

Reading Questions for November 5

These questions cover an excerpt from a book by Miranda Fricker called *Epistemic Injustice*. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to do the reading more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

In the book as a whole, Fricker looks at different examples of “epistemic injustices.” These are injustices that have to do with knowledge and ignorance. In the chapter from which this excerpt is taken, she is examining a particular kind of epistemic injustice she calls “hermeneutical injustice.” The word “hermeneutics” means the study of interpretation and understanding. Thus hermeneutical injustice will be a kind of injustice connected with being able to interpret or understand things. In the excerpt you read, Fricker tries to explain carefully what she means by “hermeneutical injustice.”

*Questions:*

1. To introduce the idea of hermeneutical injustice, Fricker offers two examples, one of Wendy Sanford, the other of Carmita Wood. Then on page 151 she writes, “For something to be an injustice, it must be harmful but also wrongful.” What is the difference supposed to be between being “harmful” and “wrongful?” Why does Fricker think both are required?
2. On pages 153-4, Fricker tries to explain what she means by the expression “hermeneutically marginalized.” What does she mean by this expression?
3. Fricker gives a definition of hermeneutical injustice on page 154. Does the concept of “hermeneutical injustice” seem like a useful one to you? Can you think of examples of hermeneutical injustice, either from your own life or in things you’ve read or heard about?