

**Charlotte Yonge's "Goosedom"**

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<1>Ho, Goslings of Old England! Ho, fellow-Goslings! hear  
The deeds of your great ancestors, and cackle loud and clear!  
[...] Wherever unfledged Goslings through Goosedom's bounds run loose,  
Shall be great glee to all who see the form of Mother Goose.(1)

<2>This poem (attributed playfully to "Bog Oak") was written for the privately circulated magazine *The Barnacle* (1863-9), edited by Charlotte Yonge under the persona of "Mother Goose." Yonge became popular during the 1850s through domestic novels such as *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) and *The Daisy Chain* (1856), yet despite her success as professional writer, she in fact found a route into the competitive mid-Victorian literary market through a series of informal networks, founded primarily upon familial relationships, and as we shall see, *The Barnacle* displays a preoccupation with such close-knit communities of women. With strong links to the Oxford Movement, Yonge greatly benefited from a well-connected circle family and friends that gathered around the Keble family, a group that Christabel Coleridge called Yonge's "private public" (Coleridge 166). Although she is now best remembered as a popular novelist of the Oxford Movement, Yonge was also the longest running editor of the nineteenth century and yet this important foundation of her career has received scant critical attention.

<3>Critics are only now starting to explore Yonge's work beyond the familiar territory of Tractarianism and the domestic novel. Her career was as long as it was diverse, and recent scholarship is starting to acknowledge the more neglected aspects of her writing. In her discussion of this revival of interest, Charlotte Mitchell hopes that this signifies a "new dawn in Yonge studies" (Mitchell 160). While Mitchell refers to Yonge as the "herald" of this new dawn, Gavin Budge has broadened our understanding of the role of religion and realism in Yonge's work, while Martha Stoddard Holmes has illuminated the significance of disability, community and gender (as has Mia Chen and Elizabeth Hale) (Mitchell 160). Leslee Thorne-Murphy, meanwhile, has written about the relationship between domesticity and charity that is central to Yonge's conception of the professional woman. However, two projects in particular, led by Tamara S. Wagner, have produced some of the most exciting re-readings of Yonge's work, and they represent a timely rediscovery of Yonge's *oeuvre*.

<4>The first, Wagner's edited collection, *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel: Rereading Nineteenth-Century Women Writers*, contains a number of chapters dedicated to Yonge and

acknowledges her status as a still-neglected author (indeed, back in 2000 Talia Schaffer wrote of “fighting to read Charlotte Yonge”) (*Magnum Bonum* 244). In her contribution, Pamela Gilbert reflects on the work done since the 1990s to recover the variety of fiction by previously neglected popular authors, and the fact that Yonge is still largely discussed in terms of her domestic novels suggests that there are areas of her work as yet untapped. In the second of these projects, a special issue of *Women’s Writing* journal on Yonge, Wagner describes her fiction as ripe for critical review, drawing our attention to Yonge’s many different “forms” and suggesting that her “adaptation of different narrative paradigms importantly registered genre crossings and thereby contributed to the formation of domestic realism as a central factor in the development of Victorian popular fiction” (Wagner 213). However, Wagner notes that Yonge’s lingering reputation as an antifeminist, and her didactic tone, continue to make her an unfashionable subject for recovery (Wagner 213). Critics have long pointed to this source of unease surrounding Yonge, perpetuated by the nervousness of feminist critics to recover an anti-feminist novelist (it should be noted that the work of Wagner and others serves to destabilize the unhelpful binary of feminist/anti-feminist). These two collections of essays mark an important step toward recovering Yonge’s work and recognizing the diversity of her career. However, the focus remains primarily on Yonge’s fiction; the work of Kristine Moruzi provides a notable exception as she pays particular attention to Yonge’s role as editor. Moruzi’s careful reading of previously neglected material offers an important insight into Yonge’s editorship but also her interest in “promoting and supporting girls as readers and writers” (an aspect of her career that I develop here) (“Never read anything” 288). Although the significance of *The Barnacle* is yet to be recognized, Moruzi’s research on *The Monthly Packet* provides an excellent starting point for an examination of Yonge’s editorial work.

<5>The main journal of her career (of which Yonge edited over 80 volumes), was the popular Tractarian publication *The Monthly Packet* (1851-99), but for a short period of time she also edited *The Barnacle*, a journal written for and by the members of the “Gosling Society.”(2) Julia Courtney has described *The Barnacle* as an “in-house” version of *The Monthly Packet*, and the purpose of the magazine was to encourage young women (the “unfledged Goslings” of our opening poem) to practice all aspects of journalism before “graduating” to *The Monthly Packet* (“Mother Goose’s Brood” 189). Because it was semi-public in nature, *The Barnacle* often directly addressed potentially controversial issues (usually through the use of vibrant illustrations) that could only be alluded in fully public religious magazines like *The Monthly Packet*, affording us a unique insight into issues that were considered largely unsuitable for Yonge’s more conservative publication, specifically the ambition of women and the networks that supported their careers.(3)

<6>The Gosling Society was an essay society of young women whom Yonge mentored during the 1860s. This group comprised not only of the relatives, and their friends, of the Yonge family, but also of some of the avid readers of Yonge’s fiction and *The Monthly Packet*. Recent work on Yonge’s letters has done much to illuminate the individual lives and careers of the members of the Gosling Society; however, my interest here is in the *Barnacle* magazine itself, Yonge’s role as editor and the depiction of the women she supported in the illustrations.(4) In her discussion of the Gosling Society, Courtney has called the poem by “Bog Oak” an “anthem to Goosedom” and it is the representation of this network (or “Goosedom”) and Yonge’s position as the central character of this network (as “Mother Goose”) that is the focus of this article (“Mother Goose’s

Brood” 189). By choosing the identity of “Mother Goose,” Yonge was referencing a recognized figure of women’s storytelling that was firmly established in Victorian literary culture and the illustrations represent Yonge in that role. Furthermore, desire for a literary career, the importance of developing a public persona and networking were all openly depicted in these illustrations, something not possible in the largely unillustrated *Monthly Packet*. These drawings depict the home as central to the formation of important connections, largely built upon personal relationships. As has been well-documented, such informal networks formed the foundation of Yonge’s early career, and out of these productive groups sprung the longest running project of her career, the editorship of *The Monthly Packet*.

<7>As Sturrock has discussed, Yonge’s editorial tone (in correspondence as well as in the journal itself) was distinctly “familial,” with Yonge representing herself to her contributors as “a daughter at home,” rather than as an “employer,” in-keeping with her self-representation as a “dutiful daughter” (“Establishing Identity” 267). This “familial” tone was suited to Yonge’s construction of herself as a professional with reference to the notions of duty, domesticity and religion. Indeed, as Barbara Onslow has noted, for many women journalists at mid-century, domesticity and the home were central to their professional persona and working life (Onslow 19). By constructing an identity that highlighted her place within family networks, Yonge created an image of herself as “nurturing and supportive to contributors and aspiring contributors to *The Monthly Packet*” (“Establishing Identity” 267). This is not because Yonge was reluctant to adopt “the persona of a professional woman,” but rather because Yonge’s particular brand of domestic professionalism was founded upon the notion of work justified within a domestic framework (“Establishing Identity” 267). In other words, the construction of a public identity which referenced Yonge’s place in the family circle did not negate her status as a professional, but rather highlighted the domestic nature of her work. The “home industry” of *The Monthly Packet* provides a case in point, for Yonge worked in the drawing room (as many women authors and editors did), reading aloud contributions, letters and articles for the friends and family members gathered there to assess, edit and comment upon (“Establishing Identity” 273). The process of production of the magazine was a real collective effort, with even “visiting cousins” becoming “part of the family production unit,” as well as “close friends” (“Establishing Identity” 273).

<8>This particular brand of domestic professionalism is emphasised in illustrations of *The Barnacle*. The emphasis on the home in these illustrations suggests that the domestic sphere offered women a space in which they could make and maintain useful contacts. There is also importance placed on the construction of a public persona (something not directly addressed in *The Monthly Packet*), as the editorial identity that Yonge adopted for *The Monthly Packet* (as a “dutiful daughter” of the Church), was transformed and exaggerated in *The Barnacle* (as the mentor, Mother Goose). By 1859, *The Monthly Packet* was running smoothly with a loyal base of regular readers. It was at this point that Mary Coleridge, Yonge’s cousin, suggested she become mentor for “a group of eager, merry schoolgirls” (Coleridge 292) with “time on their hands” and in need of “a spur to their energies,” and so Yonge’s “Goosedom” was founded (Coleridge 201).

<9>Not surprisingly, given the importance of family connections in the development of Yonge’s early career, the Gosling Society was also founded upon an informal mix of family and friends.

Margaret Mare and Alicia C. Percival explain that around the early 1860s, there formed an “inner circle” over which Yonge “exercised an influence typical of that which she wielded in lesser degree over her wider and unknown youthful public” (Mare and Percival 200.) Christabel Coleridge and Mary Augusta Ward (“Mrs Humphry Ward”) are perhaps the best-known of the Goslings who went on to have successful literary careers.(5) The fact that the Gosling Society included admirers of Yonge’s fiction (like Ward) as well as friends and family (like Coleridge), suggests that her “Goosedom” actually spread beyond the initial “inner circle” that Mare and Percival describe. It began as a type of essay society in which monthly questions were set and responses sent in for Yonge to correct, critique and edit. This correspondence quickly developed into the production of home-made volumes of a quarterly illustrated magazine. Yonge oversaw and edited each issue, modelling the journal on the *Hursley Magazine* which she had read and enjoyed as a young adult (Coleridge 202). Indeed, the illustrations of *The Barnacle* echo the playful illustrations that were typical of the *Hursley Magazine*.

<10> Julia Courtney has described *The Barnacle* as a small “manuscript magazine,” meaning that it was handwritten (only one copy of each volume was produced), bound in leather and not intended for general public consumption (being produced privately for circulation between the small group of Goslings) (“The Barnacle” 71). An illustration from an early number (which depicts a barnacle goose standing on a rocky shoreline) indicates that the title makes reference to the “mythical connection between geese and barnacles” (Courtney 72). According to this myth, the presence of barnacles on the shoreline indicates the imminent arrival of migrating geese (reflecting the ancient belief that geese were not hatched from eggs but rather grew from the barnacles themselves) (Smith 329).(6) Just like these mythical barnacles, Yonge hoped that *The Barnacle* magazine might develop ambitious young women (goslings) into fully-fledged authors (geese.) The goose is centrally placed in this first illustration, as Yonge was centrally placed in her guise as Mother Goose in almost every subsequent illustration, and these often elaborate drawings gave Yonge a greater visual presence as compared to *The Monthly Packet*. The journal itself comprised a mix of poetry, short stories, articles on what the Goslings were currently reading or places they had recently visited, as well as a large number of richly coloured illustrations and even a number of photographs pasted onto the magazine’s pages.

<11> Writing about Yonge’s relationship with Goslings, Christabel Coleridge described her as “Minerva to a set of young owls,” but wrote that Yonge described herself as “Mother Goose to a brood of goslings” (Coleridge 201). The differentiation, as Courtney has pointed out, is significant (“Mother Goose’s Brood” 191). Instead of opting for Minerva, the classical character representing female wisdom, Yonge chose the playful and domestic figure of Mother Goose as a more fitting persona for her mentoring role. Indeed, the character of Mother Goose (best known as a maternal storyteller) complemented those of “Aunt Charlotte” and “Cousin Charlotte,” monikers which occur in her correspondence and which she occasionally used for the publication of her non-fiction. Coleridge’s comments make clear that Yonge’s choice of Mother Goose was deliberate, complementing and exaggerating the nurturing editorial persona that she developed in *The Monthly Packet*.

<12> However, despite differences in style and purpose, the two magazines were closely related. An illustration for Christmas 1864 (Figure 1), suggests the interconnected nature of Yonge’s

magazines, and indicates that she employed *The Barnacle* to gently puff *The Monthly Packet* and her own fiction. This illustration depicts the Goslings gathered around a Christmas tree, joyously receiving Yonge's books as presents. Amongst these presents, which hang temptingly from the tree, are bound volumes of *The Monthly Packet*. A bird (which looks like a cormorant) stands on a "Macmillan & Co" plinth (just visible at the bottom right of the illustration,) and is snipping one of Yonge's texts from the tree (having already secured another under its wing.) A Gosling rushes to forward to receive the gifts, wings spread out in delight. Yonge had a strong relationship with Macmillan, and this illustration plays upon not only her desirability and popularity as an author, but also her close relationship with the publisher.(7)



Figure. 1. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 6 (Christmas Number 1864).

Clearly playful in intent, this allusion to the wider network of the periodical press suggests that despite the playful label of “Gosling,” the young women who contributed to the magazine were aware of the male “clubland” from which they were excluded, and also that popular writers like Yonge were extremely desirable in the current marketplace. So, the term “Gosling” represented not so much the youth of the contributors (Christabel Coleridge, for example, was twenty years old at this time), but rather their professional immaturity, or their status as “unfledged” authors, illustrators and journalists. *The Barnacle* was, therefore, explicitly set up as an a testing-ground, usefully semi-public in tone because it was circulated around the closed group of women, before the step was made to the fully public space of *The Monthly Packet*, one of the most successful religious periodicals on the market. It offered young women a kind of finishing school for honing their talents and learning the processes of magazine publication, before they ventured into the public marketplace, represented in this illustration by Yonge’s publishers.

<13>However, it is important to note that unlike *The Monthly Packet*, the emphasis of *The Barnacle* was on recreation and amusement, and this emphasis on fun indicates the Goslings’ determination not to take themselves (or their editor) too seriously; a pertinent example of this playfulness is the use of pseudonyms. Reflecting the (increasingly waning) trend for anonymous publication, the literary contributions to *The Barnacle* were not signed and any pseudonyms employed were typically mischievous and light-hearted: “Ladybird,” “Ugly Duckling,” “Bog Oak,” “Cobweb,” “Chelsea China” and “Iceberg.” However, in such a closely-knit circle, members of the group were aware of each other’s pen names and indeed, a circulation list (with addresses) was included at the beginning of each volume so that the individual readers could pass the magazine on to the next once she had finished with it. In “To the Reader,” the introductory note that Yonge wrote for the first number, the editor fondly alludes to this play at anonymity:

Goosedom is about to make its first appearance to its own public [...]. Be it known that our own feelings of confidence are not absolutely such as our able artist has depicted on the title page. Perhaps we are nearer veiling our faces with our wings (if they were grown beyond the size of flappers) and entreating the readers’ kind consideration (*Barnacle* vol. 1 [n.p.]).



Figure. 2. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 1 (September 1863).

In this passage, Yonge refers to the all-female community of writers and illustrators as her “Goosedom,” and indeed *The Barnacle* was depicted as a type of literary kingdom over which she, as editor, reigned (“Bog Oak’s” poem, cited earlier, echoing the playful concept of Yonge’s “Goosedom.”)

<14>The drawing to which Yonge’s introduction referred is worth considering in detail (Figure 2). It depicts a large goose (sitting on a raised platform) reading to four smaller birds; this scene reflects typical depictions of Mother Goose in which the storyteller reads aloud to a group of young children gathered around her (Knoepfmacher 91). Certain elements in the scene are labelled (“This is a Pond” and “Tree”) and above Mother Goose is a sign indicating that this is her “Goosedom.” Encircling the periodical’s title are images of the contributors’ faces (just visible at the top of figure 2) which offer a deliberate contrast to the editor’s coy reference to “veiling our faces.” Indeed, there is nothing coy about this illustration for the image of Mother Goose reading to her Goslings is encircled with human eyes (each one representing a member of the Gosling Society,) their gaze directly staring out at the reader. Underneath the image is written “Mother Goose cackled, while / All the world wondered!!” This reference to Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (“Charging an army, while / All the world wondered,”) parodies the military motif that many editorial introductions employed at this time (Tennyson 1189). With a knowing wink to the reader, this illustration makes grandiose claims for *The Barnacle*, and echoes the military language often employed in magazines to assert “editorial authority” (Fraser



et al 86). This military motif is also in keeping with the focus on ambition which the journal deliberately sought to foster.

<15>Literary success is the dominant theme in nearly all of the illustrations, and is explored unapologetically, with many featuring Yonge as the central character, suggesting that the young women regarded their editor as their literary role model, with *The Barnacle* providing a focus for their admiration and hopes for their futures. For example, in an illustration for June 1865 (Figure 3), manuscripts from all over the country are delivered by hand, horse and cart, postman (with his bag bulging) and even steam train, all depositing their literary offerings at Yonge's door. These forms of transport allude to nationwide networks of communication operating in Victorian society, and Yonge seems to have them in her power. Straining over her garden wall (labelled "The Editor's Office,") her arms outstretched, the editor directs this hive of activity, appearing to command the manuscripts which pile up at her door. It is a busy image and Yonge is shown to be as a small yet powerful figure, commanding work from the center of the home that she is rarely seen to step out of.



Figure. 3. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 7 (June 1865).

<16>The image is typically light-hearted, and demonstrates a determination not to take *The Barnacle* too seriously, but emphasis was repeatedly placed on ambition and this suggests the more serious purpose of the magazine. Contributions to *The Barnacle* were taken as seriously as those to *The Monthly Packet*, with Yonge and the contributors depicted in illustrations as working hard, in the home and rarely in isolation, most often working in collaboration with two or three others. This emphasis working together indicates that the home was a particularly conducive space in which women could successfully work because of (rather than in spite of) such collaboration. The Christmas number for 1865 (Figure 4) carries an illustration with an inscription that reads:

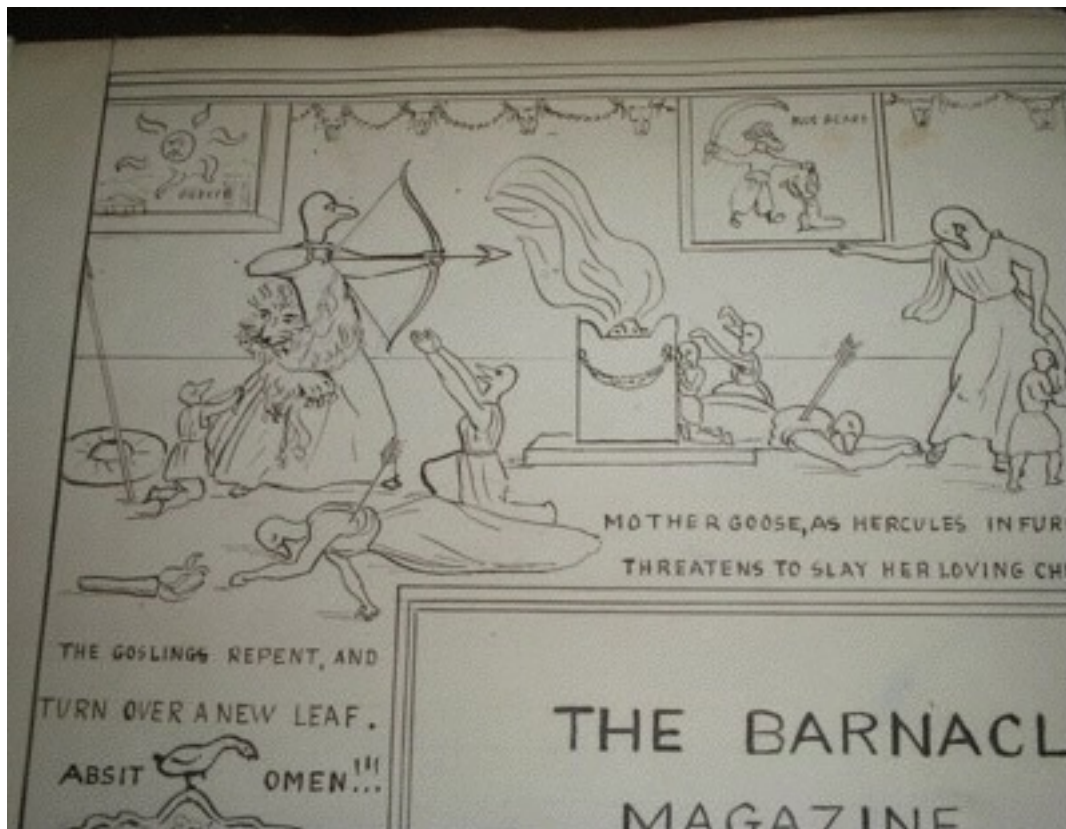


Figure 4. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 10 (Christmas Number 1865).

“Mother Goose, as Hercules infuriate, threatens to slay her loving children.” In the top half of the picture, Yonge (as Mother Goose) fires a cross-bow at a group of smaller Goslings; one lies dead at her feet, an arrow protruding from her back, two more cling to her skirts and beg for mercy, mirroring the victim of Blue Beard in the picture hanging near their editor. Another Gosling cowers into the skirts of an adult for protection, who gestures toward Mother Goose as if to indicate that the young Gosling must learn from the severe punishment her friends are suffering.

Having learned the lesson of industry from their strict master, the Goslings “repent, and turn over a new leaf.” The lower half of this illustration (Figure 5) carries the inscription “The Industry of the Goslings” and shows them studying the works of Aristotle, Plato and the History of Greenland in a vast library.

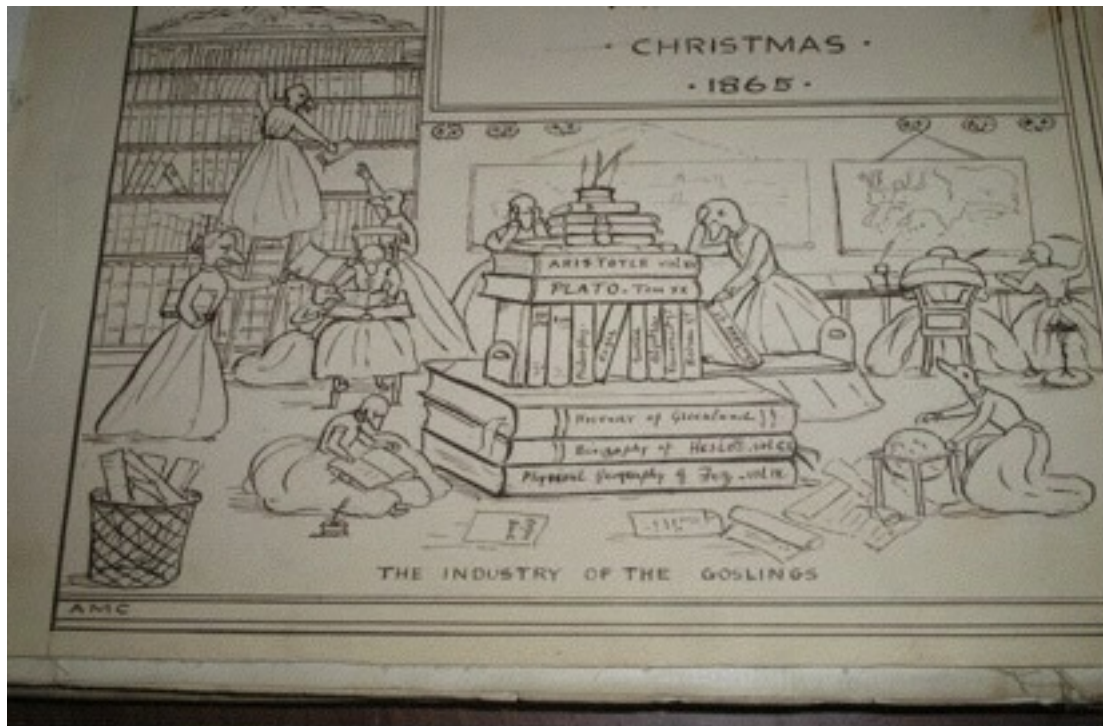


Figure 5. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 10 (Christmas Number 1865).

The Goslings are now working hard, one sits on the floor examining a globe, another pondering an open book, her pen and ink close by. In the background, Goslings scribble away at desks, some holding their heads in their hands in frustration. Disregarded manuscripts, languishing in a wastepaper bin, are conspicuous in the foreground of the picture. Overseeing this scene (which is suggestive of the “home industry” that Sturrock describes) is a stern-looking Mother Goose, hair drawn back into a severe bun and her arm outstretched, delivering yet more books for the Goslings to study (“Establishing Identity” 273). The humour of the illustration is evident, as is the suggestion that Yonge was a hard editor to please. Just as Yonge playfully accused her friend and mentor Marianne Dyson of being a “Slave Driver,” so Yonge is shown to be running a kind of literary sweatshop in which the young women were pushed to study hard, learning how to produce scholarly and entertaining contributions. The illustration is clearly ironic, for as Sturrock has noted, Yonge’s editorial tone was “familial” and placating, rather than severe and strict (though she always gently persuaded her contributors to follow her directions) (“Establishing Identity” 272).

<17>What is also noticeable about this illustration is the representation of teamwork; as the hub of productive intellectual activity, the home provides a place for the Goslings to study, read and write together. The implication is that *The Barnacle* strengthened the bond between the members of the Gosling Society and allowed them a space within which they could develop their skills as budding journalists. Indeed, the magazine was a success in terms of providing training for young women wishing to contribute to Yonge's better-known periodical, and this often painful process is once again reflected in the illustrations. In "The Progress of Composition" (Figure 6) the young contributors are depicted as developing through the difficult stages of authorship, eventually ending in the hopeful delivery of their manuscript to the editor. Proudly holding her head aloft on the left of the image is "The Authoress who thinks they have "an idea;" slumped over a desk with her head on her hands is "The Authoress who has none;" tearing at her hair is the author in "Distraction;" sitting upright with a large quill in her hand is the inspired author who sees "Gleams of light!!" and finally, as she carries her manuscript to the post office, the author's "Bliss! Triumph!!!!!" While the depiction of ambition in *The Monthly Packet* was legitimized with reference to duty and the concept of being of "use" (we might recall here Yonge's "tearful" conversation with her father to which critics often refer,) the semi-public nature of *The Barnacle* allowed for the open depiction of literary ambition with no such justification required.



Figure. 6. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 7 (June 1865).

<18>As well as acting as their literary coach and mentor, Yonge was also depicted as a kind of gatekeeper to the circles of professional journalism. Even though some Goslings, like Christabel Coleridge, were well connected in their own right, the editor is figured as holding the key to the careers of others because she has access to public networks (such as the Macmillan character that we saw earlier). In an illustration for volume fourteen (Figure 7) the editor is depicted holding open the door to “Ye Porte of Authorship.” A flood of Goslings push at each other as they attempt

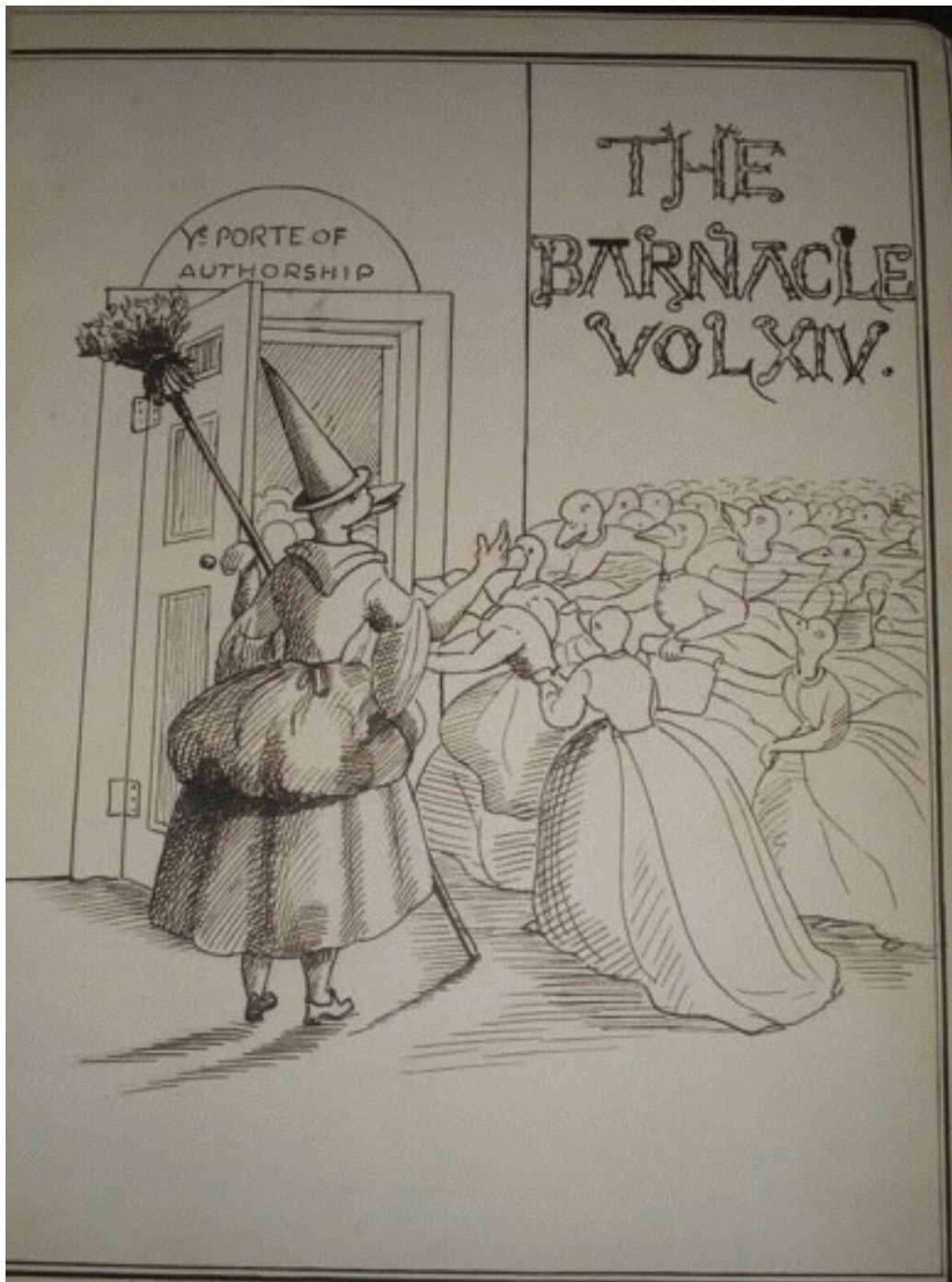


Figure 7. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 14 (1866).

to race through the door, some of them carrying manuscripts. This illustration of Yonge emphasises the nurturing and facilitating elements of her self-appointed mentoring role as she is holding the door open and beckoning the Goslings through. Just as Yonge benefitted from

contacts in the literary world, made through her family and faith, so she in turn is shown to be the gatekeeper to the realm of “authorship,” enabling and facilitating the careers of others.

<19>Because she was positioned in the magazine as a figure to be admired, Yonge’s persona does not reflect the traditionally comical figure of Mother Goose, but rather that of a “fairy-tale woman writer” (Talairach-Vielmas 18). Her incarnation as Mother Goose in this magazine came to symbolize the successful woman writer and the position to which her contributors were aspiring. In her influential study of women’s writing and the fairy tale, Marina Warner describes Mother Goose as “the immemorial storyteller,” who is often depicted as “a figure of fun, a foolish, ignorant old woman, a typical purveyor of old wives’ tales” (Warner 79). However, Warner suggests that by the nineteenth century, Mother Goose also came to represent “a Sibyl-Nurse,” as someone “who instils morality and knowledge of the world, and foresees the future of her charges and prepares them for it” (Warner 79). So, Mother Goose has traditionally signified the combined roles of storyteller and mentor, a combination which made this character ideal for Yonge’s role of mentor to the Goslings, and indeed part of the purpose of *The Barnacle* was to prepare Yonge’s “charges” for their futures. Representations of Yonge as Mother Goose referenced a long history of female storytelling, for the “murky legend” of Mother Goose can be dated back as far as 1656 (Talairach-Vielmas 17). Mother Goose first appeared in print in an illustration for Charles Perrault’s collection of fairy tales, and in the Victorian period, Mother Goose often serves as “the emblematic beast [...] of female noise, of women’s chatter” (Warner 56). However, Laurence Talairach-Vielmas describes the Victorian fairy tale as a “literary battlefield,” in which, during the 1860s in particular, women writers can be seen to be “reappropriating” the genre in order to reclaim it from male writers (Talairach-Vielmas 20). The positive characterization of Yonge as Mother Goose, as a “fairy-tale woman writer” at the centre of a thriving network of ambitious women, can be seen as reflecting this movement to reclaim the fairy tale tradition (Talairach-Vielmas 18).

<20>Although *The Barnacle* illustrations often depict Yonge as carrying the signifiers of the witch (often associated with Mother Goose), such as the “stick, the conical hat and the apron and petticoats,” her version of the character shares few of the more unappealing physical attributes traditionally associated with the comical and “grotesque” figure of the Grimms’ tales (typically including “crone features,” “chapfallen jaw,” “toothless bight of chin and nose in profile” and “Punch-like proboscis”) (Warner 156). Illustrations of Yonge often depict her with the head of a bird but the body of a young woman (see figures 7 and 8 in particular) with a small, feminine waist and dainty hands and feet. She is not a figure of repulsion or subject to humiliation, but a figure to be admired: feminine, empowered and respected. In this incarnation, Yonge’s professional persona fits Talairach-Vielmas’ description of the “glamorous figure of the fairy-tale woman writer” (Talairach-Vielmas 18). In *The Barnacle*, with illustrations depicting a Mother Goose training young women, literally and figuratively opening doors for them, Yonge was represented as just such a “fairy-tale woman writer.”

<21>An illustration for 1866 (Figure 8) crystallizes this sense of triumph and once again places Yonge as the central character while alluding to the wider network of the magazine industry. Here, Mother Goose is depicted as holding high a pair of scales containing *The Barnacle*, far outweighing the piles of well-established periodicals such as *Frasers*, *Blackwood’s*, *Temple Bar*,

*Once a Week, Good Words* and the *Quarterly Review*. The bound volumes on which Mother Goose stands carry



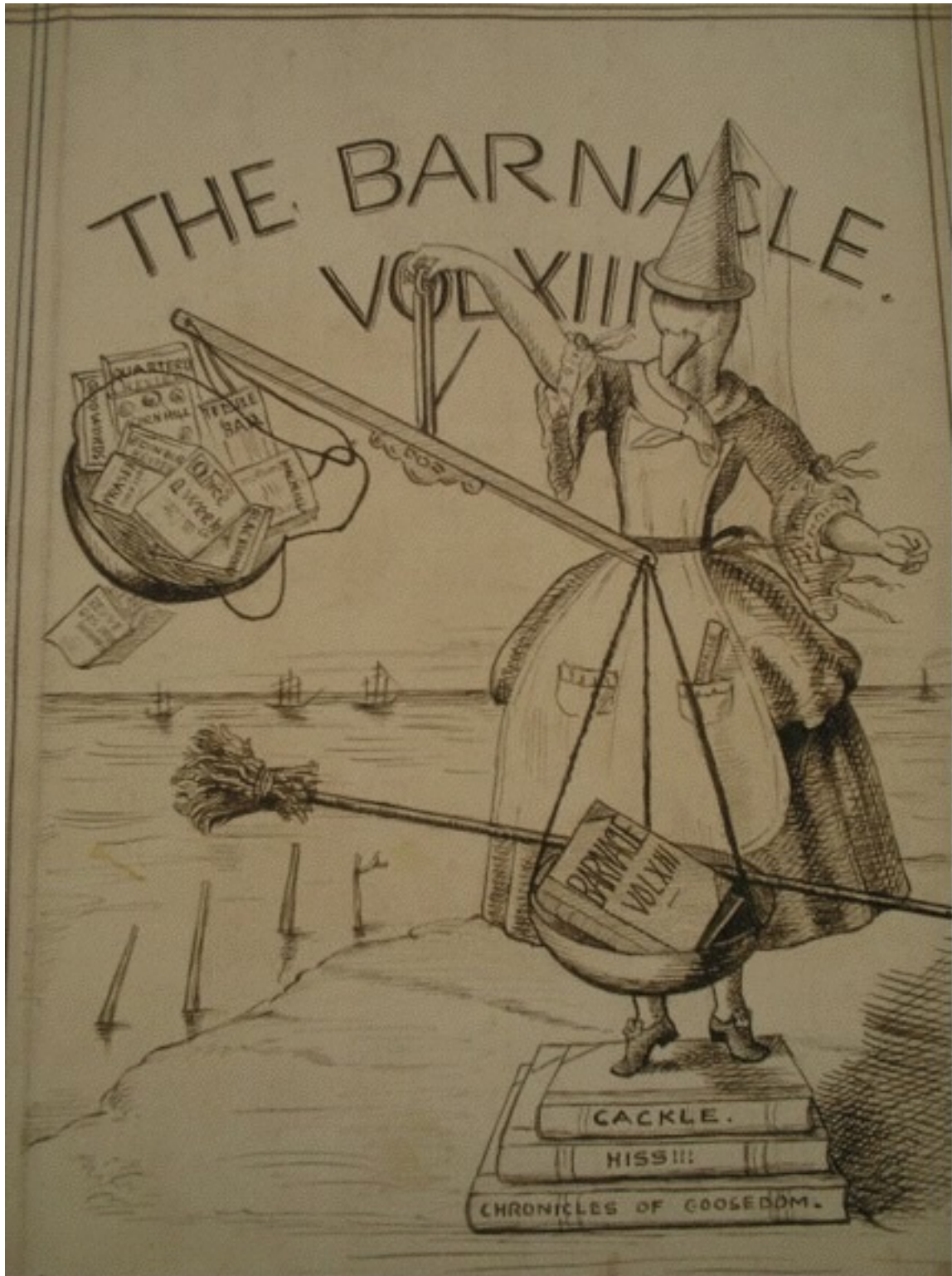


Figure 8. [Anonymous] *The Barnacle* 13 (1866).

the titles of *Cackle*, *Hiss* and *Chronicles of Goosedom* (representing the young contributors' work.) The implication here is that "women's noise" (the "cackle" of our opening poem), reigns supreme (Warner 56). This illustration is not suggesting that *The Barnacle* seriously represented a threat to these other magazines (this, after all, was not the intention of the journal), but rather that through the magazine, Yonge encouraged a new generation of women journalists, empowered through the Gosling Society. These women were clearly ambitious to take their place with established journals ranging from the serious and weighty (*Quarterly Review*) to the popular and literary (*Once a Week*) and in this final illustration, women's informal "alternative networks" (represented by *The Barnacle*) are seen within the context of the male "clubland" (represented by the *Cornhill*, *Once a Week* and *Temple Bar* (all edited by men)) (Jay 260). Although there were magazines edited by women at this time, there is no mention of them here, suggesting a sense of exclusion from the male-dominated networks of journalists and magazines.<sup>(8)</sup> However, what is offered here is not a picture of exclusion and defeat, but rather the suggestion that through such "alternative networks," women journalists could find a route into the competitive literary market (Jay 260).

<22>Some fifteen years after the first number of *The Barnacle* was produced, Charlotte Yonge and Christabel Coleridge "solemnly" sat down together to eat a roast goose and agreed to close the magazine. The work of the Goslings was merged into a column that was already running in *The Monthly Packet* (called "Arachne and her Spiders,") and most of the strongest contributors graduated to that magazine. Yonge later wrote that she felt her work was perceived as "goody goody" as the century drew to a close, and her novels certainly fell out of favour, but the Gosling Society had helped to facilitate the careers of some of the next generation of women journalists. The persona of Mother Goose linked Yonge to a long history of female storytelling that was deeply rooted in Victorian literary culture. However, this version of Mother Goose provided her circle of Goslings with a positive role model, being transformed from a figure of ridicule to one of admiration. Yonge was represented as an empowered fairy tale writer, one who facilitated the work of others and inspired the young women to seek their own careers. The informal network of the Gosling Society, and *The Barnacle*, provided a semi-public space in which young women could experiment, learn and enjoy their work.

#### Endnotes

(1)All material from *The Barnacle* is reproduced with the kind permission of the Principal and Fellows of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.<sup>(^)</sup>

(2)Yonge also edited the *Monthly Paper of Sunday Teaching* (1865-1875) and *Mothers in Council* (1890–1901).<sup>(^)</sup>

(3)It should be noted that during the 1860s, after *The Barnacle* had ceased circulation, the question of women's work and ambition was addressed directly in *The Monthly Packet* through the serialization of texts such as Yonge's *Womankind*.(^)

(4)See Mitchell, Jordan and Schinske (eds.) *The Letters of Charlotte Mary Yonge (1823-1901)*. (^)

(5)For the details of the less well-known members of the Gosling Society, see the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship, <http://www.dur.ac.uk/c.e.schultze/context/goslings.html>, a resource that provides invaluable information on all aspects of Yonge's life and work. Mare and Percival's claim that Ellen ("Mrs Henry") Wood was part of this group is obviously an error for Wood's career was at its height in 1861 with the publication of *East Lynne*, and she was too well established in her career, as well as too advanced in years, to be a Gosling.(^)

(6)Heron-Allen's *Barnacles in Nature and Myth* (1928) first examined the mythical connection between geese and barnacles. I am not aware of a recent study examining this myth in Victorian literature, though Jonathan Smith mentions it in his work on Darwin's barnacles and Victorian seaside studies.(^)

(7)For more on Yonge's relationship with Macmillan, see Walton and Mitchell.(^)

(8)As well as the women editors of other religious magazines mentioned above, other editors include Mary Elizabeth Braddon (*Belgravia*), Florence Marryat (*London Society*), and Ellen Wood (*The Argosy*).(^)

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