

THE VIRIDIAN

THE VIRIDIAN

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A NOTE FROM OUR EDITOR

Dear Readers,

On behalf of *The Viridian* team, we hope that you have all had a restful Spring Break and are ready to complete our final term of school this academic year!

This edition, '*In The Shadows*', was led by our amazingly-talented team members who shadow older students - their talent, dedication, and passion shines through the shadows in this edition.

As our team approaches the end of this academic year, we would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this short survey about *The Viridian*, as your feedback really helps us improve and continue providing content you value. Please be assured that all responses are completely anonymous.

Survey Link:

[The Viridian Survey – Fill in form](#)

The survey can also be accessed by scanning the QR Code above.

Happy reading!



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MORBID MYSTERIES

BY LOUISA LIAPIS

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Floating in the solitude of the Strait of Malacca, situated in modern day Indonesia, was the Dutch merchant freighter labelled the 'SS Ourang Medan', which directly translates to 'The man of Medan' in Indonesian. Undocumented and unheard of, the ship traversed foreign waters with an unknown intention. Despite there being different variations of the story, and notable inconsistencies concerning details, a prominent version of the story that arose in 1948 is particularly grim.

It was reported that amidst the voyage, the radio operator on board released a signal in morse code stating "S.O.S from Ourang Medan *** We float. All officers including the captain, dead in chartroom and on the bridge. Probably whole crew dead***." The haunting message was then followed by a series of inconceivable dots and dashes-almost as if they were the operator's final, dire attempt to communicate the horror that he witnessed-finally though, the sinister phrase "I die," was sent out, solely to be followed by sheer silence. Apprehensive and confused, a specialized vessel, the Silver Star, immediately set of to locate the ship in distress. Initially, the vessel appeared to be completely unharmed, calmly drifting in the water; upon boarding the ship though, the crew was horrified to find themselves shrouded by corpses, belonging to both the original crew aboard and the ship's designated dog. The lifeless, human bodies were all grotesquely sprawled on their backs and facing upward, allowing the afternoon sun to illuminate the alleged petrified grimaces displayed on all their faces. Despite failing to find any discernible injuries or wounds, it was reported their expressions were reminiscent of "Horrible caricatures," consisting of wide, hollow eyes, almost as if the very object that caused them to perish was sheer fear.

Amid investigation, a juvenile sailor claimed to hear subtle cracking below the deck, rousing him to frantically speed off the ship and onto his own, simultaneously urging his counterparts to do the same.

Gingerly, and almost humorously, his crew joined him on the vessel. As the anchor was leisurely hauled upward and the sailor was ridiculed for being overtly paranoid, the sound of an explosion pervaded the air and the Ourang Medan was almost instantly engulfed in ravenous flames, eventually sinking to the strait bed and dragging any remaining evidence down with it.



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Rumours rapidly arose of an unidentified German survivor who managed to crawl off deck, evading the corpses, and crudely paddled towards the nearest island where he came across many natives and an Italian missionary. Struggling to string his sentences together, the man mustered up a few feeble words and ultimately admitted to the fact that the ship had been illicitly transporting severely explosive substances; attempting to avoid the authorities, the captain took an unauthorized route, subjecting the entire crew to the poorly enclosed and highly lethal cargo for far too long, essentially suffocating the crew which resulted in their untimely death.

As there is a lack of evidence for the specific cause of the explosion, various other theories have been manifested throughout the years.

Reinforcing the theory of the existence of the German sailor, it is argued that the cargo contained potassium cyanide, nitro-glycerine, or even nerve agents, that remained from the Second World War, in some sort of cryptic military or smuggling operation. Sea water would have then seeped into the ship's hold and reacted with the potassium cyanide and possible nerve agents, producing very toxic gases which would have then diffused into every part of the ship, poisoning everyone on board. The sea water would have also eventually reacted with the nitro-glycerin, explaining the flames and explosion witnessed by the Silver Star crew.

It's also plausible, though, that the general system in the boiling room could have gone awry, causing smoke to trail from a hidden fire and emitting carbon monoxide into the ship, which was responsible for the death of the crew, consequently causing the fire to viciously flare up and dominate the ship.

Due to the ship's violent end and mysterious nature of the tale, the story itself cannot be confidently proven or rejected, nor can the theories that revolve around it; the presence of a malicious, undetectable entity, swiftly navigating the ship remains as plausible as the ship's own existence.



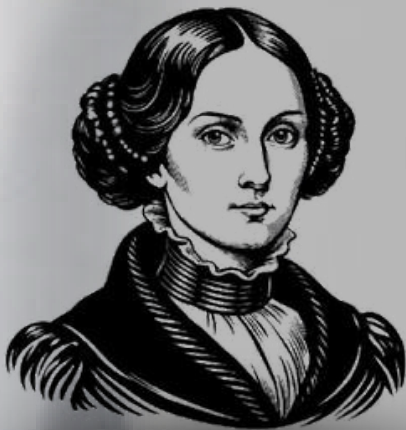
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HISTORY

BY RENEE STROUTHOU

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It is no secret that history is often told as a parade of great men, being shaped as the dominant leaders, great thinkers and unique artists of our society. But behind many award-winning men are the uncredited women, whose absence would completely alter the course of history and the development of the world.



Today, we celebrate Ada Lovelace as the world's first woman in STEM and the person who created 'The First Algorithm'. However, if we were alive in the 19th century, we would have simply known her as the student of Charles Babbage. Babbage was a mathematician who created the first automatic digital computer, which without Lovelace's work, that he quickly called his own, would have remained the simple machine he created, rather than the multi-purpose computer that it became with Ada Lovelace's work. Sadly, for many decades after her death, Lovelace was not identified as the great scientist and mathematician that she was, but as the daughter of the great poet Lord Byron. It was only until the early 1950s (over a century later), when her notes were finally published, and she was able to receive the recognition she deserved.

Discovering the structure of DNA transformed the world of medicine and biotechnology forever. Because of it, scientists were able to understand inheritance, genetic diseases, and the theory of evolution from a completely new perspective. For this, many praise James Watson, Francis Crick, and Maurice Wilkins. But, as Mark Twain once said, "Behind every successful man is a woman." In this case, her name is Rosalind Franklin. Franklin provided Photo 51, which was the first X-ray image of the structure of DNA, which we have now named the double helix. Without the provision of her photo, the three men would have never been able to complete their research as well as receive the praise that they loved and their Nobel prize which completely ignored Franklin's participation in the discovery. Franklin never received any recognition during her lifetime; it was only years after her death that the truth was reviled.

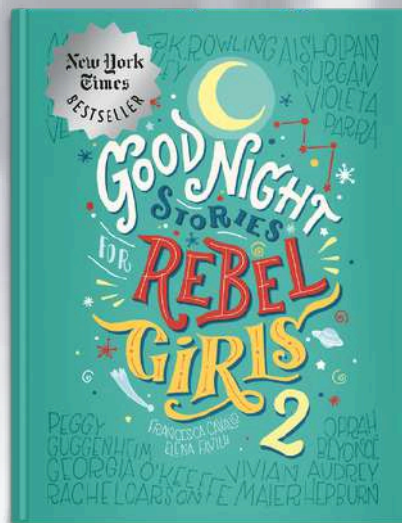
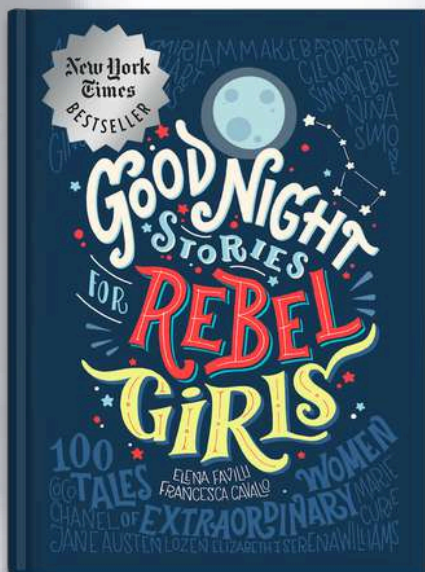
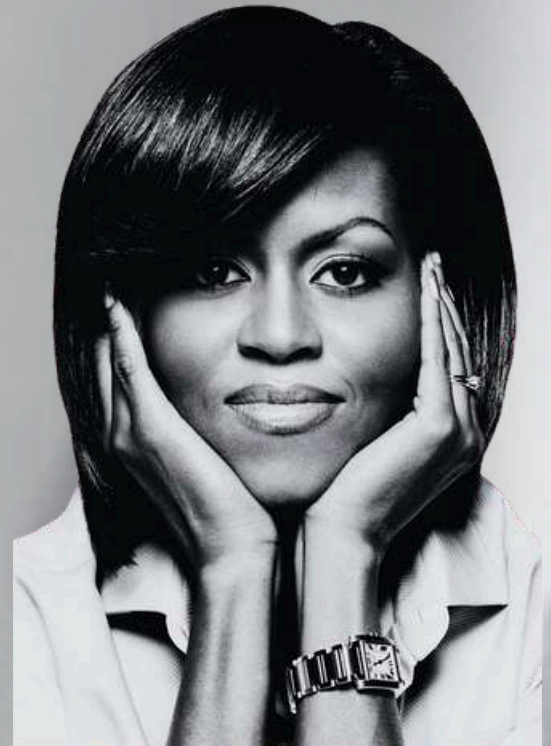


Another important discovery in the field of genetics was identifying the cause of Down syndrome. This discovery improved medical care, led to the development of prenatal screening, and made genetic screening possible. For many years, scientists and textbooks credited Jerome Lejeune for this discovery, even though he had only participated in presenting the findings. In reality, the discovery was made in 1957 by Marthe Gautier, a French physician and researcher. Unlike many women who never had the chance to receive recognition for their work Gautier eventually received credit for her work. In 2014, she was formally honored for her research by the French Federation of Human Genetics after compelling evidence and a testimony surfaced which clarified her role.



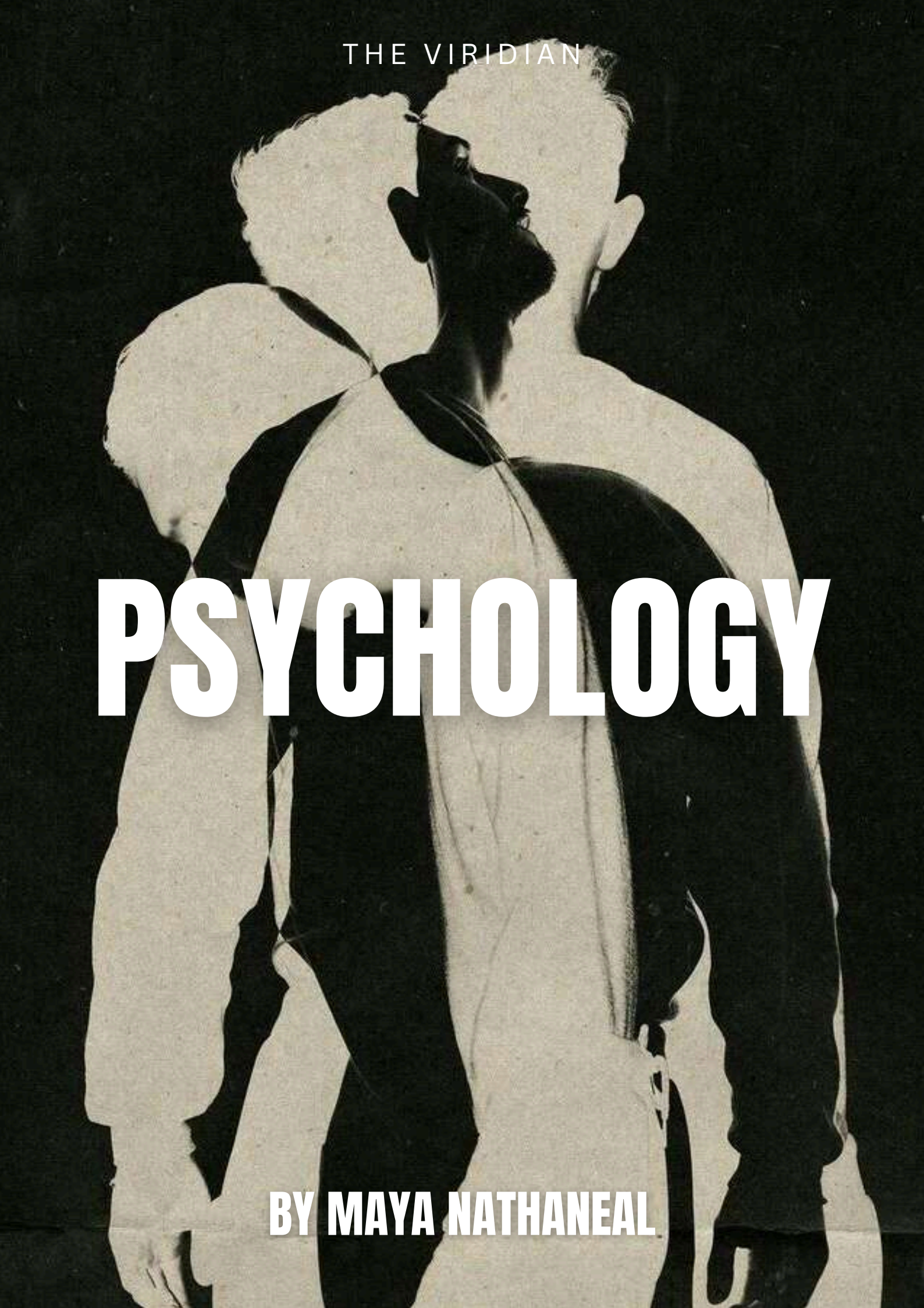
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Although this problem seems to be fading in the 21st century, it has done nothing but alter its shape. Yes, men may not be calling the work of women their own or preventing them from making it into future history books, but the misogynistic ideology that men are superior continues to haunt our society. The former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, studied at Princeton University and Harvard Law school, and is a best-selling author. She has launched many initiatives during her time at the White House, such as 'Let Girls Learn' which supports young girls in remaining in school. Yet when it comes to the press and social media, the main focus is not to promote her hard work and effort in order to inspire others, but to criticize the clothes she wears, her choices as a mother, and her relationship with her husband. It is actions like these that demotivate women from performing their best in any environment and allow harmful stereotypes to persist unchecked.



On that note, have you read this one of a kind collection focusing exclusively on the worlds most incredible women?

These women are only four examples from the thousands who have been shadowed by men and the many more whose stories we have not discovered and probably never will. How would you feel if you dedicated your life to a project and never received credit for it? For centuries, women have been ignored, seen as inferior, and not given credit for their work. It is important to educate more people on the incredible achievements of these women to encourage future generations of women to use their creativity, knowledge, and passion to achieve great things like many others have done in the past.



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PSYCHOLOGY

BY MAYA NATHANEAL

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The Quiet Power of Introverts

In every crowded room, there are people who do not compete for noise. They are not withdrawn or incompetent, but simply introverted; in a culture that equates presence with performance, that distinction is routinely misunderstood.

Psychological theory, most notably in the work of Carl Jung, framed introversion as an inward orientation toward one's mental life rather than an outward orientation toward social stimulation. Introversion is expressed not through avoidance, but through a selective investment of social energy. Someone who values stillness and thoughtfulness would feel out of place in a culture that rewards performance and volume. Social norms that privilege loudness and surface-level interaction subtly marginalise those who operate through depth and restraint.

Popular imagination casts them as timid, awkward, or socially deficient. Introversion is not the absence of confidence, but rather the absence of appetite for constant external stimulation. This misunderstanding deepens when introversion overlaps with social anxiety – two things that are not synonymous. Social anxiety is rooted in fear – of judgment, embarrassment, and exposure. Introversion, by contrast, is a preference; it is an inborn personality trait that allows individuals to choose how they direct their energy, rather than being classified as a social deficiency. Yet, because both can manifest as quietness, society collapses them into one. Quiet presence, it seems, makes others uneasy. Silence is their way of existing, and the problem is that the world doesn't know how to sit with the discomfort of not being centred in someone else's mind. We distrust what we cannot easily read. When someone exists quietly, rather than timelessly broadcasting their self-worth, it makes society uncomfortable because they have nothing to grab onto. We are unsettled by what resists immediate interpretation.

For introverts, however, social interaction often carries a cognitive cost. Environments dense with sound and movement can overwhelm rather than energise. Extroverts are known for spending much of their time socialising, while introverts tend to save their energy by spending it alone. This can be highly misread, however, as what appears to be withdrawal is often preservation. After prolonged social exposure, many introverts experience what they half-jokingly describe as a “Low social battery,” – a depletion that requires solitude in order to be restored. This need for recovery is frequently misinterpreted as aloofness or disinterest, but time alone shouldn't be framed as ‘being antisocial’. In reality, solitude is not avoidance – it is maintenance. The intrinsic need for solitude is a defining trait of introversion, as sustained social interaction drains energy and demands continuous outward engagement.

None of this is to romanticise introversion or diminish extroversion. Societies need both: those who amplify and those who distil. Balance is essential in life; we cannot have talkers without listeners. But an imbalance arises when one mode is treated as normative and the other as a deviation. When classrooms privilege the fastest speakers, or equate visibility with competence, introverts are not merely overlooked – they are structurally disadvantaged. Perhaps the error lies in assuming that social light is inherently superior to social shade. Visibility is not synonymous with importance; both forms of presence matter, even if one is quieter.

In a world increasingly saturated with noise, the ability to inhabit silence without discomfort is not a deficiency; it is fluency. And those who speak it – the quiet, the reflective, the introverted – have always been there.

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SCIENCE

The image features a central white silhouette of a person in a dynamic, crouching pose, set against a background of vibrant, vertical rainbow light streaks. The streaks are most prominent in the upper and lower portions of the frame, creating a sense of motion and energy. The overall composition is framed by a dark, textured border on the left side, which appears to be the edge of a book cover or a similar material. The word "SCIENCE" is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the middle of the image, partially overlapping the silhouette and the light streaks.

BY ALEXANDROS HADJISYMEOU

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When I was but a young lad, I used to be deathly afraid of the dark, so much so that I used to sprint to the nearest source of light. Then, out of nowhere, the dark just stopped being scary. It was almost as if a switch was flipped (pun intended) in my mind, and the dark just stopped being scary. Scrolling through social media, I found that many people all around the world had similar experiences as children. The fear of the dark is not just an amazing song by Iron Maiden, but rather very widespread among children in prime childhood, with approximately half of kids between the ages of 3 and 8 being afraid of the dark in some capacity. This irrational fear has many causes, but it is mainly a mix between developing brain activity and psychology, with evolution also having a notable contribution.

First, let's focus on neurological reasons; this is the Science Column after all. In the brain, there is this very cool area called the amygdala, which, as the name suggests, is a nut-shaped region which controls threat detection, activates the fight or flight response, and is often linked to very strong and intense emotions. It is important to establish that mammals, including humans, mainly navigate the world using their eyes (duh). The eye is a really complex structure, and so I can't give a detailed description of how it works without making it sound like an IGCSE Biology lesson, but long story short: light enters eye, retina converts light into signals, and boom lets you see stuff. As you may know, darkness is the absence of light, so no light equals not being able to see, hence the amygdala evolved to kick into overdrive when there is an absence of light. It does this because while you may not be able to see, something dangerous might be lurking around you. Now, that's not to say that not being able to see causes an immediate panic reaction. For example, when I take off my glasses I don't immediately freak out. What does stress out the brain, however, is a combination of the inherent fear of the unknown (more on that later) and some imagination, which kids experience a lot of both, thus making them more susceptible to being afraid of the dark.



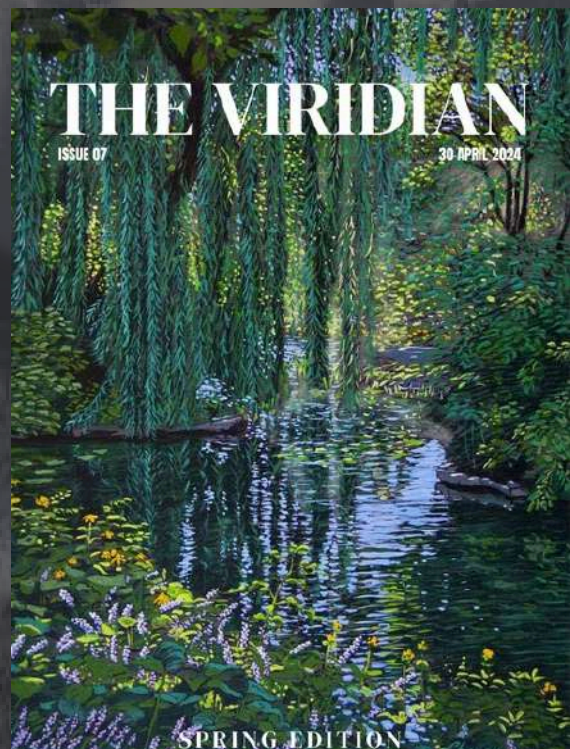
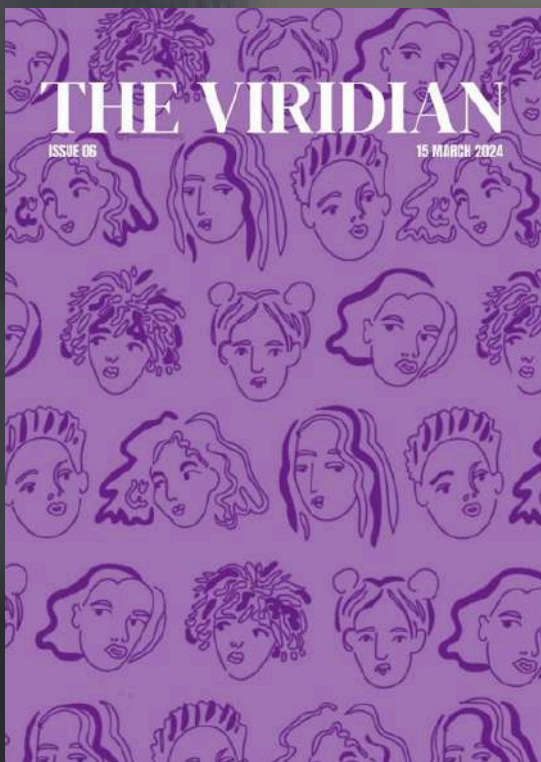
Now, that's useful for when humans were chilling in caves hundreds of thousands of years ago, but why is it necessary to have it in humans nowadays? Firstly, evolution is a really long process and takes hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years to see any noticeable change, so while our brains are hardwired to accommodate for the conditions of the Stone Age, people are going into space semi-regularly.

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As mentioned previously, the main age group that suffers from nyctophobia (that's the scientific word for fear of the dark) is children, with almost half of children around the world suffering from it. This starkly contrasts the adult statistic, which sees less than 10% of adults suffering from nyctophobia. So, what's the reason for this dramatic decline in cases? The short answer is that as kids, the brain is still developing, which makes children more impressionable. This is often why kids wholeheartedly believe that fictional figures such as Santa exist (sorry to break it to anyone that still believes in that weirdo). Additionally, when the brain is young and developing, it is also inexperienced and rarely can come to conclusions on its own. So, when a 3-year-old (let's call him Timmy) is repeatedly told that monsters don't exist and are definitely not hiding under the bed, little Timmy often won't believe it. So, when little Timmy starts drifting off to sleep and starts to think about the lack of monsters under his bed, because his brain isn't developed enough and needs to see evidence for the lack of the existence of monsters, he will be persistent in his belief of them being real.

One last reason for nyctophobia being rampant in kids, is the general fear of the unknown. This does not apply solely to kids, but the developing brain frankly doesn't know much, so the brain is inherently more afraid of things that it does not understand or is unsure of, since most things are new and unfamiliar.

In conclusion, when there is an exit of light and an entrance of night, little Timmy may think that there are beasts under his bed or in his closet, but it's really just in his head.



Check out some of the Viridian's past spring editions!

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BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

BY ROHAN STYLIANOS DUBEY

BEHIND THE SPOTLIGHT

In sport, there is an abundance of talent. Athletes from various backgrounds thriving to achieve greatness. While some manage to achieve this and remain in the spotlight, others fall in the cracks of “What could’ve been,” while playing out the rest of their miserable careers “In the shadows.” Sometimes, the athletes in question aren’t even athletes; they might be member of a team that drive the team into victory and then the main athlete of the team takes the credit.

HANNAH SCHMITZ (REDBULL RACING F1 TEAM STRATEGY ENGINEER)

Usually, when you hear about Formula 1 teams winning, all the credit goes to the drivers themselves. However, if you delve deeper into the sport, you realise just how many people behind the scenes are needed to win a Formula 1 race. Hannah Schmitz is the strategy engineer in RedBull racing, and she has managed to build a career in one of, if not the most, male-dominated sports.

Schmitz studied mechanical engineering at the University of Cambridge and joined Red Bull Racing in 2009 as a simulation engineer before becoming a senior strategy engineer. Her job is to make critical race decisions in seconds, which could make or break the team’s race. Behind the scenes, she had led RedBull to multiple victories while going mostly unnoticed with her best race being the 2019 Brazilian Grand Prix, in which **she took a risk and pitted Max Verstappen during a late safety car leading him to win the race all together.** She has also been on the podium many times even though is unusual for a strategist to be chosen as the team member to be up there; however, her influence is far too large to ignore.

Speaking of her influence, her most influential podium was that of the 2025 Qatar Grand Prix where she stood, proving that women do indeed belong in motorsport.



BEHIND THE SPOTLIGHT

SCOTTIE PIPPEN (NBA PLAYER 1987-2004)

Scottie Pippen was one of the greatest all-around players in basketball history, even though he spent much of his career in the shadow of Michael Jordan. He played for the Chicago Bulls during the 1990s and was a key part of the team that won six NBA championships. Pippen was known for his incredible defense, teamwork, and intelligence on the court. He could guard almost any position, help run the team's offense, and support his teammates in every part of the game. Many people saw Michael Jordan as the star, but Jordan himself has stated that he could not have won those championships without Pippen.

Pippen's journey to the NBA was not easy. He grew up in a poor family in Arkansas and went to a small college that was not well known for basketball. He was not famous when he entered the NBA, and at first, he did not earn a lot of money. In fact, he signed a long contract that paid him much less than other star players, which caused problems for him later in his career. Despite this, he continued to play hard and became one of the best players in the league. He was selected to the NBA All-Star team on multiple occasions and was also one of the best defenders in the NBA for many years.

Unfortunately, Scottie Pippen is a great example of an athlete who did not always get the spotlight but was essential to his team's success. He showed that leadership is not always about being the most famous player, but about working hard, helping your team, and doing the difficult jobs that others do not always see.



SIGNIFICANT SPORTING EVENTS IN APRIL

April 6th, 1896: First modern Olympics (April 6, 1896) – Athens hosted the first Olympic Games of the modern era, reviving an ancient tradition and starting the global Olympic movement.

April 15th, 1947: Jackie Robinson breaks the colour barrier, becoming the first African American to play in Major League Baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers, a historic step for racial equality in sport.


April 1954: Roger Bannister became the first person to run a mile in under four minutes, setting a landmark achievement in athletics.

April 15th, 1989: 97 Liverpool fans died due to overcrowding at an FA Cup semi-final during the Hillsborough disaster, leading to major changes in stadium safety and football regulations.

April 19th, 2008: My birth.

April 27th, 2024: Alex Tofalides becomes the first Cypriot fencer to qualify for the Olympics.

Being a sports person that is in the shadows seems depressing; having your achievements and career highs go unnoticed must seem like a burden for many. But somehow, these athletes and sportspeople manage to thrive under these conditions without a care in the world about how and if they will ever be appreciated as much as they deserve.



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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

BY FRANCESCA PARTASSIS

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THE GHOST ARTIST

In today's world, many people believe that the ideal piece of contemporary art is created simply by splashing paint onto a canvas. Abstract art is often misunderstood, since it may appear as random or effortless. Without a doubt, this perception overlooks the stories behind some of abstract art's earliest pioneers, such as Hilma af Klint, a Swedish painter whose work remained hidden for decades, living in the shadows of art history.

Af Klint, best known for her abstract art, was born in 1862, in Karlberg Palace, Solna, Sweden. Being one of the first women to attend the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, a prestigious institution, she graduated from there in Stockholm in 1887, initially painting conventional portraits, botanical drawings and landscapes. Later, she turned to abstraction, allowing her paintings to be made up of spirals, geometric shapes, symbolic diagrams and bright blocks of colour.



A spiritual group called "De Fem," Swedish for "The Five," was established in 1896 by Hilma af Klint and four other women. Their aim was to explore spiritualism and communicate with spiritual entities through séances, automatic writing, and drawings. Guided by the spirit world and using a range of materials, such as oil paints, watercolours, ink, and pencils, the five women of De Fem, produced works that expressed spiritual knowledge as well as human evolution. The painting series consisted of five major works, though the group's practices inspired hundreds of other drawings and sketches.

After De Fem disbanded in around 1906, af Klint followed an independent path, pursuing a life devoted to painting spiritually inspired abstract works, where she focused on a much larger project called "Paintings for the Temple." This project ran from 1906 to 1915. More specifically, it comprised of 193 works, in many series. Af Klint described this work and its relationship to the spirits in various ways. For one of the series, painted in 1907, she said: "The pictures were painted directly through me, without any preliminary drawings and with great force. I had no idea what the paintings were supposed to depict; nevertheless, I worked swiftly and surely, without changing a single brushstroke."

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THE GHOST ARTIST

In 1908, af Klint, seeking validation for her spiritual paintings, invited Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher and leader of the Theosophical movement, to view her work. Unfortunately for her, his comments were immensely discouraging, as he advised her that "No one must see this for 50 years." Steiner felt that her work was heavily influenced by mediumistic spiritualism, rather than the grounded spiritual science that he taught. Despite this, af Klint was a dedicated student of Steiner and through the 1920s, she visited his Anthroposophical Society centre in Dornach, Switzerland.



In an art world dominated by male artists such as, Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian painter who was cited as the father of abstract art, af Klint honoured Steiner's advice and chose to work in secret. Consequently, she requested in her will that her work not be exhibited until years after her death. She believed that her groundbreaking and symbolic paintings were too advanced for her time, and that the public of the early 20th century would be incapable of comprehending her work maturely. At the same time, abstract art was still a relatively new movement. Thus, her work remained largely unseen for approximately twenty years, following her death in 1944.

Initially, Hilma af Klint's nephew, Erik af Klint, inherited the entire collection, which included around 1300 paintings and over 120 notebooks. The family preserved it, according to her wishes. Af Klint gained major recognition over forty years later, in 1986, when her work was first publicly exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, titled "The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985." This exhibition introduced her to an international audience. By the 2000s, art historians had come to recognise that Hilma af Klint created abstract art before many of her well-known male contemporaries. Today, she is considered to be a pioneering figure in abstract art and serves as an inspiration for women, having challenged a male-dominated art world. Her art travels to major museums around the world, including prominent institutions, for example the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Her work continues to gain recognition and credit for its innovative contribution to modern art.

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Stay tuned for our next edition, out soon!**



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