

Afterword



In Medieval times, the Lord in power frequently issued edicts called **bans** for a variety of purposes, the most important of which was to conscript men for battle. All called were expected to comply. One shirking his duty was considered outside the **ban**. This made for the French *bannir*, “to proclaim,” labeling him an outlaw, leading to his **banishment** and making him a **bandit**, from the Italian *bandito*.

Over time, the **ban** evolved from a proclamation to a prohibition. In our culture we primarily **ban** ideas. Words such as those which make up the body of this book are often the subject for **banning**, making writers outlaws of sorts.

The lord’s **banal** rights also gave him exclusive control of everything on his estate: the ovens, mills, storage facilities etc., and the right to decree who used them—conditions set forth in the **bans**. There were **bans** for everything, even for formal notice of intended marriage, as when they posted the **banns**. Covering so many situations, and issued with such frequency, the **ban** came to be considered commonplace or trite. Yet another **ban**...ho-hum. This explains how those working to **ban** ideas and works of art today would merely substitute their own **banal** stuff in its stead.

Equally **banal** is the senseless bombardment of these words and their cheap exploitation. Knights once raised the flag of their sovereign lord in tribute to him. It was called a **banner**. The word is now considered a symbol of principles, making for **banner** headlines and **banner** years—proclaiming things “leading” or “foremost.” These are **banner** years for dirty words. Never before have they had it so good. The French gave us *mettre à bandon*, “to put under another’s control,” hence to give it up. **Abandon** the principle of freedom of expression to the self-styled lords of morality? **Banish** the thought. But let us also raise high the **banner** of taste and creative use of language for all words, bar none.