



## The Problem With 'Immoral' Covers

What started me off on this one was seeing a reference to politically incorrect covers and morality and immorality. That, in turn, led me to begin thinking about a new small category I had only started early last year...covers with swear words on them. Hmmm! Were those covers *immoral*? What *is* 'immoral', anyway? Can covers *be* immoral? If so, which ones? Is it immoral to collect immoral covers?...Ohhhhh! My head is spinning!

Let's tackle 'immoral' first [*fools go where angels fear to tread!*] What is it? That's quite important these days, especially, I think, given our rapidly changing culture, the current times of political correctness, and the trend of revising history to suit the whims of the moment. Basically, 'immoral' means not living according to the morals (values) of your society...and that's *all* it means! Many people, these days, seem to like to go back and lay *our* values on other cultures and times. So, was Thomas Jefferson immoral because he owned slaves? No, because slavery was seen as OK in his culture. Was Al Capone immoral for evading taxes? Yes, because that was *not* OK in his culture. The point is that a person or action can only be judged as being moral or immoral based on the values of *that* particular society at *that* particular time. You have to agree with whatever it is, but you can't say it's immoral when it or he or she was in line with the particular society's mores at the time.

The problem is that it's become politically correct to revise history to suit the current fads and judge people and events in the past according to *our* values...which is bad enough...but look around!...As a society, *we're* not even certain anymore what our values *are*? What's right? What's wrong? The society as a whole doesn't seem to have definitive answers anymore...*because if we did, someone might be offended*...but, that's another topic.

Well, *do* 'immoral' covers exist? Yes, they do. My little collection of swear word covers constitutes such, because we still have a value against swearing...although that value (along with many others) will apparently die out with my generation. Still, even here, I can see where my argument could get in trouble. So far, I've based the definition of 'immoral' on what is officially OK in the society. But swearing in print is legal, although I hold that the *social* value against it is still fairly strong. What about Girlie covers? Hmmm...moral! They're legally and culturally acceptable. Of course, these covers aren't porn, so there's a degree of explicitness involved in this example.

Sometimes the morality of a cover depends on location. A brothel cover from California would be immoral, because prostitution is illegal there. A similar cover, however, from Nevada, right next door, is perfectly moral because prostitution is legal there. [*remember, we've defined 'moral' and 'immoral' according to accepted secular mores, not religious mores*].

And sometimes the lines between the two get rather blurred. Take, for example, 1930s-1940s covers from Southern restaurants indicating something like "Blacks not served here." Does *that* represent immorality? Well...slavery was certainly abolished by then, but such treatment of Blacks was just as certainly institutionalized in at least the Deep South: sitting in the back of the bus, separate schools, separate drinking fountains, etc. None of this was legally challenged until later on in our history. Still, Blacks *were* served in 'white' restaurants in other areas of the country. So, where does that leave us?...

...There's probably a much better term for such covers than 'moral' or 'immoral'. 'Politically incorrect' would seem to be much too shallow a term for the events and behaviors here... '*Currently unacceptable?*' '*Historical values currently not in vogue?*' '*Things we don't do anymore!*'?