

Susan Sontag and I



by Phyllis Chesler

We first met in the early 1970s and I was shocked that such an intellectual icon was not really a feminist. But no matter. She knew many other things. Once, we found ourselves in the lobby of the 2nd Ave Film Archives waiting to see Dreyer's utterly magnificent, black and white silent film "[The Passion of Joan of Arc](#)." She said: "Of course, you're here." Said I: "I see that you're here too." We nodded in recognition that both of us were in search of lost Amazons, women warriors, heroic and therefore, in Christian times, tragic examples of misguided female resistance. But we were also in search of a great film. Sontag and I had a few discussions over the years but we never really "hung out" together as she'd once requested, and I never forgot her address in Paris: 12 Rue Regrattier. Susan: R.I.P.

As for Joan: I had read Regine Pernoud's transcript of the actual trial for "Women and Madness" and that, too, had shocked me. So, it was not merely a myth, historically, the

British had really captured her and no doubt done their worst to her before they burned her as a witch. Pauvre Jeanne. R.I.P as well.