

# Nursery Rhymes & Vedanta

## Notes

Subhasis  
Bhattacharya  
(constructed from  
memory from 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.)

(Present at Rani Birla College for Women, Calcutta, middle of 2016.  
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Resource Person. Invited by Dr. Apal Dasgupta.

Existing ideas:

a) Nursery rhymes are coded heirlooms/artefacts (Fairy tales)

anecdotal or dictionaries etc.

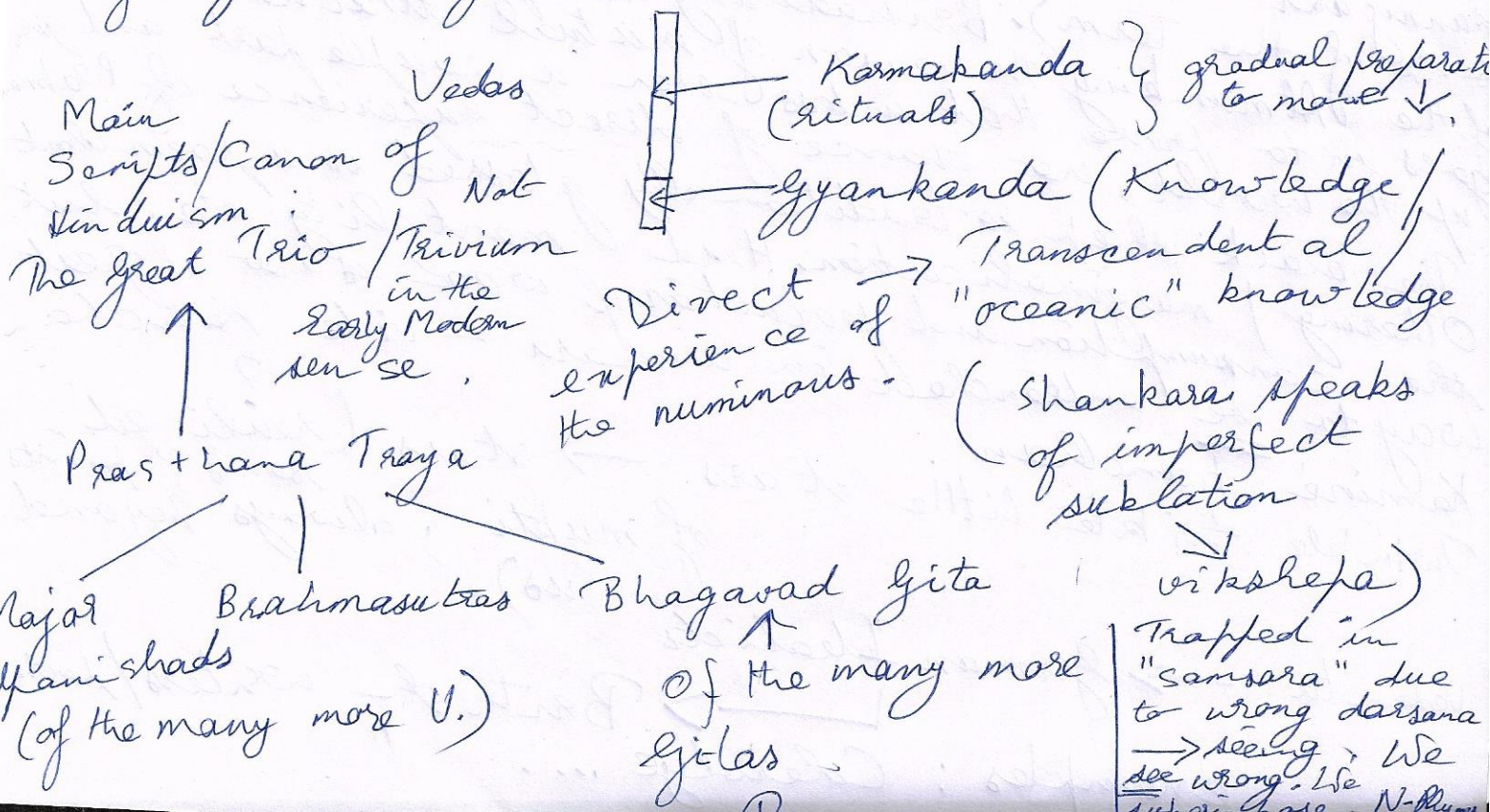
against child abuse (L.R. Riding Hood) Sexual mores (Jack & Jill.) & gender roles

Political ideas:

Humpty Dumpty → Sat. Elizabeth  
Walshingham (all the king's horses & could not help her)

## My contentions:

Vedanta, though can be of many types, for the sake of English Majors, I took this format:



∴ nursery rhymes are also coded to carry Vedantic tropes since Vedanta is not patrimony of Hindus only. Syllogism: Christian Truths (equated in Patristics to Natural Justice) are truths for all like Jesus' Golden Rule. That is poetry/art which can sustain critical pressure. No wrong in analysing Lady Macbeth through Freud then what prevents us from analysing rhymes through Vedanta?

To sum up: Vedanta as propagated by Sri Shankaracharya says that the world is created, as it were, through our imperfect dubitation. (Very different from Sri Ramanujacharya etc.)

Now for illustration: Wendy Doniger mentions a spider web. Doniger is an excellent piecemeal archivist. We are according to Vedanta, creating our own webs: Vishnu Sahasranama; janna samsara bandhanat → vicious web of birth and rebirth.

"Little Miss Muff." → reference to the spider. The image of the spider recurs in Vedanta vide Doniger. It is the jivatman who weaves due to wrong darsana, these webs. (Quoted lines etc.)

"Jack & Jill" → human attachments. According to the Shastras, only and only through renunciation/sannyasa can one be saved (not in the Semitic/J.C. sense of the term). Brihadaranyak Upanishad speaks of the Atman being the reason of mutual attraction but goes on to prove that unless ever a couple part and give up the world, no chance of direct experience of Brahman.

The black sheep is traditionally glossed as a poem about Othering/marginalisation. Head mentality etc. but the consumption and production of wool is also a great way to be entrenched in samsara - vide Kancha Kamini's bandhan.

Twinkle, twinkle little stars → stars (realized souls, points of mukti, always beyond us).

Vedanta → German Idealists  
↳ British writers/poets  
examples: Coleridge ....