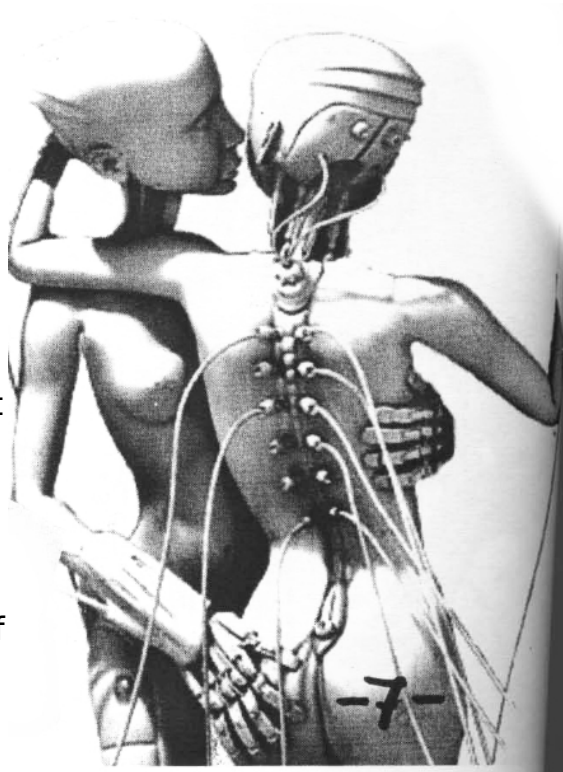


Women accused of witchcraft were usually lay healers serving poor and peasant populations. The suppression of women as healers was concomitant with the rise of professionalization of medicine as a branch of study for upper-class males. The first trained doctors were not doctors of medicine but of theology and philosophy. They attended to the wealthy and bourgeoisie, not the peasants. Witches were often the only medical practitioners for people who had no hospitals and who were riddled with disease and afflicted with poverty. The church saw its persecution of peasant healers as attacking the practice of magic and superstition, not medicine. Ironically, it was women healers who were the empirical scientists, gathering data from their practices and experimenting with herbal cures and knowledge derived from direct observation through the senses.

### **Banished knowledge and bio-piracy**

Through contact with the Arab world during the Crusades, the 13th Century saw the rise of the university-educated male medical doctor. Young men of means went to university to study medicine and soon worked to monopolize the practice and banish women from the healing arts—except for midwifery.

The banishing of common (female and people's) knowledge gained from centuries of inquiry, experimentation, and practice,



**Bayer is responsible for the privatization and monopolization of genetic resources such as seeds and medicinal plants.** Bayer belongs to the largest transnational companies in the area of pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals which share the largest portion of patents granted to date. The attempts to monopolize them harm biological diversity in the fields and rob indigenous communities of their medicinal plants and traditional knowledge.

Years of intensive influence on lawmaking on the part of transnational companies resulted in the TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement of the WTO. This agreement results in the legal commitment to intellectual property rights such as patents on biological and genetic material – that is, property rights on life. Bayer was involved in this.

A particularly insidious mechanism of control and power is so-called terminator technology, officially known as Genetic Use Restriction Technology. This technology results in sterility of plants after their harvest, such that they may not be reused for re-planting. A moratorium was placed on terminator technology in 2000 as part of the Convention on Biological Diversity, since it represented too great a risk to biological diversity. The Bayer corporation is also involved in the development of terminator technology—as is attested to by circa one-half dozen patent applications with titles such as “New Gene for the Coordination of Cell-Ablation” or “Process for the Production of Sterile Female Plants”. According to Bayer CropScience, however, the corporation only owns terminator patents as a result of its acquisition of Aventis CropScience. This is a false statement. Bayer is owner of at least five patents on seed sterilization technologies. This suggests that Bayer continues to be interested in research and use of terminator technology. During the 2006 COP 6 meetings in Curitiba, Brazil, Bayer lobbyists were involved in trying to reverse the moratorium of these technologies. Bayer is also involved in the development of pharmaceutical plants, thus threatening biological diversity.