

## LIFE STAGES OF A WRITER

During a recent conversation with a Creative Writing instructor, he told me that he believed that "what" one writes and "how" one writes are determined by one's stages in life. Following a thorough self-examination of why I have spent endless hours for the past three years in solitude with a pen and pad while struggling with my emotions, I have concluded that "why" I write is determined by my life stages as well.

I conceived the idea of writing initially only as a commercial venture. Others had realized success through the creative process, and being relatively creative myself, I, naively, began grappling for my piece of the pie. This was my opportunistic or compulsive materialistic stage, but the subject of my shallow work soon plunged me into a stage of social consciousness, and I became obsessed with the prospect of exposing the Southern hypocrisy and corruption involved in racial prejudice, discrimination, and stagnation. I was repulsed by the fact that the "Separate but Equal" principle still applies in South Eastern Georgia, and became a one writer task force hell-bent on curing all social ills with a pen. My objective was to force my fellow man to examine his heart for some unrecognized defect, and instead found it in myself. It was soon obvious to me that this

course was self-defeating, and again naive - one cannot change the world by what one writes - perhaps alter - but never change. I

I continued working on the same "fiction based on fact", but my depression from the futility led me towards the stage of seeking immortality and justification of my existence. Still determined that I could and must write, leaning far too much on the praise and encouragement of others, I set out to make my mark on the world much like doodling on paper, still seeking approval, until a couple of critical teachers and myriad examples of great writers halted my quest for greatness - hence, my scribbling stage. But I continued scribbling like the objects of Pope's satires because I had a need to express myself and order my world by organizing my incoherent thoughts on paper.

Floundering in a sea of ideas and emotions can only be resolved and form a meaningful whole by <sup>(writing)</sup>writing them and then going on to other endeavors assured in the knowledge that it has been stated in print to the best of one's ability: and so my stage of perspective gaining and acquiring of self knowledge, which was worth the despair in terms of becoming a more objective writer and a better person. That was my epiphany - and the best part was that in gaining self-knowledge, I realized that I would experience many other breakthroughs during my writing career. I learned many things as a result

of this stage, but mostly humility - I am now a better audience for the works of others.

Since that time, I have written to escape the tyranny and technology of modern existence. I have the power through pen to control my own life, and can move backwards and forward in time according to my desires. For me writing is invaluable, also, as a method for filtering the explosion of information which we have fallen heir to and accepting change in our rapidly moving society.

I am presently bound in a literary stage; my quest for Eden through writing. Materialism has very little space in my life. I write hopefully to make an esthetic contribution of balance and harmony, creating a picture with words like an artist with paints. I write to find meaning to life, if meaning there be, and presently find my view to be that of William Faulkner's, that meaning can only be found in matters of the heart.

Recently, I discovered that I am in love with the written word. I had hired a professional typist to give an artice a finer finish, and she deleted and substituted many words to save time and space - trivial little words , to her, like "A" for "THE" and "AND" for "OR", and I became quite angry, not so much because I had a defective manuscript to send to a prestigious journal and would have to spend valuable time revising the project, but because of the typists failure to show

proper respect for the uniquely different words.

This assessment of my reasons for writing has officially confirmed my qualifications as a true writer with apologies to none. I have earned the title, not in published material or monetary gain, but in the very fact that I shall continue to struggle through the inevitable, accumulating stages, despite the rejection or absence of success.