

Amen. / I would be wounded, and I would wound. / Amen. / I would be born, and I would bear. / Amen. / I would eat, and I would be eaten. / Amen.”

Thus the wisdom of the Hamadryad is actually a quotation from a Gnostic Gospel and should be seen in a spiritual archetypal sense, not a physical, literal one. The Hamadryad continues: “We are all made of the same stuff. The same substance composes us - the tree overhead, the stone beneath us, the bird, the beast, the star - we are all one, all moving to the same end. ... Look!’ and he nodded his head towards the moving mass of creatures before them. Birds and animals were now swaying together, closely encircling Mary Poppins, who was rocking lightly from side to side. Backwards and forwards went the swaying crowd, keeping time together, swinging like the pendulum of a clock. Even the trees were bending and lifting gently, and the moon seemed to be rocking in the sky as a ship rocks on the sea. [para.] ‘Bird and beast and stone and star - we are all one, all one -’ murmured the Hamadryad ... as he himself swayed between the children. [para.] ‘Child and serpent, star and stone - all one.’”

The Hamadryad's comment is clearly a Theosophical statement of the unity of all existence, the oneness of all being. And the Grand Chain is clearly a Theosophical image of the universal order of the cosmos. This whole passage is a magnificent example of why the Mary Poppins books can be regarded as expositions of the Ancient Wisdom presented in the form of fantasy fiction.

Jane and Michael are entranced by the Hamadryad's speech and slip off into a state between waking and sleeping. When they come into normal consciousness, it is morning and they are back in their beds in the Night Nursery at Number 17, Cherry Tree Lane. At first, both think that they had been dreaming, but when they discover that they had the same “dream,” they conclude that it must have been an actual experience. Jane then asks Mary Poppins, who is fixing their porridge, whether she, Mary Poppins, was at the zoo last night. Mary Poppins replies in her usual, offended manner to any such question, without actually answering it, but expressing outrage at its impertinence and changing the subject. Jane therefore concludes that the night's experience must have been just a dream after all. But Michael points out that Mary Poppins is wearing a belt made of golden scaly snakeskin, on which is written: “A Present from the Zoo.”