

Understanding Historical Perspectives in Political Philosophy

An Examination of the Works of Leanne
Betasamosake-Simpson and Nancy
Fraser

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How do Betasamosake-Simpson and Fraser understand history? How do these understandings differ from each other, and what do they have to offer?

Research Question

Betasamosake-Simpson and Fraser have greatly differing perspectives on history, as they seek to answer different historical questions.

Betasamosake-Simpson aims to answer the question, how does the past impact the present, and how does the present impact future generations' past? Fraser aims to answer the question, what happened in the past, and how did certain themes change over time? While combining these conceptions of history into one understanding is not productive, each can be utilized to answer different historical questions.

Tentative Thesis





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Betasamosake-Simpson

History is...

- Based in connection to nature, narratives, stories, oral traditions
- Interconnected with the past and the future - ancestors cared for the present generations, they respect ancestors and care for the future generations
- History is continuous, not in phases or relegated to the past, it has trends
- History is just a time period people pass through, or a force itself
- No end of history or goal driven perspective, it is a continuing process

Fraser

History is...

- Linear/ in phases
- A force that is not predetermined
- Discrete - in acts
- Homogenous - cultural turn, zeitgeist
- Weighted - some acts or areas are given priority (phrases such as second)

Sources Used

Betasamosake-Simpson

- As We Have Always Done
- Land as Pedagogy
- A Short History of the Blockade : Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and Regeneration in Nishnaabewin
- Dancing on Our Turtle's Back : Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence
- Rehearsals for Living/areyoureallysureyouwanttobe well

Fraser

- Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History
- Feminism's Two Legacies: A Tale of Ambivalence
- Tales from the Trenches: On Women Philosophers, Feminist Philosophy, and the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy
- A Triple Movement?: Parsing the Politics of Crisis after Polanyi
- Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice

Compare and Contrast

- Their conceptions of history aim to answer different questions
 - ◆ Betasamosake-Simpson - how does the past impact the present, and how does the present impact future generations' past?
 - ◆ Fraser - what happened in the past, and how did certain themes change over time?
- These conceptions are then used to achieve different theoretical ends
 - ◆ Betasamosake-Simpson - Indigenous peoples and resurgence
 - ◆ Fraser - feminism's progression through history
- Cannot be combined, but have the potential to both be used in examining history

Issues Encountered

Not talking
directly about
history

Talking in
metaphors and
stories

Comparing on
their own merits



Conclusion

Questions?

