

PMLA

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October 1976



The Necessary Blankness

WOMEN IN MAJOR
AMERICAN FICTION
OF THE SIXTIES

by **Mary Allen**

Examining the works of Barth, Updike, Purdy, Kesey, Oates, Plath, Pynchon, and Roth, Allen finds that, even in a time of social and sexual expansiveness, women continue to be portrayed in the same old ways, noticeable primarily because of their blankness. From Updike's "dull, bovine" beauties to Purdy's monstrous, acquisitive matrons, Allen traces the many ways in which women are shown to be inadequate in their personal lives and in the complex "man-made" systems of American society. "A grim view, worthily and convincingly argued. Recommended. . . ."—*Library Journal*. 226 pages. \$8.95.

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