

## What is the Matilda Effect?

The [\*\*Matilda Effect\*\*](#) describes the systematic **under-recognition of women's scientific and artistic achievements**, where their work is attributed to male colleagues or downplayed entirely. The term was coined by science historian [Margaret W. Rossiter](#), named after suffragist [Matilda Joslyn Gage](#), who wrote about this pattern in the 19th century. It highlights how gender bias has shaped the history of science, art, and culture.

---

## Physics & Astronomy

- **Rosalind Franklin & Watson/Crick** – DNA structure; Franklin's crucial X-ray diffraction images were not acknowledged when the 1962 Nobel Prize was awarded to Watson, Crick, and Wilkins.
- **Lise Meitner & Otto Hahn** – Nuclear fission; Meitner helped provide the theoretical explanation, but Hahn alone received the 1944 Nobel Prize.
- **Jocelyn Bell Burnell & Antony Hewish** – Discovery of the first pulsar; Hewish received the 1974 Nobel Prize, Bell Burnell was overlooked.
- **Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin** – Demonstrated that stars are primarily composed of hydrogen; recognition came much later, and her findings were initially credited to Eddington.
- **Vera Rubin & Kent Ford** – Discovery of dark matter; Rubin received very little recognition during her lifetime.

## Chemistry & Biology

- **Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin & the men in her team** – Structure of penicillin; in early acknowledgments, her contributions were marginalized (although she later won a Nobel Prize).
- **Nettie Stevens & Edmund Wilson** – Discovery that sex is determined by chromosomes; Stevens was largely excluded from official recognition.
- **Rosalyn Yalow & male colleagues** – Development of radioimmunoassay; early results were often attributed to men, despite her central role.

- **Gerty Cori & Carl Cori** – Sugar metabolism; although they collaborated closely, Carl was more frequently credited in the media.

## Mathematics & Computer Science

- **Ada Lovelace & Charles Babbage** – First computer program; historically, Babbage received most of the recognition.
- **Mary Cartwright & J.E. Littlewood** – Work in chaos theory and nonlinear systems; Cartwright's contributions were long undervalued.
- **Emmy Noether** – Abstract algebra and Noether's theorem; male colleagues applied her theories without always acknowledging her work.

## Medicine & Psychology

- **Martha Chase & Alfred Hershey** – DNA experiments (Hershey–Chase); Hershey gained most of the fame.
- **Rosalyn Sussman Yalow & Solomon Berson** – Radioimmunoassay; Berson was more widely praised during his lifetime.
- **Virginia Apgar** – The Apgar score; her work was initially dismissed or minimized by institutions and male colleagues.

---

## Literature

- **Zora Neale Hurston** – Neglected during her lifetime; her work was later “rediscovered” and acknowledged as foundational.
- **Mary Shelley** – Early reviews attributed *Frankenstein* to her husband or dismissed her authorship as secondary.
- **The Brontë sisters** – Originally published under male pseudonyms (Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell) to be taken seriously.

## Music

- **Fanny Mendelssohn** – Many of her compositions were published under her brother Felix's name.
- **Clara Schumann** – Celebrated pianist, but her compositions were overshadowed by those of male contemporaries.
- **Hildegard von Bingen** – Her large musical output was recognized only centuries later.

## Visual Arts

- **Artemisia Gentileschi** – Baroque painter whose work was long overshadowed by male artists such as Caravaggio.
- **Hilma af Klint** – Pioneer of abstract art; her achievements were only acknowledged decades after her death.
- **Lee Krasner** – Her work was minimized while Jackson Pollock received the fame.