

sweetness, entertainment, pleasure; and wax, from its use for candles, is taken as a symbol of light, instruction, knowledge. That apian connection of entertainment (honey) and instruction (wax) is highly relevant to all the writings of Pamela Travers, especially the *Mary Poppins* books.

With regard to the opening statement of the present chapter - that books ostensibly written for children appeal also to adults - Pamela Travers denied the distinction altogether, saying that books actually written for children were invariably bad literature, and that the most adult-oriented of books can appeal to children. In an essay titled "I Never Wrote for Children" (first published in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1978 and reprinted in Draper and Koralek's *A Lively Oracle*, she wrote that, "even though children throughout the world have, some of them, been kind enough to read what I write ... I didn't write for children at all, ... the idea simply didn't enter my head."

A well-done and useful work combining biographical studies drawn from Pamela Travers's own writings, commentaries on her works, and the texts of some of her rarer articles is Ellen Dooling Draper and Jenny Koralek's *A Lively Oracle*. Travers, herself, did not want any biography written about her after her death - with good reason. Valerie Lawson's *Mary Poppins, She Wrote* is an example, mentioned here as something to be warned about. It has errors of fact, unwarranted speculation, and antagonistic comments about Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, which are wholly without justification either in the writings of Pamela Travers or otherwise. However, it does have some useful features, such as a chronological list of Travers's published books.

Pamela Travers wrote many books on the *Mary Poppins* theme, of which three are basic: *Mary Poppins* (1934), *Mary Poppins Comes Back* (1935), and *Mary Poppins Opens the Door* (1943). Those three books are each self-contained but also follow one another in a continuous sequence, each treating a different visit by *Mary Poppins* to the Banks family, who live at number 17, Cherry Tree Lane. The father is a banker (obviously) and the mother is a harried housewife in desperate need of a nanny for her children: Jane and Michael (the eldest, in that order), the twins John and Barbara, and part way through the series a new baby, Annabel. *Mary Poppins* "pops in" on the Banks household in our ordinary world, which she causes to be an extraordinary world, full of surprises and archetypal experiences.