

public vows a history of marriage and the nation

****Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation****

Public vows a history of marriage and the nation reveal a fascinating journey of how personal commitment intertwines with societal evolution. Marriage, often seen as a private union between two individuals, has historically carried immense public significance—serving as a reflection of cultural values, legal frameworks, and even national identity. From ancient ceremonies to modern-day weddings, the act of publicly declaring vows has played a pivotal role in shaping not only personal relationships but also the social fabric of nations.

The Origins of Public Vows in Marriage

Marriage, as an institution, has existed for millennia, but the tradition of making public vows has roots deep in both religious and civil practices. In many ancient cultures, marriage was less about romantic love and more about alliances, property, and social order. Public vows served as a formal declaration of these alliances and commitments, often witnessed by the community or religious figures.

The Role of Religion and Ritual

Religious institutions have long been central to the ceremony of marriage, with public vows acting as a sacred promise before a deity and community. For instance, Christian marriages traditionally involve the exchange of vows in front of a congregation and a priest, symbolizing not only a contract between two individuals but also a covenant with God. Similarly, Hindu weddings feature the "Saptapadi" or seven steps, where couples make vows in front of fire and family, emphasizing the spiritual and communal dimensions of their union.

Legal Recognition and Social Implications

Beyond spiritual significance, public vows have historically carried legal weight. In medieval Europe, the declaration of intent and vows before witnesses could constitute a legally binding marriage, even without formal church sanction. This practice highlights how public vows have functioned as social contracts, establishing rights and responsibilities not only between spouses but also within the community and state.

Marriage as a Reflection of National Identity

Throughout history, marriage customs and public vows have mirrored the values and political climates of nations. Whether used to consolidate power, forge alliances, or promote social cohesion, marriage ceremonies have often been

charged with national symbolism.

Royal Marriages and Political Alliances

Royal weddings have long been public spectacles, where vows symbolize more than personal commitment—they represent the unity of kingdoms and the stability of political alliances. The exchange of public vows in royal ceremonies was often broadcast or witnessed by large audiences, reinforcing the monarch's legitimacy and the nation's continuity. For example, the marriages of European monarchs in the Middle Ages were strategic tools for diplomacy, with the public vows serving as formal agreements between royal houses.

Marriage Laws and Nation-Building

As modern nations formed, the legal regulation of marriage became a crucial aspect of governance. Public vows transitioned from solely religious ceremonies to include civil ceremonies officiated by the state. This shift reflected the growing role of the nation in defining social contracts, citizenship, and inheritance rights. Public vows in civil ceremonies underscore the state's interest in the institution of marriage as a foundation for social order and population stability.

The Evolution of Public Vows in Contemporary Society

Today, public vows continue to evolve, reflecting changing social attitudes toward marriage, gender roles, and cultural diversity. The tradition of publicly declaring commitment remains, but its meaning and form have expanded considerably.

Inclusivity and New Forms of Vows

Modern weddings increasingly embrace personalized vows that reflect the unique values and beliefs of couples. This trend emphasizes emotional honesty over traditional formulas, allowing couples to craft public declarations that resonate with their identities. Additionally, the legalization of same-sex marriage in many countries has transformed public vows into powerful symbols of equality and social progress.

The Role of Media and Technology

The digital age has transformed how public vows are shared and witnessed. Live streaming weddings, social media announcements, and virtual ceremonies have expanded the audience beyond physical attendees. This new form of public witnessing preserves the communal aspect of vows while adapting to contemporary lifestyles and global connectivity.

Why Public Vows Matter: Insights and Reflections

The enduring practice of public vows highlights the human need for connection, accountability, and recognition. Publicly declaring one's commitment provides several key benefits:

- **Accountability:** Sharing vows in front of others adds a layer of social accountability that can strengthen marital commitment.
- **Community Support:** Witnesses offer emotional support and validation, reinforcing the couple's bond within their social network.
- **Cultural Continuity:** Public vows preserve cultural heritage and rituals, linking individuals to broader historical and national narratives.
- **Legal Clarity:** In many jurisdictions, public vows are a prerequisite for legal recognition of marriage, ensuring rights and protections.

Understanding the significance of public vows helps couples and societies appreciate the depth and complexity behind this seemingly simple tradition.

Tips for Crafting Meaningful Public Vows

For those planning a wedding or renewal ceremony, creating meaningful public vows can be a rewarding experience:

1. **Reflect on Personal Values:** Consider what commitment means to you and your partner beyond traditional phrases.
2. **Incorporate Cultural or Familial Traditions:** Acknowledge the heritage that shapes your relationship and community.
3. **Be Genuine and Clear:** Speak from the heart and communicate promises that you intend to keep.
4. **Balance Emotion and Practicality:** Combine heartfelt sentiments with realistic commitments to build a strong foundation.

Public Vows as a Mirror of National Change

The history of public vows in marriage offers a unique lens through which to view societal transformation. As nations evolve—embracing diversity, redefining gender norms, and expanding legal rights—their marriage rituals and public vows adapt in tandem. This dynamic interplay between personal promises and national identity underscores how marriage remains both a private bond and a public institution.

In exploring public vows, we uncover not just the story of two people coming together, but also the broader narrative of nations and cultures shaping, and being shaped by, the commitments made in the name of love and community.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main focus of 'Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation' by Nancy F. Cott?

The book explores the historical relationship between marriage and the nation, examining how public vows and marriage practices have been shaped by and have influenced national identity and social policies in the United States.

How does 'Public Vows' link marriage to the concept of the nation?

Nancy F. Cott argues that marriage has been a public institution deeply intertwined with the nation's political, social, and cultural development, serving as a site where citizenship, rights, and national belonging are negotiated and defined.

What historical periods does 'Public Vows' cover in its analysis of marriage?

'Public Vows' spans from colonial America to the late 20th century, tracing the evolution of marriage laws, cultural norms, and public policies that reflect changing ideas about family, gender, and nationhood.

How does 'Public Vows' address the role of gender in the history of marriage?

The book highlights how concepts of gender have been central to marriage laws and practices, showing how patriarchal norms shaped marriage as an institution and how challenges to these norms have influenced broader social change.

Why is 'Public Vows' considered relevant to contemporary discussions about marriage?

By providing a historical perspective on how marriage has been linked to national identity and citizenship, 'Public Vows' offers valuable insights into current debates about marriage equality, family rights, and social inclusion.

What sources does Nancy F. Cott use in 'Public Vows' to support her analysis?

Cott utilizes a wide range of sources including legal documents, marriage laws, political debates, personal narratives, and cultural texts to illustrate how marriage has functioned as a public and political institution

throughout American history.

Additional Resources

Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation

public vows a history of marriage and the nation opens a fascinating window into how the institution of marriage has evolved in tandem with the development of modern states and national identities. From ancient rituals binding families and tribes to the elaborate civil and religious ceremonies of today, public vows have served not only as personal commitments but as potent symbols of social order, cultural values, and political power. Exploring this intricate relationship reveals how marriage functions beyond the private sphere, intertwining the personal with the political, tradition with transformation.

The Historical Foundations of Public Marriage Vows

The practice of declaring marriage vows publicly has roots stretching back millennia. In many early societies, marriage was less a romantic union than a strategic alliance between families or clans. Public vows functioned as legal and social contracts, witnessed by community members to ensure legitimacy and accountability. For instance, in ancient Rome, the "confarreatio" ceremony required public pledges before witnesses, reinforcing the union's significance not only for the couple but for the broader social fabric.

Similarly, medieval European marriages often required formal declarations in churches, underscoring the religious institution's role in sanctioning and recording unions. The public nature of vows was essential to confirming the marriage's validity under canon law, which shaped societal norms and inheritance rights. Such ceremonies reflected and reinforced the hierarchical structures of the time, where marriage often cemented alliances between noble families, impacting the political landscape.

Marriage as a National Institution

Over centuries, as nation-states emerged, marriage increasingly became a matter regulated by civil authorities, reflecting broader shifts in governance and societal organization. Public vows transitioned from purely religious rites to legal contracts recognized by the state. This evolution illustrates the intertwined nature of personal commitments and national interests.

In many countries, the state's involvement in marriage served multiple purposes: establishing clear lineage for inheritance and citizenship, regulating social behavior, and reinforcing cultural norms. For example, 19th-century Europe saw the rise of civil marriage laws that formalized marriage as a state-recognized institution, independent or supplementary to religious ceremonies. This development underscored the growing power of centralized governments to define social contracts and the role of marriage in nation-building.

The Role of Public Vows in Social and Political Contexts

Public marriage vows have functioned as more than mere declarations of love or commitment; they have been tools for social cohesion and political symbolism. The public aspect ensures communal recognition and upholds societal values.

Marriage and Social Order

By making vows public, societies enforce certain expectations and responsibilities. Public commitment acts as a social contract, binding individuals not only to each other but also to their community's moral and legal standards. This openness deters breaches of trust and reinforces the seriousness of the union.

Furthermore, public vows often reflect prevailing cultural ideals. In many cultures, the words exchanged during ceremonies emphasize fidelity, mutual support, and procreation, underscoring marriage's role in sustaining social structures and future generations. The visibility of these vows also affirms the couple's integration into the community, promoting social stability.

Marriage as a Reflection of National Identity

Public marriage ceremonies frequently incorporate national symbols, languages, and rituals, linking personal unions to collective identity. For instance, in countries with strong nationalist movements, marriage traditions have been adapted or revived to emphasize cultural heritage. Public vows in the national language or references to shared history during ceremonies serve to reinforce a sense of belonging and continuity.

Additionally, governments have historically used marriage laws and public ceremonies to control citizenship and demographic composition. Policies regulating marriage eligibility, such as bans on interethnic or interracial unions, showcase how public vows intersect with broader political agendas. These regulations illustrate the power of marriage to shape the nation's social fabric.

Modern Transformations of Public Vows

In contemporary society, the public nature of marriage vows continues to evolve, reflecting changing social values, legal frameworks, and cultural diversity. The intersection of tradition and innovation in wedding ceremonies illustrates how public vows remain a dynamic symbol.

Legal Recognition and Civil Ceremonies

Today, civil marriage ceremonies conducted by state officials often emphasize the legal aspects of marriage, including rights and responsibilities. These

public vows focus less on religious content and more on contractual commitments, reflecting secular governance and pluralistic societies.

The rise of same-sex marriage globally exemplifies how public vows can challenge and expand traditional definitions of marriage. Public ceremonies affirming these unions serve as milestones in social acceptance and legal equality, demonstrating marriage's ongoing role in shaping national narratives around inclusion and human rights.

Cultural Diversity and Hybrid Ceremonies

Globalization and multiculturalism have influenced public vows by blending traditions from different cultures and religions. Couples increasingly personalize ceremonies to reflect their unique identities while maintaining the public declaration's communal significance.

This trend highlights the flexibility of public vows as both a private promise and a public ritual. Whether through incorporating indigenous blessings, intercultural readings, or modern symbolic acts, public vows adapt to contemporary realities without losing their foundational purpose of solemnizing commitment in a social context.

Pros and Cons of Public Marriage Vows in Contemporary Society

• Pros:

- Enhances social accountability and transparency in marital commitments.
- Reinforces cultural and national identity through shared rituals.
- Provides legal clarity and protections for spouses and families.
- Promotes community participation and support for the couple.

• Cons:

- May impose societal pressures, limiting individual freedom in choosing partners or ceremony styles.
- Historically, has been used to enforce exclusionary or discriminatory policies.
- Public exposure can complicate private aspects of marriage.
- Rigid traditions may not accommodate diverse or non-traditional relationships fully.

The Future of Public Vows and Marriage

As societies continue to evolve, the institution of marriage and the practice of public vows will likely undergo further transformation. Emerging trends such as digital ceremonies, legal recognition of diverse family structures, and growing secularism challenge traditional notions while preserving the public vow's core function: to bind individuals publicly and meaningfully.

In this ongoing dialogue between personal commitment and national identity, public vows remain a powerful testament to marriage's enduring social and political significance. They serve as a mirror reflecting society's values, aspirations, and complexities, bridging individual lives with the collective story of the nation.

Public Vows A History Of Marriage And The Nation

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Public Vows Nancy F. Cott, 2002-03-08 We commonly think of marriage as a private matter between two people, a personal expression of love and commitment. In this pioneering history, Nancy F. Cott demonstrates that marriage is and always has been a public institution.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Marriage as a National Fiction Dagmar Stöferle, 2023-02-15 There is a prehistory of the adultery novel, which became a pan-European literary paradigm in the second half of the 19th century. In the wake of the French Revolution, secular marriage legislation emerges, producing a metaphorical surplus that is still effective today. Using legal history and canonical literary texts from Rousseau to Goethe and Manzoni to Hugo and Flaubert, this book traces how marriage around 1800 became a figure of reflection for the modern nation-state. In the process, original contributions to the philology of the individual texts emerge. At the same time, law and literature are made fruitful for a historical semantics of society and community. This book is a translation of an original German 1st edition "Ehe als Nationalfiktion" by Dagmar Stöferle, published by J.B. Metzler, imprint of Springer-Verlag GmbH Germany, part of Springer Nature in 2020. The translation was done with the help of artificial intelligence (machine translation by the service DeepL.com). The author (with the support of Chris Owain Carter) has subsequently revised the text further in an endeavour to refine the work stylistically.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Marriage, Violence and the Nation in the American Literary West William R. Handley, 2002-08-15 In *Marriage, Violence and the Nation in the American Literary West*, William R. Handley examines literary interpretations of the Western American past. Handley argues that although scholarship provides a narrative of western history that counters optimistic story of frontier individualism by focusing on the victims of conquest, twentieth-century American fiction tells a different story of intra-ethnic violence surrounding marriages and families. He examines works of historiography, as well as writing by Zane Grey, Willa Cather, Wallace Stegner and Joan Didion among others, to argue that these works highlight white Americans' anxiety about what happens to American 'character' when domestic enemies such as Indians and Mormon polygamists, against whom the nation had defined itself in the nineteenth century, no longer threaten its homes. Handley explains that once its enemies are gone, imperialism brings violence home in retrospective narratives that allegorise national pasts and futures through intimate relationships.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Geschichte der Männlichkeiten Jürgen Martschukat, Olaf Stieglitz, 2018-09-07 Die historische Forschung zu Männern und Männlichkeiten ist kaum noch zu überblicken. Jürgen Martschukat und Olaf Stieglitz zeigen in dieser konzisen

Einführung, wie die Männergeschichte aus der internationalen Geschlechtergeschichte entstand; sie stellen die Leitfragen und die relevante Forschungsliteratur der Männergeschichte vor. Dabei setzen sie drei inhaltliche Schwerpunkte, die für männliche Subjektbildungen und Lebenswelten in der Neuzeit zentral sind: Vaterschaft zwischen Familie und Arbeit, Formen männlicher Geselligkeit und die Geschichte männlicher Sexualitäten. Die Einführung bietet eine zugängliche und sehr gut informierte Orientierung (...) und regt zur Weiterarbeit in diesem gesellschaftlich und wissenschaftlich relevanten Feld an. H-Soz-Kult Der Band setzt Maßstäbe und ist zweifellos derzeit das Standardwerk zur Männergeschichte. Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Geschichte der USA Volker Depkat, 2016-03-02 The United States of America are the only remaining superpower in an increasingly confusing world at the start of the twenty-first century. This volume discusses the stages of the country's rise to the status of world power and analyses the USA's fascinating and complex history on the basis of several fundamental subjects. The survey starts with the experiment of establishing a democracy, which was initiated through revolution and is unfinished even today. The USA's development to become a superpower enjoying world hegemony was equally uneven - a rise that has also acquired missionary aspects under the banner of the 'empire of liberty'. Another focus in the account is the way in which new, decidedly American values and a modern, consumption-oriented, technology-saturated lifestyle - the 'American way of life' - emerged from contact in North America between the widest possible variety of cultures and ethnic groups. This lifestyle by no means levelled out the existing ethnic and cultural pluralism of American society. With topics revolving around politics, society, business and culture, the book reveals the lines of historical development in the USA that have been and continue to be signposts for the modern world.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Der privatisierte Krieg Sarah Katharina Stein, 2024-09-30 Private Militardienstleister (PMCs) sind als zugekaufte Verstärkung oder autark agierende Truppen aus bewaffneten Konflikten nicht mehr wegzudenken. Trotz ihres fast universalen Einsatzes fehlt es an einer spezifischen Regulierung oder der konsequenten Einordnung nach den Regeln des humanitären Völkerrechts. Das führt zu einer rechtlichen Grauzone, in der private Militardienstleister Gewalt fast gänzlich verantwortungsfrei ausüben können. Zum anderen geraten Staaten, die Private zur Ausübung militärischer Gewalt einsetzen, in Konflikt mit rechtsstaatlichen und demokratischen Prinzipien. Sarah Katharina Stein zeigt durch eine eingehende Analyse der relevanten Rechtsnormen und der ihnen zugrundeliegenden Wertvorstellungen auf, warum mit jedem Einsatz privater Militardienstleister das eigene staatliche Gewaltmonopol geschwächt wird.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Prekäre Eheschließungen Arno Haldemann, 2021-12-13 In der Vergangenheit haben viele historische Studien Ehe und Sexualität auf kommunaler Ebene thematisiert. Dabei blieben die sich während der sogenannten 'Sattelzeit' rasant wandelnden Haltungen der übergeordneten Zentralgewalten jedoch vernachlässigt. Letztere rissen in einem gipfelnden Staatsbildungsprozess das Gewaltmonopol immer vehementer an sich und wiesen Interessen von Partikulärmächten zunehmend energisch zurück. Die vorliegende Arbeit begegnet dem genannten Desiderat, indem sie Eheschließungen als Aushandlungsprozesse zwischen ehewilligem Eigensinn, kommunaler und familiärer Ressourcenpolitik sowie obrigkeitlicher Biopolitik analysiert. Exemplarischer Untersuchungsraum ist das Gebiet der ehemals großen Stadtrepublik Bern, die sich am Übergang vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert in einer Transformation von einem der mächtigsten alteidgenössischen Bundesglieder zu einem gleichberechtigten bundesstaatlichen Kanton befand. Die Quellengrundlage für die Erforschung des wechselseitigen Beziehungsdreiecks von Ehebegehrenden Paaren, sozialem Umfeld (Familien, Verwandte, Gemeinden sowie Korporationen) und obrigkeitlichem Ehegericht bilden Ehegerichtsakten und Petitionen um Eheerlaubnis, aber auch Ehegesetze und bevölkerungspolitische Debatten, die die Aushandlungsprozesse beeinflussten.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Ehe als Ernstfall der Geschlechterdifferenz Bernhard Heininger, 2010

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: *Geschichte der USA* Manfred Berg, 2013-10-18 Das Buch informiert konzipiert und kompetent über die Geschichte der USA von der Kolonialzeit bis zur Gegenwart sowie über die prägenden Entwicklungen der neueren US-Geschichtswissenschaft. Im Mittelpunkt dieser Einführung stehen die „klassischen“ Themen der amerikanischen Geschichte: der Kulturkontakt und Konflikt mit den Ureinwohnern, die Westexpansion, die Sklaverei, Rassenbeziehungen und ethnische Vielfalt, die Einwanderung, der religiöse Pluralismus, die Gründung und Entwicklung der föderalen Republik, die Ausbildung der Demokratie, die Entwicklung der modernen Industrie- und Konsumgesellschaft sowie der Aufstieg der USA zur globalen Supermacht.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Die Sexualisierung der Religion im 20. Jahrhundert Jana Kristin Hoffmann, 2021-10-25 Religiöse Kontroversen um Sexualerziehung, Abtreibung und Homosexualität prägen seit Jahrzehnten Alltag und Politik in den USA. Allerdings wissen wir bisher wenig darüber, wie protestantische Mainline-Kirchen an diesem Prozess partizipierten. Jana Hoffmanns Studie setzt hier an und untersucht am Beispiel der United Methodist Church, wie sich religiöse Sexualitätsdiskurse im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts veränderten und welchen Einfluss sie auf religiöse Familien-, Ehe- und Geschlechtervorstellungen hatten. Die Autorin zeigt hierbei, dass Mainline-Protestanten nicht nur auf gesellschaftliche Veränderungen reagierten, sondern sie aktiv anstießen, beeinflussten und mitgestalteten. So gelang es Mainline-Protestanten mit Hilfe einer neuen Sexualethik, christliche Wertvorstellungen in den 1950er Jahren zu modernisieren und zu demokratisieren, wobei sie an bestimmten Differenzachsen (race, class, gender) festhielten. Konservative Methodisten hingegen griffen später auf dieselben Diskursräume zurück, um ihrerseits Pluralisierungs- und Liberalisierungsprozesse rückgängig zu machen und den christlichen Wertekanon erneut enger zu führen. Sexualität wurde zum wichtigsten Distinktionsmerkmal von Religionsgemeinschaften. Die vorliegende Studie liefert damit den Schlüssel zum Verständnis der komplexen und oft widersprüchlichen Debatten um Religion und Sexualität in den USA des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Geschichte der Welt Wege zur modernen Welt Akira Iriye, Jürgen Osterhammel, Sebastian Conrad, 2016-07-29 Weltgeschichte ist lange Zeit als eine Geschichte des Aufstiegs und Niedergangs einer kleinen Zahl von 'Hochkulturen' geschrieben worden. Unter diesen Kulturen schienen Europa oder der atlantische 'Westen' während der letzten Jahrhunderte nach den Kriterien Macht, Wohlstand und kulturelle Kreativität zu dominieren. Das neue sechsbändige Werk zur Weltgeschichte, das von einem Team von Historikerinnen und Historikern vorwiegend aus den USA und Deutschland erarbeitet wird und das gleichzeitig bei C.H.Beck und Harvard University Press erscheint, verabschiedet sich von diesen Traditionen. Es leugnet die Errungenschaften des Westens nicht, stellt sie aber in den größeren Zusammenhang gleichzeitiger Entwicklungen in anderen Teilen der Welt. Dadurch wird das allmähliche, dabei aber krisenhafte Entstehen des heutigen dicht integrierten und pluralistischen Weltzusammenhangs sichtbar. Erstmals werden in diesen Bänden die Ergebnisse von mehreren Jahrzehnten internationaler Forschung zur Vorgeschichte der Globalisierung und zur Entwicklung von Gesellschaften und politischen Ordnungen auf allen Kontinenten von führenden Experten zusammenfassend dargestellt. Weltgeschichte erscheint hier nicht als Aneinanderreihung einzelner Spezialgeschichten. Die Aufmerksamkeit richtet sich auf bisher wenig beachtete Querbeziehungen und Wechselwirkungen: auf Migrationen von Einzelnen und Gruppen und die Gründung neuer Gesellschaften, auf die interkontinentale Ausbreitung von Technologien, Religionen oder politischen Ideen, auf globale Kommunikationsnetze, Handelsströme und Konsummuster, auf Imperialismus, Kolonialismus und großräumige Kriege. Akira Iriye und Jürgen Osterhammel Zwischen 1750 und 1870 wurde aus einer Welt, die – bei aller Vernetzung – im Großen und Ganzen noch regional strukturiert war, eine immer enger zusammenhängende Einheit. Seitdem sind die unterschiedlichen Teile des Globus nicht nur über Kriege und Handel miteinander verbunden; auch kulturelle Entwicklungen, politische Reformen und soziale Veränderungen waren immer häufiger aufeinander bezogen. Mit dem Band Wege zur modernen Welt liegt nun der vierte Band der großen, auf

insgesamt sechs Bände angelegten Geschichte der Welt vor. Intellektuell so anregend wie kaum eine weitere gegenwärtige Arbeit der Geschichtswissenschaft. Jacques Schuster, Die Welt Was für ein Meilenstein: Einige der besten Historiker schreiben eine Geschichte der Welt. Dirk van Laak, DIE ZEIT

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Diese Wahrheiten Jill Lepore, 2019-10-15 WELTMACHT AM SCHEIDEWEG - JILL LEPORES BRILLANTE GESCHICHTE AMERIKAS Die Amerikaner stammen von Eroberern und Eroberten, von Menschen die als Sklaven gehalten wurden, und von Menschen die Sklaven hielten, von der Union und von der Konföderation, von Protestanten und von den Juden, von Muslimen und von Katholiken, von Einwanderern und von Menschen, die dafür gekämpft haben, die Einwanderung zu beenden. In der amerikanischen Geschichte ist manchmal - wie in fast allen Nationalgeschichten - der Schurke des einen der Held des anderen. Aber dieses Argument bezieht sich auf die Fragen der Ideologie: Die Vereinigten Staaten sind auf Basis eines Grundbestands von Ideen und Vorstellungen gegründet worden, aber die Amerikaner sind inzwischen so gespalten, dass sie sich nicht mehr darin einig sind, wenn sie es denn jemals waren, welche Ideen und Vorstellungen das sind und waren. Aus der Einleitung In einer Prosa von funkelnder Schönheit erzählt die preisgekrönte Historikerin Jill Lepore die Geschichte der USA von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Sie schildert sie im Spiegel jener «Wahrheiten» (Thomas Jefferson), auf deren Fundament die Nation gegründet wurde: der Ideen von der Gleichheit aller Menschen, ihren naturgegebenen Rechten und der Volkssouveränität. Meisterhaft verknüpft sie dabei das widersprüchliche Ringen um den richtigen Weg Amerikas mit den Menschen, die seine Geschichte gestaltet oder durchlitten haben. Sklaverei und Rassendiskriminierung kommen ebenso zur Sprache wie der Kampf für die Gleichberechtigung der Frauen oder die wachsende Bedeutung der Medien. Jill Lepores große Gesamtdarstellung ist aufregend modern und direkt, eine Geschichte der politischen Kultur, die neue Wege beschreitet und das historische Geschehen geradezu hautnah lebendig werden lässt. Das fulminante Portrait einer Nation Von den Anfängen bis zur heutigen Weltmacht in der Krise Jeder, der sich für die Zukunft Amerikas interessiert, muss dieses Buch lesen. Lepore macht alles lebendig, das Gute, das Schlechte, das Schöne und das Hässliche. Lynn Hunt

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: One Marriage Under God Melanie Heath, 2012-04-16 The meaning and significance of the institution of marriage has engendered angry and boisterous battles across the United States. While the efforts of lesbians and gay men to make marriage accessible to same-sex couples have seen increasing success, these initiatives have sparked a backlash as campaigns are waged to "protect" heterosexual marriage in America. Less in the public eye is government legislation that embraces the idea of marriage promotion as a necessary societal good. In this timely and extensive study of marriage politics, Melanie Heath uncovers broad cultural anxieties that fuel on-the-ground practices to reinforce a boundary of heterosexual marriage, questioning why marriage has become an issue of pervasive national preoccupation and anxiety, and explores the impact of policies that seek to reinstitutionalize heterosexual marriage in American society. From marriage workshops for the general public to relationship classes for welfare recipients to marriage education in high school classrooms, One Marriage Under God documents in meticulous detail the inner workings of ideologies of gender and heterosexuality in the practice of marriage promotion to fortify a concept of "one marriage," an Anglo-American ideal of Christian, heterosexual monogamy.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: Nationalism's Bloody Terrain George Baca, 2006-05-01 As many scholars have argued, racism and its passions are created by and subordinated to the nation. This volume places the practices of racism at the center of analysis of so-called post-racist or multi cultural nation-states. This way, each contributor analytically treats racism and its related concepts of race, identity, culture, and naturalizing symbols of blood to highlight the manner in which governing institutions use nationalist precepts to create races. In the end, it is racism - the actual political practices of domination - that makes race salient, especially in its multi-cultural and liberal-democratic form.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: *Sweeping the German Nation* Nancy R. Reagan, 2006-10-09 Is cleanliness next to Germanness, as some nineteenth-century nationalists insisted? This book explores the relationship between gender roles, domesticity, and German national identity between 1870-1945. After German unification, approaches to household management that had originally emerged among the bourgeoisie became central to German national identity by 1914. Thrift, order, and extreme cleanliness, along with particular domestic markers (such as the linen cabinet) and holiday customs, were used by many Germans to define the distinctions between themselves and neighboring cultures. What was bourgeois at home became German abroad, as 'German domesticity' also helped to define and underwrite colonial identities in Southwest Africa and elsewhere. After 1933, this idealized notion of domestic Germanness was racialized and incorporated into an array of Nazi social politics. In occupied Eastern Europe during WWII Nazi women's groups used these approaches to household management in their attempts to 'Germanize' Eastern European women who were part of a large-scale project of population resettlement and ethnic cleansing.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: *National Insecurities* Deirdre M. Moloney, 2012-05-07 For over a century, deportation and exclusion have defined eligibility for citizenship in the United States and, in turn, have shaped what it means to be American. In this broad analysis of policy from 1882 to present, Deirdre Moloney places current debates about immigration issues in historical context. Focusing on several ethnic groups, Moloney closely examines how gender and race led to differences in the implementation of U.S. immigration policy as well as how poverty, sexuality, health, and ideologies were regulated at the borders. Emphasizing the perspectives of immigrants and their advocates, Moloney weaves in details from case files that illustrate the impact policy decisions had on individual lives. She explores the role of immigration policy in diplomatic relations between the U.S. and other nations, and shows how federal, state, and local agencies had often conflicting priorities and approaches to immigration control. Throughout, Moloney traces the ways that these policy debates contributed to a modern understanding of citizenship and human rights in the twentieth century and even today.

public vows a history of marriage and the nation: *Creating a Nation of Joiners* Johann N. Neem, 2008-12-15 Ever since Alexis de Tocqueville published his observations in *Democracy in America*, Americans have recognized the distinctiveness of their voluntary tradition. In a work of political, legal, social, and intellectual history, Neem traces the origins of this venerable tradition to the vexed beginnings of American democracy in Massachusetts.

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