

## A Narrative First-Person/Third-Person Experience and Six Mugs of Beer

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### Abstract

This paper provides a first-person (me) and a third-person's experience (colleague) of me while drinking six mugs of beer. It is an attempt to describe the experience commencing with the first sip and ending with the last sip of beer from a first-person (my) perspective and a third-person's perspective. The third-person's perspective here is purely based on the observation of my behaviour which has been narrated in third-person by my colleague. The observation of this study indicate that there is a substantial sever between my personal conscious first-person experience when compared to a third-person's experience of me, that can lead to contradictory conjectures when contrasted.

### Key Words

First-Person, Third-Person, Beer, Consciousness, Experience

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It was a warm and sunny afternoon and to gratify ourselves we decided to go out for a drink. My colleague does not drink alcohol, but has always accompanied me when I do so; for he considers it as his recreational time. He loves sipping on juices or mocktails and is happy with the place if the music and the ambience are fine. It was 4 o'clock and it was hot and humid and therefore we ended up at a nearby pub. To our surprise when we reached the pub we got to know that it was happy hours. Happy hours are usually kept during odd hours of the day, and during this period a customer gets another drink absolutely free. After bearing the sweltering heat outside we were all eager to plunge into our drinks.

### **My First-person experience**

I had already decided that I would drink beer today, while my colleague decided to sip on a mocktail. Since I had walked down in the afternoon heat, I was eager to see my first mug of beer. That golden sparkling drink and its ability to quench my thirst, was all that was running through my head and the thought itself was making me drool. As the bartender placed the mug of beer in front of me, my eyes twinkled and I sat up erect; I was eager to take my first sip and I could resist no more. In a flash, I picked up my mug, said a loud 'cheers' and sipped it. With the first sip I felt my body go numb; the experience of my vanishing thirst was out of this world. I felt a tingling sensation on my tongue; my taste buds were all soaked with beer and were waiting for my next sip. I felt my mind getting empty, all my thoughts seemed far away; I was relaxed. I threw a smile at my colleague and in the next sip, my mug was empty. Wow!! I felt the beer roll down all through my gullet and fill my stomach; it felt like the experience of gushing water during the first rain. The fragrance of the beer had filled the air; I felt as if I was sitting in a bathing tub filled with beer. Would water have had the same feeling, on a sunny day like this? I guess not, water would have only quenched my thirst, but the beer was doing something more. I was not high; I usually have a good hold on my capacity while drinking beer, especially when it is draught beer or stout beer, variable to the state of my mind.

The experience was blissful; I felt pleasant as we chatted about work and life. In no time I summoned for another mug of beer. The beer came but since I felt a bit full I decided to take a break; I waited until my colleague finished his first round of mocktails, even though he told me to go-ahead. The taste of the beer changed from the unusual bitter taste to a sweet taste by the third round; it surged with no restriction. I had now begun to feel light-headed as everything around me slowed down, in fact my colleague's voice seemed farther away than usual; it was getting a bit hard to hear him with all that loud music around us. Strangely in the beginning the music was pleasant but slowly got louder; definitely there was some effect due to the beer, but I felt strange. My body had somehow cooled-off

completely, the feeling was getting better and better; I had all the time in the world for I was aware about the next three rounds of beer waiting to be consumed. Was I in an altered state of mind? Didn't seem like, as I was completely aware of my surrounding; I was definitely conscious and was aware of what I was speaking and doing; I was convinced I was not drunk but I decided to slow down. The music was really loud now but somehow it relaxed my nerves; the feeling was good and then all of a sudden I felt the urge to pee.

All that beer inside me, had made my bladder full, my liver was definitely going berserk with all that alcohol that it had to detoxify. That washroom visit was a relaxation; a wonderful experience; maybe not for many but for me it was 'the' experience. After all the beer had been washed out of my system, I was all ready to gulp down some more. My stomach felt light, but my body felt restless; in all this there was some kind of congeniality that prevailed. The experience of this niceness was unknowingly superlative; I am sure it may differ from person to person and during the different states of mind, but at this moment the experience for me was excellent. The next three rounds were completely different from the first three rounds wherein every sip of the beer was making me feel heavy and lethargic. I was not sloshed, I was fully aware of what was happening around me; the music seemed fine, but there was something else that I was doing which I did not realize until I paid attention to it. I was being disconcertingly observant; everything around me just seemed clear and bright; it seemed beyond my actual consciousness. I was extra vigilant; I kept looking around; listening attentively to the music that was playing louder than before; drinking my beer; simultaneously talking to my colleague; laughing, suggesting, analysing, etc. everything seemed to go on concurrently. It felt as if I was in some unknown place multi-tasking effortlessly; and there definitely was not scope of getting tired. Was it the beer? Was it my mind? Why was everything moving so rapidly? I knew that I was not drunk, because I stood up and walked to the washroom; I had to pee again.

The experience after the pee remained the same, there was no change; blissful. The beers were over and it was time to go home. As we discussed and paid the bill, my colleague kept giving me this stare as if I was an alien from another planet. I decided not to ask, as it seemed like I would end up in an indefinable situation. As we stood up and walked out of the pub, I experienced a sense of satisfaction and content; the feeling was good and my thirst was quenched; but I was not drunk. I bid my colleague a good bye and thanked him for his company; I walked back home pleased of the experience.

### **A Third-person's Experience of Me**

As we sat at the bar table waiting for Contzen's beer to come and of course my mocktail, I noticed that his behaviour was a bit different today, he was a bit side-tracked or unfocussed. Maybe it was the heat, as it was very hot and humid outside and we had walked all the way to the bar. The bartender placed the mug of beer in front of Contzen and the mocktail saying that we were lucky to have come during happy hours and therefore we were entitled to get an additional drink free. As soon as the bartender left, I noticed the expression on Contzen's face change; he seemed all happy about the offer and suggested that we stay for a couple of drinks rather than just a few. At that very moment I was convinced that it was definitely the heat that had affected his behaviour and I was hoping it would change. It was not the first time I was with drinking with Contzen, we have had many good times together and he is always good company. As a person, I always believe in giving some breathing space to an individual and therefore I was not keen to know, why he was behaving in that manner. Today he did seem in a state of despair, which was evident in his eagerness to drink; it was something that I had never experienced before. Maybe he was drinking beer after a long time and so the pining was visible in his expressions and behaviour.

As soon as the beer was served, Contzen grabbed his mug, shouted out a loud 'cheers' and took a really big sip. It felt as if he was distraughtly waiting to drink that beer. At that very moment a thought ran through my mind, why is he behaving so desperate for beer? Has he become an alcoholic? Is the beer important or is meeting up with me important? Nevertheless, I have known Contzen for quite some time now; maybe today is a bad day for him, so I will pull along. My mocktail was great and refreshing, so much so that I had forgotten about the heat outside and was in a relaxed state of mind. Contzen's behaviour began to change once he had finished his first mug of beer. He kept smiling for no reason, laughed unnecessarily and started speaking a bit louder; but he didn't seem drunk. I know him; he doesn't get drunk so easily. Maybe all that was playing on his mind was the reason his mood was changing. I too have a lot of problems in life, but whenever I go out for a drink with a friend I keep them aside, so that it doesn't come in my way and spoil the meet. Was Contzen's behaviour annoying? It definitely was not, but for sure it was strange.

An opinion can differ from person to person and therefore behaviours can sometimes change based on one's present thoughts; this maybe the reason I was noticing Contzen's mood change as he kept drinking his beer. Contzen was on a drinking spree today, before even the mug of beer was over, he would ask for the next one. Then all of a sudden he stood up and asked me the direction to the washroom. He seemed a bit shaky as he walked towards the washroom but he was not drunk, I guess he was aware of what he was doing as it didn't seem like

he needed help. As he walked back he had this impish smile on his face, as if he had met someone and was about to share the conversation with me; but to my surprise he came back and sat down on his seat; but never spoke. He was already three mugs down and had the next three mugs to go; all thanks to happy hours. Post his return from the washroom, Contzen seemed a bit different, he kept smiling all the while but seemed serener and stiller. Did he puke? Was he high? Was he feeling sick? Should we stop and just go home? These were some of thoughts that ran through my head, but something kept telling me he was okay and there was no need for me to be worried.

The next round of beers came and Contzen confidently pick up his mug, clicked it to my glass and drank with no hesitation; I was relieved. But the thought kept coming to my mind that there was a change in his behaviour, so I decided to keep a watch over his drinking. His drinking pace had slowed down considerably after the fifth mug and now I was getting worried, but fortunately the look on his face was not alarming. When he was on his sixth round, I started to notice that he was getting a bit restless; he kept looking around as if he was searching for someone; he had kind of lost focus. What was going on in his mind? He stood up several times and sat down and when I asked him what was wrong, he just smiled. I was done with my mocktails and I definitely couldn't drink anymore, so I just sat and watched him drink his last mug of beer. He seemed drunk but in the next moment he was up and walking towards the washroom again. I observed him as he walked to the washroom; there were no signs of shaking or tottering; he was fine.

When he came back there was still that subtle smile on his face; it was definitely an experience to be observed for I did not know what was going on in his mind at that moment that made him smile like that. He stood there and asked me whether we should settle the bill and then move back home. We settled the bill and walked out of the pub; I kept observing his gait and his moves just to be sure that he was okay to walk back home. He looked at me smiled again and assured me that he was fine and not drunk and could walk back home.

## Conclusion

A third-person's perspective is usually based on behavioural observations which may or may not be the first-person's experience, as observed in this study. A first-person's experience is always unique to the individual experiencing it and therefore can be misinterpreted by an observer. The human mind is capable of analysing the mind of the other but to a limit of what is observed; what is perceived and the way it is interpreted by the knowledge acquiring processes.

Drinking beer is an experience of its kind and therefore it was chosen to explain the experience from a first-person and third-person perspective.

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