourse, and in the field of magic, Regardie is perhaps its foremost exponent.

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