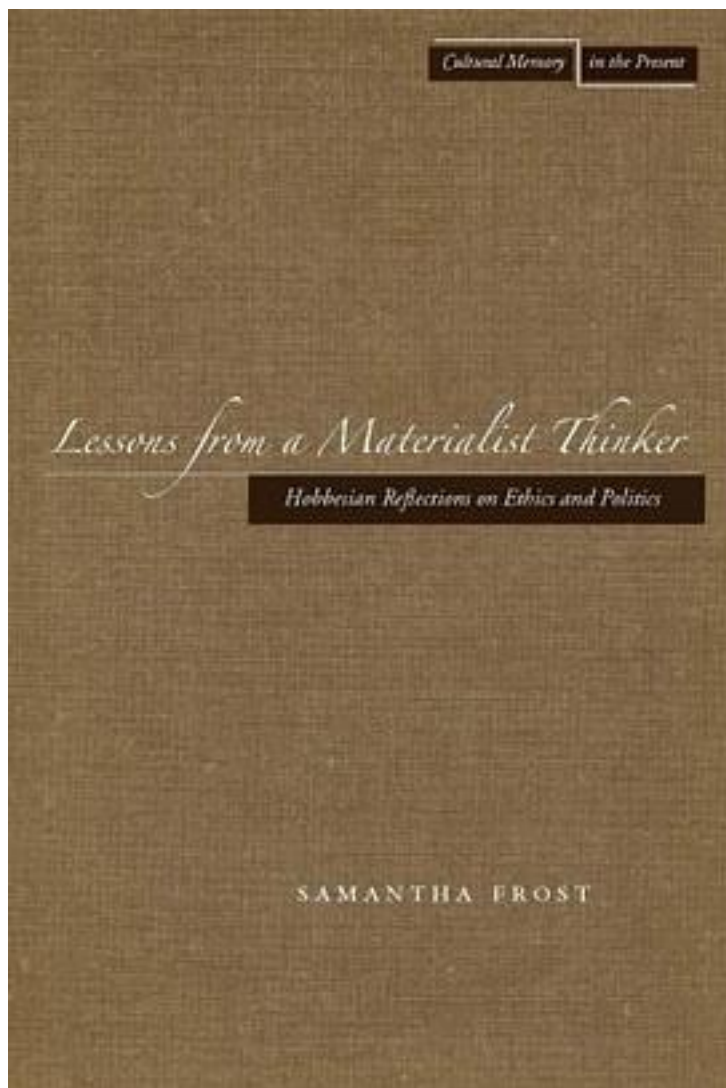


Lessons from a Materialist Thinker



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Thomas Hobbes is an iconic figure who serves as an easy reference for pundits commenting on the brutality of war as well as for critics of a distinctly modern individualism in which calculating and rapacious self-interest is the cause of the violence, destruction, and exploitation endemic to the contemporary world. Frost's reading of Hobbes's philosophy shows us that underlying such visions of self and politics is another iconic figure: that of the Cartesian subject. What gives the iconic Hobbes his hardcore individualism and its corollary accounts of instrumentalism, conflict, and absolutism is a Cartesian rendering of the self as split into mind and body. Carefully elaborating Hobbes's materialist ontology, "Lessons from a Materialist Thinker" challenges both our implicit Cartesian assumptions about the self and the commonplace Hobbes that so readily figures violence in our political imagination. Through his materialism, Hobbes presents an alternative modern account of self-consciousness, reason, agency, power, freedom, and responsibility. In doing so, he shows that our fundamental intersubjectivity and interdependence require that we pursue peace above all else.

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