

## BOOK REVIEW

John Cameron ed. *Changing Places: Re-Imagining Australia*. Sydney: Longueville, 2003.

Jenny Crawford, 'Seeking Soul: Exploring Ground for an Ecofeminist Dialogue with Spirituality'.

This is an exciting and stimulating book, in which twenty-five prominent scholars, poets, priests, artists and writers examine issues related to what it means to be Australian: are there distinctive Australian senses of place? what are they? how are they constructed? The book explores the tension between European cultural and intellectual heritage and indigenous culture and heritage. It examines how the environmental realities of the Australian continent are finally making themselves felt in our national consciousness, and considers the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal senses of place.



Cameron hopes that this might 'form the basis of a more mutually respectful dialogue with Aboriginal people about what it means to inhabit this continent in the new millennium,'

The collection includes sections on: Personal Stories; Cultural Perspectives; Psychological Perspectives; Spiritual Perspectives; and Perspectives from Literature and the Arts. Contributors include Veronica Brady, Freya Mthews, Kate Rigby, David Russell, John Seed, Craig San Roque, Eugene Stockton and David Tacey.

One key contributor to the section on spiritual perspectives is Jenny Crawford, who writes on 'Seeking Soul: Exploring Ground for an Ecofeminist Dialogue with Spirituality'. Crawford sees the environmental crisis as symptomatic of a deeper spiritual crisis. In the dialogue between spirituality and environmentalism she suggests that there must be a parallel dialogue with some of the contemporary emancipatory schools such as feminism - hence Crawford's exploration of eco-feminism and spirituality.

Crawford claims that the non-philosophical, contemplative or meditative aspects of spirituality can give a unique standpoint from which to critique the patriarchal, philosophic approach to knowing. She believes that 'ultimately the solution to the environmental crisis can only be found by seeking soul' - the spiritual dimension. (211). This soul is especially captured through attention/ mindfulness/ awareness/ wonder. 'It is receptivity, it is a kind of negative, or deconstructive effort that holds us in openness, so that the object of our attention might reveal itself.' (216) She further suggests that 'many of the approaches to nature that have given rise to environmentalism have their roots in the "wonder" and "love" that an attentive meeting with nature generates.' (217)