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Heritage of Celtic Myths, Legends, Traditions and Rituals  
in Harry Potter Books

Bachelor paper

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2007

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Odkaz keltských mýtů, legend, tradic a rituálů v knihách o Harry  
Potterovi

Bakalářská práce

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2007

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V Pardubicích dne 30.3.2007

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## **Abstract**

The bachelor paper deals with Celtic myths, legends, traditions and rituals, analyzes their main aspects and compares them with J.K.Rowlings books about Harry Potter. The aim of the paper is to prove the linkage between Celtic tradition and Rowling's books, point out their main interesting aspects and show their resemblance. The paper starts with the introduction of basic terminology of myth, legend and magic. The second chapter analyzes characters from Harry Potter books, as well as animals, creatures and supernatural beings of the wizarding world, and compares them with those that occur in Celtic myths and legends. Third chapter deals with rituals, their importance and function in Celtic society, as well as in Rowling's books. The paper ends with analysis of symbolism that is included in Harry Potter stories and contrasts it finds its roots in Celtic mythology.

## **Abstrakt**

Tato práce se zabývá keltskými mýty, legendami, tradicemi a rituály a analyzuje jejich nejdůležitější aspekty, které porovnává s knihami J.K.Rowlingové o Harry Potterovi. Cílem této práce je dokázat úzkou spojitost mezi keltskou tradicí a knihami Rowlingové, vyzdvihnout důležité aspekty obou zmiňovaných, a poukázat na jejich podobnost. Práce začíná úvodem, kde je vysvětlena hlavní terminologie mýtu, legendy a magie. Druhá kapitola analyzuje postavy z knihy o Harry Potterovi, stejně tak jako zvířata, příšery a nadpřirozené bytosti kouzelnického světa a srovnává je s těmi, které se objevují v keltských mýtech a legendách. Třetí kapitola se zabývá rituály, jejich významem a funkcí v keltské společnosti, stejně jako v knihách Rowlingové. Práce je zakončena analýzou symboliky, která je obsažena v příbězích o Harry Potterovi a objevuje její kořeny v keltské mytologii.

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## **1. Introduction**

Myths and legends have always been a part of human culture and reach far back into human history. Although they may seem to be slowly disappearing and becoming less important in modern world, in fact, they have strong roots that have enabled them to survive over centuries. Myths and legends generally have the blessing to enter people's lives somehow, being hidden in fairytales and films, as they are resistant to decline. To be specific, recently there has been a huge boom of interest in mythology caused by Harry Potter stories. It may nearly seem that he himself has become a legend in just a few years. But there may be more to it. Perhaps, it is thanks to the Celtic myths and legends that are concealed in Harry Potter books, shown as a living proof of the human kind's firm bounds to its ancient times, culture and traditions in which one often finds faith, belief and philosophy.

There are thousands of books that try to reveal the secrets of Celtic mysteries and philosophy in different ways. This paper deals with both the Celts, people shrouded in mysteries, legends and magic, and Harry Potter stories. Its aim is to uncover the veil of Celtic mysteries, culture, rituals, traditions, religion and heritage hidden in Rowling's books about Harry Potter. There has been six volumes released so far and the seventh is to be published this year. The purpose is mainly to show that Celtic heritage is not forgotten even nowadays, in modern times, and that it still strongly influences our lives, often without us realizing. The aim of this paper is to prove the linkage between the Celtic myths and legends and Harry Potter stories.

The paper is divided into three main parts, each of them dealing with different aspects that have their origin in Celtic myths and legends. The first chapter brings out the characters from Harry Potter books and divides them into three main sections: wizards, animals and creatures, and elves, fairies, giants and other supernatural beings. This chapter starts with the introduction of a fictional wizarding world and the Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry that Harry Potter attends and compares it with the Celtic mythological Otherworld. It also shows the similarities between the Hogwarts wizards and Celtic druids. Further, it introduces particular characters into detail; these are Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore, and contrasts them with specific characters and heroes that can be found in Celtic mythology and legends. The second

section deals with animals and creatures found in Harry Potter books and compares them with their depiction in Celtic myths and legends. The same concerns the elves, fairies, giants and other supernatural beings that are said to dwell in *sídhe*, according to the Celtic mythology. Chapter number two investigates the core of rituals, reveals their relations, importance and function for druidic society, and again, searches its similarities in Harry Potter stories. It explains the term magic in detail and shows its close connectedness to the Celtic mythology. The resemblance of Celtic rituals and those practiced in Harry Potter wizarding world are illustrated on particular spells and rituals, also mentioning the indispensable tools and instruments needed for a successful accomplishment of magic rituals. The last chapter examines the importance of symbols and their utilization in Celtic mythology, investigates the archetypes that have their roots in Celtic mythology and contrasts them with those that appear in Harry Potter books. There is also briefly mentioned how readers perceive Rowling's books.

At the beginning of the paper, it is important to look closer at the definition of what the myth, mythology, legend and magic is:

Myth is a complex cultural phenomenon that can be approached from a number of viewpoints. In general, myth is a narrative that describes and portrays in symbolic language the origin of the basic elements and assumptions of a culture...Almost all cultures possess or at one time possessed and lived in terms of myths. Myths differ from fairy tales in that they refer to a time that is different from ordinary time...Because myths refer to an extraordinary time and place and to gods and other supernatural beings and processes, they have usually been seen as aspects of religion. Because of the all-encompassing nature of myth, however, it can illuminate many aspects of individual and cultural life. (Encarta Encyclopedia)

Body of myths is then called mythology. According to the above mentioned definition, there is also a clear border between a myth and a fairy tale. Since this paper deals with myths on one hand and Harry Potter books on the other hand, and tries to find similarities between the two previously mentioned, it is important to mention whether Harry Potter stories uphold the signs of a myth or whether it is just a fairy tale. For the definition clearly distinguishes myth from a fairy tale, one can assume that Harry Potter is "just" a fairy tale, although the border may sometimes be very fragile. There do occur supernatural beings and processes, and in fact, Harry Potter stories do happen in an extraordinary place - the wizarding world. But as it is described, this world is a part of

*contemporary Britain*. The most apt definition would then be that Rowling's books are fairytales that are based on mythological aspects, as well as on legends that differ from myth by depicting rather human heroes than gods. It is also important to state, which particular Celtic myths this paper is going to deal with. Since the Celts themselves used to dwell a great part of the western and middle European continent, it would be very hard to take in all the miscellaneous myths within this paper. Hence it will contain only the myths of the British Isles for the reason formulated as the following:

The insular Celts of the British Isles, particularly of Ireland, remained relatively undisturbed by other cultures far longer than the other European Celts. They thus retained traditions longer than their European relatives. (Matthews 6)

The main sources which this paper draws from are Irish and Welsh mythology. Generally, the Celtic mythology can be divided into three main parts: "Celtic mythology consists of three groups: *The Goidelic*, including Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the western highlands of Scotland, *The Insular Brythonic*, including Wales and Cornwall, and *The Continental Brythonic*, including Brittany" (pantheon.org). Green claims that Irish mythology is represented mainly by its four major cycles: *The Ulster Cycle*, formerly *the Red Branch Cycle*, *the Mythological Cycle*, *the Fenian Cycle* and *the Historical Cycle*. Welsh myths that are mentioned in this paper originate from *The four branches of the Mabinogi*, the most mythological stories that come from *The Mabinogion*, a collection of prose stories from Welsh medieval manuscripts (11-14). Apart of these main sources, some other origins of Celtic myths may appear in the text with its source mentioned eventually. Both in Harry Potter stories and Celtic myths, magic plays a fundamental role. Its definition is explained below, as well as the importance it serves the Celtic mythology and J.K.Rowling's books:

Magic (sorcery), art of influencing the course of events or gaining knowledge by supernatural means. Magic is linked to alchemy, occultism, spiritualism, superstition, and witchcraft. The term is derived from the ancient Persian magi, whose priestly occupations included dealing with the occult. The ancient Greeks and Romans also practiced magic. According to anthropologists, magical beliefs and practices exist in most less-sophisticated cultures. Moreover, magical beliefs and practices, such as fortune-telling, communication with the dead, astrology, and belief in lucky numbers and charms, survive even in the most advanced cultures. (Encarta Encyclopedia)



Why is magic so crucial in life of the Celts and their myths? At first, it is important to realize the fact that Celts were in their religion and beliefs deeply spiritually connected with nature, its supernatural powers and worshiped a pantheon of deities who they not only kept in respect but used them to make their everyday life better. For deeper understanding, one could ask the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung who scrutinized the meanings of myths and affirmed that “myths are based on dreams and fantastic imaginations which, in concrete terms, represent unconscious process of mind and thus become powerful tools of our deep inner changes and development” (McCoy 18). Generally, Jung found universal archetypes in world mythology and by means of the above mentioned description, he explained its importance in human life. And this is the key for understanding why the magic has such a cardinal status in Celtic myths, as well as in Harry Potter series. According to Jung, the deities and heroes of the myths are the archetypes in our minds. Magical rituals are used to bring to the synergy energies of which each comes from a different dimension, one representing the human being, the other particular deity whose power or ability one wishes to possess for fulfilling their aim. This core principle is demonstrated also in Harry Potter books which contain a great deal of various rituals, spells and magical objects. Rituals are explained and described more deeply in the third chapter.

## 2. Characters

This chapter is devoted to the introduction of characters that appear in Harry Potter stories and demonstrates their resemblance to the characters and heroes of Celtic mythology. For profound grasp relating to the core of this chapter, it is useful to mention the setting of the Harry Potter series and show its very similitude to the Otherworld that plays a crucial role in Celtic mythology.

### 2.1. Wizarding world

The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry will be introduced, as well as some of its occupants, and will be set against the fili who belonged to the scholarly druidic class. The author of Harry Potter books, J.K.Rowling, created her own fantasy world, the wizarding world, where wizards and witches live in a parallel world to the world of muggles (ordinary people without the ability to perform magic). This world is situated in contemporary Great Britain and its dwellers have to remain hidden to muggles' attention. The guard against the focus of muggles is shielded by the Ministry of Magic. The wizarding world is resided by miscellaneous dwellers: wizards, witches, elves, giants, dragons, animals and other creatures and supernatural beings. When examining the description of the Otherworld or *sídh*e as perceived by the ancient Celts, one can come to the conclusion that these two "worlds" convey similar aspects. The Otherworld was of a great importance to the Celts as it presented a source of wisdom, place, where their worshiped deities dwelled. It is said to lie close to the borders of the ordinary world:

The Otherworld is generally understood to lie within the compass of one's ship sailing to the islands of the furthest West. Many wonder-voyages are taken to reach those shores; these are so numerous in Irish tradition that they constitute a genre of storytelling – the *immrama*. The realms of the Otherworld are of the ever-living, where everything is possible, where great deeds are accomplished. The text speak of a life which is enhanced to perfection, no an impossible heaven, in the Otherworld, life goes on as in the manifest world, with eating and drinking, making love and merriment. (Matthews 63)

From the above depiction, one can assume that the Otherworld carries similar features to the wizarding world of Harry Potter books. It is understood to lie close to the borders of the muggle world, maybe closer than one could imagine. The only difference is that it does not lie „within the compass of one’s ship sailing“, but rather within the journey by the magic train called Hogwarts Express which departs from the very real King’s Cross Station, Platform 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> , though hidden to muggles by various thorough protection spells. Another example is Diagon Alley which is a main high street of wizards and witches, situated in London, but hidden to the mortals similarly as the Platform 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>:

...“How shall I get to the platform? “ asked Harry. “Do not worry about that, the woman answered. You just have to go straight to the partition between the platforms 9 and 10. Do not stop and do not be worried that you hit it, that is very important“...and Harry ran but he did not hit anything, he kept running and then opened his eyes. There was a red engine with the sign Hogwarts Express on it...He did it! (Rowling *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s stone* 91, my translation)

Likewise, certain places were considered to be the entrances to the Otherworld, these were usually the mounds, also called sídhes, as Botheroyds explain (342). These were the places where gods, elves, fairies and other supernatural beings dwelled, similarly to the Harry Potter’s Wizarding world. It is interesting to mention different running of time. Many wizards and witches from Wizarding world are much older than mortals could ever be. In Celtic tradition, many legends speak about heroes who, having returned from the Sídhe, find out that many years have passed since their leaving, albeit having perceived that they were away only for few days.

Before introducing the main characters, it is important to acquaint with the Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry, its general conception and philosophy, and show its similitude with the druidic system of education. The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was founded more than thousand years ago. The school has seven grades, and a wide spectrum of subjects related to student’s future job is taught there. Among compulsory and facultative subjects, one can find for instance: Transfiguration, Charms, Defence Against the Dark Arts, Potions, Herbology, History of Magic, Astronomy, Divination, Care of Magical Creatures, Muggle Studies, and so on. To become a registered wizard or witch, students must pass Ordinary Wizarding Level (O.W.L.) examination in their third to fifth grade. If passed, they can proceed to

the Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Test (N.E.W.T.) which comprises fewer subjects but in more depth and is examined at the end of the seventh grade.

Similarly, the priestly class in ancient Celtic societies, called Druids, had to complete thoroughgoing education. According to Matthews, Druids were members of the *aos dana*, the people of art, and were also said to have magical abilities. They were bonesetters, astrologers, teachers, poets, judges and prophets as well (40). As they did not allow their wisdom to be put into the written form, for their lore of twenty years' studies consisted of learning numerous verses by heart, basically no single verse was preserved in the written form. Thus the information about Druidic lore interpretation is provided mainly by Roman or Christian records that describe their doctrines:

Of the famous teaching of the Druids we know little, owing to their habit of never allowing their doctrines to be put into writing. Caesar, however, roughly records its scope. "As one of their leading dogmas," he says, "they inculcate this: that souls are not annihilated, but pass after death from one body to another, and they hold that by this teaching men are much encouraged to valour, through disregarding the fear of death. They also discuss and impart to the young many things concerning the heavenly bodies and their movements, the size of the world and of our earth, natural science, and of the influence and power of the immortal gods." (Squire 36)

Druids were of a great status to the kings, acting as their advisers. They were not just philosophers but their wisdom had to be applicable in a daily life. Druids were divided into three ranks: bards (in Ireland called *fili*), who were the poets and scholars, *vates*, the soothsayers, and druidic priesthoods:

The training of a *Fili* lasted many years; the beginning student was called "Ollaire" and passed on to the other grades of "Tamhan" and "Drisac." At these grades the student was expected to learn the basics of the art, including grammar and the Ogham, and they had to memorize 20 stories. Following completion of these tasks students were called "Anruth" and were expected to learn 95 more tales, as well as the place-name stories of Ireland, called "Dindshenchas," and the forms of poetic composition and meter. Following this grade students were called "Eces" and "Fili," passing through these two grades to be called "Ollamh," which means "doctor of poetry." By the time a student reached this grade, he was the master of more than 350 stories and poems. ([irishdruidry.org](http://irishdruidry.org))

The poets were considered to be a channel of connection between reality and the supernatural which was the source of all knowledge. *Fili* were able to perform rituals

and shamanic techniques by which the supernatural was expressed. The poems were though the source of all knowledge and contained the spiritual powers. These Irish heroes had to be the masters of poetic art.

Similarly, Hogwarts' pupils find themselves somewhere between reality and supernatural. Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was divided into four houses: Gryffindor, symbolised by valour, courage and chivalry, Hufflepuf, characterised by loyalty and a hard work ethics, Ravenclaw, representing wit and intellect, and Slytherin, standing for ambition and cunning. Each of the houses was founded by different wizards and witches that carry the general qualities of each house. Students are divided into these houses on the basis of the decision that is made by Sorting hat, a special hat that is put on the head of each student at the beginning of their first year, being able to recognize person's character and qualities:

Harry noticed that sometimes, the *Sorting Hat* shouted out the name immediately, however, another time it took him a while to make a decision.....and then Harry only saw the black inside of the hat and waited. "Hmmm," said a small voice in his ear. "Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not a bad mind either. There's talent, oh my goodness yes - and a nice thirst to prove yourself, now that's interesting.... So where shall I put you?" Harry held the edges of the chair and said to himself "Not to *Slytherin*, not there." „You say not to *Slytherin*?" Interposed the silent voice. Well, if you are sure, then let it be – *Gryffindor*!" (Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone" 116, my translation)

There is a group of people in Irish mythology, called Tuatha de Dannan. These were, according to the *Book of Invasion* (mythical stories about origin and history of Irish people), inhabitants of Ireland, were proficient in poetry and magic, and were thought to represent the gods, although by later Christian transcriptions they were relegated to kings and heroes. According to some legends, as Vlčková states, Tuatha de Dannan descended on the Earth from heavens; other sources say they came from four northern cities Falias, Gorias, Murias and Finias where they acquired their skills. They brought four treasures with them: the Dagda's cauldron, the Spear of Lugh, the Stone of Fal and the Sword of Nuada (297). Likewise, the four Hogwarts houses were each represented by a specific symbol, or to be more precise, each house has its relics. There could be a close linkage to the four treasures mentioned in Arthurian legends as well,

and possibly with the four elements that play an important role in Celtic rituals and magic.

From the above comparison of druidic education and this depicted in Harry Potter books, and the Hogwarts houses resembling the Irish myth about Tuatha de Dannann, one can assume that J.K.Rowling has used sources from Celtic mythology as a firm ground for her books. In the next part of this chapter, selected individual characters will be examined, beginning with the wizards, continuing with animals and creatures, and ending with giants, goblins, ghosts, and other supernatural beings.

## **2.2. Wizards**

Harry Potter is an 11 years old orphan, living with his unfriendly aunt, uncle and cousin in Great Britain. He is treated badly and whenever anything odd happens around, he is always the one to blame. Everything changes on Harry's eleventh birthday when a giant Hagrid arrives secretly and delivers an acceptance to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the most exclusive boarding school for magicians in Great Britain. And here, in Hogwarts, starts the mysterious and fascinating story of Harry Potter, the "boy who lived". When he was a baby, his parents were killed by the evil wizard Voldemort but Harry survived only with a lightning-bolt scar on his forehead which often warns him of a hidden danger:

“Such mark will appear when some powerful, evil wizard touches you – it killed your mother and father and destroyed your house – but it did not defeat you, and that's why you are famous, Harry. No one stayed alive if he tried to kill them, and he killed so many powerful witches and wizards of that time –McKinnons, Bones, Prewettes – and you were only a small child but you survived.” (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone” 57, my translation)

Thus Harry became known all over the Wizarding World as the only one who had ever survived the killing curse Avada Kedavra, and so caused Voldemort's downfall. And it is Dark Wizard Lord Voldemort who tries, in every book volume, to regain his power by fighting Harry Potter, the famous, skinny, little boy with mysterious powers and sensibilities. “The Celtic hero is supernaturally prodigious. Size and age are no disability to him” (Matthews 74). Although Harry was small in size and young in age,

he was still able to defeat the Dark Wizard Voldemort. As the years pass by, in each volume, Harry is getting older, more learned, braver and more capable of magical abilities. And in each volume he has to face the evil Lord Voldemort who continually pursues Harry's death to be able to come to power over the whole Wizarding World again. He is not the only enemy Harry has to face. He is considered to be a half-blood wizard because his mother was a muggle-born (the witches and wizards born to Muggle parents or having at least muggle grandparents) and for the pure-blood wizards' fanatics, the muggle-borns are considered to be on the same level as muggles, despite the fact that some of the best witches and wizards ever are muggle-born. Great example is Merlin, as described in Celtic myths:

He was born to earthly mother and father from the Otherworld. He is an archetypal bridge and contact between the spiritual and material world and sometimes he is seen as a minor god of light. (McCoy 404).

One of the supporters of the pure-blood philosophy is Slytherin's student Draco Malfoy, main Harry's rival in Hogwarts school, because of his vicious remarks on Hermione Granger, one of Harry's best friends, the family of Ron Weasley, another Harry's best friend, and other muggle-born students:

“You know how I think they choose people for the Gryffindor team?” said Malfoy a few minutes later, as Snape awarded Hufflepuff another penalty for no reason at all. “It's people they feel sorry for. See, there's Potter, who's got no parents, then there's the Weasleys, who've got no money – you should be on the team, Longbottom, you've got no brains.” (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone” 207).

However, much more dangerous are Death Eaters, one of them being Malfoy's father. They are the followers of Voldemort, who fought on his side during his war against British wizarding government Ministry of Magic and the Dumbledore's anti-Dark group of allies called Order of the Phoenix. Another evil enemies of Harry are Dementors, a soul-sucking demons who serve as guards in the wizard prison of Azkaban. Among Harry's strengths belong his exceptional skills that he largely gained when Voldemort tried to kill him. Being marked with a lightning scar by Voldemort, he became basically

equal to him and connected with his mind. Whenever is Voldemort close or feels murderous, Harry's scar starts to hurt:

Dumbledore looked very intensely at Harry for a moment, and then said, "I have a theory, no more than that ... It is my belief that your scar hurts both when Lord Voldemort is near you, and when he is feeling a particularly strong surge of hatred." "But...why?" "Because you and he are connected by the curse that failed," said Dumbledore. "That is no ordinary scar." (Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" 652)

For sure, Harry's scar in the shape of a lightning is extraordinary and this fact confirms even Celtic symbolism of a lightning that can be explained as two adverse powers:

Lightning is, as well as the Sun, the heavenly fire, ambivalent, both salutary and devastating power. On the one hand, it brings rain, which is necessary for fertility...on the other hand, it endangers people's lives. (Botheroyd 37, my translation).

Harry's other great personal quality is the ability to love despite of his deep grief because of having lost his beloved parents. He has great leadership skills and realizes his potential. He teaches his classmates Defence against the Dark Arts and thus faces the Death Eaters. His loyalty pays him back by his friends being willing to risk their own lives to defend him. He also excels at his athletic abilities, to be precise, in the most popular sport of the wizarding world called Quidditch. There are always two teams in a game, flying on broomsticks, and their aim is to score by throwing the ball, Quaffle, through hoops on either end of the field. Concerning his magical abilities, one of the oddest ones is the ability to speak with snakes, being the Parselmouth. It is an art associated with the Dark Arts, but as Dumbledore soon recognized, it serves Harry more as a useful tool than evil power:

"Listen to me, Harry. You happen to have many qualities Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students. His own very rare gift, Parseltongue -- resourcefulness -- determination -- a certain disregard for rules. Yet the Sorting Hat placed you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think...It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." (Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" 357)



Harry gained this power during the Voldemort's attempt to kill him and unwillingly transferring some of his powers on Harry. Another exceptional ability that Harry learned at the very early age, and that only a small part of wizarding population is able to perform, is a Patronus Charm that is used to fight off the Dementors. Harry's Patronus takes a form of a stag, his father's animagi form:

"You think the dead we loved ever truly leave us? You think we don't recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble? Your father is alive in you, Harry, and shows himself plainly when you have need of him. How else could you produce that *particular* Patronus? Prongs rode again last night." (Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban 460)

Likewise, the Celtic hero always had a whole range of outstanding qualities and reached excellent outcomes. These were called "clessa" and "buada". Though, he was not perfect at all and had his weaknesses as well:

His gift of prudence until his warrior's flame appeared, the gift of feats, the gift of buanfach (a game like draughts), the gift of chess-playing, the gift of calculating, the gift of sooth-saying, the gift of discernment, the gift of beauty. ..Set against this were his defects: He was too young...too daring...and too beautiful. (Matthews 75)

Harry often suffers from his weaknesses such as not being able to deal with his emotions properly, attempts to solve everything on his own by undervaluing abilities of his friends, occasionally lacking self-confidence himself, being stubborn and not being able to control his anger which sometimes bears the stamp of dark feelings, probably as a result of being connected with Voldemort's mind. As a student, Harry is classified as mediocre because of lacking the initiative to learn subjects and perform charms that he does not consider of any good to him.

From the Harry Potter characteristics mentioned above one can assume that he carries the similar qualities of a Celtic hero depicted in their myths and legends. The importance of a hero in Celtic society is proved in such stories as of Cúchulainn, Fionn or Arthur. These and other alike characters comprised binding image of positive society values and kept its importance over centuries up till today. Botheroyds mention that even though they developed from divine concept they still retain its human attributes.

They are not immortal, have to face crisis, illnesses, sufferings and their own personal taints. Their valour, courage, physical strength, determination and the will to win are commonplace for the ideal of society. They often gain their supernatural powers as a blessing from the Otherworld:

They seek out the Otherworld not only to meliorate in martial arts or to acquire the knowledge about future but also because of forays in service of humans, on account of demons and other dangerous beings' repressing, sometimes they assail or even kill some prince from the Otherworld or they seek the way there in a company of beautiful women. Hence, heroes play in a stratum of a battler similar role as druids in the first class: they maintain the contact between the human and supernatural world. (Botheroyd 160, my translation)

Another character of a great importance in Harry Potter stories is Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He is considered the most powerful wizard of a time and could easily be perceived as an archetypal representative of Merlin, being good-hearted, wise, eccentric, father-like wizard:

"He was tall, thin, and very old, judging by the silver of his hair and beard, which were both long enough to tuck into his belt. He was wearing long robes, a purple cloak that swept the ground, and high-heeled, buckled boots. His blue eyes were light, bright, and sparkling behind half-moon spectacles and his nose was very long and crooked, as though it had been broken at least twice."(Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone" 14)

Like Harry, he recognizes Parsletongue, apart from this can speak several other languages including Mermish. He masters alchemy, transfiguration, legilimency (ability to extract emotions and memories from one's mind, normally not taught in Hogwarts), performs magic without using a wand, such as turning invisible, and is able to see through an invisibility cloak. He is a member of various wizarding organizations, for example Order of Merlin, or Order of the Phoenix. His Patronus takes shape of a phoenix. His whole name is Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore and if we examine his name into detail, we find certain roots in mythology as well:

The word *Albus* in Latin means „white“ but it shows its close connection to *Albion*: The old Roman-Celtic name of Britain, used in poetry till today. It is

said to be derived from Latin word *albus*, meaning „white“, connected with well-known white cliffs of Dover. In common usage *Albion* was replaced by Latin word „Britannia“. (McCoy 478)

Concerning the word Percival, he was one of the King Arthur's legendary Knights of the Round Table and is famous for his involvement in the quest for the Holy Grail while Brian is a name of Celtic origin meaning strength, dignity, and honour. According to Irish myths, Brian was the son of Tuireann and with the help of his brothers, Iuchar and Iucharba, he killed Cian, father of Lugh (god of sun, “master of all arts”, Cuchulain’s father) and was said to have a power to change his shape and that of his brothers. Albus Dumbledore definitely carries many similar qualities of Merlin, maybe the most famous wizard of all times. He was a magician, druid, sorcerer and prophet, according to the Welsh lore named Myrddin, Myeddyn, Myrddhin, and considered the very first bard and a founder of bards’ order. Merlin plays a crucial role as an adviser to the King Arthur. However, myth and lore about Merlin has many faces and his historical origin is rather unclear:

“In Arthurian legends, he firstly appears in 1136 as a character in *Historia Regum Britanniae*, written by Geoffrey of Monmouth. In fact, he created Merlin from the simulation of two Celtic mythological characters, bard-prophet, Myrddin, and a “child without a father”, here, a young soothsayer Ambrosius who is mentioned by Nennius. And so was created a character that has fascinated the whole world ever since.” (Botheroyd 255)

There are many other literary sources which use the legend of Merlin as a framework. In Harry Potter books, he appears on a Chocolate Frog Trading Card and founded Order of Merlin which is an organization that set rules about protecting muggles and prohibited performing magic on them. Albus Dumbledore is not important only as a headmaster but plays a crucial role as a kindred spirit of Harry by supporting and encouraging him in his intentions, preparing him for dangerous duels with Voldemort, and in many ways feeling responsible and father-like due to the tragic death of Harry’s parents. Unfortunately, even the best wizards are not immortal and Albus Dumbledore is not an exception. To the grief of all wizarding world, with the exception of these performing the Dark Arts, he is killed by professor Snape with the Avada Kedavra curse. Likewise, Merlin is not spared unpleasant death:

Young Merlin fell in love with princess Nimue (in other version Niniane, Viviane, the Lady of the Lake, nymph), who accompanied him in his life and fate...Merlin taught her all his spells of which he finally became a victim himself. Nimue, that is to say, enchanted him into the stone grave of which there was no return. Other version of Merlin's life states that his departure was voluntary because he was broken by his life among humans. Noone has than seen Merlin ever after. (Vlčková 225, my translation)

Albus Dumbledore is certainly a wise man and even though he is not able to escape an unpleasant death, as well as Merlin, his wisdom and belief let him die without feeling any inner fear. He has the same point of view on death as the Celtic druids, for he claims that the end is only a beginning of something else.

### **2.3. Animals and creatures**

Besides the above mentioned and other wizard characters, animals and bizarre creatures frequently appear in J.K.Rowling's books as well as in Celtic myths and legends. This chapter introduces some of them into more depth and points out their most intriguing attributes.

Dragons are popularly used creatures in myths, legends and fairytales all over the world. In Harry Potter books they are depicted as large, flying reptiles breathing fire, and having magical abilities. Muggles remember them only from old mythology thanks to the efforts of Ministry of Magic to keep them hidden. They are regarded as one of the most dangerous creatures of the world and only specially educated wizards called dragon keepers can work with them. Their private ownership is illegal but this is of no concern to giant Rubeus Hagrid, friend of Harry Potter and his mates, who functions at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as a keeper of keys and grounds, the gamekeeper and a teacher of Care of Magical Creatures. He is known for his interest in weird and dangerous pets, such as dragons, three-headed dogs or enormous, spine-chilling acromantula spider:

Suddenly, a screeching noise echoed, the egg burst and a dragon suckling thumped on the table. It wasn't any attractive; Harry said to himself that it looked like a crumpled black umbrella. His spiny wings were huge in comparison with his skinny, black body; the dragonet had a long muzzle with wide nostrils, a sign of expectant horns, and goggle, orange eyes. Then the

suckling sneezed and a shower of sparks flew out of his muzzle. (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s stone” 218, my translation)

There are ten dragon breeds recognized in wizarding world. These are: Antipodean Opaleye , Chinese Fireball (Liondragon) , Common Welsh Green , Hebridean Black , Hungarian Horntail , Norwegian Ridgeback , Peruvian Vipertooth , Romanian Longhorn , Swedish Short-Snout and Ukrainian Ironbelly , each of them carrying different appearance and features. They are used for different purposes, such as guarding the safes in Gringott’s bank or providing essential ingredients for magical potions.

Description of dragons in myths and legends worldwide do not differ too much. The traditional one is perceived as a fire breathing creature with short legs and arms equipped with sharp talons, and wings as those of a bat. Hence, no wonder that these creatures became, through ages, unfavoured enemies. Dragons in British folklore were depicted from different cultures; there was a great influence of Saxons, Celts and also Normans. The best known dragon is the red dragon, Y Ddraig Goch in Welsh, which appears on the national Flag of Wales.

There is a Celtic myth, originating from *Mabinogion*, about two brothers, Llevelys, the King of France, and Llud, the Great King of Britain, who had to face three strange plagues of unknown reason, one of them being a grating scream that could be heard at every May Eve:

“On the night before Beltaine, on May’s Eve, an indescribable screech rang out across the entire land, a high and awful scream and all who heard it felt threatened with derangement – some even succumbed” (Delaney 181).

As all the plagues intensified, they caused serious troubles to all people of the kingdom and nobody knew what the reason is and how to get rid of these torments. Even poor King Llud was desperate and was not capable of any solution to them. Once, at a council, some of his counsellors advised him to ask his brother, King Llewelys, for help. He did so and Llewelys came with relieving unravelling of all three plagues and devised how to divest the kingdom of them. He found out that the second plague, the terrifying scream, was caused by two fighting dragons:

Llud then outlined the problem of a second plague, the May Eve's scream. "Caused by a dragon," said Llewelys down the brass trumpet, "under attack from a dragon attempting to invade your country. Your own dragon resists the attack every year but screams terribly. Now what you do is this. When you get back, survey the island mathematically...and when you have arrived at the exact centre mark the spot. Then dig a hole..at the bottom of this hole put a cauldron of your best mead which you then cover with a sheet of your best silk. Trust nobody else – stand guard here yourself next May Eve. (Delaney 182)

And so Llud did as he was told by his brother. When the fighting dragons appeared in the air, above the head of Llud, both of them fell to the cauldron of the very best mead, and at the moment they touched the silk, they turned into two small pigs who, in their thirst and greed, drank every drop of the mead. When they fell asleep, Llud tied them up securely in the silk and bundled them in a stone chest beneath Snowdon, the most secure fastness of his kingdom. Nobody heard the scream ever after again.

As mentioned in the chapter one, a deer plays an important role in Harry Potter series; the same significance applies Celtic myths and legends. This animal has absolutely fundamental meaning for Celtic society, symbolizing the horned god Cernunos, the god of the forests and animals. He is rendered with the horns of a deer on many Celtic works of art, the most famous of them being the Gundestrup Cauldron. He was the main god of fertility, the spouse of Great Mother goddess:

Horns symbolized female genitalia because of their U shape, and protruding horns of masculinity. Thus, attire stood for a fertility principle, connection of male and female aspect. Attire also symbolizes not only earth-life, but as well life after death, for the world of the dead is much like fertile as this world. Deer attire refers to creation, being or life in random level of existence, as well as to the transition from one form of life into another. Bodily human dies and spiritual one is born. (Kalweit 277, my translation)

From the above explanation we can see certain similar symbolism which is used by J.K.Rowling. White deer appears for the first time in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* when Harry is taught to cast the Patronus spell, which is the embodiment of positive thoughts of the performer. Patronus usually takes form of an animal and has a silvery phantom shape. It protects oneself from Dementors but is not easy to perform at all. However, Harry finally manages. His Patronus has a shape of a stag, which is the animagus form of his father. Here, we can see a demonstration of both the earth-life and

life-after-death symbolism mentioned in the citation. Although Harry's father is not alive any more, his spiritual power can be brought back by Harry performing the Patronus spell. Another similitude arises when we look into more depth on some Celtic myths where people are turned into a deer. Such examples are Irish myths of Fionn mac Cumhal, the legendary giant god and warrior, whose stories are told in *Fenian cycle*, and the myth of Gwyddion and Gilfaethwy who are depicted in the fourth branch of Welsh *Mabinogion*. Here, two brothers, nephews of Math, the son of Mathonwy, are punished for raping Math's foot-servant (for he could not exist unless his feet were in the lap of a maiden) by being turned into a deer and a hind. They are forced to live for one year in a forest and be coupled as animals:

Then he took his magic wand, and struck Gilfaethwy, so that he became a deer, and he seized upon the other hastily lest he should escape from him. And he struck him with the same magic wand, and he became a deer also. "Since now ye are in bonds, I will that ye go forth together and be coupled, and possess the nature of the animals whose form ye bear, and there will be offspring from this union. And this day twelvemonth come heither unto me." (Barber 351)

The *Ulster cycle* tells the story about Fionn mac Cumhal who is, one day, hunting in the forests with his hounds. Suddenly, he sees a white deer and when he is about to shoot an arrow to kill it, he notices a strange behaviour of his two dogs, who once used to be humans. They approach the deer and start to lick it because they recognized it once had been a human. Thus, Fionn spares the deer and it turns back into a beautiful woman, Sadhbh (also referred to as Sadv or Sadb), who was turned into a deer by the Dark Druid, Fer Doirich. They fall in love and get married. Unfortunately, one day Fionn has to go to a battle and when he returns, he finds out that Sadhbh is gone. Fer Doirich lured her out by taking a shape of Fionn, and turned her into a deer again. For seven years, Fionn tries to find his wife, when one day, he finds a little, golden-hair boy lying in the forest. He realizes it is a son of his and Sadhbh, takes him home and names him Oisín, which means "little deer".

Many myths and legends feature owls. These birds are generally perceived to symbolize a source of wisdom, thus being great companions for witches and wizards. In Celtic myths, owl is best known from the *Mabinogion* story of Blodeuwedd. In Harry Potter books, owls serve as letter carriers. Harry's owl is called Hedwig and is regarded

both his friend, as well as a method of communication. In wizarding world of J.K.Rowling, owls are said to be intelligent, even able to read because of their ability to deliver letters to the recipient stated on the envelope, and also identify the social standing of their owner. While Weasley's old owl is hardly able to make a journey without collapsing of tiredness, Malfoy's one is depicted as enormous, eagle owl:

At that moment, the post arrived. Harry was already getting used to it but the first day he was startled when suddenly, during breakfast, hundreds of owls flew into the Big Hall and all of them were wheeling around the tables until they found their owners and dropped parcels and letters into their laps. Hedwig has not brought Harry anything so far. Sometimes, she perched, bit his ear and took a piece of toast from him before she went to sleep again with other school owls. (Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone" 128 , my translation)

The most famous owl of Celtic myths is probably that from the fourth branch of Welsh *Mabinogion*, *Math son of Mathonwy*. There is a story about Blodeuwedd, a woman that was created from flowers by Math and Gwydion to marry Llew Llaw Gyffes, because his mother Arianrod forbid him to marry a human wife. However, Blodeuwedd fell in love with Gronw and they planned to kill her husband, Llew, together. They had to trick him because he could only be killed subject to certain conditions: neither during the day nor night, indoors nor outdoors, riding nor walking, clothed nor naked, and not by any weapon legally made. So, one night, Blodeuwedd pretended to be amazed by these rules and asked Llew innocently to tell her how all these conditions could be fulfilled. Because Llew trusted and loved his wife, he told her how the conditions could be achieved and, in addition to that, he demonstrated it to her one day, without knowing that Gronw is hidden nearby. At the moment all circumstances were fulfilled, Gronw jumped out and killed Llew who later turned into an eagle. Later on, Gwydion finds out what happened and he sets on a journey to find Llew-eagle. When he does so, he turns him back into a human and Llew kills Gronw. Gwydion punishes Blodeuwedd by turning her into an owl and drowning all her maiden companions:

And they were all drowned except Blodeuwedd herself, and her Gwydion overtook. And he said unto her, "I will turn thee into a bird; and because of the shame thou hast done unto Llew Llaw Gyffes, thou shalt never show thy face in the light of day henceforth; and that through fear of all other birds. For it shall be



their nature to attack thee and to chase thee from wheresoever they may find thee. And thou shalt not lose the name, but shalt be always called Blodeuwedd” Now Blodeuwedd is an owl in the language of this present time, and for this reason is the owl hateful unto all birds. And even now the owl is called Blodeuwedd. (Barber 360)

Thus the story of Blodeuwedd explains owls’ nocturnal life and their position among other birds. However, in Rowling’s wizarding world, owls are rather appreciated because of their postal service function.

## **2.4. Supernatural beings**

Besides animals and mythic creatures, supernatural beings can be found in a great amount both in J.K.Rowling’s books as well as in Celtic myths and legends. There, they are the dwellers of the Otherworld and often engaged in a hero’s life stories. In Harry Potter books, they are a common element of wizarding world, ordinarily influencing character’s events. Giants, goblins, brownies, ghosts, et cetera are all among them.

Giant called Hagrid is introduced at the very beginning of the first book *Harry Potter and Philosopher’s stone* as a half giant, half human, kind and sweet person who becomes a great friend of Harry and his friends. He works as a groundkeeper of Hogwarts and lives in a cabin on the edge of the Forbidden Forrest. He is obsessed with dangerous creatures, for example the already mentioned dragons. His childhood was rather sad, for his mother, also a giant, abandoned him and his father when he was only three years old. Hagrid was then raised by his wizard father, who died when his son was in the second grade at Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry. Albus Dumbledore then took him under his wing. In the third grade, Hagrid was unjustly accused of opening Chamber of Secrets and releasing its monster basilisk that later killed Moaning Myrtle (student, after her death she became a ghost and haunts in a girl’s bathroom). Student Tom Riddle (original name of Lord Voldemort) blamed him and thus Hagrid was expelled. Nevertheless, thanks to Albus Dumbledore, he was allowed to stay as a gamekeeper. Later, thanks to Harry and his friends, the truth was brought to light and Hagrid was purged. Rowling describes him in her books:

If the motorcycle was huge, it was nothing to the man sitting astride it. He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as wide. He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face. He had hands the size of trash can lids, and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s stone” 19)

However, appearance is probably the only feature that Hagrid has in common with giants. In the wizarding world, as well as in Celtic myths and legends, they are feared and considered to be dangerous. Kronzeks state in their book that giants have been a part of British lore and largely appeared in Arthurian legends. Here, they are described as sanguinary, horrifying and cruel beings that kidnap, torture and kill people, thus giants were often the main enemies of legendary heroes (206). There are many myths and legends where giants occur. Vlčková mentions that, according to the *Lebor Gabála Érenn (The Book of Invasions)*, there were once so called Fomorians, who were demonic giants having arrived from the sea, and very first dwellers of Ireland. Their name is derived from Gaelic words meaning “under sea”. They fought immigrants, first of them being Partholons who they defeated, second were people of Nemed, having the same fate as Partholons. Third were FirBolgs who, together with Tuatha de Dannan, managed to live in peace with Fomorians for a while. However, finally, Tuatha de Dannan felt oppressed by Fomorians and under the lead of Lug, they conquered Fomorian forces and chased them away to sea and sídhes (119). In literary sources, Fomorians are described as ugly monsters:

Offspring of “Chaos and Old Night”, they were, for the most part, huge and deformed. Some had but one arm and one leg apiece, while others had the heads of goats, horses, or bulls. The most famous, and perhaps the most terrible of them all was Balor, whose father is said to have been one Buarainech, this is, the cow-faced, and who combined in himself the two classical roles of the Cyclops and the Medusa. Though he had two eyes, one was always kept shut, for it was so venomous that it slew anyone on whom it look fell. (Squire 48)

Hence, the story of Fomorians documents that legendary giants, unlike 20th century Hagrid, were not hearty and likeable at all.

Another supernatural beings that take part in Harry Potter stories are various goblins and brownies. Goblins who work in the Gringott’s bank are those who may be easily connected with the Irish legend of the Leprechaun. As well as the goblins in

Harry Potter's book are related to the gold, so is the Leprechaun. Its crafty tricks are a great delight of Irish story telling. According to Kalweit, the legend says that Leprechauns are tiny, prankish beings who are willing to help people as long as they get paid for it. It is said that a Leprachaun has a hidden pot of gold which he has to give to the one who catches him (228).

Rowling, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone*, describes the goblins working in Gringott's bank as diminutive beings, dressed in scarlet and gold uniforms, with long fingers and even longer soles. Gringott's bank is said to be the safest place in the Wizarding world, at least according to what Hagrid says to Harry when he goes there with him to pick up some money for his teaching aids at the beginning of the school year. "Gringotts is the safest place in the world fer anything yeh want ter keep safe -- 'cept maybe Hogwarts." (64). One goblin also mentions that anyone trying to steal at Gringott's is sucked in a safe and thus condemned to death. At the bank entrance, there is a big warning sign in a form of a poem, as mentioned in Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone*:

Enter, stranger, but take heed,  
Of what awaits the sin of greed,  
For those who take, but do not earn,  
Must pay most dearly in their turn,  
So if you seek beneath our floors,  
A treasure that was never yours,  
Thief, you have been warned,  
Beware of finding more than treasure there. (72)

Money in Gringott's bank is stored very deep underground and one has to get there by a rail wagon. This is closely related to Kalweit's symbolism of the earth in its connection with goblins and elves. Leprechaun's pot full of money is hidden under earth. He considers this motive of earth, together with gold and buried treasures, to be connected with elves, the dwellers of sidhes (Otherworld), with earth symbolizing underworld, and the „pot“ - cauldron that itself is a symbol of plenty (its symbolic is further explained in the third chapter) (228).

Another kind of sprite that plays an important role in Rowling's books is a house-elf, as Rowling calls it, which carries mutual features with brownies that appear in Celtic lore. According to its depiction in Kronzeks' book, brownies' „job“ is to help

people in their household while the occupants are asleep. They are depicted as good-natured manikins who, once offered a payment for their work, disappear and never come again (60). This strange behaviour is similar to Dobby's, the house-elf that helps Harry Potter. He is owned by Malfoy's family, one of the Harry's enemies, but constantly tries to protect Harry from danger. He can not be released from the service to his boss, unless he is given any reward. One day, Harry plays a trick on Malfoy, so that he unwittingly rewards Dobby and thus, he is free to go. Dobby firstly appears, and plays a crucial role, in the book *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*:

The little creature on the bed had large, bat-like ears and bulging green eyes the size of tennis balls. Harry knew instantly that this was what had been watching him out of the garden hedge that morning. „Who are you?“ „Dobby, sir. Just Dobby. Dobby the house-elf,“ said the creature. (Rowling „Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets“ 18)

Besides various sprites, ghosts are other supernatural beings that are a common part of Rowling's wizarding world. They are considered to be something between a human and the dead, having no physical body and being semi-transparent. They can be seen and walked through by humans and are also able to hear and speak to them. They can not eat, nor drink. One of the ghost representants in Harry Potter books is Nearly Headless Nick, originally named Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington, the ghost of Gryffindor. His name refers to the fact that he was beheaded but not really precisely:

„Nearly Headless? How can you be *nearly* headless?“ Sir Nicholas made an offended face as their conversation did not wend his way. „About *like that*,“ presented crossly. He grasped his left ear and pulled. His whole head folded back from his neck and fell down on his shoulder, as it was on joints. Someone probably tried to behead him once but did not do it properly.“ (Rowling, „Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone“ 118, my translation)

Nearly Headless Nick is a case of a friendly ghost. Nevertheless, not all ghosts in Hogwarts are that kind. The ghost of Slytherin, The Bloody Baron, is depicted by Rowling as gloomy, terrifying, silent ghost whose clothes are stained with blood of unknown origin. Already mentioned Moaning Myrtle is another ghost dwelling Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry. She was killed by a basilisk when Chamber of Secrets was opened and from that time on, she dwells the girls' bathroom

and is excessively sentimental, crying loudly at every little opportunity. Generally, ghosts in Rowlings' wizarding world are dead wizards who chose to stay that way after they died.

Ghosts play an important role in many British myths, legends and folklore. Even nowadays, people tell each other scary ghost stories claiming they have seen these supernatural beings. There are hundreds of movies where a ghost existence plays a crucial role. Haunted castles, houses and various sites have been a subject of tales and myths all over the world for thousands years. Ghosts are usually said to dwell this world because of not having been able to leave it for reasons such as having experienced some injustice that was not explained properly or because they have some other strong bond in this world. It can be for example money or someone they were deeply in love with. They do not have to be necessarily annoying but sometimes they can make people's life unpleasant by drawing their attention to them.

Alexander depicts an interesting theory in his book. He claims that the contemporary United Kingdom has one of the strongest ghostlores in the world, thanks to plentiful historical sites and places built of stones. They are said to have a capability of "absorbing human emanation", it means that people's feelings are transferred into waves which are then absorbed by a stone (such as making a sound or video record) and can be sometimes recalled in a form of haunting (133). This is an example of an unchangeable ghost that does not try to communicate with, nor apprehends the surroundings. Then, there are ghosts recognized as making attempts to contact people, often trying to give them some important message. This gives a true picture of death's conception in Celtic tradition.

The main principle that all Celtic philosophy stands on and that is depicted basically in every single myth, legend or folktale, is a strong belief in life after death. In Celtic mythology, the Otherworld is tantamount to life on earth, maybe even much more important. It is like a puzzle picture that one can not recognize unless being pieced together. In the similar way, Celts believed that deities, elves and other beings dwelling the Otherworld can help them in their lives to be able to reach the unknown, understand the implication of various chain of events and thus their destiny and meaning of life:

Yet, the one, who wants to discover wisdom, must learn to love death. Celts knew that and made their love to death to be a principle of their philosophy. All

Celtic stories are those of love and death, life and doom, furthermore, they point out a continuation of life that comes after death-that is why most of them take place in the Otherworld. (Kalweit 53)

According to Kalweit, Celts were able to meet the dead by means of rituals, even though they were invisible. This was made by their consciousness that is ready for this experience when concentrated with the assistance of ritual. This was the principle of all traditions and rituals that enabled people to meet the dead (145).

The best time to meet the dead and other dwellers of the Otherworld, is a time of Samhain. Celtic year was divided into four main parts - Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane and Lughnasadh, each of them beginning on the first day of November, February, May and August, and for each of them there was a specific characteristic celebrated by festivals and sabbaths. Matthews explains the function of Samhain in her book. It marked the beginning of winter and Celtic New Year. (nowadays, celebrated as Halloween or All Saint's Day). The gates to the Otherworld opened and people could meet their dead fellows. Samhain festivals were associated with dead, divination and storytelling. In *The Wheel of Celtic Year*, the year is divided into two main parts by already mentioned Samhain with Beltain opposite. 30th April was another best time to communicate with the dead, as the doors of sídhe were opened as well. Living people entered sídhes and the dead, on the contrary, visited human world. (82).

It is interesting to point out that 31st October, the beginning of Samhain, was a time of important events in Celtic myths and legends, especially concerning hero's death. Vlčková explains that sun deities, symbolizing male fertility, were the ones to die at Samhain, either ritually, or in real (266). This tradition corresponds to the fact that Samhain was the end of warm, sunny, summer part of the year, the Sun was dying. According to Celtic myths and legends, many famous heroes and kings died at Samhain - Cuchulainn, Laeg, Muirchertach mac Erca, Diarmaid mac Cerbhail, et cetera. As depicted in the story „The Battle of Maf Tuiread“, at Samhain, Tuatha de Dannan defeated Fomorians. The *Ulster cycle* story about Nera, the warrior of Connacht, narrates about Nera's journey to sídhe at Samhain:

It was Samhain Eve and two captives had just been hanged..Ailill offered a prize to anyone brave enough to go outside and put a withye around the foot of the corpses. Nera takes up the challenge and accomplishes the task. But as soon as

he handles the body, Nera experiences all manner of adventures. He has a vision of the royal *rath* of Cruachan burning and finds himself in the Otherworldly *sidhe* where he marries a *bean-sidhe*...All falls out as predicted, but Nera vanishes into the *sidhe* and is never seen again. (Matthews 84)

Thus, the story mentions the dangers of Samhain, the time when the border between human world and the Otherworld disappears. 31st October is an important date in Rowling's books as well. It is a day when Harry Potter's parents are killed by evil Lord Voldemort and since then, Harry Potter unusual life begins.

### 3. Rituals

Magical rituals are essential both in Harry Potter series and Celtic society, because of their importance in a daily life. Celts used magic to make their lives better and were continually improving their spiritual wisdom and growth. Intuition and strong belief in invisible powers, worshipping of nature and its four elements, deities, respect to the Otherworld and its dwellers, together with material ritual tools, were the main attributes that enabled them to perform successful magical rituals and thus enrich their lives. Celtic myths, legends and traditions are filled with magic and rituals, as well as are Rowling's books. When Harry Potter starts attending Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry, his life changes. Not only because he finally finds his true friends and people who love him - unlike his relatives he was brought up by - but also because of new, previously unimaginable, possibilities that grant his life absolutely different dimension. This chapter analyzes magical rituals in the sense of their importance for Celts, as well as for Harry Potter, explains its core and function, and introduces some of the most interesting ones, as well as the tools that are necessary for their successful accomplishment.

It is essential to mention what the word ritual means and which role it plays in people's lives:

The role of a ritual in religion is as old as the first signs of mankind's belief in an originate power, thus conception that came into existence nearly 40 thousand years ago. Ritual is defined as a systematic, formal or informal complex of ceremonies, which is to evoke a constant change in life and mind of its participants. Ritual must not be unchangeable and repetitive in order not to become boring, but can continually develop simultaneously with progress of our spiritual life. (McCoy 21, my translation)

As stated in the introduction, Jung came with a theory that heroes and deities are archetypes in people's minds. Thus, by way of a ritual, as described above, one can acquire the power of those deities. It was also already mentioned that Celts worshiped a great deal of deities, so called pantheon. Thus, it depended on each individual, which aim they wanted to reach. Each deity had its specific powers that could help people, depending on which problem they wanted to solve. Interesting examples are mentioned



in McCoy's book. If one wishes to acquire wisdom, wants to defeat their enemies, or would like to be able to divine, they should „call“ for help Fionn mac Cumhal, while mythic queen Fand can help those who want to acquire a healing power or wish to perform a magic connected with water (could be due to the fact that she was once married to the sea god Mannanan) (366, 270).

Celtic magical belief had its strong roots in four main elements that are the core of nature. Druids claimed that all life has its origin in these four elements and no life would exist without them. These four elements were Earth, Air, Fire, and Water and each had its specific attributes that, similarly as different deities, help participants to fulfil their miscellaneous needs. Conway confirms this theory by statement that principle of magic itself is to contact different energetic dimensions, thus deities, because they make the participant's power much stronger. As mentioned in the definition of the ritual, the aim is to evoke a change. And this change can be only reached by calling the power of deities or elements for help.

For complete understanding of the ritual core, it is essential to mention a difference between invocation and evocation. Both of them call the spiritual powers of deities, elements, mythical characters, et cetera, to the presence of the performer. The main difference consists in the „target“. McCoy explains, that while during evocation rituals spiritual powers are called nearby to performer's spiritual presence, the invocations principle is to bring the spiritual power's core into the performer's physical body. Invocation thus enables to temporarily borrow the powers of deity in full, while evocation is better to use when one needs help while performing magic, or to ask for protection, or just to express courtesy and words of thanks (74).

To be able to perform a magical ritual in an efficient way, Celts used various magical tools but as Botheroyds mention in their book, some charms were considered to be so common that hardly anyone would need to use magical wands, except from, for example, Math (from *Mabinogion* collection). Authors also say that magic was mainly in the possession of druids or fili, while ordinary people performed rather easy charms, such as to induce love or plenty (189). Magic was perceived as something invisible and, in fact, there was no need for any special material tools. Druids considered spoken words and poems to be the most powerful tool for successful accomplishment of one's intention. The most effective was a sudden inspiration, rather than previously learned

formulations. This also corresponds to the fact that no written pieces of druidic literature were preserved. However, rather than a wand or cauldron, druids used various bizzare tools for their charms, such as a piece of meat:

According to Cormac's glossary (early 10<sup>th</sup> century), *imbas forosnai*, "enlightenment from palms", came also in a sleep. By this way, a poet found out everything he wanted to know. All he needed to do was to chew a piece of raw meat from rusty (red) pig, dog or rusty cat and while charming, he put it on a stone as a sacrifice for gods. Then, when he spoke to his palms and put them on his cheeks, he fell asleep for three to nine days. He was guarder carefully, so that nobody could disturb him. When he woke up, he was completely clear about the matter. When Fionn wanted to reach "knowledge about future", he chew his thumb the same way. (Botheroyd 190, my translation)

In Harry Potter books, Hogwarts' pupils need to own necessary teaching aids to be able to succeed in their lessons. When Harry is to enter the first grade at Hogwarts, he receives a letter that states which tools he needs to buy. It is a wand, a cauldron, several cloaks and other various subjects that are necessary for every wizard to own. Hagrid takes Harry to Diagon Alley, because there are shops that sell miscellaneous equipment for wizards:

There were shops where gowns were sold, businesses with binoculars and weird silver tools that Harry has not seen before, windows full of kegs with bat's spleens and eel's eyes, carelessly bunched piles of wizard's books, writing quills and parchment rolls, bottles with potions, and lunar globes...(Rowling, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone" 72, my translation)

Hogwarts' students need such tools for their subjects, such as Potions, Herbology, Occlumancy, The Dark Arts, et cetera. Wands are necessary for all wizards and witches to have. There are thousands types of them and none of them is similar to another. When a wizard buys his first wand, it can take a while before he chooses the right one, or maybe, before the right wand chooses its owner:

„All Ollivander's wands have a centre made of some powerful, magical substance, Mr Potter," he explained him. „We use unicorn's horsehair, phoenix's tail feather and dragon heart's membrane...And of course, you never reach such results with other wizard's wand as you do with your own one..." "You are a demanding customer, aren't you, Mr Potter? Do not worry, we will surely find

the one that will suit you perfectly - now, I have an idea - yes, why not – unusual combination, holly wood and phoenix’s feather, eleven inches, nice and flexible.“ Harry took the wand and felt a sudden heat in his fingers. He raised it above his head and briskly lashed with it through the air full of dust; from the head of the wand sprang a stream of ruby and golden sparks...(Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s stone” 84, my translation)

Harry Potter and other Hogwarts’ students perform magical rituals daily in their classes where they use magical tools. One of the subjects that is taught during these classes is Transfiguration. It is a subject of very specific attributes, very close to ritual, featuring Celtic myths and legends. Nearly in every story there is a hero that has the ability to transform himself into something else, either a subject, or, more commonly, into a form of an animal. Great examples are the already mentioned myths in previous chapter, the myth about Fionn mac Cumhal (whose wife Sadb is turned into a deer) from *Ulster cycle* and myths depicted in the fourth branch of Welsh *Mabinogion* (about Gwyddion and Gilfaethwy who are punished by being turned into deers, other myth tells about unfaithful Blodeuwedd who is then turned into an owl). Thus, Botherodyds’ theory that the ability of shapeshifting was rather prevalent than extraordinary, is confirmed.

The same piece of knowledge can be applied to characters from Rowling’s books. It is not uncommon for many wizards and witches to be able to transform into an animal. But such ordinary transfiguration that is normally taught during school lessons, is characterized by a fact that a wizard, once being turned into an animal form, does not keep the human capacity brain. Thus, it is impossible for such transformed wizard or witch to think on a high mental level. However, there are very few magicians who are able to think as a human, even when being into the animal form. Wizards with such abilities are called animagi and they have just one specific animal form they can turn into, according to their true physical appearance. Thus, deputy headmistress of Hogwarts, Minerva McGonagall, who wears spectacles, takes the animagi form of a cat which has a spectacle marking around her eyes. Harry’s godfather, Sirius Black, takes a form of a large, black dog, and Pete Pettigrew, Voldemort’s spy and former friend of Harry’s parents and their mates, is transformed into a rat. Harry’s father animagi form was a stag (future Harry’s Patronus). It seems that animagi does not need a wand or any other tool to be able to transform. This also corresponds to the fact that advanced druids, with few exceptions, did not need such material tools either:

“What a coincidence that we have met there, professoress McGonagall.” He turned to the tabby and wanted to give it a smile but it was not there any more. Instead of a cat, he was looking at a fairly strictly-looking lady, who had one her nose a square spectacles in the exact shape of the marks that had graced the cat around its eyes. She was wearing an emerald green robe and had her black hair tightened in a firm chignon. She looked angry. “How did you find out it was me?” she asked. “Dear Mrs Professoress, I have never seen such a stiffly-sitting cat in my whole life.” (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosophers stone” 15, my translation)

As a summary of this chapter, it is important to mention that in Celtic magical rituals it did not really matter who was the performer, nor which tools they used, as long as the person had enough consciousness, will, desire and ability to concentrate on evoking the archetypal deity or any other spiritual power that dozes in everyone’s mind. Of course, time, place, special tools and other circumstances played a great role as well, but the main power always lies simply in each individual and the same applies to Rowling’s characters.

## 4. Symbols

The last chapter of this paper deals with chosen symbols, their importance in Celtic myths and legends and application in a daily life of Celtic society. All symbols that are mentioned there also appear in Rowling's books. The symbols explained in this chapter are cauldron and cloak of invisibility, with cauldron being of a crucial importance to the Celts. At the end of this chapter, there is a brief thought on the Harry Potter books and their perceiving by readers.

Cauldron is one of the magical items that has always been connected with witches and wizards. Cauldron is by most people perceived as a necessary magical tool for witches, based on an assumption that magical potions are stirred in it. It plays basically the same role in Rowling's books, but in Celtic society, the importance of a cauldron goes beyond its utility function, even though cauldrons in Harry Potter's magical world are said to be very special. They serve not only as a vessel for potions, but can also accommodate surprisingly great amount of books or other stuff, thanks to its ability to enlarge inside but stay the same size from the outside. Some of them are so advanced that they are for example self-stirring. Cauldrons of all different sizes, colours and additional functions are sold, as well as other magical tools and items, in Diagon Alley.

As mentioned, cauldron is the main symbol that figures in many Celtic myths and legends. Maybe the most famous one is the Gundestrup cauldron, an archaeological find that is dated back to the first or second century BC. It is considered to be an outliving witness of Celtic religion. It depicts famous mythology scenes, rituals, symbols and deities, one of them being the horned god Cernunnos. Cauldron is a symbol of various attributes for the Celts, such as life, death, the Otherworld, et cetera. It is not possible to embrace all symbolism of cauldron on several pages, nevertheless, some of the main attributes will be mentioned. Kalweit provides comprehensive overview of cauldron's symbolism in his book. He points out that there are many different cauldrons that occur in various myths and legends, but in fact, he considered there to be only one cauldron, that was to symbolize being itself (90). Some Celtic legends say that pieces of warrior's dead bodies that had been cut during the fight, were

put into a cauldron and complete bodies arised from it again. Some cauldrons had a power to grant immortality, as this of Pwyll, king of the Otherworld:

Bran owned a cauldron, that revived the dead, Ceridwen's cauldron provided inspiration. Tuatha de Danann also owned a cauldron; then there was Dagda's cauldron, which was something like a horn of plentitude, always full up to the edge. However, only *one* cauldron existed, one *being*...Cauldron is also a symbol of resurrection. Fallen warriors are thrown in it, so that they jump out of it the next day – in the world of the dead, in the Ceridwen's cauldron that contains omnipotent elixir of intelligentsia. Meat or body that simmers in it, will return to it pre-material state. (Kalweit 90)

Thus, everything originates from cauldron and everything dies in cauldron. It is a symbol of life, death and rebirth, which logically corresponds to Celtic belief in reincarnatin and soul moving.

Invisibility cloak is another item of great importance that occurs in Harry Potter series, as well as in Celtic mythology. In fact, invisibility cloaks occur in stories and legends all over the world, for the desire to become invisible, to triumph over the physicality, has been there ever since. Both Harry Potter and some Celtic heroes made that desire to come true.

Invisibility cloaks are rather rare in the wizarding world, Harry inherited his from his departed father, who got it as a Christmas present from Albus Dumbledore. It is made of the hair of Demiguise which is a creature that can make itself invisible. The cloak can, likewise a cauldron, accommodate as many persons as needed, even though it appears to have the same size all the time:

Harry picked shiny, silvery suiting from the floor. It was strange to the touch – like water woven into material. „It is an invisibility cloak,“ said Ron... „I'm sure – try it on.“ Harry put the cloak over his shouldres and Ron cried out. „*It is* an invisibility cloak! Look down!“ Harry looked down on his feet but they weren't there. He rushed to the mirror. Of course, he saw himself in it, but only his head, which seemed to be hanging in the air, however, the body couldn't be seen. He pulled the cloak over his head and his picture dissapeared completely. (Rowling, “Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone” 187, my translation)

Since Harry got the invisibility cloak, he has been using this magical item very often, escpecially when accomplishing important mission concerning his enemy Lord

Voldemort. Thus, there is no doubt that invisibility cloak has saved his life several times.

Interpretation of the function of an invisibility cloak in the Celtic society is rather symbolic, although Matthews assimilates it to the power of four elements, specifically the Air, and thus points out its protective function. “Cloaks of invisibility looking like grey clouds are quite common. Caswallawn has such a cloak and with it he raises a magical fog to overcome the army of Britain when Bran is absent in Ireland.” (Matthews 53). Another invisibility cloak occurring in Celtic myths is the one, which is considered to be one of the Thirteen treasures of Britain, the hallowed items that safeguard Britain. Legend says that they were brought from the Otherworld. “They are treasures of the Otherworld, distinguished by qualities that are typical for such level of being, where no place or time exist. They open gnosis of the Otherworld.” (Kalweit 165). Arthur’s thirteenth treasure was the invisibility cloak that enabled its wearer to become invisible to others. Nevertheless, the cloak can be just a symbol and in fact, does not have to physically exist at all. Kalweit refers to an altered state of mind when one is so concentrated and mentally deeply immersed into himself, that “seemingly, the body melts as a result of immense desire for complete fusion with psyche” (Kalweit 170).

It has already been pointed out in the last chapter, and applies to the above described attributes too, that according to the Celtic wisdom, their life philosophy and traditions, the circumstances are not of such importance as is the person and the way one approaches to devices (either material or spiritual) they were given. Thus, a cauldron could serve in a different way to different people, as well as the invisibility cloak, depending who the user is. This idea concerns also J.K.Rowlings books and their readers. Everybody can find different meaning in them, depending on their approach. For some, it is just a brilliantly written fairytale, for others a true evidence that myths and legends “are not dead”. The power of symbols lies in their adaptiveness to one’s mind and fantasy. This could be a hidden philosophy of J.K.Rowling’s books, and also the reason of their enormous success.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to introduce, analyze and show the resemblance between famous Harry Potter set of books and Celtic myths, legends and rituals. Each culture has its specific lore, traditions, mythology and rituals that have always held the function of formation of human values and particular nation or society. Nowadays, it may seem that it is rather modern science, technology and level of economic development that is considered to characterise the attributes of particular society. Nevertheless, Rowling's books proof that the influence of Celtic heritage has been strong enough to prevail, even in the times when universal interest in mythology and lore may seem to be superseded by modern areas of concern:

It is the nature of things that myths and mythologies sooner or later lose their "truth", their living relevance, when the world to which they relate has fallen apart or been superseded; when this happens they become a mere pastime, a source of entertainment and – especially with the coming of writing – the stuff of literature. The kind of culture change which reduces old myths and creates new ones in their place may be a matter of evolutionary change over a long passage of time or, as in modern colonized territories, it may come about rapidly through political conquest, the introduction of a new language and social values or the establishment and propagation of a new religion. (O'Driscoll 143)

The citation above demonstrates the "fragility" of mythologies, as if they were predetermined to lapse one day. Nevertheless, even if they were to disappear from people's lives once, the time has not come yet. There still can be found modern heroes nowadays, no matter if it is a neighbour next door or a literary character as Harry Potter and others from Rowling's books.

Again, the principle lies in a commonly perceived archetype that has retained its attributes over centuries. Thus 11 years old boy can have qualities of legendary Cuchulainn, therefore he is a hero. An ordinary woman suddenly feels that she can make her life better, when her unconsciousness helps her to recall the archetype of a Celtic Great Goddess. Hence, she is a goddess herself. People will probably feel sorry for him, when they see an old, dying man, and may wonder, how can he look so equanimous and serene, with a smile on his face. It is because he knows that when something comes to an end, something else starts.



All mentioned examples carry similar qualities to the main principle of Celtic philosophy and belief that is also reflected in Rowling's books. No boundaries exist for anyone. People create the boundaries themselves and it is for each individual to decide what their life will be like. The Celts were people of a great wisdom, strong belief and endless determination. All these attributes, together with their reverence to pantheon of deities, power of nature and the four elements, enabled them to cross the boundaries between the two worlds, the human one and the Otherworld, and find the wisdom, the principle of being. And that is the reason why their lore, rituals and mythology have not been forgotten, for people have always been searching the sense of life, death and being itself.

## Résumé

Cíl této práce bylo poukázat na vlivy a odkaz keltských mýtů, legend a tradic na knihy J.K.Rowlingové o Harry Potterovi. Ač se může zdát, že zde leží veliká propast mezi tradiční keltskou náboženskou kulturou a pohádkami 20.století, faktem je, že i novodobé příběhy mohou přinést čtenářům zajímavé poznatky z dob pradávných, a upevnit tak důležitou pozici mytologie v životech lidí.

Mýty a legendy hrály odjakživa důležitou úlohu v kulturách a národech po celém světě, a nejenak je tomu u pohanských Keltů. Je zázrak, že se keltská tradice, spolu s jejich mýty a legendami, uchovala až do dnešní doby. Keltové obývali široké území evropského kontinentu, kam začali nejvíce expandovat mezi 5.a 3.stoletím před naším letopočtem, a nikdy netvořili národ jako takový. Jejich společenské uspořádání bylo spíše kmenové a hranice oblasti osídlení nebyla nijak pevně dána. Proto se jejich zvyky, náboženství, tradice a z nich plynoucí mýty a legendy často kraj od kraje liší. Nicméně, ani tento, ne zrovna příznivý fakt, nedopustil to, aby keltská mytologie během několika století zanikla. Keltové byli lidé, kteří byli hluboce nábožensky založeni a uctívali široké spektrum bohů a bohyň. Tento božský pantheon skýtal několik stovek božstev, které hráli významnou roli v každodenním životě Keltů, a proto snad neexistuje legenda, která by se obešla bez zmínky o těchto bozích. Další specifikum keltské tradice tvoří respekt a úcta k přírodě a jejím čtyřem živlům-vodě, ohni, zemi a vzduchu. Takzvané Keltské kolo roku bylo rozděleno do několika hlavních částí a každé období bylo určitým způsobem specifické, mělo svoji tradiční symboliku a rituály. Snad nejznámější je takzvaný Samhain, kdy končí keltské lét, začíná zima, tudíž se jedná o symbol smrti, a tedy příznivé období pro komunikaci s mrtvými. V tento den se otevírají brány do Jiného světa, jehož obyvatelé přicházejí mezi živé, a naopak obyvatelé světa lidí cestují do sídhů. Ovšem nebyl to pouze Samhain, kdy obyvatelé Jiného světa vstupovali do života lidí. Keltské náboženství, tradice a mytologie je jedna z těch, kde hranice mezi těmito dvěma světy je tak tenká, že snad není příběhu, kde by nebyla alespoň zmínka o Jiném světě. Tato keltská filozofie je jen těžko materiálně uchopitelná, neboť Keltové ve skutečnosti hledali veškerou moudrost a podstatu bytí v sobě samých. Keltské mýty, jejich postavy, hrdinové, bohové, zvířata, Jiný svět a svět lidí, to vše jsou jen symboly, které transformují životní filozofii a podstatu Keltů do

přijatelné, tedy široké veřejnosti pochopitelné, podoby. Velkou úlohu v životě Keltů hrál rovněž rituál, prostřednictvím kterého bylo vlastně možno dosáhnout prakticky všeho vědění. Rituál sloužil Keltům jako brána do jiné dimenze, tam, kde leží podstata všeho, kde najdou odpovědi na všechny otázky, řešení jakéhokoli problému, tedy brána do Jiného světa. Naprosto zásadní roli hraje v keltské společnosti víra v posmrtný život, a tudíž je také jádrem celé keltské mytologie. Keltové prakticky neznali hranice mezi světem mrtvých a živých. Vše bylo jedním, vše vznikalo v jednom, a tam také zanikalo. To „jedno“ by snadno mohlo být chápáno jako keltský kotel, což byl snad nejdůležitější symbol, který pro Kelty skýtal filozofii a podstatu veškerého universa.

Není jednoduché obsáhnout v několika řádcích podstatu keltské filozofie, jejich náboženství, mýtů a tradic. Jak již bylo zmíněno, některé hlavní aspekty celé keltské kultury jsou tak těžké vyjádřit slovy, že snad jediný způsob, jak pochopit „keltskou podstatu“, je prostřednictvím symbolů. Ty jsou základním pilířem mýtů a legend, a skýtají tak nekonečnou fantazii pro každého čtenáře. To platí i pro knihy J.K.Rowlingové o Harry Potterovi.

V posledních letech byl zaznamenán naprostý „boom“ těchto příběhů o malém kouzelnickém chlapci, „chlapeci, který zůstal naživu“. Dá se snad pouze spekulovat o tom, zda autorka tušila, jaký úspěch jí tento příběh přinese. Ať už však její záměr byl jakýkoli, výsledek je nezapomenutelný. Rowlingové se podařilo ve svých knihách obsáhnout právě ony základní pilíře, na kterých stojí keltská mytologie. Ač se to na první pohled může pro někoho zdát jako poněkud odvážné tvrzení, je založené na zcela logických souvislostech. Je však nutné získat alespoň stručný přehled napříč celým spektrem keltské tradice, náboženství a kultury, snažit se pochopit životní filozofii Keltů. Čtenáři mohou namítnout, že je nemožné pátrat po něčem, aniž by bylo dáno, k čemu vlastně mají dojít. Avšak i v tomto už lze najít úlomek z keltské moudrosti, a tak vlastně dojít skrz vše ke všemu. Ve všem je obsaženo vše, a tak tomu je i v knihách J.K.Rowlingové. Fantazie každého jedince je totiž nekonečným vesmírem, universem samotným, a proto v něm lze nalézt odpověď na každou otázku, stejně tak, jak tomu bylo u starých Keltů. Důležité je řídit se vlastní intuicí, vnitřním pocitem, a pak už nestojí nic v cestě ponořit do tajů starých náboženství, tradic a kultur, a odnést si tak nezapomenutelný zážitek v podobě jakéhosi vnitřního osvícení.

## List of translated citations

**Botheroyd, Sylvia a Paul.** *Lexikon keltské mytologie*

Blesk je stejně jako Slunce nebeský oheň, ambivalentní, blahodárná a ničivá síla. Na jedné straně rozpoutává déšť, který je nepostradatelný pro plodnost...na druhé straně ohrožuje život lidí.

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Vyhledávají Jiný svět, nejen proto, aby se zdokonalili ve válečném umění nebo aby získali vědění o budoucnosti, nýbrž také kvůli loupeživým výpravám ve službách lidí, kvůli potírání démonů a dalších nebezpečných bytostí; občas napadají nebo dokonce usmrtí nějakého knížete Jiného světa nebo tam hledají cestu v doprovodu krásných žen. Hrdinové tedy hrají ve vrstvě bojovníků podobnou roli jako druidové ve vrstvě první: udržují kontakt mezi světem lidí a světem nadpřirozeným.

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V té podobě, v jaké se velký čaroděj a prorok objevuje v artušovské pověsti, je výtvozem Velšana Geoffreya z Monmouthu, který ho ve své *Historia Regum Britanniae (Dějiny britských králů)* r.1136 poprvé uvádí. Geoffrey skloubil dvě postavy vlastní mytologii ostrovních Keltů, básníka – proroka, Myrddina a dítě bez otce, zde mladistvého jasnovidce Ambrosia, o němž se zmiňuje Nennius; vznikla postava jedna, která od té doby fascinovala svět.

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Podle *Cormacova glosáře*(rané 10.stol.) dostavovalo se *imbas forosnai*, „osvícení z dlaní“, rovněž ve spánku. Básník se touto cestou dozvěděl všechno, co chtěl vědět. Stačilo, aby sežvýkal kus syrového masa rezavého vepře, psa nebo rezavé kočky a s určitým zařikáváním jej položil na kámen za oběť bohům. když potom oslovil své dlaně a položil si je na tváře, upadl na tři až devět dnů do hlubokého spánku. Byl pečlivě střežen, aby ho nikdo nevyrušil. Když se probudil, měl o příslušné věci naprosté

jasno. Když chtěl Fionn dospět k „vědění o budoucnosti“, žvýkal se stejným výsledkem palec.

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**Kalweit, Holger.** *Das Totenbuch der Kelten*

Parohy symbolizovaly ženské pohlavní orgány, neboť mají podobu písmene U, a odstávající rohy mužství. Paroží tudíž představovalo princip plodnosti, spojení mužského a ženského aspektu. Paroží symbolizuje nejenom pozemský, ale i posmrtný život, neboť říše mrtvých je stejně plodná jako tento svět. Jelení paroží poukazuje na tvoření, bytí či život v libovolné úrovni bytí stejně jako na přechod z jedné formy života v jinou. Tělesný člověk umírá a rodí se duševní člověk.

(277)

Avšak ten, kdo se chce dobrat moudrosti, ten se musí naučit milovat smrt. To Keltové věděli a lásku ke smrti učinili základem své životní filozofie. Všechny keltské příběhy jsou vyprávěním o lásce a smrti, o životě a zániku, navíc poukazují na pokračování života po smrti – proto se jich většina odehrává v říši mrtvých.

(53)

Bran vlastnil kotel, který křísil mrtvé, Ceridwenin kotel skýtal inspiraci. Kotel měli rovněž Tuatha Dé Danannové; potom tu byl ještě Dagdův kotel, který byl jakýmsi rohem hojnosti, vždycky plným až po okraj. Avšak existoval jen *jeden* kotel, *jedno* bytí....Kotel je rovněž symbolem zmrtvýchvstání. Jsou do něho vhazováni padlí bojovníci, aby z něho příštího dne zase vyskočili – v říši mrtvých, v kotli Ceridwenině, jež obsahuje mocný elixír inteligence. Maso nebo tělo, jež se v něm povaří, se navrátí do svého premateriálního stavu.

(90)

Jsou to poklady podsvětí, vyznačující se vlastnostmi typickými pro tuto úroveň bytí, v níž neexistuje prostor ani čas. Otevírají nám vědění o říši mrtvých.

(165)

**McCoy, Edain.** *Celtic Myth & Magick*

Úloha rituálu v náboženství je stejně stará jako první náznaky víry lidstva v tvořivé síly, čili koncepce, která se zrodila před téměř 40 tisíci lety. Rituál bývá definován jako systematický, formální nebo neformální soubor obřadů, jenž má vyvolat trvalou změnu v životě a psychice jeho účastníků. Rituál nesmí být neměnný a stále se opakující, aby se nestal nudným, ale může se vyvíjet souběžně s růstem a rozvojem našeho duchovního života.

(21)

**Vlčková, Jitka.** *Encyklopedie keltské mytologie*

Mladý Merlin se zamiloval do princezny Nimue (v jiné verzi Niniana, Viviana, Jezerní panna, víla), která ho provázela životem i osudem...Merlin ji naučil všem svým kouzlům, jejichž obětí se nakonec stal. Nimue jej totiž začarovala do kamenného hrobu, odkud nebylo návratu. Jiná verze Merlinova života uvádí, že jeho odchod byl dobrovolný, neboť byl zlomen životem mezi lidmi. Lidské oko pak již nikdy více Merlina nespatriilo.

(225)

**Rowling, J.K.** *Harry Potter a kámen mudrců*

„Jenomže nevím – já totiž nevím, jak –“ „Jak se dostat na nástupiště?“ zeotala se žena laskavě, a Harry přikývl. „S tím si nedělej starosti,“ řekla. „Musíš prostě jít přímo k přepážce mezi nástupišti devět a deset. Nezastavuj se a neboj se, že do ní narazíš, to je velice důležité.“...a to už běžel klusem..Do ničeho však nenarazil...utíkal pořád dál...a potom otevřel oči. U nástupiště plného lidí stála zářivě červená parní lokomotiva. Zepředu na ní bylo veliké označení *Spěšný vlak do Bradavic*...Dokázal to!

(91)

Harry si všiml, že někdy klobouk vykřikl jméno koleje okamžitě, jindy mu však chvílku trvalo, než se rozhodl...Pak už se díval jen na černý vnitřek klobouku a čekal. „Hmm,“

ozval se tichý hlásek v jeho uchu. Máš velkou odvalu, to ano. A nemáš špatnou hlavu. nadání ti také nechybí, přísambůh, to tedy ne – a máš opravdovou chuť předvést, co všecko dokážeš, ano, to je zajímavé...Takže kam tě mám poslat? Harry se přidržel hran stoličky a říkal si v duchu: „Jenom ne do Zmijozelu, tam ne.“ „Říkáš, že do Zmijozelu ne?“ Pronesl tichý hlásek...Jestli to víš určitě, ať je to tedy – NEBELVÍR!“

(116)

Takový znamení ti zůstane, když na tebe šáhne nějaký mocný, zlý kouzlo – dokázalo zabít tvou maminku a tátu a zničilo váš dům – ale s tebou nic nezmohlo, a právě proto jseš slavnej, Harry. Nikdo nezůstal naživu, když von se rozhod ho zabít, nikdo kromě tebe, a zabil kolik nejlepších čarodějek a kouzelníků, který tehda žili – McKinnonovy, Boneovy, Prewettovy – a tys byl ještě malý dítě, ale zůstals naživu.“

(57)

Náhle se ozval skřípavý zvuk, vejce puklo a na stůl žuchlo dračí mládě. Nebylo nijak vábné; Harry si v duchu říkal, že vypadá jako zmuchlaný černý deštník. Jeho ostnatá křídla byla v porovnání s hubeným černým tělem veliká; dráče mělo dlouhý čenich s širokými nozdrami, náznak budoucích rohů a vypoulené oranžové oči.

(218)

V tu chvíli dorazila pošta. Teď už si na to Harry zvykl, ale první den ho patřičně vylekalo, když při snídani zničehonic vletěla do Velké síně snad stovka sov a všechny kroužily kolem stolů, až objevily své majitele a upustily jim do klína dopisy a balíčky. Hedvika až dosud nepřinesla Harrymu nic. Občas přiletěla, kousala ho do ucha a vzala si od něj ždíbec topinky, než se v sovinci znovu uložila ke spánku spolu s ostatními školními sovami.

(128)

„*Skoro bezhlavý? Jak můžete být skoro bezhlavý?* Rytíř Nicholas se zatvářil velice dotčeně, jako by se jejich rozhovor vůbec neubíral takovým směrem, jak si přál. „*Asi takhle,*“ pronesl podrážděně. Uchopil své levé ucho a zatáhl. Celá hlava se mu odklopila

z krku a spadla mu na rameno, jako kdyby ji měl na kloubech. Někdo se ho zřejmě kdysi pokoušel stít, ale neudělal to pořádně.

(118)

Byly tu obchody, kde se prodávaly hábity, krámky s dalekohledy a s podivnými stříbrnými nástroji, jaké Harry ještě nikdy neviděl, výlohy plné soudků s netopýřími slezinami a s úhoříma očima, ledabyly nakupených stohů kouzelnických knih, psacích brků a rolí pergamenu, lahviček s lektvary a měsíčních globusů...

(72)

„Všechny Olivanderovy hůlky mají jádro z nějaké mocné čarovné substance, pane Pottere,“ vysvětloval mu přitom. „Používáme žíně jednorožce, ocasní péra ptáka fénixe a blány z dračích srdcí...a samozřejmě, s hůlkou jiného kouzelníka nikdy nedosáhnete takových výsledků jako se svou vlastní.“...“Vy jste náročný zákazník, že, pane Pottere? Nedělejte si starosti, určitě najdeme nějakou, která k vám dokonale půjde – teď mi napadá – ano, proč by ne – neobvyklá kombinace, cesmínové dřevo a pero z fénixe, jedenáct palců, pěkná a poddajná.“ Harry vzal hůlku do ruky a pocítil v prstech nenadálé teplo. Zdvihl ji nad hlavu a rázně s ní švihl vzduchem plným prachu; z hrotu hůlky vytryskl proud rudých a zlatých jisker...

(84, 85)

„To je ale náhoda, že jsme se tu sešli, profesorko McGonagallová.“ otočil se k mourovaté kočce a chtěl se na ni usmát, ale nebyla tam už. Místo na kočku se usmíval na dost přísně vyhlížející ženu, která měla na nose hranaté brýle přesně téhož tvaru jako skvrny, jež zdobily kočku kolem očí. Měla na sobě také plášť, ale smaragdově zelený, a černé vlasy stažené do tuhého uzlu. Bylo na ní vidět, že je nazlobená. „Jak jste zjistil, že jsem to já?“ zeptala se. „Milá paní profesorko, v životě jsme neviděl kočku, která by seděla tak strnule.“

(15)

Harry zvedl z podlahy lesklou, stříbřitou látku. Už na dotek byla zvláštní – jako kdyby ji utkali z vody. „Je to neviditelný plášť,“ řekl Ron...“Jsem si tím jist – vyzkoušej si ho.“



Harry si přehodil plášť přes ramena a Ron vykřikl. *Je to neviditelný plášť!* Podívej se dolů!“ Harry se podíval na svoje nohy, ale nebyly tam. Spěšně se vrhl k zrcadlu. Samozřejmě v něm spatřil sám sebe, ovšem jen hlavu, která jakoby visela ve vzduchu, tělo však nebylo vidět. Přetáhl si plášť i přes hlavu a jeho obraz zmizel úplně.

(187)

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**Celtic horned god Cernunnos**



**„The second Battle of Maige Turedh.“ (A. Fantalov 1996)**



**Merlin and the Dragon Spirit**



**Picture from „Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s stone” movie**



**Harry Potter**



## ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Odkaz keltských mýtů, legend, tradic a rituálů v knihách o Harry Potterovi
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Rok obhajoby	2007
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Olga Roebuck, M.Litt
Anotace	Práce pojednává o vlivech keltských mýtů, legend a tradic na knihy J.K.Rowlingové o Harry Potterovi. Hledá v nich keltskou podstatu postav, zvířat, nadpřirozených tvorů a podrobně analyzuje tradiční keltské rituály a symboliku, která se v těchto knihách objevuje.
Klíčová slova	Keltové, Harry Potter, mýty, magické rituály, druidové