

a group of young aspirants living a Bohemian existence in postwar Bloomsbury. Their mentor, the White Brother of the title, is an older occultist called "Brother M" who takes them on astral journeys and other adventures.

The book is actually a *roman à clef*. Michael Juste was a pseudonym of Michael Hurwitz (1897-1961), author, poet, playwright, and, under the name of Michael Houghton, founder and proprietor of the Atlantis Bookshop, which still exists (as of 2024) near the British Museum. His nephew, the eminent English violinist Emanuel Hurwitz, remembered him as "a benevolent white magician."¹⁸ Michael's friend, called "David" in the book, is securely identified as Raphael Hurst (1898-1981), who would become a best-selling author on spirituality under the name of Paul Brunton.¹⁹ Brunton's son, Kenneth Thurston Hurst (1923-2009), has confirmed that Brother M was a family friend and his own godfather (witness Kenneth's middle name). But he only knew him as Mr. Thurston, an American painter living in London and specializing in lacquer work for upscale department stores. No one hitherto had been able to identify him.

There are two further books authored simply by M and bearing The Brothers' emblem. The first was *The Dayspring of Youth* (1933), advertised by the publisher as "By One of the Brothers."²⁰ The reviewer in *Psychic Science* speculated that M "seems to be identical with Michael Juste, author of *White Brother*."²¹ It was a good guess, but missed the mark.

A second book by M, *The Lord God of Truth Within*, was compiled by Hurwitz and published in 1941 by the press of the esoteric entrepreneur Manly Palmer Hall.²² It is subtitled *A Posthumous Sequel to The Dayspring of Youth*, and includes anecdotes about sylphs and gnomes who are M's personal friends.

M mentions *Comte de Gabalis* in both books. In *Dayspring* he prefaces a long quotation with the words: "In a book previously mentioned by us, *The Comte de Gabalis*, we have written this passage about prayer . . ." (p. 326). In *The Lord God of Truth Within*, M writes: "we have spoken about [Merlin] in a former book [footnote] *Comte de Gabalis*." (p. 159) The three books form a coherent, if idiosyncratic, body of doctrine.

Yet the 1922 edition loudly claimed to be the work of Lotus Dudley. My first unpleasant suspicion was that she had appropriated Thurston's work and republished it under her own name(s). He could have been referring to this when he wrote, in the Preface to *The Dayspring of Youth*, "as certain people in the past have assumed authorship of some of my writings, all publications of the Brothers will be issued in future under their seal and copyrighted" (p. 7). But this does not accord with what is known of Dudley's character. The references to *Comte de Gabalis* in Thurston's later books, carefully read, do not claim authorship: they merely say that his words have appeared in it.

18. Riki Gerardy, *Talks with Emanuel Hurwitz: 82 Years with the Violin* (Edgware: Zelia, 2006), 11.

19. On Brunton's connections with Michael Juste and with M, see Kenneth Thurston Hurst, *Paul Brunton: A Personal View* (Burdett, NY: Larson Publications, 1989), 44-46, 60-62.

20. M, *The Dayspring of Youth (Yoga Practice Adapted for Western Bodies)* (London & New York: Putnam, 1933).

21. Unsigned review, *Psychic Science* 12/4 (Jan. 1934): 317.

22. M, *The Lord God of Truth Within* (Los Angeles: Phoenix Press, 1941).