Stephen Giang

Prof. Kallas

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Reader Response 4

In Parenti’s novel, Superpatriotism, he covers the point of the importance of being Number One as a country. He quotes many presidents and important people saying that either America is number one, or will be number one. That entices the question, of why do we want to be number one? He then questions as to what we are even number one in. We’re not number one in education. We’re not number one freedom, individuality, culture, or anything remotely important. We seem to be number one in military and wealth. But that isn’t anything one should be proud of. Being number one in wealth only shows the huge wage gap between our classes and the being number one in military only shows how much we’re ready to go to war with other countries. We are number one in managers per employees. This means we complain about the huge corporate heads while being so close to one. We are number one in income inequality, meaning that we’re the nation with the biggest wage gap. All of our wealth belongs to a select few while the rest of the nation only gets a minute portion of it. Despite being number one in wealth, we have one of the world’s biggest public debt, which only outlines the huge wage gap between the rich and poor in this nation. The importance of being number one is only for public appeal. When presidents say that were number one, we’re number one in all the wrong places. Presidents only call America number one to preserve the superpatriotistic views of the citizens. It gives them reassurance as to if the country they’re in is safe, the best, and qualified for their standard of living. The entire number one thing is all used only as reassurance for the citizens but is never actually backed up from any real evidence.

What Parenti means when he states his chapter “Military Patriotism: For Flag and Missile” is the theory that patriotism is celebrating the military. We as Americans celebrate that we’re number one in standing army, and that we celebrate our country for its warfare status. When people join the military, they don’t join to fight for their nation, but of the nice life it is to be in the army. They get free meals, free housing, great benefits, all without any sacrifice of actually going to war and losing limbs. They are also recognized for their service and get a status of heroism, which is an additional bonus to the job. People will celebrate the military and their duty as protectors, however, will oppose against the thought of war and the use of weapons on other countries. So when Parenti talks about Military Patriotism, he means that people celebrate the pretty flag and the big missiles. We don’t actually celebrate America for being any good, but just because it’s the social norm. We celebrate the nation’s military history rather than the history of our political economic equality or other important ideas like world peace. We have been taught the social norm to celebrate the flag and the missile, through patriotic songs like the national anthem, and learning to appreciate the military for their service. We only celebrate because that’s how we were taught, and this is a type of blind patriotism because no one really cares for the flag and the missiles, other than the parties associated it to it. ­­­ In conclusion, what Parenti means by Military Patriotism is a taught and fake patriotism that doesn’t actually outline any Americans’ values and is only good for celevrating.