

Office of Sponsored Programs
Research Enhancement Program Final
Reports

Texas State University

Year 2006

P.L. Travers's *Mary Poppins*: Ideology in
Children's Magical Realism

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Project Title: P.L. Travers's Mary Poppins: Ideology in Children's Magical Realism

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Project summary: With the REP grant, I spent fourteen days during July 2006 in the Manuscripts Collection at the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, and Sydney, Australia, where I read documents from the P.L. Travers Papers. Travers's Mary Poppins series (1934-88) provides particularly interesting examples of magical realism in children's literature and reading Travers's papers greatly helped formulate my ideas about the place of those texts in my larger book project on magical realism in twentieth-century children's literature. Because the Travers collection is particularly well catalogued, with a precise index available online, I was able to focus my reading on the manuscript versions of the first two books of the series (two boxes); personal letters from the period while she was writing the first book (one box), critical articles and essays from journals and magazines in draft and final form (five boxes), and notes and manuscripts of lectures and interviews she gave (three boxes). As a result of my reading, I revised my original plan to combine discussion of Travers with another author, and I am now writing a chapter of the book focusing solely on Travers, her literary milieu (which included, as I found in her letters, many important writers and journalists of the 1920s and 30s in England and Dublin), and the importance of her century-spanning fiction and literary criticism.