

WALT WHITMAN, 1940-1975: A REFERENCE GUIDE, by  
Donald D. Kummings. G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1982.  
264 pages, \$45.

In the period 1940-75, more than 3,000 separate items concerning Walt Whitman--books, articles, reviews, notes--were published, often in obscure magazines or newspapers. Through the efforts of Donald Kummings, a professor of English at the Parkside campus of the University of Wisconsin, we now have an exhaustive bibliography of these items. Kummings' bibliography includes a descriptive paragraph with each entry, which allows the Whitman scholar to decide whether the item will be useful or not.

Kummings has organized his bibliography by year, so that we may know at a glance what was being written

about Whitman in, say, the centennial of the first publication of *Leaves of Grass*: in 1955, the number of items jumped to 127 from a previous average of 37 per year. The flow never diminished, remaining at about 124 items annually until the high point of 202 publications was reached in 1969, the sesquicentennial of Whitman's birth. Kummings' method allows us to read his book almost as a narrative, in which we see the unfolding and deepening of Whitman's critical appreciation.

For those who prefer not to search chronologically, there is an index to the authors of the publications, as well as a subject index. The book is printed on acid-free paper and has a library binding.

No serious Whitman scholar can henceforward plead ignorance of existing knowledge or complain about the disorganized state of Whitman criticism--it's all here in an easy-to-use format. And no serious research library should be without it.

Geoffrey Sill