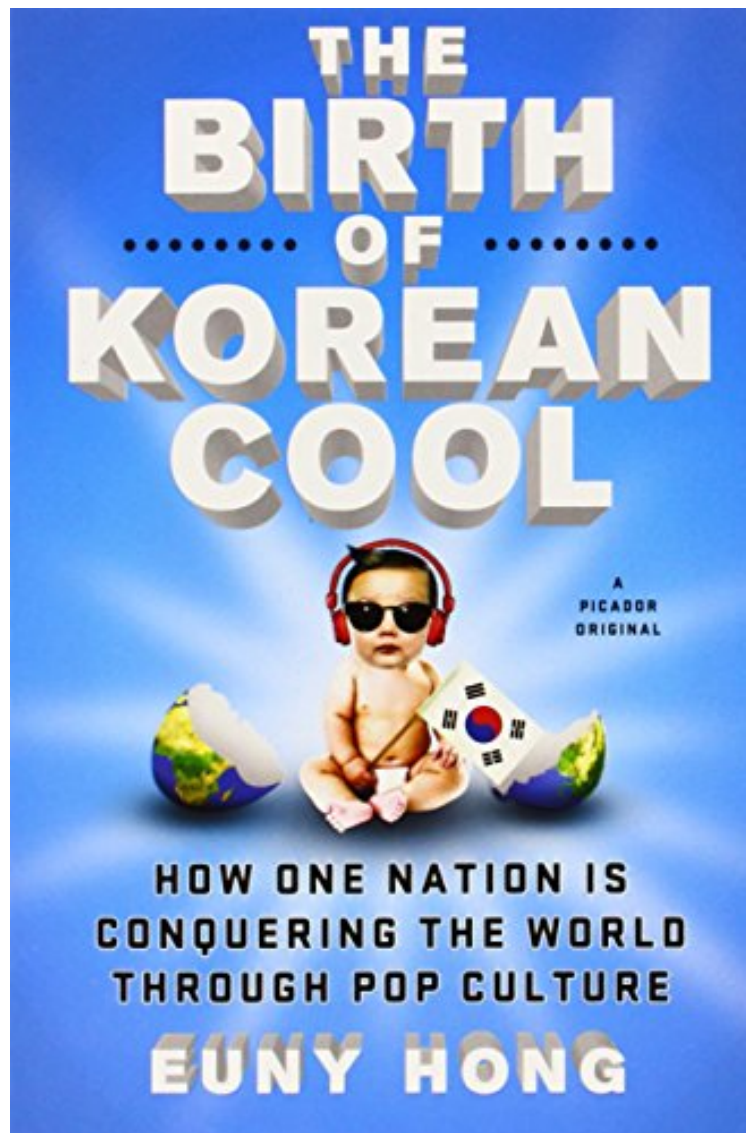


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The Birth of Korean Cool: How One Nation Is Conquering the World Through Pop Culture

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 CENTURYBy 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.

.com An 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 Hongs *The Birth of Korean Cool* is that familiar tales 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, Hongs 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 Incisive and humorous An excellent case study of calculated entrepreneurial moxie. The New York Times Book Full of facts and entertaining to boot, it's definitely a gem. EntertainmentWeekly.comAn 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 BusinessweekThe rare book that's hilariously funny and also makes you smarter about world economies. VultureAn incisive, colorfully written account of South Korea's cultural ascent. GrantlandFabulously snarkyHong 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* sBeing 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* sFull 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 ShteyngartAbout the AuthorEuny 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.