



# Women Coauthors

*Holly A. Laird*

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## **Women Coauthors** Holly A. Laird

Until recently, collaborative authorship has barely been considered by scholars; when it has, the focus has been on discovering who contributed what and who dominated whom in the relationship and in the writing. In "Women Coauthors", Holly Laird reads coauthored texts as the realization of new kinds of relationship. Through close scrutiny of literary collaborations in which women writers have played central roles, "Women Coauthors" shows how partnerships in writing - between two women or between a woman and a man - provide a paradigm of literary creativity that complicates traditional views of both author and text and makes us revise old habits of thinking about writing. Focusing on the social dynamics of literary production, including the conversations that precede and surround collaborative writing, "Women Coauthors" treats its coauthored texts as representations as well as acts of collaboration. Holly A. Laird discusses a wide array of partial and full coauthorships to reveal how these texts blur or remap often uncanny boundaries of self, status, race, reason, and culture. Among the many partnerships discussed are black-white collaborations, such as that of the Delany sisters and Amy Hill Hearsh on "Having Our Say"; lesbian couples whose lives and writings were intertwined, including Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper ("Michael Field") and Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas; and the Native American wife-and-husband authors Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris. Framed in time by the feminist and abolitionist movements of the mid-nineteenth century and the ongoing social struggles surrounding gender, race, and sexuality in the late twentieth century, the partnerships and texts observed in "Women Coauthors" explore collaboration as a path toward equity, both socioliterary and erotic. For the authors here who collaborate most fully with each other, two are much better than one.

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