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Maya J. Mansour
Evergreen State College

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Maya June Mansour
Undergraduate student, Evergreen State College

It can be difficult to be critical of the institutions that we are a part of, from inter-personal relationships to big corporations. Part of this is because our own institutions of education do not teach us how to be critical in the first place. I was born into a family that practices the Baha’i faith, which is a religion that teaches that education is the key to human progress, and that lack of education leads to oppression and chaos. The Baha’i faith originated in Iran, which is where my father was born and raised. Baha’i in Iran are denied access to high education and because of this, I have always been hyper aware of my privilege as a college student. My dad came to America to go to college, and when the Iranian revolution happened, the country became unsafe for Baha’is, so he was forced to apply for political asylum. One good thing that came out of this is that he met my intelligent, beautiful, wonderful, Black mother and they are currently living out of this is that he met my intelligent, beautiful, wonderful, Black mother and they are currently living alongside incarcerated young men who are enrolled in the class. I’m not only learning about race theories on cultural wealth and cultural trauma, but I also have the opportunity to apply my knowledge and practice to what I’m learning outside of the traditional classroom.

I am currently taking a class called Gateways for Incarcerated Youth. Gateways allows me to visit Green Hill School for Boys (a juvenile detention center in Chahelis, Washington) twice a week, and learn alongside incarcerated young men who are enrolled in the class. I’m not only learning about race theories on cultural wealth and cultural trauma, but I also have the opportunity to apply my knowledge and practice to what I’m learning outside of the traditional classroom. Something I learned quickly is that if I want to get the most out of my time in Gateways, I have to allow room for myself to make mistakes. It is necessary for me to get out of my own head long enough to ask the question that I think “sound dumb.” At first, it was really easy to get caught up in my thoughts, worrying about saying the wrong thing. I had almost forgotten the room for myself to make mistakes. It is necessary for me to get out of my own head long enough to ask the question that I think “sound dumb.” At first, it was really easy to get caught up in my thoughts, worrying about saying the wrong thing. I had almost forgotten the room for myself to make mistakes. It is necessary for me to get out of my own head long enough to ask the question that I think “sound dumb.” At first, it was really easy to get caught up in my thoughts, worrying about saying the wrong thing. I had almost forgotten the room for myself to make mistakes. It is necessary for me to get out of my own head long enough to ask the question that I think “sound dumb.” At first, it was really easy to get caught up in my thoughts, worrying about saying the wrong thing. I had almost forgotten

I go to a school that has been ranked as the most liberal college in America, where a lot of the students are quick to consider themselves activists. In the spring of last year, two unarmed young black men were shot outside of a grocery store down the street from my school. Other than a protest and some optional workshops hosted by my college, nothing has changed in our community. Students of color still face the same challenges we did before, and everyone else seems to be apathetic. It seems like to some people, social justice is only really appealing when you can yell protest chants with a big group of people and stop traffic for a few hours.

I cannot affect enough change alone to stop the violence that Black college students are facing all over the country. I can honestly say this breaks my heart.