Islands, Identity and the Literary Imagination
By Elizabeth McMahon

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Elizabeth McMahon’s book has been awarded the Walter McRae Russell prize. It was announced as the best book of Australian literary scholarship published in the last two years by the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL) at their annual conference.

It discusses original material that enables new connections to be made and reshape the Australian literary canon and presents the first in-depth, interdisciplinary consideration of the Australian and Caribbean relationship in Australian literary studies.

‘In this magisterial work are the stories and imaginaries, along with their gripping critical analyses, that prove how “utterly compelling, beautiful and devastating” island experiences are.’ —Godfrey Baldacchino, Pro-Rector, University of Malta and President, International Small Islands Studies Association.

‘This elegant and inspiring book transforms our understanding of Australian literature in light of the shifting cartographies of global modernity.’ —Robert Dixon, Professor of Australian Literature, University of Sydney.

"This is a ravishing book, exciting, enervating, from one of the leading voices in Australian criticism. Attractive and accessible in its language, it revels in the intellectual demands occasioned by deep awareness of the island continent, and provides access for our own revelations about the interplay of topography, lived experience, and the imagination. [It] beautifully illustrates the exceptionalism of Australia as a space. —Dr. Ian Henderson, King’s College London

Australia is the planet’s sole island continent. This book argues that the uniqueness of this geography has shaped Australian history and culture, including its literature. Further, it shows how shifting understandings of the island continent shed new light on the relationship between islands and continents in the mapping of modernity.

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)
Elizabeth McMahon is Associate Professor in the School of the Arts and Media at the University of New South Wales.