



British Literature Expert Available To Discuss Final Harry Potter Book

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DURHAM, N.H. – British literature expert James Krasner is available to discuss the seventh and final Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, scheduled for publication July 21, 2007.

Krasner, a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, can discuss the book in the context of the genre in which it is written – British Public School novels, a popular writing style of 19th century Britain that may be unfamiliar to most Americans. He also can share his thoughts regarding what characters he believes will or will not survive J.K. Rowling's final book.

The classic novel of British Public School genre is *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, set in the Rugby School for Boys. Others include *David Copperfield* and *Jane Eyre*. "The heroes in these genres simply do not die – they are stories of development that focus on family and education. Sacrifice matters, and important characters are sacrificed, but it's never the hero," Krasner says.

According to Krasner, Rowling's success has been through working in these genres – giving us complicated plots, likeable young orphaned heroes, hateable authoritarian villains, mean step-parents and humorous minor characters. To step out of that would be like Bach shifting to an atonal scale in the last part of a cantata – it would seem terribly dissonant, and would undermine the structure she's worked so hard to create.

And Rowling is more attentive to narrative structure than virtually any 20th or 21st century novelist – she wouldn't throw it away just to reinforce a theme or prove a point, according to Krasner. Rowling changes the tone of the novels, just as Dickens' tone becomes darker as he deals with more mature subjects in his later novels, but the basic structure of the stories doesn't change.

"We like this genre because it makes us happy. Justice is done, the protagonist learns some lessons and ends up content. Harry doesn't get everything he wants, but he does get friends, he gets a surrogate family in the Weasleys, he gets respect from Dumbledore, he gets recognition for his magical powers, and he usually wins the competition he's in, whether it's Quidditch or the house cup. Big holes remain in his life, but the stories give us a sense of satisfaction. Harry dying might make some abstract point about good and evil and the necessity of sacrifice, but we don't read these books for abstract points. We read them for emotional fulfillment," Krasner says.

