

Ramachandra Gandhi Memorial Lecture - 2025

*Department of Philosophy
University of Hyderabad*

The Vocative Turn: From Addressing to Advaita

Prof. Arindam Chakrabarti

Abstract:

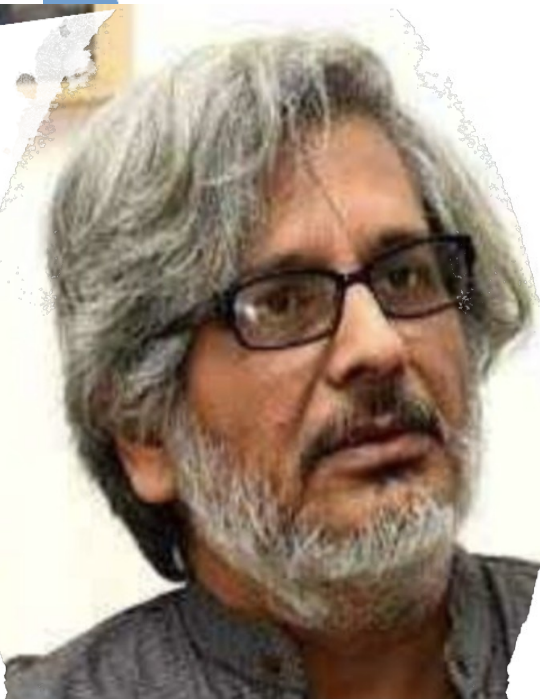
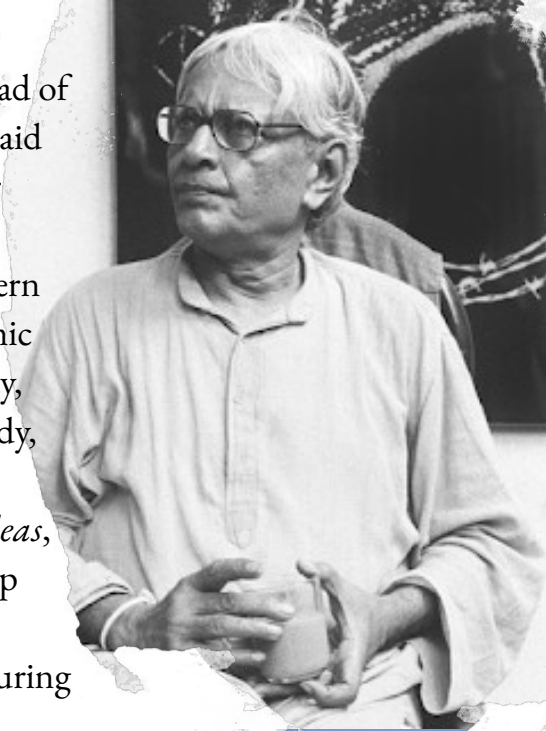
Referring to objects and persons is not the only function of proper names. Names are used to call or address a friend, a close relation or God. This lecture would take Ramchandra Gandhi's most original contribution to philosophy of language: his theory of *the vocative use of names to address* the second person. It will track RCG's line of rigorous phenomenological argument from the non-coercive drawing of attention of the other which is addressing (*sambodhana*) to the essential non-duality (*Advaita*) of all subjective consciousness. From calling you to calling the Self in you. If there cannot be two I's there cannot be two streams of subjective consciousness. But how can the second person be the first person? With the support of Abhinavagupta's complex theory of the two powers of consciousness: that of illumination (*prakāśa*) and conceptual self-awareness (*vimarśa*), we shall delve into RCG's dense and deep analytical philosophy of human communication both critically and contemplatively.

21-10-2025 || 10:30 am-1 pm (IST)

Humanities Auditorium

Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/emn-jryy-nyw>

Ramachandra Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, was a distinguished Indian philosopher known for blending Indian philosophical thought with Western traditions. As the founding head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hyderabad, he laid the foundation for its academic excellence, shaping it into a hub for rigorous philosophical inquiry. Educated at Cambridge under philosopher Peter Strawson, Gandhi drew insights from both Western rationalism and the deep insights of Advaita Vedanta. In his academic career, he also taught at prominent institutions like Delhi University, Visva-Bharati University, and the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. His key works include *Presuppositions of Human Communication*, *Sita's Kitchen* and *The Availability of Religious Ideas*, explore themes of meaning, metaphysics, ethics, and the relationship between religion and society. A thinker deeply committed to non-violence, truth, and compassion, Ramachandra Gandhi left an enduring legacy in both philosophy and public thought



Arindam Chakrabarti did his D.Phil at Oxford University under Sir Michael Dummett and Sir Peter Strawson, taught at Calcutta University, University College London and University of Washington, Seattle, University of Delhi. Since 1997 he taught at University of Hawaii Manoa as Lenney distinguished professor of philosophy. Between 2018 and 2020, he occupied the Nirmal and Augustina Mattoo Chair in Indic Humanities at the department of philosophy Stony Brook University, New York. He published 14 edited or authored books (in English, Sanskrit, and Bengali), and more than a hundred papers and reviews in refereed journals or anthologies. In 2019, Bloomsbury London published his critically acclaimed work: *Realisms Interlinked: Objects, Subjects and Other Subjects*. Currently he is finishing: *The Book of Questions: Indian Philosophical Analysis* (under contract with Penguin, India). Since January 2024, he is a professor of philosophy at Ashoka University, Sonipath, Haryana