

# Imagination, Content, and the Self

by

Dilip Ninan

Submitted to the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy  
on May 21, 2008, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

## Abstract

I begin with a discussion of two ways of imagining something: ‘from the inside’ and ‘from the outside’. My interest in this topic is two-fold: First, I want to see what studying this topic can teach us about the nature of mental content—in particular, about the content of *de se* and *de re* thoughts. Second, I want to formulate an account of this distinction which will help us understand the role these two types of imagining play in philosophical thought experiments about personal identity over time. The first three chapters of this dissertation focus on the first set of issues, issues of imagination and content. Chapter 4 extends and applies some of these insights to a puzzle about personal identity over time.

Thesis Supervisor: Robert C. Stalnaker

Title: Laurance S. Rockefeller Professor of Philosophy