**Perspectival Sensitivity**

One of the central notions in the discussion about consciousness and especially self-consciousness is the notion of perspective (Neuman & Vogser 2003). Perspective is foremost a spatial notion. It is generally held that consciousness involves at least having a perspective and self-consciousness requires knowledge of one’s own perspective. In order to obtain the basis of perspectivity, the notion of perspectival sensitivity was introduced (Peacocke 1983, Bermúdez 1998). I will argue that this notion fails to draw the distinction between having a perspective and knowing (representing) it.

A cognitive system displays perspectival sensitivity if:
- It is able to move from any point B directly to point C although it is experientially acquainted only with the paths AB and AC.
- A perspectival sensitive system can be described according to the spatial concepts (according to Peacocke 1983):
  - It has an integrated representation of space which comprises a static representation of the spatial layout of locations A, B, and C and a representation of its own position (according to Bermúdez 1998).
  - It is argued that “any subject for whom the route from A to C is coded in terms of the movements required to get from A to C will fail to display perspectival sensitivity” (Bermúdez 1998, p. 214). In this case it would take a route parallel to AC from B.
- It is said that the system displaying perspectival sensitivity has a perspective: its spatial actions depend on its position and
- Thus represents its perspective (its own position and orientation).

**Empirical Examples**

**Experiment of Wang (1999):**
- Subjects learned the location of four different objects and the four corners of a room.
- They were blindfolded and asked to point to the objects and corners (control condition).
- They were disoriented (by turning around), so they had to update continuously.
- They pointed again (test condition).
- The configuration error (standard deviation of pointing errors) was measured.
- Adults use egocentric as well as allocentric representations.

**Experiment of Tolman & Honzik (1930):**
- After training, rats chose the shortest path A.
- In the test condition, path A and B were blocked simultaneously (see picture).
- After finding the block, the rats returned to the start to take immediately the longest path C.
- They recognized that the “exit” of B was spatially connected to the “entrance” of B.
- They used an allocentric representation for action guiding.
- Rats are able to represent the own perspective.

**Conclusion**

The notion of perspectival sensitivity fails to make the important distinction between having a perspective and representing it. It is at the same time too vague and too intellectualized to account for the data.

Egocentric representations suffice for having a perspective without having conceptual power nor having a static representation of the environment. They are in an action form.

Representing one’s own perspective is required when allocentric representations are used for spatial navigation. They are static, non-action formal, abstract, and conceptual spatial representations.