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**THE SECRET BOOK BY FRANCISCO I. MADERO,
LEADER OF MEXICO'S 1910 REVOLUTION**

Expanded and edited transcript of C.M. Mayo's presentation of *Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution: Francisco I. Madero and His Secret Book, Spiritist Manual* (Dancing Chiva, 2014) at the Center for Big Bend Studies Conference, Sul Ross State University, November 11, 2016.

Mexico commemorates its Revolution of 1910 every November 20, that date enshrined by Francisco I. Madero's Plan of San Luis Potosí which called for citizens to "take up arms, overthrow the usurpers, recover your rights as free men."¹ In effect, however, Madero had launched the revolution nearly two years earlier with his book, *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* (the Presidential Succession of 1910). Dated 1908 but not in circulation until early 1909, *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* was a liberal rendition of Mexican history and a ringing appeal for free and open presidential elections, effective suffrage, and no reelection, in other words, nothing less than the retirement of Porfirio Díaz, who had held or controlled the presidency for over three decades. It was around the ideas and call to action in *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* that, with

¹ [T]omad las armas, arrojad del poder a los usurpadores, recobrad vuestros derechos de hombre libres" in Federico González Garza, *La Revolución Mexicana, Mi contribución político-literaria* (A. del Bosque, 1936).

lightning speed, Madero built his Partido Antireeleccionista, or Anti-Reelection Party, and his own candidacy for the presidency. Before that election of 1910, Madero was jailed in San Luis Potosí and, thanks to the customary ballot-stuffing, the elderly Díaz claimed for himself another presidential term. But Madero escaped, and from the launchpad of Texas, he soared back onto the Mexican national stage as leader of the 1910 Revolution. In a matter of months the Díaz regime crumbled; in May of 1911 Díaz was on his way to exile in France; that same month, after a wildly popular nationwide campaign, Madero won the presidency, and went on to serve from November 1911 until his assassination in the coup d'état of February 1913.

Less known to scholars of the 1910 Revolution is Madero's subsequent book, *Manual espírita* (Spiritist Manual), written in 1909-1910, and published in Mexico City under a pseudonym, Bhîma, in 1911, when he was President-elect.

The juxtaposition of these various dates—the circulation of *La sucesión presidencial en 1910* in 1909; the call for insurrection on November 20, 1910; the publication of *Manual espírita* and Madero's assumption to the presidency both in 1911—in itself strongly suggests the importance of *Manual espírita* in illuminating the political ideas, motivations, and actions of its author. And it turns out that a careful examination of *Manual espírita's* contents, together with Madero's other esoteric writings, mediumnistic notebooks, correspondence, and his extensive personal library, yields powerfully suggestive connections.

Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution: Francisco I. Madero and His Secret Book, Spiritist Manual, is a two-for-one: it is my book about Madero and his secret book, plus my translation of *Manual espírita*—to my knowledge, the first.

Nonetheless, I am not the first to write about Madero's Spiritism. Madero left a personal memoir of a few pages, first published in the *Anales del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía* in 1922, and reprinted in *Obras Completas de Francisco Ignacio² Madero*, edited by Alejandro Rosas Robles (Clío, 2000). During his presidency his enemies and the press—unleashed by his determination to honor free speech—relished caricatures of Madero as a conjurer of phantoms. José Juan Tablada's 1910 play, *Madero Chanticler*, also portrayed him as invoking spirits. Indeed, it was widely rumored, especially in the capital among the supporters of the old regime, that this parvenu *norteño* had, as U.S. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson put it, a "disordered intellect."³ With the fall of the usuper government of Victoriano Huerta in 1914, the Spiritism of Madero, Mexico's "Apostle of Democracy," became a taboo subject. Nonetheless, in recent decades pathbreaking research on Madero's Spiritism has been published by a small number of Mexican historians, among them, Enrique Krauze in his *Francisco I. Madero, Místico de la libertad* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987); Yolia Tortolero Cervantes in *El espiritismo seduce a Francisco I. Madero* (CONACULTA-FONCA, 2003); and Alejandro Rosas Robles, editor of the ten volume complete works, *Obras completas*

² To this day, most biographies and reference works continue to mistake Francisco Madero's middle name as "Indalecio," however, both his birth certificate and baptismal records give his middle name as "Ignacio," after the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignacio of Loyola. See Alejandro Rosas Robles, "Francisco I. Madero con 'I' de Ignacio" in <
http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/acces/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=264:revolucion--francisco-i-madero-con-qiq-de-ignacio-por-alejandro-rosas&catid=3:revolucion&Itemid=13> Retrieved August 15, 2017.

³ Henry Lane Wilson, *Diplomatic Episodes in Belgium, Mexico, and Chile* (Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927), p. 287.

de Francisco Ignacio Madero (Clío, 2000)—and these include transcriptions of Madero’s mediumnistic notebooks and the complete text of *Manual espírita*. Moreover, Rosas Robles and Manuel Guerra de Luna, archivist and biographer of both Francisco I. Madero and the Madero family,⁴ co-authored the screenplay for the superb, if rarely screened 2006 documentary, *1910: La Revolución espírita* (1910: The Spiritist Revolution). Guerra de Luna also contributed “Semblanza de un adepto” (An Adept’s Appearance), the deeply researched prologue to volume VI of *Obras Completas, Cuadernos espíritas 1900-1908* (transcriptions of Madero’s mediumnistic notebooks).

That said, Madero’s *Manual espírita* merits a single sentence in a footnote in Stanley R. Ross’s classic biography, *Francisco I. Madero* (Columbia University Press, 1955), and most other historians of the 1910 Revolution gloss over, misconstrue, or ignore Madero’s ardent Spiritism.⁵

Given the voluminous bibliography on the 1910 Revolution the paucity of material on its leader’s Spiritism is remarkable. One hindrance for historians of this revolution has been the scarcity of scholarly works on the history metaphysical religion itself, in particular, of Spiritualism and its off-shoot, Spiritism. Fortunately, in recent decades historians of religion and social movements have begun producing a still small but vitally relevant literature, outstanding works among them: Catherine L. Albanese’s *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History*

⁴ Manuel Guerra de Luna, *Francisco I. Madero* (Planeta, 2002) and *Los Madero, La saga liberal* (Tudor Producciones, 2010).

⁵ For a more detailed overview of the treatment of Madero’s Spiritism in the literature on the 1910 Revolution, see C.M. Mayo, *Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution* (Dancing Chiva, 2014), pp. 35-38.

of *American Metaphysical Religion* (Yale University Press, 2007); Whitley R. Cross' *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York 1800-1850* (Cornell University Press, 1981); José Marino Leyva's *El ocaso de los espíritus: El espiritismo en México en el siglo XIX* (Ediciones Cal y Arena, 2005); and John Warne Monroe's *Laboratories of Faith: Mesmerism, Spiritism, and Occultism in Modern France* (Cornell University Press, 2008).⁶

Another factor that may help explain the scarcity of writing on Madero's Spiritism has been that, apart from the 1911 edition in the Francisco I. Madero Archive in Mexico's Ministro of Finance, and another in the Francisco I. Madero Archive (Madero's personal library) in Mexico City's Centro de Estudios de la Historia de México, and the above-mentioned texts in *Obras completas de Francisco Ignacio Madero*, also available in select research libraries, until 2010, it has been exceedingly difficult to find a *Manual espírita*.

It seems the books have disappeared into the ethers—although we do know from Madero's correspondence that as many as five thousand copies may have been printed in 1911.⁷ Another edition was published in Barcelona in 1924,⁸ another came out in Mexico City in 1978⁹

⁶ See Mayo, *ibid.*, for a more detailed bibliography.

⁷ Yolia Tortolero Cervantes, *El espiritismo seduce a Francisco I. Madero* (CONACULTA-FONCA, 2003), p. 153.

⁸ I found this edition when, after more than four years of persistent searching for a *Manual espírita*, both in bookshops and online, up popped a surprisingly inexpensive listing from a Spanish bookseller for a *Manual espírita* described only as “by Bhima, circa 1900.” This turned out to have been published by Casa Editorial Maucci of Barcelona sometime after 1913 (the edition gives no date but advertises that the publishing house was awarded the gold medal in an exposition in Paris in 1913). I later learned that the National Library of Spain has two copies in

and a third with a print-run of 2,000 was published by the Government of the State of Quintana Roo, Mexico, in 2000.¹⁰ Nonetheless, in my experience of persistent searching for several years beginning in 2008, both in Mexico City and online, it was nigh impossible to find a physical copy in any antiquarian or used bookstore at any price¹¹. In 2010, along with uncounted other

its catalog, listed as published by Maucci “between 1911 and 1936.” According to a blog post at *Grupo Espiritista Isla de la Palma* dated January 13, 2014, the Casa Editorial Maucci edition is from 1924. Whether there were more than one Maucci edition, and the size of any print runs, is unknown.

⁹ *Manual espírita* is reprinted in Francisco I. Madero, *El Espiritismo*, edited by Gustavo de Anda, 1978.

¹⁰ *La Revolución espiritual de Francisco I. Madero, Documentos inéditos y poco conocidos*. Presentación de Lic. Joaquín E. Hendricks Díaz; Introducción de Dr. Jaime Muñoz Domínguez; Prólogo y comentarios de Manuel Arellano Zavaleta. In the year of its publication, Joaquín E. Hendricks Díaz was Governor of the State of Quintana Roo. This collection includes the complete *Manual espírita* as well as transcripts of Madero’s mediumnistic notebooks and his commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita.

¹¹ More than a year after I had published *Metaphysical Odyssey*, in a Mexico City antiquarian bookshop, I found a first edition of 1911, foxed but in otherwise pristine condition, for about USD 200. When I opened the cover, on its title page I found stamped in lilac ink, “*Cortesía del Gral. Ramón F. Iturbe*. (Courtesy of General Ramón F. Iturbe). Iturbe (1889-1970) was a militant Maderista, fighting in 1911 in Durango and Sinaloa. After Madero’s death, he joined the Army of the Northeast fighting for the Constitutionalists. From 1917-1920 he was Provisional Governor of the State of Sinaloa. According to the *Enciclopedia de México*, 1996, which is mute on the question of General Iturbe’s Spiritism, “In his later years... he established the Sociedad Familiar Amor and created several organizations to protect women and promote world peace” (my translation).

documents, a facsimile PDF was uploaded to www.bicentennial.gob.mx, the official Mexican government website commemorating the bicentennial of the 1810 Revolution for Independence from Spain and the centennial of the 1910 Revolution.¹² That URL was soon thereafter captured by Google's and other Internet search engines.

While Madero hid his authorship of *Manual espírita* and articles behind pseudonyms, under his own name he kept up a lively correspondence with fellow Spiritists, and sponsored and attended the Spiritist Congresses held in 1906 and 1908, in which he was counted as a delegate from San Pedro, Coahuila's Spiritist circle "Estudios Psicológicos." Madero also sponsored Spiritist publications, including the translation by "a Mexican statesman" (that was Ignacio Mariscal, Minister of Finance under President Porfirio Díaz) of León Denis' *Après le mort* (After Death) as *Después de la Muerte* in 1906, in an edition that recognizes Francisco Madero's sponsorship on its first page.¹³

Neither did Madero attempt to keep *Manual espírita* itself out of the public eye. It was meant not only for adepts, but also to evangelize. As "Bhima" states on the first page:

By the author's express wishes this work is the property of the Permanent Board of Mexico's Second Spiritist Congress, which is now empowered to reproduce this work in whole or in part, or translations into foreign languages, on the sole condition that all reproductions be true to the text and the translations accurate. In this way the author's

¹² < <http://www.bicentenario.gob.mx/bdb/bdbpdf/MANUAL%20ESPIRITA%20POR%20BHIMA.pdf> >

¹³Tortolero Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

objective and the Committee's wish, that is, to make the most propaganda possible, will be achieved.¹⁴

The subjects are arranged in the Q-and-A style of a Catholic catechism; the syntax and vocabulary simple. From *Manual espírita*'s introduction:

[T]his work is intended for young people, workers, and the general population who have not yet felt materialism's devastating influence.¹⁵

An open question is whether further editions of *Manual espírita* were printed, and if so, by whom, and where. Beginning in the 1860s, numerous works by Kardec and other Spiritist writers appeared in Spanish in not only Mexico but Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and elsewhere in Latin America. Kardecian Spiritism also arrived in the Philippines with Spanish-language literature¹⁶ and in that country today, Spiritism, a mix of Kardecian Spiritism and diverse indigenous folk and shamanistic practices, is thriving. Various Spiritist mediums attract long lines of people who travel from as far as North America and Europe for mediumnistic healing known as "psychic surgery." Madero himself did not practice nor mention "psychic surgery," but he did believe he could perform hands-on healing and, in my understanding, he would have seen himself as a healer of the Mexican body politic. One intriguing possibility is that there may have been an edition of *Manual espírita* circulating and perchance reprinted in the Philippines, and if

¹⁴ The original *Manual espírita* is now in the public domain.

¹⁵ Francisco I. Madero, *Spiritist Manual*, in Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

¹⁶ See Harvey Martin, *The Secret Teachings of the Espiritistas: A Hidden History of Spiritual Healing* (Metamind Publications, 1998), p. 86 and p. 205.

so, this could suggest a wider role for Francisco I. Madero in the international history of metaphysical religion.

Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution is a peculiar title, and I am the first to admit that mine is an unusual narrative, for it is a species of literary chimera, at once a work of scholarship and of creative nonfiction/ personal memoir, and as mentioned, melded to my translation of Madero's book.

Homer's *Odyssey* recounts the warrior king Odysseus' fantastic and labyrinthine journey home to Ithaca. In the case of *Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution*, Ithaca, as it were, is

to simply acknowledge that Madero was a Spiritist, to understand what that means, to appreciate the rich esoteric matrix from which his philosophy sprang, and why and how it informed what he did and did not do—and how some friends and enemies saw him—as leader of the 1910 Revolution and President of Mexico in that comet-like moment when he blazed into Mexican history and so profoundly changed it.¹⁷

My narrative—in essence, a book-length introduction to my translation of Madero's *Manual espírita*—braids three odysseys into one: My own, from my first encounter with *Manual espírita*; Francisco I. Madero's odyssey from his *coup de foudre* conversion to Spiritism in 1891; and finally, the reader's—the latter presumably unfamiliar with Mexican history and/or with Spiritism and other esoteric ideas as Madero encountered them and sought to shape them.

¹⁷ Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

From the opening chapter:

Popular imagery of the Mexican Revolution usually features rustic characters in bandoliers and washtub-sized sombreros, such as smoldering-eyed Emiliano Zapata, with his handlebar mustache and skin-tight trousers, or Pancho Villa, who always seems to wear the smirk of having just quaffed a beer (though he was a teetotaler; more likely it was a strawberry soda). Less often are we shown Don Francisco, handsomely-dressed scion of one of Mexico's wealthiest families—usually bareheaded, occasionally in a top hat—for he was and remains a confounding figure. He was a Spiritist, and what the devil is that? I had no idea. And until 2008, it had not occurred to me to wonder.

I had just finished writing *The Last Prince of the Mexican Empire*, a novel based on several years of original archival research into an episode during Mexico's French Intervention of the 1860s, the so-called Second Empire under Maximilian von Habsburg. I mean to say, spending an afternoon delving into an archive, I am happier than a cat after mice. At that time, my husband was in Mexico's Ministry of Finance, which has a number of archives, among them, Francisco I. Madero's. His archive is available to the public, but thanks to my husband's invitation, I had the immense privilege of viewing it in private with the curator, Martha López Castillo.

When we arrived, she had arranged a selection of the most outstanding items on a table that spanned nearly the width of the room: Madero's masonic regalia; photographs; documents. We went down the table, as she explained the importance of each piece.

Years earlier, on a tour of the National Palace, in one of its parade of ornately decorated rooms (I couldn't have told you which) I had seen the bureau that still bore the bullet hole from the shoot-out between General Victoriano Huerta's men and the presidential guard that ended with President Madero and Vice President, José María Pino Suárez, taken prisoner. If I knew anything about Madero it was because I had been living in Mexico on and off for two decades, and in Mexico, Madero has a stature comparable to Abraham Lincoln's—in the political-historical sense, not the physical, for Madero was short, with a balding pate and a neatly trimmed triangle of a beard. In portraits, Madero appears kindly yet dignified—one can easily imagine him managing a prosperous complex of farms and factories (as he did). The few moving pictures of him reveal a theatrical, embracing energy. Madero was also distantly related to my husband's family: a paternal uncle had married a great niece of Madero. In sum, what I knew then about Madero amounted to little more than the barest gloss over the story Mexican schoolchildren learn, but certainly I was vividly aware of his transcendent and deeply respected role in Mexican history.

Not halfway through this presentation, my gaze fell on a little book, *Manual espírita* by “Bhîma.”

“Who was Bhîma?” I asked.

“Madero himself,” the curator answered.

I had picked it up and was already leafing through it... *Los invisibles, Chrishná, Mosés, La doctrina secreta...* it seemed a farrago of the Bible, Madame Blavatsky, and Hindu whatnot.

“Really?” I said. “Bhîma was Francisco Madero?”

“Yes.”

I knew, instantly and absolutely, that I had to translate this book into English. Had it been translated?

“No.”

“Are you sure?” This, too, seemed too extraordinary.

“I assure you, it has never been translated.”

Within the week, I had received a xerox copy of this strange little book, and I began my self-appointed task—which turned out to be a Mount Everest more than I imagined.¹⁸

What is Spiritism? Or, more precisely, what is the Spiritism Madero encountered in France in 1891, and what is the Spiritism he presents two decades later in *Manual espírita*?

These are questions I address at length in *Metaphysical Odyssey*. In brief, the bulk of the somewhat tangled roots of Spiritism can be found in the works of the seventeenth century Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg; those of American seer Andrew Jackson Davis; and in the sensational 1848 emergence of Spiritualism in the Burned-Over District of Upstate New York. One of Spiritualism’s most famous adherents was the novelist Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In *The History of Spiritualism* Doyle describes this first spark in the cottage of the Fox family of Hydesville:

Finally, upon the night of March 31 there was a very loud and continued outbreak of inexplicable sounds. It was on this night that one of the great points of psychic evolution was reached, for it was

¹⁸ Mayo, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-4.

then that young Kate Fox challenged the unseen power to repeat the snaps of her fingers. That rude room, with its earnest, expectant, half-clad occupants with eager upturned faces, its circle of candlelight, and its heavy shadows lurking in the corners, might well be made the subject of a great historical painting. Search all the palaces and chancelleries of 1848, and where will you find a chamber which has made its place in history as secure as this bedroom of a shack?

The child's challenge, though given in flippant words, was instantly answered. Every snap was echoed by a knock. However humble the operator at either end, the spiritual telegraph was at last working...¹⁹

It was from American Spiritualism that, in France, sprouted Spiritism, first codified by Allen Kardec in a series of books, including *Le Livre des Esprits* (1857) and *Le Livre des Médioms* (1861). These, as well as other books and articles by Kardec and his followers writing in the 1870s and 1880s, were the literature that Madero encountered as a student in France in 1891.

According to Kardec in *The Spirits' Book*:

Strictly speaking, *Spiritualism* is the opposite of *Materialism*; everyone is a Spiritualist who believes that there is in him something more than matter, but it does not follow that he believes in the existence of spirits, or in their communication with the visible world. Instead, therefore, of the words SPIRITUAL, SPIRITUALISM, we employ, to designate this latter belief, the words SPIRITIST,

¹⁹ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism* (Cassell and Company, 1926), p. 59.

SPIRITISM, which, by their form, indicate their origin and radical meaning, and thus have the advantage of being perfectly intelligible; and we reserve the words *spiritualism*, *spiritualist*, for the expression of the meaning attached to them by common acceptance. We say, then, that the fundamental principle of the *spiritist theory*, or *spiritism*, is the relation of the material world with spirits, or the beings of the spirit world; and we designate the adherents of the spiritist theory as *spiritists*.²⁰

Spiritists proclaimed theirs as both a religion and a science for, as scientist might peer through a microscope to perceive and explore the detail in a leaf, so a scientist might employ a medium to see into and hear from, and so explore, the spirit world. After all, the Spiritists reasoned, this was a time of developments in radio, telephone, and other technologies that could receive and transmit waves imperceivable to normal human senses.

In his *Spiritist Manual*, Madero provides this definition:

Spiritism is the science concerned with investigating the powers of the human spirit, its past before arriving in this world, and its fortune upon abandoning it.²¹

But a careful reading of *Spiritist Manual* yields a broader set of ideas. In *Metaphysical Odyssey*, I summarize my understanding of what would be Madero's credo thus:

²⁰ Allan Kardec, translated by Anna Blackwell, *The Spirits' Book* (Colby and Rich Publishers, 1893), p. i.

²¹ Madero, *op. cit.*, in Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

We are not our physical bodies; we are spirits, as as such we are immortal and we are destined, lifetime by lifetme, not by any ritual intermediated by clerics, but by freely chosen good works, to evolve into ever higher levels of consciousness and so return to God.²²

Good works meant charity but also support for justice, freedom, and democracy under the law.

The rejection of the value of ritual intermediated by clerics (for example, the Mass) and belief in reincarnation are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church, an institution of then formidable influence in Mexico. Moreover, as we know from Madero's archive, which preserves his mediumnistic notebooks, as well as his correspondence, and many of his pseudonymous writings, including *Spiritist Manual* with its elaborate detail on the nature and variety of mediumship, Madero was himself a practising medium. In other words, he believed he could channel communications from the spirit world—his specialty being automatic writing. For many people, then as now, entertaining such a belief could be considered prima facie evidence of mental illness.

Madero was keenly aware of this hostility towards his faith. Of his *Manual espírita* he wrote to the President of the Permanent Board of the Second Spiritist Congress, “it comes signed with an X. I ask you to please not reveal it to anyone, as you know how in the current political

²² Mayo, *op cit.*, p. 85.

situation it would injure me enormously.” And to Antonio Becerra y Castro, his fellow *Spiritist* and the book’s editor, Madero wrote: “keep it as secret as possible that I am the author.”²³

But Madero’s *Spiritist Manual* is more than a rehash of Kardecian Spiritism; it is a unique synthesis of traditional Catholic ideas (for example, the miracles of saints and the power of the Lord’s Prayer), and what was in his time the cutting-edge of well-established French Spiritist, Anglo-American Spiritualist, Buddhist, Hindu, and occult literatures. And among this bricolage of esoteric literature, the work with the most overshadowing influence by far on Madero’s religious and political thinking is the Bhagavad-Gita.

From *Metaphysical Odyssey*:

The Bhagavad-Gita or “The Lord’s Song” is a chapter added in about 200 BC to the possibly even more ancient Mahabharata, jewel of Sanskrit literature, a scripture of yoga, and the world’s longest epic. Lord Krishna, the blue-skinned eighth incarnation of the god Vishnu, appears on a battlefield and reveals to the warrior Arjuna the true nature of reality, morality, and the need for calmness and courage. It was introduced to the West in an English translation in the late eighteenth century; French, German, and other languages quickly followed. Annie Besant, who retranslated it into English, called it a “priceless teaching;” Henry David Thoreau, poet of *Walden Pond*, considered it his textbook. Introduced to it by English Theosophists, Mohandas Gandhi considered it his “infallible guide to conduct,” and reread it while in prison in South Africa in 1908. Madero found it of such inspiration that he kept it

²³ Tortolero Cervantes, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

with him during the Revolution and later, while in office as President of Mexico in 1912 and early 1913, he published his commentary as a series of articles “by an adept” in *Helios*, a Spiritist magazine.²⁴

As Manuel Guerra asserts in the documentary *1910: La Revolución espírita* [my translation]:

“Historians cannot comprehend how a democrat would take up arms, that is to say, why would a leader like Francisco I. Madero, who supposedly promoted justice and liberty, decide to launch a revolution, knowing he would spill the blood of innocents? They thought, and they think, that Madero was motivated by power, and only power. But they are wrong.”

The piece that completes the puzzle is Madero’s ardent devotion to studying the Bhagavad-Gita. In this documentary [again, my translation], Guerra de Luna says, “The truth of all this, it is certain, is that Francisco I. Madero was inspired to launch the Revolution by the writings in the Bhagavad-Gita.”

The Bhagavad-Gita is a book about war. Lord Krishna teaches the warrior prince Arjuna that duty to justice matters more than life itself, or the lives of those we love, for we all have another life after this one, and an infinity of lives thereafter. In Madero’s library I found three Bhagavad-Gitas. From *Metaphysical Odyssey*:

Then came a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, the 1887 Boston translation from the Sanskrit by Mohini M. Chatterji, who

²⁴ Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

introduced it as “an attempt to present to the English-speaking people the pearl of price from the ocean of Brahmanical Scriptures.” (Chatterji was a Theosophist from Calcutta, and a staunch defender of Madame Blavatsky and her mysterious Mahatmas, one of whom, “Koot-hoomi,” or “Kuthumi,” Chatterji claimed to have met in Madras, India, when the latter was passing through on his way to China.)

Another Bhagavad-Gita, with notes by Annie Besant was a Spanish translation by Federico Climent Terrer published by the Biblioteca Orientalista in Barcelona in 1908...

Another Spanish copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, translated by J. Roviralta Borrell, carried Madero’s *ex-libris* stamped October 16, 1909, and in contrast to his other books, all nearly impeccable, almost every page was filled with scribbles in his handwriting.²⁵

On the flyleaf of that edition I found in Madero’s handwriting (my translation):

It would be good to do an edition of the Bhagavad-Gita that could be entitled Teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita or The Bhagavad-Gita in Western Language, writing in the same way Allan Kardec wrote The Gospels According Spiritism, that is to say, to organize the most important essays of the Bhagavad-Gita into different chapters about [?] and Reincarnation of the Soul, Existence of God [?] moral, etc., etc.

²⁵ Mayo, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

Writing for the Spiritist magazine *Helios* in 1912—when he was President—Madero, aka Arjuna, says:

[T]he Bhagavad-Gita encompasses glorious conceptions and it is far indeed from recommending those superstitious practices so in fashion with the majority of religions, including those professed by civilized peoples and, according to which certain religious practices are given more importance than fulfilling one's duty, overlooking that, in fulfilling one's duty, one better aligns with a vaster and greater plan for humanity's progress and well-being.²⁶

Bhîma, Madero's pseudonym for *Manual espírita*, is a warrior in the Bhagavad-Gita, one who is especially blood-thirsty.

Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution would not have been possible without the foundational work of Guerra de Luna, Krauze, Rosas Robles, and Tortolero Cervantes. What I have been able to contribute is, firstly, the English translation of *Manual espírita*; secondly, a lyric narrative style and structure to my book that—so I hope—may entice otherwise reluctant aficionados and scholars of the Revolution to make the journey to a fuller understanding of Madero's Spiritism and its context; and thirdly, I have been able to delve deeper into the history and nature of metaphysical religion and so identify more and clearer connections in Madero's *Spiritist Manual* with Anglo-American Spiritualists, Theosophists, and other Anglo-American and European occult philosophers and scientists.

²⁶ My translation from the article in *Helios*, volume VII, 1912, which is reprinted in José Vasconcelos, *Estudios Indostánicos*, 1938, and volume VII of *Obras Completas de Francisco Ignacio Madero*, edited by Alejandro Rosas Robles (Clío, 2000).

This latter contribution was made possible in large part by my ability to consult Madero's personal library, unavailable to most researchers until recent years, and, fortuitously for me, housed in the Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, within walking distance from my house in Mexico City. The ability to make multiple visits over many months was a prodigious advantage, for it is a substantial library and many of the works in it—including such as “Maestro Huiracocha's” treatise on sexual magic, Dr. Peebles' *Seers of the Ages*, Édouard Schuré's *Les Grandes intiés*, and Ely Star's *Les mystères de l'être* with its diagrams of the Qabalah—would surely be as confounding to most historians of the Mexican Revolution as they were to me on my first encounters with them. In short, it is a corpus best taken in small bites, and with ample time in between to digest.²⁷

Since we are gathered here in the Big Bend of Far West Texas, a region so essential to many of the movements and battles of the Mexican Revolution—including the Battle of Ciudad Juárez, just opposite El Paso, Texas, under Francisco I. Madero in the spring of 1911—I would like to leave you with an image of Madero here, as he was for some fleeting hours, on February 2, 1911.

To return to the juxtaposition of dates and context. On February 2, 1911, Madero, author of the sensational and incendiary *La sucesión presidencial en 1910*, and of the Plan of San Luis Potosí of 1910 calling for armed insurrection, was the embattled leader of this still fragile revolution. As Bhîma, he had written *Manual espírita*, although it was not yet published. Over

²⁷ I thank many people in my acknowledgments, but here I must especially thank Manuel Guerra de Luna for his advice and encouragement in this most challenging part of researching *Metaphysical Odyssey*.

the Christmas holidays, in the public library of New Orleans, he had spent long hours with the Bhagavad-Gita; the following year, when he was President of Mexico, writing as Arjuna, he would publish some of his commentaries on that holy text.

On that morning of Thursday, February 2, 1911, Madero was in Dallas, Texas.²⁸ Over the previous weeks, he had been in hiding in San Antonio, as his followers fought in Mexico and, in the United States, frantically worked to gather arms and ammunition. Some supporters advised Madero to lead his troops; others urged him to bide his time. But the time, Madero decided, had come. He had packed his Bhagavad-Gita, presumably in a knapsack, and to slip the political police and detectives, he had shaved his beard and traveled in the opposite direction— northeast, to Dallas. There, that February 2, 1911, he hopped on the Texas and Pacific to El Paso. That line runs a ways north from here, through Pecos, Texas, and Toyah, then on to Sierra Blanca and finally, El Paso. The Texas Almanac tells us that on that day the sun set at 5:32 PM. It was only two days past the new moon. The crack of February in Far West Texas: It would have been chilly, so chilly that if he had turned to the window to try and see something out in the ink-dark night—or in the sky—and perhaps he did—he would have left the mist of his breath on the glass. He was all of 38 years old, and he would depart this world almost exactly two years later: February 22, 1913. His bones rest in Mexico City’s Monument to the Revolution.

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²⁸ David Nathan Johnson, *Madero in Texas*. Edited by Félix D. Almaráz, Jr. (Corona Publishing Company, 2001), p. 117.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

C.M. Mayo is the author of *Metaphysical Odyssey into the Mexican Revolution: Francisco I. Madero and His Secret Book* (Dancing Chiva, 2014); the novel based on the true story, *The Last Prince of the Mexican Empire* (Unbridled Books, 2009); *Miraculous Air: Journey of a Thousand Miles through Baja California, the Other Mexico* (University of Utah Press, 2002), and *Sky Over E Nido* (University of Georgia Press, 1995), which won the Flannery O'Connor Award for Short Fiction. A long-time resident of Mexico City and a noted translator of contemporary Mexican literature, Mayo is the editor of *Mexico: A Traveler's Literary Companion* (Whereabouts Press, 2006), an anthology of twenty-four Mexican writers on Mexico, many of these works in translation for the first time. In 2017 she was inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters.

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