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(54) Title: **ASSOCIATIVE THICKENERS**

(57) Abstract

Associative thickeners of the present invention are water-soluble polymer compositions that have a backbone of poly(acetal- or ketal-polyether) with ends that are capped with hydrophobic groups. They are prepared by copolymerizing an alpha, omega-diol, -dithiol or -diamino polyether with a gem-dihalide compound in the presence of a base to form an alpha, omega-diol, -dithiol or -diamino poly(acetal- or ketal-polyether) which in turn is reacted with hydrophobic reagents to form the final product. These associative thickeners are used in film-forming coating compositions, such as latex paints.