



The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture

By Euny Hong



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A FRESH, FUNNY, UP-CLOSE LOOK AT HOW SOUTH KOREA REMADE ITSELF AS THE WORLD'S POP CULTURE POWERHOUSE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By now, everyone in the world knows the song "Gangnam Style" and Psy, an instantly recognizable star. But the song's international popularity is no passing fad. "Gangnam Style" is only one tool in South Korea's extraordinarily elaborate and effective strategy to become a major world superpower by first becoming the world's number one pop culture exporter.

As a child, Euny Hong moved from America to the Gangnam neighbourhood in Seoul. She was a witness to the most accelerated part of South Korea's economic development, during which time it leapfrogged from third-world military dictatorship to first-world liberal democracy on the cutting edge of global technology.

Euny Hong recounts how South Korea vaulted itself into the twenty-first century, becoming a global leader in business, technology, education, and pop culture. Featuring lively, in-depth reporting and numerous interviews with Koreans working in all areas of government and society, *The Birth of Korean Cool* reveals how a really uncool country became cool, and how a nation that once banned miniskirts, long hair on men, and rock 'n' roll could come to mass produce boy bands, soap operas, and the world's most important smart phone.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, August 2014: I always love a good immigrant story: a tale of a young person, transplanted from the “old country” and learning the ropes (and usually teaching them to her parents) in the new. But journalist Euny Hong’s *The Birth of Korean Cool* is that familiar tale’s obverse: at age 12, the Chicago-born American moved with her parents back to the South Korea of *their* birth. And like the displaced Hong herself, the Korea of 1985 grew up fast: it became, in short order, the nation of Samsung, of newly wealthy executives, and now, Hong contends, it has become the crown prince of Asian pop culture. A kind of memoir of a culture as well as of an individual life, Hong’s first nonfiction book (she previously wrote the novel *Kept: A Comedy of Sex and Manners*) mixes personal memoir with interviews and research to produce a rollicking, delightful, wise-guy story of how both she and her ancestral home became the cultural icons they are today. --Sara Nelson

Review

“Incisive and humorous... An excellent case study of calculated entrepreneurial moxie.” *?The New York Times Book Review*

“Full of facts and entertaining to boot, it's definitely a gem.” *?EntertainmentWeekly.com*

“An insightful book...[Hong's] brief chapter on Korea's han against Japan is both the best and most concise explanation I've read of the two countries' complicated and ancient feud.” *?Bloomberg Businessweek*

“The rare book that's hilariously funny and also makes you smarter about world economies.” *?Vulture*

“An incisive, colorfully written account of South Korea's cultural ascent.” *?Grantland*

“Fabulously snarky...Hong is perfectly positioned to understand this complex Korean psyche while retaining enough distance (and cynicism) to evaluate it.” *?Helen Brown, The Telegraph (UK)*

“Highly entertaining.” *?The Guardian (UK)*

“Hong's breezy book is a good place to begin to understand this rising nation.” *?The Times (London)*

“A witty chronicle of how pop culture shaped South Korea's meteoric rise from a war-torn nation to a technological giant.” *?The Forward*

“Euny Hong playfully and insightfully dissects her native culture... There's much more to it than just ‘Gangnam Style.’” *?Charleston City Paper*

“*The Birth of Korean Cool* is a sparkling gem that falls into the must-read category... A satisfying and thought-provoking book by a first-rate journalist whose style is irresistible and informative all at once.” *?Pop Matters (Nine out of Ten Stars)*

“It's Hong's voice, a funny, smart, often conflicted and witty combination of personal essay and

observational journalism, which makes the book unique.” ?*Clayton Moore, Kirkus Reviews*

“Being both an outsider and an insider, Hong is the perfect guide to explain South Korean culture.” ?*The Toronto Star*

“Hong is a funny and uber-snarky observer and is as clever as clever can be...[As] laugh-out-loud funny and as spicy and memorable as the best homemade kimchi.” ?*Library Journal*

“A pleasing mix of Margaret Cho, Sarah Vowell and a pinch of Cory Doctorow.” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

“Full of insight and shocking facts, *The Birth Of Korean Cool* is a hilarious, gutsy, eye-opening account of Korean drive and success. I couldn't put it down. Euny Hong is a force of nature.” ?*Amy Chua, Yale Law Professor and author of The Triple Package and Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*

“If you're not fascinated by Korea yet, you damn well should be. The most innovative country on earth deserves a hilarious and poignant account on the order of Euny Hong's *The Birth of Korean Cool*. Her phat beats got Gangnam Style and then some.” ?*Gary Shteyngart*

About the Author

Euny Hong is a journalist and author with international experience in web, print, and television news. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *International Herald Tribune*, *New Republic*, *Boston Globe*, and *The Forward*. She is the author of one previous book, the novel *Kept: A Comedy of Sex and Manners*. She is fluent in English, French, German, and Korean.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bobby Townsend:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you actually, why because this *The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture* book written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book which can be understand by anyone who read the book. Written inside good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and composing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still skepticism *The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture* as good book not just by the cover but also with the content. This is one publication that can break don't judge book by its cover, so do you still needing an additional sixth sense to pick this particular!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

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