Verena Kast grew up in a farming village in Switzerland. I imagine her as a basically happy, animated, and optimistic child playing, singing, and being in contact with the earth and its animals, herbs, and flowers. I sense this to be true after meeting her, hearing her lectures, and reading this book. It seems that she has liberated her inner child and those wondrous, but all too often neglected, emotions of joy, inspiration, and hope. Verena infects you with her mirth, enthusiasm, and assurance. It makes perfect sense that before her career in psychology, she was a school teacher in a small rural Swiss town.

When I first talked with Professor Kast in Zurich (June, 1989) about being the inaugural Fay Lecturer, she was very pleased to learn that Texas A&M University had a history of being tied to the land. I asked Verena what the theme would be for her lecture series in the spring of 1990, and she replied, “I want to lecture on emotions that we do not usually focus on.” I inquired further, and she gave the following as the title of her lecture series: “Joy, Inspiration, Hope, and the Individuation Process.” I was excited, because it is true that we do not ordinarily concentrate on such topics, especially in a scholarly way.

Unknowingly, at that time Verena was also being prophetic. Now we all feel the joy of the newfound freedom in Eastern Europe; we share the inspiration that comes from casting off
the oppression of totalitarianism, and we all experience a renewed sense of hope as walls have come tumbling down and people embrace one another. Individuation, which Jung first described in individuals and has to do with the process of moving toward wholeness, is now also occurring on national and regional levels. There is a concept called synchronicity in Jungian psychology that is related to meaningful precognition and/or simultaneous coincidences. The psychological phenomena are related to acausal connections and find a parallel in modern quantum physics. It seems as though Verena has tapped into something related to synchronicity, something of immense importance for all of us. Perhaps it suggests that the decade of the 1990s will be a transitional one heralding a new millennium in which there will be true “peace on earth”; a time when we shall all be conscious members of one human family. At least, we can hope that this is the direction in which we are evolving.

William James, the founder of both American psychology and American philosophy, stated, “Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.” Dr. Kast extends this view to include the unattended to but essential emotions of joy, inspiration, and hope. We can change our lives by acknowledging and experiencing these unheeded feelings.

Professor Kast’s book is thoughtful, provocative, as well as practical. It is also inspirational and renews one’s faith and hope in “the human being as a creature of joy.” Dr. Kast’s writing has creative vitality, and one can sense her delight throughout the book. It exudes a feeling of trust and emits hope that can only facilitate one’s individuation process.

Etymologically, psychology means the study of the soul—that is, that enlightening spirit or life-giving force which gives rise to those stabilizing, integrating powers that make a being whole and a person fully human. Such a person can find meaning and purpose in life and can feel optimism, sensitivity, recep-
tivity, empathy, and creativity. But we have neglected three basic emotions that relate to the soul. It is of these emotions that Dr. Kast writes. She points out that we research and concentrate on the dark side—depression, sorrow, and despair. But she emphasizes the need to explore the bright and light side—the world of the carefree child. She offers an anatomy of joy that deals with intrapsychic and interpersonal joy and its sources. Professor Kast outlines a practical way to contact joy that has been buried since childhood; she calls this technique the "biographical reconstructions of joy." She shows us how to use this technique to reexperience our repressed joys from childhood and to bring these emotions into consciousness.

The next part of the book concerns inspiration, the opposite of expiration or death. Inspiration is synonymous with life, and that is the basic issue. Are we going to live or die? "To be or Not to be?" Inspiration is on the side of "To be." It implies that we have purpose, that we are moving toward something, and that we have direction and meaning in our lives or we are pursuing the quest. This part also deals with ecstasy and creativity and how they relate to inspiration.

In the final part of the book, Dr. Kast focuses on hope, which is also related to life, the future, and "To be." It is the opposite of hopelessness and "Not to be." What a therapeutic agent hope is! Dr. Kast not only spotlights this unsung and uncared for emotion, but she suggests ways to encourage its development and bring it into consciousness. She prescribes a rekindling of the flame of personal hope and embeds it finally in the context of absolute hope, something akin to faith.

Dr. Kast's writing is inspirational, hopeful, creative, and transformative. For the most part, this book focuses on the individual and one's own psychic growth. However, Dr. Kast suggests that as the person individuates (engages in a process toward wholeness), relationships and groups beyond the indi-
individual will be influenced and vice versa. In other words, the
concepts in this book can be extended to families, communi-
ties, societies, and Mother Earth. Verena Kast uproots and then
bridges, by joining areas well known in psychology with areas
that are less known, unfamiliar, and underdeveloped. It seems
that psychology (and most of us) deviated off the right path
and apparently got lost along the way, reminiscent of Dante’s
quote:

In the middle of the journey of our life
I found myself in a dark wood,
For I had lost the right path.

Are we now experiencing psychology’s (and our) midlife crisis?
A symptom of this wrong turn is the concentration by psychol-
ogy and our society on anxiety, conflict, violence, despair, de-
materialization, meaninglessness, and hopelessness. Dr. Kast’s book
brings psychology and us back onto the right path—through joy, inspiration, and hope—toward wholeness, individuation,
and the actualization of our potential.

On the cover of this book is a moonflower drawn by John
Walker, an artist and professor of architecture at Texas A&M
University. The moonflower is very pertinent in a symbolic way
to the essence of Dr. Kast’s book. The moonflower is a tropical,
night-blooming morning glory (*Calonyction aculeatum*) with fra-
grant white or purple flowers. The two parts of the name moon-
flower are significant. The moon is dark and feminine, but it
is light as it reflects the sun (masculine), so it is an androgynous
entity, a Yin/Yang symbol. The fact that the moonflower only
blooms at night means that out of the darkness comes creative
blossoming. Flower means the best of the emotions; and joy,
inspiration, and hope surely are choice natural and positive emo-
tions that emerge out of the darkness. It is a paradox. When
there is demoralization in the psyche, society, and the land, there
is despair, meaninglessness, and hopelessness, a living deadness. But just on the other side is the blossom, the restoration of morale, delight, meaning, and hope; a symbolic death and new life. The moonflower is an edifying symbol for the cover of this breakthrough work. It represents the Soul and the idea that out of the darkness emerge the creative emotions of joy, inspiration, and hope.

William Wordsworth held the view that the soul of the human being had at its very core a deep relationship with the forces at work in the world of essential nature and that those forces in the last analysis represented joy. Regarding inspiration, Ovid said, “There is a deity within us, who breathes that divine fire by which we are animated.” Emily Dickinson wrote,

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.

Verena Kast has written a book that embodies what Wordsworth, Ovid, and Dickinson expressed. She has something very special. In Africa it is called obuntu, botho, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu defines as: “The essence of being human. You know when it is there, and when it is absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, putting yourself out on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”

**David H. Rosen**

College Station, Texas