

Ms. Julie and Myself

by Phyllis Chesler



Last evening, a hero came uptown to visit me. Her name is Dr. Julie Ancis and she is the founder of Psychologists Against Antisemitism. Dr. Julie was once a diversity and anti-racism expert—and she still is—but she is now also an expert in Cyber Psychology which sounds utterly fascinating. As I understand it, this concerns the psychological consequences of human interaction with machines. This might constitute the psychology of the future since everyone under fifty spends so much of their time on the internet. Dr. Julie told me that war-traumatized veterans are often more comfortable with a robot programmed to counsel them than they are with another living being. I must introduce her to my friend Dr. Paula Boddington, the philosopher, who specializes in the ethics of artificial intelligence. Who knows what the two of them might discover?



Julie wanted to have a photo. I have a hard time taking one. My eyes always automatically close. Oh, the time we had to take to get a few images in which my eyes were not closed or half-closed. But we kept trying and oh how we laughed. Here's two with my Eyes (almost) Wide Open. Obtaining a good photo is not that easy. Once, I sat for the great photographer, Joan L. Roth, for an author portrait. After 45 minutes, I picked myself up, thanked her, and said I'd be leaving. "Oh no darling," she said, "we've only just begun." She was right. I was there for nearly three hours, which was apparently the time it took to take the absolutely perfect photo.