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### Evolving as a Writer: My Journey of Maturation (2024-2025)

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#### Recommended Citation

Hasanaj, Edona, "Evolving as a Writer: My Journey of Maturation (2024-2025)" (2024). *Critical Evaluation*. 8.

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# “Evolving as a Writer: My Journey of Maturation” Edona Hasanaj (Critical Evaluation example)

## Questions to Consider For Discussion and Reflection

In this piece Edona Hasanaj writes about her experiences in CPN 100 with three different writing assignments—a narrative, a rhetorical analysis, and an argumentative piece. Throughout Hasanaj draws both on her feelings about the process and direct quotations from her own work. She weaves together a sense of what she wrote in each assignment, as well as how that writing taught her different skills and possibilities for her writing in the future.

- In considering each writing assignment, Hasanaj offers us insight into her journey through each genre from the narrative essay “Flokët” to a rhetorical analysis and then the argumentative essay. How did her journey metaphor emphasize some of the differences in these genres?
- Hasanaj also includes reflection on different forms of writing support on campus (e.g. the Writing Center and research librarians) in addition to her learning experiences in her CPN 100 class. How does the inclusion of discussion of these sites for help and support create an even greater focus on writing as a process? What does it make you think about in your own writing practices or processes?
- Finally, Hasanaj concludes with the idea of reading more in and out of class as a means to reduce her feelings of insecurity and self-doubt. How do you perceive of relationships between reading and writing? What have you read in your own CPN course? How has that reading informed or changed aspects of your writing?

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## Evolving as a Writer: My Journey of Maturation by Edona Hasanaj

Throughout the years, my writing has always been an accurate reflection of who I am as a person and has been a measurement of my academic growth and maturity. American poet and novelist Sylvia Plath put it best when she explains, "And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt" (Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*). Self-doubt has always impeded my creativity and efforts, as I tend to overthink or underestimate my ability to succeed and accomplish my goals. Pushing the boundaries of what I thought I could do has always been at the forefront of my writing, and as I've grown up, I've recognized how much my writing grew alongside me.

The 2023 fall semester of my first year marked a new beginning for me: the start of college and the reintroduction of school after my gap year. Initially, I was worried about feeling behind everybody else and unable to adjust to the school and college workloads. The moment I let go of that insecurity, I found myself flourishing and applying myself in school better than I

ever had in years, rediscovering who I was in academia, and allowing myself to courageously grow and take my writing to limits I've never reached for. This semester, I wrote three essays in my Composition 100 class: "Flokët," "Rhetorical Analysis of Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy'" and "The Rise of A.I. and Its Threatening Weaponization, Issues with Ethics, and Imposing Impacts on Society, Democracy and Privacy." My Composition 100 class allowed me to really dive into the topics I wrote about. With each essay, I was completely attentive to my writing process, spending most of my time heavily involved with revision and combining academic writing with my own perspective and analysis.

At the start of the year, I began writing my narrative essay, and I wanted to focus on my ethnic identity and how growing up as a first-generation American with Albanian immigrant parents had really shaped my personal experiences and upbringing as a child. Through this class, exposed materials, and readings, I was inspired to tell my narrative through a more creative lens, utilizing figurative language to explain how I struggled with my identity and self-image during adolescence, personifying my hair and Albanian features as an enemy I always fought against. For instance, in my essay, "Flokët," I describe my relationship with my hair and my mother: "I tugged on her the way I would tug on my hair, pulling her sleeve the way I would pull on an impossible knot, gently and slow at first, then aggressively and fast with frustration and defeat. My hair was my enemy, so my mother was mine, too" (Hasanaj 2023a 2). Being able to combine academic writing with anecdotal stories about my life wasn't something I've ever done before, and surprisingly, it came naturally to me as I let myself loose and explored everything I wanted to say and accomplish in this essay during the writing process and felt proud doing so. The support from the Writing Center and my professor allowed me to feel confident in this piece.

I put in so much time during the drafting process, which ultimately shortened my revision process and left me feeling satisfied with the work I produced. The following essay I wrote in my Composition 100 course was a rhetorical analysis essay that prompted me to choose between some of the readings we had read in class and identify rhetorical devices the author used and whether we believe they successfully incorporate them to support the essay's thesis. My essay focused on Sylvia Plath's poem, "Daddy," and by doing a rhetorical analysis essay, I was able to perceive this poem in a new light, really breaking down each part of it and analyzing how symbolism and metaphors within the essay allowed Plath to really solidify her thesis. For example, in my essay, "Rhetorical Analysis of Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy,'" I state, "Referring to her father as 'bastard' and 'daddy' in the same sentence is intentionally ironic, as Plath reinforces the hatred she has towards her father and this imbalanced power dynamic that has existed between them both since she was a child" (Hasanaj 2023b 6).

Looking through a piece of writing and deconstructing it to its rhetorical devices was an exercise that gave me a new perspective on writing, exposing me to how intentionality can really create a massive difference in a piece. As I reread "Daddy" in class with my professor and in the Writing Center, I immersed myself in the experience of repetitive analysis, shedding new light on the poem each time I read it. By doing so, I expanded my comprehension and reading abilities, being able to create full-fledged analyses.

The last essay I wrote in my Composition 100 course was an argumentative essay on artificial intelligence. Of the three essays I produced from this class, this essay proved to be my

most challenging one. I have written argumentative essays and have experience with research papers and creating academic writing with extensive content and sources. However, this essay and its topic overwhelmed me, as I had difficulty composing all my thoughts together and thinking of ways to start and finish this essay cohesively. At the start of drafting this essay, I became too overwhelmed with everything I wanted to discuss and felt myself cramming information into my draft and not feeling proud of what I had written. Once I entered the revision process, I gave myself enough time to research A.I. and mindfully pick out what perspective and points I wanted to cover. I went to the library and worked with a librarian to find reputable sources and create an annotated bibliography and a template for my essay to help give me more structure when entering the revision process. When working on my final essay, I rewrote everything from scratch and felt more confident because I gave myself more preparation and time to research and organize all my thoughts and ideas. Being mindful of my time management and giving myself structure allowed me to create an essay I was ultimately satisfied with while simultaneously persuading my audience to agree with my thesis. For instance, in my essay, "The Rise of A.I. and Its Threatening Weaponization, Issues with Ethics, and Imposing Impacts on Society, Democracy and Privacy," I explain how "with a brilliant power that is so convenient and easy to access within the palm of our hands, it becomes effortless to ignore or fail to understand precisely what the long-term effects of the daily usage of such a rapidly growing technology can have on an individual and society. The ethical flaws within A.I. can lead to the spread of A.I. bias and misinformation. Additionally, the ability for A.I. to be weaponized, violate privacy, and undermine and influence democracy outweighs all the benefits of the convenience and accessibility of this compelling technology. To preserve safety and security, A.I. must be regulated and contained" (Hasanaj 2023c 5). Creating a template to base my writing on gave me the structure I needed to start my argumentative essay and explain my thesis and reasoning. Once I created a plan that dictated how I'd rewrite this essay, I approached it with less intimidation, creating a body of work I felt confident in making.

Overall, this semester, I profusely grew with my writing and found ways to improve upon it as I approached the drafting process differently for each assignment, giving myself more time and space to understand the content and plan what I wanted to accomplish. Reading more in and out of class inspired me to take my essays one step further and relinquish any self-doubt or insecurity to give myself the space and ability to succeed. I became highly successful at managing my time and stress, contributing to my ability to fully mature in my writing. The process of revision was reflective of my growth, and creating something that I was proud of meant that I accomplished my biggest goal for this course: going beyond my limitations and breaking down the walls of self-doubt that encapsulated my writing in the past, giving myself the ultimate freedom to evolve as a person and a writer.

## Works Cited

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