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The World Keeps the Score: Intergenerational Trauma and Global Politics

Part feminist fiction, part pedagogical resource, this book follows Indian-American professor “Kavya” as she grapples with family violence and estrangement that she traces to her grandparents' experiences during colonialism. Inspired by Black feminist bell hooks’ view of teaching as political, connective, and transformative, Kavya crafts lesson plans to think through the suffering that she and so many others experience as a result of being descended from communities who endured systematic violence. She analyzes intergenerational trauma as a framework for how the wounds of oppressive political orders and hierarchies are “stored” in contemporary geopolitics, thereby keeping such oppression alive. The book features Kavya’s usable lesson plans, developed in my own courses, about case studies that include the South Asian partitions, reproductive violence during slavery, South Asia’s caste segregation, and Canada's settler colonialism. When Kavya discovers her family’s infliction of caste harm and how global practitioners have coopted “intergenerational trauma” to diagnose and “fix” marginalized communities, she turns to a tool of these very communities, “futurist worldbuilding” through speculative imagination, art, and play, to radically confront both familial/kinship destruction and systems of oppression.