

# Reworking classics for one generation or ruining it for another?

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## INVESTIGATE ARTICLE

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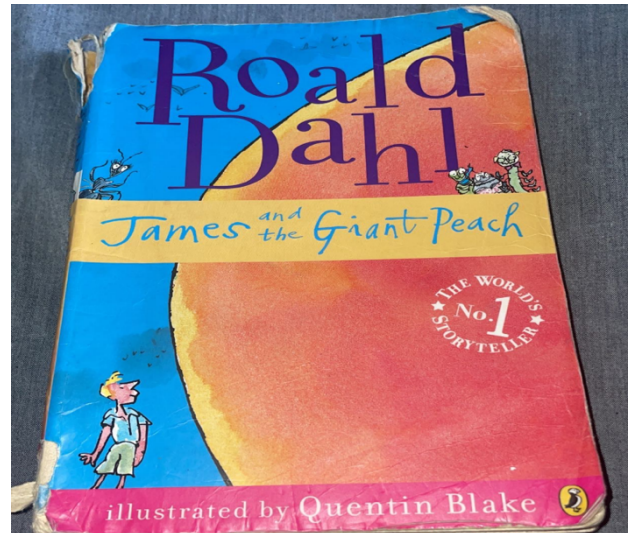
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**R**ewritten editions of many classics by British author Roald Dahl are set to be released with reworked titles that are meant to be more inclusive for all readers.

Contents in regard to characters' physicality, gender and race are to be changed to more 'child friendly' terms. For example, Bruce Bogtrotter within the infamous story *Matilda* is no longer described as 'fat' but is now 'enormous,' or as within *James and the Giant Peach*, the 'cloud men' is said to be changed to 'cloud people.'

This announcement was undoubtedly going to cause shockwaves in society for two reasons. One being that Roald Dahl is a beloved and highly regarded author with his children's books, being extremely well known, selling over 300 million copies worldwide.

Secondly, there is a growing debate in the world, inclusivity vs sensitivity. With many people, namely the older generation, believing that the newer, so called,



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'snowflake' generation are overly sensitive to a fault.

However, the young adults of today have adopted a different mindset, one that ensures that different groups of people are always included and are made to feel visible in all facets of life.

This is done by removing any language or media that could cast them in a negative light, as well as ensuring that people are always authentically represented to avoid any marginalisation.

This has caused many readers to have mixed feelings, due to many people having Roald Dahl's books intertwined in their fondest childhood memories.

Personally, I can relate to this as growing up, the first set of books that I remember truly resonating with me, were written by Roald Dahl. Namely, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* and *The Twits*.

A particular favourite of mine is *James and the Giant Peach*, as the thought of animals

coming to life and conversing blew my mind and had my eyes glued to the book.

I believe that the books shouldn't be reworked since the author who created them is not alive to edit them himself, taking away from the magic and uniqueness of his stories.

In response to the suggested changes of Dahl's books, I think that there needs to be a set criterion on what is deemed as 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable,' otherwise we will be editing and reworking books forever until there is nothing left.

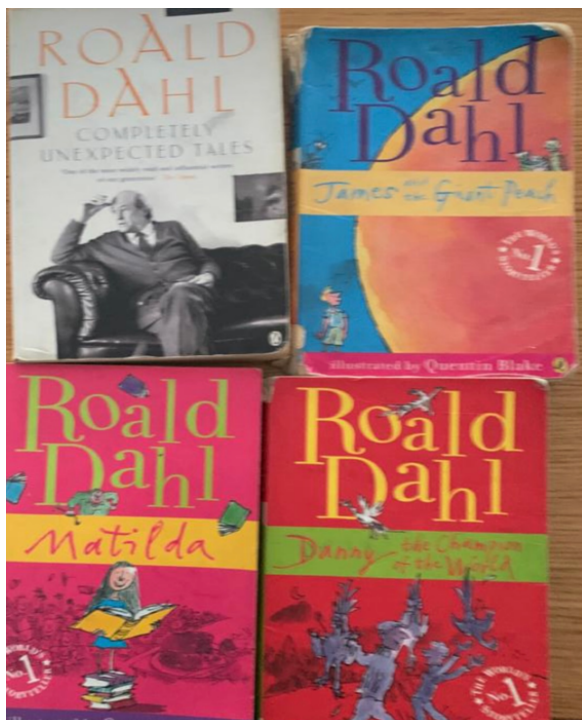
It has been said that Puffin, the publishers of the books, have hired 'sensitivity readers' to rewrite the books. What do these sensitivity readers deem as 'inappropriate' and do they have any guidelines which they follow for them to be replacing words? These are amongst many questions people have in concern of what the new reworked texts will be changed to.

On the other hand, there is a different angle to approach this situation. The reworked versions might attract more people and Roald Dahl's fanbase could be broadened. The inclusivity of the new books allows different groups of society that might usually be ostracised from children's books and society in general, to feel seen and included.

This would be good as young children from these groups will resonate with the books much deeper. This is a mutually beneficial situation, providing more readers for Road Dahl and his family, and people from different backgrounds will feel seen for once.

The reworked versions of these books were a shock to many, but it might surprise us all for the better.

Overall, the perception of whether Roald Dahl's original work is deemed to be inappropriate for contemporary readers is entirely subjective. However, if Dahl's work is changed, will the screen adaptations based upon the originals be appropriate for current children to watch?



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