

## CHALLENGES TO OR CRITICISMS OF McCARTHY'S VERSION OF REPARATIONS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

1. the baseline problem (Arthur 214-217): How to determine the position to which African Americans should be "restored" by reparations.
2. role of U.S. government (Arthur 219-20): If U.S. govt is the main agent of reparations, how to deal with the fact that many other non-governmental agents played a central role in slavery and the slave trade
3. estimating damage (Arthur 220): How can we calculate the damage to African Americans in the present when being deprived of opportunity (as in slavery, and segregation too, though Arthur does not say this) is very different from having property taken away. Latter can be restored, even in subsequent generations; former much more complicated.
4. The class/race challenge: If African Americans' lives can be improved by race-neutral initiatives (e.g. universal health care, improved access by low income populations to quality education) that also benefit other groups, although benefiting African Americans *more*, is this *within* or *contrary to* the spirit of reparations?
5. A related point concerns McCarthy's focus on the most disadvantaged segment of the African American population. Does this suggest that the demand for reparations is being driven by justice considerations other than, though in addition to, the purely "reparative" dimension of reparations? For example, you might think that justice demands that access to public education should not depend on ability to pay, so making that happen for African Americans has nothing specific to do with reparations (and it applies to low-income people of every group, as point #5 mentions).
6. "Benefiting" issue: Arthur thinks that the benefits whites have derived from the victimization of African Americans should not play any role in reparations (211: not clear that people today benefit from slavery). McCarthy is not entirely clear where he stands on this. If the agent of reparations is the government, this seems to bypass the "benefits to whites" issue. What do you think?
7. "statute of limitations" problem: In law, we think that after a certain amount of time, certain crimes should no longer be prosecuted. Does this apply to the situation (especially if slavery is part of it) to which reparations responds?