In Hegemonic Mimicry, Kyung Hyun Kim considers the recent global success of Korean popular culture—the Korean wave of pop music, cinema, and television also known as hallyu—from a transnational and transcultural perspective. Using the concept of mimicry to think through hallyu’s adaptation of American sensibilities and genres, he shows how the commercialization of Korean popular culture has upended the familiar dynamic of major-to-minor cultural influence, enabling hallyu to become a dominant global cultural phenomenon. At the same time, its worldwide popularity has rendered its Korean-ness opaque. Kim argues that Korean cultural subjectivity over the past two decades is one steeped in ethnic rather than national identity. Explaining how South Korea leapt over the linguistic and cultural walls surrounding a supposedly “minor” culture to achieve global ascendance, Kim positions K-pop, Korean cinema and television serials, and even electronics as transformative acts of reappropriation that have created a hegemonic global ethnic identity.

“Hegemonic Mimicry provides insightful, critical analyses of Korean cultural products explored through a variety of lenses: national identity, transnationalism, convergence, social class, Confucianism, simulacra, and cynicism. Unlike many previous studies, Kyung Hyun Kim is very effective in theorizing developments in hallyu and its global proliferation. Anyone interested in contemporary Korean culture will learn a lot from this book and enjoy Kim’s ability to connect ideas and events in brilliant new ways.”—Roald Maliangkay, author of Broken Voices: Postcolonial Entanglements and the Preservation of Korea’s Central Folksong Tradition

https://www.dukeupress.edu/hegemonic-mimicry
October 2021 | 328 pages, 36 illustrations
978-1-4780-1449-2 | $27.95 paperback $19.57 with discount

Special offer: Use coupon code E21KIM to save 30% on the paperback when you order from dukeupress.edu.