

# Thick: And Other Essays

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## FINALIST FOR THE 2019 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD

Named a Best Book of the Year by Time and Chicago Tribune

As featured by The Daily Show, NPR, PBS, CBC, Time, VIBE, Entertainment Weekly, Well-Read Black Girl, and Chris Hayes, "incisive, witty, and provocative essays" (Publishers Weekly) by one of the "most bracing thinkers on race, gender, and capitalism of our time" (Rebecca Traister)

"Thick is sure to become a classic." -The New York Times Book Review

In eight highly praised treatises on beauty, media, money, and more, Tressie McMillan Cottom—award-winning professor and acclaimed author of *Lower Ed*—is unapologetically "thick": deemed "thick where I should have been thin, more where I should have been less." McMillan Cottom refuses to shy away from blending the personal with the political, from bringing her full self and voice to the fore of her analytical work. *Thick* "transforms narrative moments into analyses of whiteness, black misogyny, and status-signaling as means of survival for black women" (Los Angeles Review of Books) with "writing that is as deft as it is amusing" (Darnell L. Moore).

This "transgressive, provocative, and brilliant" (Roxane Gay) collection cements McMillan Cottom's position as a public thinker capable of shedding new light on what the "personal essay" can do. She turns her chosen form into a showcase for her critical dexterity, investigating everything from Saturday Night Live, LinkedIn, and BBQ Becky to sexual violence, infant mortality, and Trump rallies.

Collected in an indispensable volume that speaks to the everywoman and the erudite alike, these unforgettable essays never fail to be "painfully honest and gloriously affirming" and hold "a mirror to your soul and to that of America" (Dorothy Roberts).

### Tressie McMillan Cottom

is an associate professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University and the author of *Lower Ed*. Her work has been featured by the The Daily Show, the New York

Times, the Washington Post, PBS, NPR, Fresh Air, and The Atlantic, among others. She lives in Richmond, Virginia.

Praise for Thick:

A New York Times Editor's Choice selection

Shortlisted for the Museum of African American History Stone Book Award

"Thick is sure to become a classic of black intellectualism, one that ought to be read not only in African-American and gender studies departments across the country, although its lens is irrefutably and irresistibly black and feminist. It should be required reading for anyone interested in making 'trust black women' more than a hollow social media mantra."

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The New York Times Book Review

"Cottom's intersectionality is merely the work of a writer seeing the world clearly and deeply, and connecting the dots in fresh and revealing ways."

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Chicago Tribune

"Thick confirms McMillan Cottom as one of our most fearless public intellectuals and one of the most vital."

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Literary Hub, "The 10 Best Essay Collections of the Decade"

"Thick gets into the messiness of US culture, exposing what Americans want to say but are sometimes too afraid or too unaware to say. . . . In essence, this book is about the compromises we make for the sake of control."

-Christian Century

"Incisive, witty, and provocative essays. . . . The collection showcases McMillan Cottom's wisdom and originality and amply fulfills her aim of telling powerful stories that become a problem for power."

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Publishers Weekly (starred review)

"The meshing of the personal and political and the author's take-no-prisoners attitude make these essays sizzle. A provocative volume bound to stir argument and discussion."

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Kirkus Reviews

"This book is essential for anyone who wants to think deeply about race, feminism, and culture."

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BookRiot

"To say this collection is transgressive, provocative, and brilliant is simply to tell you the truth. Thick is a necessary work and a reminder that Tressie McMillan Cottom is one of the finest public intellectuals writing today."

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Roxane Gay, author of *Hunger* and *Bad Feminist*

"Thick is gorgeous, incisive, and hard. Tressie McMillan Cottom is among America's most bracing thinkers on race, gender, and capitalism of our time and she is at her very best here. These essays enlighten and complicate and push conversations further. They are blisteringly smart and beautifully written. They are also, simply, a pleasure to read."

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Rebecca Traister, author of *Good and Mad* and *All the Single Ladies*

"Black women are uniquely attuned to the hydra that bell hooks names the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Publics should trust black women. Thick proves why readers should trust Tressie McMillan Cottom's black-people-loving writing that is as deft as it is amusing. Her words are a sword. She comes out swinging her blade at the hydra's head with unmatched courage."

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Darnell L. Moore, author of *No Ashes in the Fire*

"These essays show us the potency of actually existing black feminist analysis and expose the deep structures of racism and inequality that shape most black women's lives. With biting humor and razor-sharp political clarity, Thick is a crucial contribution to contemporary black thought."

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Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, author of *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*

"Reading Thick is like holding a mirror to your soul and to that of America. [S]earingly intimate and astute . . . at once painfully honest and gloriously affirming."

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Dorothy Roberts, author of *Killing the Black Body*

"Rich with layers of meaning . . . blaaaaaack and southern and country and wise [and] pulsates with wit, self-awareness, and unabashed expertise. For Professional Smart People with sense, her writing is #goals."

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Soraya McDonald, culture critic at The Undeclared

"Thick is aptly named, for McMillan Cottom is no intellectual lightweight-she walks heavy, bringing together her singular sociological insights with compelling and relatable storytelling."

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Brittney Cooper, author of Eloquent Rage

Praise for Tressie McMillan Cottom's Lower Ed:

"The best book yet on the complex lives and choices of for-profit students."

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The New York Times Book Review

#### Other Books

The Cambridge Companion to The Essay, The Cambridge Companion to the Essay considers the history, theory, and aesthetics of the essay from the moment it's named in the late sixteenth century to the present. What is an essay? What can the essay do or think or reveal or know that other literary forms cannot? What makes a piece of writing essayistic? How can essays bring about change? Over the course of seventeen chapters by a diverse group of scholars, The Companion reads the essay in relation to poetry, fiction, natural science, philosophy, critical theory, postcolonial and decolonial thinking, studies in race and gender, queer theory, and the history of literary criticism. This book studies the essay in its written, photographic, cinematic, and digital forms, with a special emphasis on how the essay is being reshaped and reimagined in the twenty-first century, making it a crucial resource for scholars, students, and essayists.

39 LaRet Savoy, Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2015), 113. 40 Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, in A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation, ed."