

# Psychohistory News

Newsletter of the International Psychohistorical Association

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## 2019 IPA CONFERENCE TO FEATURE MICHAEL EIGEN AND NANCY CHODOROW

The International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) Conference will be held from May 22nd to May 24th at New York University. A theme of the conference will be the contributions to human understanding of Michael Eigen and Dr. Eigen will speak. Other featured speakers are Nancy Chodorow, who will give our keynote address, and Michael A. Diamond, David Greenberg, Susan Kavalier Adler, and Kirk James. Below are short biographies of these speakers.

**Michael Eigen**, is a psychoanalyst and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology in the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis at New York University. His first book was published when he was 50 years old in 1986. Since then he has authored over 25 books including *Toxic Nourishment*; *The Psychotic Core*; *The Psychoanalytic Mystic*; *The Sensitive Self*; *Feeling Matters*; *Faith*; and *Flames from the Unconscious*. He directed

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### PSYCHOHISTORIAN INTERVIEW

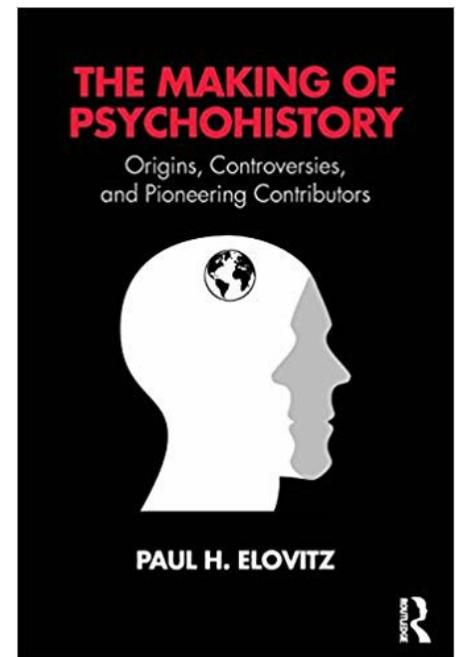
#### PAUL ELOVITZ ON *The Making of Psychohistory: Origins, Controversies, and Pioneering Contributors*

*Kenneth A. Fuchsman (KAF) here interviews Paul H. Elovitz (PHE) on his major history of our field, published this year by Routledge.*

**KAF:** Until your book was published, was there ever a history of psychohistory? Why is such a history important?

**PHE:** Psychohistory is an extraordinarily useful instrument to understand the human condition and itself has a long and little known history. Given the enormous literature that has been

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## 2019 IPA CONFERENCE

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an institute program for working with creative individuals at the Center for Psychoanalytic Training and was the first Director of Educational Training at the Institute for Expressive Analysis. He was on the Board of Directors at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis for eight years, first as Program Chair, then editor of *The Psychoanalytic Review*. To honor Dr. Eigen's contributions, clinicians are coming from South Korea, India, Vancouver, and Brooklyn.



**Michael Eigen**



**Nancy Chodorow** is a sociologist and psychoanalyst who taught for years at the University of California and is now at Harvard. Her 1978 landmark book, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* was chosen by *Contemporary Sociology* as one of the ten most influential books of the last quarter century. Some of her other books also address psychoanalysis and feminism, including *Individualizing Gender and Sexuality: Theory and Practice*, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, *The Power of Feelings: Personal Meaning in Psychoanalysis, Gender and Culture*, and *Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond*.

**Michael A. Diamond** is Professor Emeritus of Public Affairs and Organizational Studies at the University of Missouri. His 1993 volume *The Unconscious Life of Organizations* was awarded a special prize by the American Psychological Association. He has also written *Private Selves in Public Organizations* and most recently *Discovering Organizational Identity*. He is past President, International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations.



## PAUL ELOVITZ INTERVIEW

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created and the high quality of many of its books and journals, it is amazing that there has not previously been a comprehensive history of the field.

**KAF:** What is psychohistory? What are the internal specialties within this field?

**PHE:** Psychohistory is an amalgam of psychoanalysis, history, psychology, and all of the social

sciences and humanities. A willingness to probe the unconscious and focus on motivation are crucial aspects of it. The specialties within the field include creativity, dreamwork, group dynamics, the history of childhood, psychobiography (including that of leaders), trauma studies, and unconscious motivation (especially the difference between intention and actual behavior).

**KAF:** You have been at every annual conference of the IPA. How does your own experience illuminate the history of psychohistory?

**PHE:** In 1977, I was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of an international group. Subsequently, I presented at least one paper and sometimes workshops at each of our conferences. My experience in the organization changed dramatically as I went from founding member to leader to honorary member of the Executive Council participating in monthly planning sessions. When I came to our inaugural meeting in 1978, a decade after discovering psychoanalysis and psychohistory while



**David Greenberg** is Professor of History and Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University. His 2016 *Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency* examines the rise of the White House spin machine, from the Progressive Era to the present day, and the debates that Americans have waged over its implications for democracy. His first book, *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* won the Washington Monthly Annual Political Book Award, the American Journalism History Award, and Columbia University's Bancroft Dissertation Award. *Calvin Coolidge* was published in December 2006 and appeared on the *Washington Post's* list of best books of 2007. *Presidential Doodles* (Basic Books, 2006) was widely reviewed and featured on

CNN, NPR's "All Things Considered," and CBS's "Sunday Morning."

**Susan Kavalier Adler** is founder and Director of the Object Relations Institute for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. She is in private practice as a psychologist and psychoanalyst in New York City. She has published more than 60 peer reviewed articles and five psychoanalytic books, including *The Klein-Winnicott Dialectic: Transformative New Metapsychology and Interactive Clinical Theory*, *Compulsion to Create: Women Writers and Their Demon Lovers*, *The Creative Mystiques: From Red Shoes Frenzy to Love and Creativity*, *Mourning Spirituality and Psychic Change*, and *The Anatomy of Regret*.



**Kirk Anthony James** is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the NYU Silver School of Social Work. He earned his doctorate from the School of Social Policy and Practice at The University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation, "The Invisible Epidemic in Social Work Academia," challenged dominant understandings of mass incarceration using a historical and contemporary lens. Dr. James deconstructs mass incarceration, especially as it pertains to trauma, cognitive development, culpability, and the examination of systems that foster and perpetuate racial injustice. He works collaboratively with the Center For Justice at Columbia University on its annual "Beyond The Bars" conference, which seeks to create a more informed understanding of and response to mass incarceration.

**A call for proposals will be sent out in September with a deadline for submissions by Halloween. For more information contact Ken Fuchsman at [kfuchsman@gmail.com](mailto:kfuchsman@gmail.com).**

teaching history at Temple University, I found that 80% of our members were historians, but almost none were trained in psychoanalysis (as I was at the time). Today our presenters are overwhelmingly clinicians, and there are only a handful of historians.

I have had an exuberant journey as a psychohistorian. It was thrilling to meet so many like-minded

colleagues around the world and learn an incredible amount from them. I also wanted to share my knowledge with them, which is why David Beisel and I organized panels on the teaching of psychohistory and I, for about a decade, formed a lunchtime workshop on the complexities of war, peace, and conflict resolution. I served in almost every office of our group, including newsletter editor. When

I became president at our Washington, DC meeting in 1988, I was eager to spread the word on psychohistory. Two frustrations are that we have only once left New York City for our annual meetings and that the promising idea of making the group self-analytic has sometimes hurt rather than helped our development.

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## PAUL ELOVITZ INTERVIEW

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**KAF:** What are some of the most important things to know about the history of psychohistory?

**PHE:** The word psycho-historical was first used in 1840 and psycho-historical studies began in the Freud Circle early in the 20th century. Psychohistorical organizations sprang up in the 1960s and 70's. We have a long and most creative history with different colleagues and groups creating new methodologies and extending our understanding to area after area. Robert Jay Lifton's by invitation only Wellfleet Psychohistory Group is the oldest, with the Institute for Psychohistory and the IPA following in the 70's. Most psychohistory has been done by colleagues not directly associated with these groups. Importantly, we learn from each other, including our own and each other's mistakes, and consequently, we widened the breadth and depth of our knowledge.

**KAF:** What have been the opportunities and obstacles you have faced in writing a history of psychohistory?

**PHE:** Psychohistory has offered incredible opportunities to me as a scholar, and the many friendships I've made have greatly enriched my life. Although I've been thinking about writing this book for three decades, some part of me felt that it could be hubris on my part to try and encapsulate everything. I also worried about hurting the feelings of friends and colleagues who weren't specifically mentioned or whose contributions were not

highlighted. Fortunately, as the editor of *Clio's Psyche* I have learned an enormous amount by publishing 60 featured scholar interviews and the memorials for 35 colleagues. I have a wealth of knowledge about the personalities and controversies of our field.

I worried that so many of our best psychohistorians are in the last decades of their lives. Yet I felt blocked about doing this myself until I realized that if I didn't do it, so much of the history would be lost. I was in a unique position to write it, having created some and participated in most other psychohistorical organizations. Ken, you have been an unfailing supporter of my book publishing project and much else. Now that my history is in print I am organizing a summer 2019 special issue of *Clio's Psyche* and an edited book, *The Builders of Psychohistory*, containing the experiences of my colleagues

Overwhelmingly, my colleagues have been extremely positive about *The Making of Psychohistory*, but inevitably some colleagues will be disappointed that I did not write more about them and their psychohistorical accomplishments and organizations. Although as an editor and organizer I spent 40 years reaching out to colleagues in the West, Midwest, and Europe, I am less knowledgeable about them than I would have preferred. This is one reason why I encourage colleagues to write their own histories of psychohistory. They are also welcome to submit comments on my book, and most importantly, articles on their own experiences in psychohistory to *Clio's Psyche's* forthcoming special issue on "Your Psychohistory," which will become *The Builders of Psychohistory* book.

The more histories we have of the field, the better off we are.

**KAF:** You have presented portraits of six prominent psychohistorians. What led you to choose these particular six?

**PHE:** About 80 colleagues were discussed in my volume, with Binion, deMause, Gay, Loewenberg, Lifton, and Volkan chosen because of their scholarly accomplishments, leadership, and institutional innovations. Robert Jay Lifton created the Wellfleet Psychohistorical Group in 1966. He is the best known, most influential public intellectual among our members, who went on to create the Center for Violence and Human Survival in New York (1986-2002). Lloyd deMause created a psychohistorical institute, international association, and publishing firm, edited *The History of Childhood* (1974), and wrote *The Foundations of Psychohistory* (1982). Lifton sees psychohistory as a method of inquiry and deMause views it as a scientific discipline. These conflicting visions have had an enormous influence on psycho-history. Vamik Volkan, the author of *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relations* (1988) and *Enemies on the Couch* (2013), is a Cypriote-Turkish-American psychiatrist who created a psychohistorical center and journal devoted to lessening hatred and conflict in our world. Lifton, deMause, and Volkan all have a passion for creating a more peaceful world.

The remaining three leaders are historians who have done outstanding psychohistorical work. Peter Gay was an excellent and

world-renowned scholar whose books provide enormous insights into European history and Sigmund Freud. Peter Loewenberg has been a leader of psychoanalysis and psychohistory who is playing a key role in bringing Western psychotherapy to China. Rudolph Binion was a brilliant historian and frequent IPA-er who focused on traumatic reliving among individuals and societies after rejecting his early Freudianism. There is considerable material on all six of these leaders in my book and the interviews I published in *Clio's Psyche*.

Were there space enough, it certainly would have been tempting to cover in depth the lives and achievements of numerous other colleagues. Peter Barglow, a retired psychiatric professor in California, has complained that I'm too modest and that I should have included myself as one of the preeminent people in the field. The richness of the contributions of so many colleagues can be found in our featured scholar interviews and in the memorials you can find at [cliospsyche.org/archives](http://cliospsyche.org/archives). I welcome colleagues submitting their own experiences in psychohistory and articles discussing the influence of others on them. I look forward to making additions to the next edition of *The Making of Psychohistory*.

**KAF:** You have written psychobiographies of presidential candidates since 1976. What can psychobiographies of living American political leaders contribute that is not available from other approaches?

**PHE:** Psychobiographies of contemporary American political leaders can provide insights that are simply not present in more

traditional approaches by political scientists. Few psychobiographers are willing to undertake the enormous, laborious, time-consuming task of probing the childhoods, family backgrounds, coping mechanisms, leadership styles, personalities, life crises, and unconscious motivations of candidates to the presidency so that we can give our assessments during the electoral cycle. The influence of our insights on elections is a separate question, of course. Psychologically attuned commentators were universally negative about Donald Trump prior to the 2016 election, for example, but he still prevailed in the Electoral College.

**KAF:** Since 1980, what is an important thing you learned about individual presidents?

**PHE:** While values and character are quite important, a president like George H. W. Bush (1989-1993) was less successful at mobilizing the electorate than Ronald Reagan, who showed a greater ability to catch the public mood and make Americans feel better about themselves.

**KAF:** Psychohistory is generally not taught at American research universities. What have been the negative and positive effects for psychohistory being outside of the academy? How do you see psychohistory unfolding in the future?

**PHE:** To the best of my knowledge, with the retirement of Peter Loewenberg and the death of Rudy Binion and others, courses listed as psychohistory are no longer taught in major research universities, though are still taught in some colleges. Consequently, as in the past, psychohistorians are self-taught. There is no certainty as to how psychohistory will develop in the future. It is my hope that the

prejudice against it, currently quite strong in psychology and history departments, will eventually die out as our society becomes more and more psychological in its perspective.

**KAF:** How does a scholar trained as a European historian end up being a presidential psychobiographer?

**PHE:** I care passionately about my country and its leadership. When I read Jimmy Carter's campaign autobiography, I said at an Institute for Psychohistory meeting that someone ought to go down to Plains, Georgia and interview this presidential candidate since he seems to be unusually open about his history and himself. Lloyd deMause said, "Why don't you do it, Paul?" After much hesitancy, before the 1976 election I was in Plains, Georgia interviewing Carter's mother, sister, and a variety of other people in his tiny hometown. Presidential psychobiography become one of my specialties, one I find to be rather addictive.

*Paul Elovitz is Associate Professor of History, Psychohistory and Interdisciplinary Studies at Ramapo College as well as Founding Director of the Psychohistory Forum and Editor of Clio's Psyche. He can be reached at [cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com](mailto:cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com)*

*Ken Fuchsman, Ed.D. is President of the International Psychohistorical Association and a recently retired professor and administrator from University of Connecticut. He is a widely published psychohistorian and a member of the Editorial Boards of Clio's Psyche and The Journal of Psychohistory. Ken can be reached at [kfuchsman@gmail.com](mailto:kfuchsman@gmail.com)*

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## PSYCHOHISTORY BULLETIN BOARD

- On September 29, the Psychohistory Forum will meet at Fordham University Lincoln Center campus from 9:45 am to 1:00 pm. The meeting will feature Denis O'Keefe, Inna Rozentsvit, and Ken Fuchsman discussing their road to psychohistory. David Beisel, Joyce Rosenberg, and Christina Stein will comment on Dr. Paul Elovitz's *The Making of Psychohistory*. For more information contact [cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com](mailto:cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com).
- Psychoanalyst Alice Maher, M.D., has written *Catalysis: A Recipe to Slow Down or Abort Humankind's Leap to War*. Dr. Maher presents what she believes is a major paradigm shift in human understanding. She asserts that there is a new way of communicating across human divides, to develop creative solutions to intractable conflicts, which will lead to a shift in the direction of human consciousness and evolution. For more information about this work, go to <https://ipbooks.net/product/catalysis-a-recipe-to-slow-down-or-abort-humankinds-leap-to-war/>.
- New York University Press has published *America As Seen on TV: How Television Shapes Immigrant Expectations Around the Globe*, by Clara Rodriguez, Professor of Sociology at Fordham University at Lincoln Center. Dr. Rodriguez has also taught at Columbia, MIT and Yale. The book examines how those in foreign countries view American television and how that helps induce them to immigrate to the United States. Go to [www.nyupress.org](http://www.nyupress.org) for more information.
- On October 25, 2018, Routledge will publish Trevor Pederson's *Psychoanalysis and Hidden Narrative in Film*. Pederson begins the process of unifying competing schools of film into a single model of mind and offers clinical examples for many of the terms it seeks to operationalize. Central in this work are the horizontal axis of psychic bisexuality and the vertical axis of superego development and social ontology. He illustrates these conceptions through an explication of the 1987 American film, *The Lost Boys*. For more info go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Psychoanalysis-and-Hidden-Narrative-in-Film-Reading-the-Symptom/Pederson/p/book/9781138307148>.

## HARVEY KAPLAN ON HIS BOOK *FRANK SINATRA: THE SWINGING NARCISSIST*

***Frank Sinatra: The Swinging Narcissist* was written by Dr. Harvey Kaplan, a New York psychotherapist, and published in 2017 by International Psychoanalytic Books. He is interviewed here by Ken Fuchsman.**

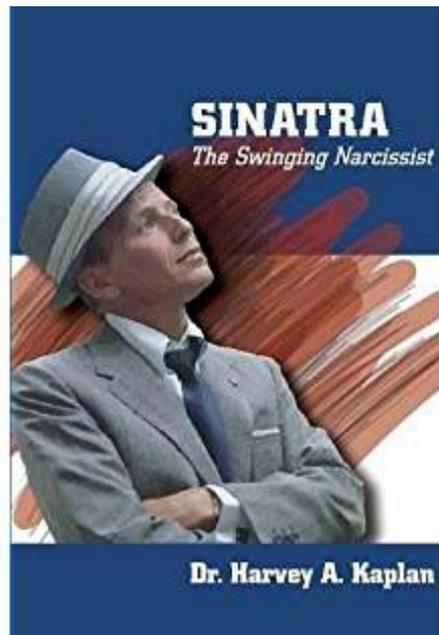
**KF:** Frank Sinatra had a recording career of 55 years, and he appeared in films for over 40 years. What makes Sinatra an important cultural figure and artist? What accounts for his longevity?

**HK:** To be successful, the artist must know the personal elements of human character, the parts of us that respond in kind. These emotional realities make up for a force that lies within our unconscious.

Sinatra, as a unique artist, became aware of those deeper emotions and was able to transform them into everyday reality, where they could then become discernible to the audience at large. In this vein, Sinatra was an interpretive artist. As a true artist, Sinatra understood how to elaborate his daydreams, and he had special gifts, the mysterious ability to shape his particular material until it expressed the contents of his fantasy faithfully. The way to be an interpretive artist is to know how to give performances the aspect and feel of life, so that people are moved.

With Sinatra, in addition to his voice, the words were the thing. Nobody ever treated lyrics the loving way he did. With precise

diction that enabled you to hear every word, he made songs his, made them sound as if they'd sprung from his heart. No pop singer before him sought or achieved so complete an identification both personal and emotional, with his material. It's no wonder composers from traditionalist Irving Berlin to modernist Stephen Sondheim preferred his rendition of their tunes. It's no wonder that in 1973, the Songwriters of America named him "Entertainer of the Century."



**KF:** You describe Sinatra as a productive narcissist. What do you mean by that in assessing Sinatra?

**HK:** Narcissists tend to create a vision to change the world or at least to change the way things have been going on before. So they are bold risk takers who think and act independently, pursuing their vision with great passion and perseverance. These are the kinds of people we want in leadership positions or in

other endeavors. However, with these assets come some liabilities, the negative traits. They are oversensitive to criticism, don't really listen to anyone, are quick to anger at put-downs, can be withdrawn and paranoid and grandiose.

These days in both the psychiatric field and colloquial conversation, "Narcissism" has become a term for egoism, egocentricity or just plain bad manners. But the narcissistic personality that fits best with Sinatra is someone who rejects how things are for how things should be. Narcissists do not react to the external world so much as they try to create it. For example, when following Sinatra's life we see someone whose life has been an exercise in shutting out the chorus of voices that told him what or what not to do. A productive narcissist is the kind of a person who doesn't listen to anyone else when they believe in doing something and has a precise vision of how things should be. Some other people are like this yet they are unable to follow-through on any of their big ideas and dreams, never rising to the top. So the point is that a narcissist can be either productive or unproductive and it's the productive ones that I want to focus on.

The productive ones have the charisma and drive to convince others to buy in to their vision or embrace a common purpose. They

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## KAPLAN ON SINATRA

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communicate a sense of meaning that inspires others to follow them whereas the unproductive types retreat into their own world and blame others for their isolation. The productive ones are those who take the risks that others can't or won't dare and the most productive transform our world through politics, business, social action and of course the arts.

**KF:** You cite Sinatra saying of himself, "Being an 18-karat manic-depressive" and having "violent emotional contradictions, I have an over-acute capacity for sadness as well as elation." Frank's daughter Tina wrote of her father, "Had he been a healthier, less tortured man, he might have been Perry Como." How does Sinatra's temperament contribute to his artistry as a singer?

**HK:** He carried the baggage of an explosive and passionate life with him onstage, and the songs he sang evoked his own alternately lonely and swinging existence. Both his prodigious talent and his feisty behavior made him one of the most extraordinary entertainment figures of the century. The paradoxes in his makeup were all part of it – the swashbuckling toughness together with the poignant tenderness, the idolized hero and simultaneously, the small-boy underdog, the family man and yet the emancipated charmer of the world. This honesty, passion and vitality make up the essential elements of his singing.

**KF:** You write about Sinatra's lengthy career as a popular icon and contrast his lasting success and achievements with other popular singers of the era. Describe some of what made others careers not as prominent and why Sinatra had such longevity.

**HK:** We might ask why Sinatra was different from other singers and much more grand than Tony Bennett. I think the answer lies in his ambition, which is inherently totalizing, moving forward through taking in more, striving to have, to do and be more. Sinatra, the ambitious performer, thus stands as a figure who enables us to appreciate life and grasp past, present, and future in a significant shape. Once Sinatra got the bug for singing and performing, nothing stood in his way. So it all may come down to his inordinate need for success and power. Throughout Sinatra's life, it was all about power. In his art, he perfected the power of captivating a nightclub audience to the point of utter silence or inducing near-breathlessness in a movie audience as he underwent withdrawal in *The Man with the Golden Arm*.

**KF:** Your interest in Sinatra started at a young age. Describe your meeting him, and the impact it had on you.

**HK:** When I was 12 years old, my aunt took me to see and hear Sinatra doing a live radio broadcast. By this time his rendition of *I'll Never Smile Again* had filled the airways and enthralled the country. We entered this room and took a seat up front near the microphone. After some minutes, Sinatra entered. He didn't look so heroic to me, rather skinny and bashful.

The orchestra started playing and Sinatra moved toward the microphone and eased into a song. I remember the song until this day: it was *Dream*. How can I forget how the words rolled from his lips? And as I listened, I started to feel a chill or quiver running up my spine – there was something about that voice that was so riveting and enthralling. Part of me felt uncomfortable at being so fascinated by that voice; the other part knew he had a certain power to captivate his audience. And for the next half hour, I sat still, totally fascinated by him.

Then at the end of the show, my aunt led me to the front of the stage and approached Sinatra, while holding my hand very tightly. She stopped in front

of him and waited until a few other people were finished talking to him. Then she addressed him.

"Mr. Sinatra, I would like to introduce you to my nephew, who just loves your singing." He looked down at me with a big grin and said, "Why thank you," and then shook my hand. I looked back at him slightly frightened and replied, "Mr. Sinatra, you're the greatest!"

I have been a devoted fan of his through the years. I attended many of his performances always feeling that same initial sensation. I am writing this book to make sense of what his presence has meant to me over the years and to see how I can creatively describe the impact that his life made in this world.

**KF:** What is Sinatra's legacy?

**HK:** So many of Sinatra's songs make explicit the almost nameless dreads of daily human life: aging, failure, loss or guilt. Sifting through his repertoire, we find these thoughts in every performance.

He is a portrait of an individual with great smoldering forces of human desire and frustration and discontent, something we all have in us too, part of humanity as a whole. And because, with all his strength, he's still up against something he can't seem to understand, there's an ironic perspective too. He then reflects about part of our own lives. Much of his singing is a story of a loss and recovery of identity.

**KF:** What did you get out of writing this book?

**HK:** When I finished writing the story of Sinatra's life, his rise and fall and then rise again it got me to think that the struggle in life is continuing to face whatever challenges head on. A man who only had himself to answer to or as he said "I Did it My Way." I think there is something empowering about that as if he represents some kind of heightened role model. He represents some potent, beautiful force in our culture. He was one of a kind.