Frankenstein: Background

**Ursula Le Guin**

*The Left Hand of Darkness: Its Place In The History Of Science Fiction*

Male dominance

The first science fiction novel, it is largely agreed, was written by a woman, Mary Shelley, the daughter of the feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and the wife of the English romantic poet Shelley. She wrote *Frankenstein*in 1818 when she was only nineteen. However, the field has since been dominated by male writers who have made the domain of science fiction almost exclusively male. Indeed, in his book *Billion Year Spree—The True History of Science Fiction*, Brian Aldiss describes the genre as an “all-male escapist power fantasy” and calls its writers “Philistine-male-chauvinist-pigs” who work in the “Ghetto of Retarded Boyhood.”

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