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## ACLA 2024 René Wellek Prize, Monograph: Co-Winner

### Committee:

Chair, Kamran Rastegar (Tufts University)  
Simona Bertacco (University of Louisville)  
Jeremy Glick (Hunter College): 2023-2026

### **Moira Fradinger, *Antígonas: Writing from Latin America*, Oxford University Press**

*Antígonas: Writing from Latin America* is an exemplary model of interdisciplinary scholarship. Moira Fradinger documents with critical finesse, theoretical sophistication, and in granular detail not merely some of the modern afterlives of Sophocles' classical play, *Antigone*; this important book draws the curtain on an astounding vernacular corpus to which Antígona, as a character from the Americas, has given life in the last two centuries. If, as Fradinger convincingly shows, Antígona is grounded in Latin America, the book can be said to be securely grounded in the careful study of the plays that tell Antígona's story. The introduction offers the reader a map to follow Antígona's peregrinations across Latin America, and the chapters analyze the ways in which the fragments of the classical myth have travelled to the Americas and become interwoven with the stories and the events of different communities. The American Antígona is a mother figure and Fradinger discusses in depth how this element engages with the other important traditions of feminine collectives across the Americas in the last century.

The corpus the book offers is both astounding and precious for it makes accessible to an English-reading audience a wealth of texts and materials that are not usually examined through a comparative lens. The dramatic collection taken into consideration is not only transnational, as the geography of the plays and performances goes from Haiti to Peru; it is also multilingual, as some of the plays discussed are in Spanish while others are in Creole languages and vernaculars. The corpus is composed of seventy-nine plays, about half of which exist as printed texts while four exist in English translation. This is the treasure that this book offers to readers and scholars interested in the possibilities of storytelling across lines of language, history, and geography.

Methodologically, this book exemplifies a decolonial approach to comparative literature through a focus on place-based stories, texts, performances, languages, and communities. Most importantly, *Antígonas: Writing from Latin America* is a comparative book that centers on "vernacular writing" rather than on adaptations or re-writings of an original story. "In Latin America, Fradinger writes, "the vernacular *never* requires nor expects the audience's knowledge of antiquity, of tragic drama, or of *Antigone*." By reading this book, however, we, as the book's audience, learn a lot not only about the myth of Antígona in

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South America but about the possibilities of reading in our globalized world of letters. *Antígonas: Writing from Latin America* is a must-read not only for people interested in Latin American literature, the afterlives of classical literature, and global postcolonial and decolonial studies. It opens a new page for comparative literature with an emphasis on vernacular traditions and on the protocols of reading they require.

We are delighted to co-award the ACLA René Wellek Prize for an outstanding book in the discipline of comparative literature to Moira Fradinger's *Antígonas: Writing from Latin America*.