



# **Delirio-The Fantastic, the Demonic, and the Réel: The Buried History of Nuevo León**

*Marie Theresa Hernández*

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Striking, inexplicable stories circulate among the people of Nuevo León in northern Mexico. Stories of *conversos* (converted Jews) who fled the Inquisition in Spain and became fabulously wealthy in Mexico. Stories of women and children buried in walls and under houses. Stories of an entire, secret city hidden under modern-day Monterrey. All these stories have no place or corroboration in the official histories of Nuevo León.

In this pioneering ethnography, Marie Theresa Hernández explores how the folktales of Nuevo León encode aspects of Nuevolenese identity that have been lost, repressed, or fetishized in "legitimate" histories of the region. She focuses particularly on stories regarding three groups: the Sephardic Jews said to be the "original" settlers of the region, the "disappeared" indigenous population, and the supposed "barbaric" society that persists in modern Nuevo León. Hernández's explorations into these stories uncover the region's complicated history, as well as the problematic and often fascinating relationship between history and folklore, between officially accepted "facts" and "fictions" that many Nuevoleneses believe as truth.

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