

# personal english



## Semantic Field #7

### Out of Wedlock

Wedlock



Love child



Gunshot Marriage



This semantic field illuminates some of the cultural differences between Italy and the Anglo-Saxon world. **Wedlock** is the state of being married; interestingly, it has derived from the Gothic word for **pledge** and the Middle English word **lock** (see picture above), thus conveying the idea of a legally binding promise. Whereas in Italian a child born out of the wedlock used to be referred to as a **figlio illegittimo**, the English equivalent **love child** stresses the sentimental implications of the affair, rather than its unlawfulness. In the past the birth of a love child often caused a **gunshot marriage**: the groom would be forced to get married at **gunpoint** by the bride's father. This definition highlights the groom's unwillingness to give up on his freedom through the abovementioned wedlock; by contrast, the Italian **matrimonio riparatore** lays the stress on the **mending effect** of the sacrament over the **sin** (supposedly) committed.