OPERATORIC RESEARCH CORPUS - STUDIES IN WORLD-FORMATION

VOL 9

Autistic Epistemology & Structural Savantism

Timothy Speed

Operatoric Research Corpus
Studies in World-Formation

Section IV

Neurodivergent Epistemology

Volume 9

Autistic Epistemology & Structural Savantism

Timothy Speed

2026

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18998240

Impressum / Publication Information

Author: Timothy Speed
Independent Researcher
Straße zur Eiche 10
04916 Schönewalde
Germany

Email: info@timothy-speed.com
Website: https://timothy-speed.org

GND: 122901991

VIAF: 37811735

ISNI: 000000001636722X

Wikidata: Q138504206

Scholar ID: hBLHdoAAAAJ

https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0143-5949

Zenodo Community: Operatoric Research Corpus Archive

First published: 2026

This publication is deposited in the German National Library (Deutsche Nationalbibliothek) as a network publication.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18998240

Autistic Epistemology & Structural Savantism

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Abstract

The present volume brings together six contributions that pursue a common question: under which epistemic conditions forms of knowledge arise that do not primarily rely on representation, model construction, or symbolic abstraction, but instead emerge from a direct structural coupling between perception and world. The point of departure is the observation that central areas of contemporary cognitive science—particularly intelligence research, autism research, and savant studies—continue to operate with the implicit assumption of a single, representational architecture of cognition. Within this framework, neurodivergent modes of perception and thought appear either as deficit profiles, as unusual performance distributions, or as isolated anomalies within an otherwise homogeneous cognitive system.

The contributions collected in this volume systematically question this presupposition. They develop the thesis that certain neurodivergent forms of perception and cognition—especially those associated with autistic modes of knowing—cannot be adequately described as variations within a unified cognitive architecture, but rather as expressions of an independent epistemic configuration. Autistic cognition is therefore not approached through deficits or performance measures, but through structural operators such as fidelity (high truth-resolution), hyperspecificity (context retention rather than generalization), pattern attunement (direct coupling to structural dynamics), and non-representational immediacy in world-relation.

Against this background, several interconnected theoretical shifts are proposed. First, the concept of intelligence itself is reconsidered. Intelligence no longer appears as the primary source of knowledge, but as a secondary stabilizing performance that becomes effective only once emergence has already occurred within a relation to the world. Second, savant phenomena are reinterpreted not as isolated "islands of ability," but as local manifestations of a non-representational mode of knowing in which structural invariants can be directly recognized and maintained without symbolic mediation. Third, the concept of structural savantism is introduced to describe an epistemic configuration that remains largely invisible within both classical savant research and intelligence-centered models of autism.

A further focus of the volume concerns the methodological question of how such forms of knowledge can become scientifically accessible at all. In this context, the concept of *synesthetic science* is proposed as an epistemological extension in which embodied perception, affective resonance, and somatic feedback are not treated as disturbances but as epistemic instruments for detecting complex and non-linear relations in the world. From this perspective, neurodivergent perceptual configurations can function as measurement architectures capable of registering structural tensions and thresholds that remain invisible within strictly representational research paradigms.

The volume concludes with an analysis of the feature film *Transferprotokoll* as a transmedial research configuration. The film is not interpreted as an artistic representation of a theoretical approach, but as an empirical stress test of a non-representational knowledge architecture under real social and institutional conditions. Its polarized reception is therefore read less as an aesthetic judgement than as an epistemic marker indicating different degrees of compatibility between representation-oriented expectations and forms of knowledge that systematically resist narrative condensation and symbolic translation.

Taken together, the contributions aim to render visible the possibility of a plural architecture of human cognition. Instead of assuming a single universal model of knowledge, the volume advances a perspective of epistemic diversity in which different modes of world-relation coexist without being reducible to a shared representational logic. In this sense, the volume positions neurodivergent forms of perception and cognition not as marginal phenomena, but as constitutive expansions of the scientific horizon of knowledge.

Keywords: autistic epistemology, neurodivergent epistemology, autistic cognition, non-representational cognition, structural cognition, epistemic architectures, dual-architecture epistemology, neurodiversity and knowledge production, philosophy of mind and autism, cognitive pluralism, epistemic diversity, structural savantism, savant cognition, savant syndrome theory, veridical mapping, pattern attunement, hyperspecificity, fidelity in perception, high-resolution cognition, non-reductive perception, embodied cognition, enactivism and autism, predictive processing critique, representational cognition critique, structural perception, operatoric cognition, operator relativity, operator theory of cognition, emergence and cognition, complexity perception, epistemic injustice, structural epistemic injustice, neurodivergent perception, synesthetic science, embodied epistemology, non-representational knowledge, perception–world coupling, cognition beyond representation, autistic phenomenology, neurodivergent embodiment, epistemology of autism, plural architectures of cognition, cognitive science and neurodiversity, autism and philosophy of science, neurodivergent methods in research, artistic research and cognition, Transferprotokoll film analysis, transmedial research, epistemology of perception

Contents

Introduction

The question of how knowledge arises belongs to the oldest problems of science. For a long time, it has been addressed within a relatively stable theoretical framework: knowledge was understood as the result of representation, model construction, and symbolic processing. Perception was thereby treated as the input stage of a cognitive system that abstracts information, generalizes it, and translates it into internal models of the world. Within this paradigm, cognition appears fundamentally as a process of compression: complexity is reduced, differences are translated into categories, and relations to the world are stabilized in transferable representational forms.

This assumption has proven extraordinarily productive for scientific research. At the same time, however, it increasingly becomes apparent that certain forms of knowledge remain systematically excluded within this framework. This becomes particularly visible in the domain of neurodivergent perception and cognition. In conventional research, autism, savant phenomena, or synesthetic perceptual profiles are typically interpreted either as deficit variants or as unusual performance distributions within the same cognitive architecture. Rarely is the architecture of knowledge itself questioned.

It is precisely at this point that the present volume intervenes. The contributions collected here begin with the observation that certain neurodivergent forms of perception and cognition cannot be adequately described as variations within a single cognitive system. Instead, they suggest that multiple epistemic architectures may coexist within the same species. While the dominant mode of cognition relies on representation, modeling, and the reduction of complexity, other forms of world-relation can be identified that are grounded in a more direct structural coupling between perception and world, in which complexity is not primarily reduced but maintained.

Autistic forms of knowing play a central role in this context. In the analyses presented here, they do not appear as deficit profiles but as expressions of an independent epistemic configuration. This configuration is characterized by a high structural resolution of perception, a strong contextual binding of meaning, and forms of pattern recognition that operate less through symbolic modeling than through direct structural resonance. Within this framework, several epistemic operators are discussed that describe this mode of cognition, including fidelity (truth-resolution), hyperspecificity (context retention rather than generalization), pattern attunement, and a non-representational immediacy in world-relation.

This perspective leads to several theoretical shifts within the study of cognition. First, the concept of intelligence itself is recontextualized. Intelligence no longer appears as the origin of knowledge but as a secondary stabilizing performance within already emergent relations to the world. Second, savant phenomena are not interpreted as isolated anomalies but as empirical boundary cases in which a non-representational form of knowledge becomes visible. Third, the concept of structural savantism is introduced in order to describe an epistemic configuration that remains insufficiently captured within both classical models of giftedness and deficit-oriented models of autism.

A further focus of the volume concerns the methodological question of how such forms of knowledge can become scientifically accessible at all. In this context, the notion of a "synesthetic science" is proposed. The aim is not the subjectivization of scientific knowledge, but an expansion of the epistemic instrumentarium. Under certain conditions, embodied perception, affective resonance, and sensory overload can function as indicators of structural inconsistency or systemic tension. Neurodivergent perceptual configurations thus appear not only as objects of investigation but also as potential epistemic instruments capable of detecting relations that remain invisible within strictly representational research paradigms.

The volume concludes with an analysis of the feature film *Transferprotokoll*, which is examined as a transmedial research configuration. Within this context, the film does not function as a representation of a theoretical model but as an experimental situation in which a non-representational knowledge architecture is exposed under real social and institutional conditions. The polarized reactions to the film are therefore interpreted not primarily in aesthetic terms but as indicators of epistemic incompatibility between different modes of world-relation.

Taken together, the contributions collected in this volume aim to render visible the possibility of a plural architecture of human knowledge. Instead of presupposing a single universal model of cognition, the volume advances the perspective of epistemic diversity: different forms of perception, knowledge, and world-relation coexist without being fully reducible to a shared representational logic. In this sense, the volume positions neurodivergent modes of cognition not as marginal phenomena, but as constitutive expansions of the scientific horizon of knowledge.

Autistic Epistemology - A Second Knowledge Architecture in the Human Species

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17817017

Abstract:

Autism is not a cognitive deviation within a singular human architecture, but an independent system of knowing.

This paper develops the foundational structure of autistic epistemology as a fully valid, non-representational, high-resolution mode of cognition. It identifies four core operators – Fidelity, Hyperspecificity, Pattern Attunement, and Non-Representational Immediacy – and demonstrates that they generate a form of world-contact that does not rely on abstraction or social coherence. Autistic knowledge does not compress complexity. It preserves it.

The result is epistemic bifurcation: a neurotypical architecture that models, predicts, and reduces, and an autistic architecture that perceives, maintains resolution, and maps reality without representational loss. Miscommunication is therefore not interpersonal failure, but translation impossibility across architectures.

Note: The autistic/NT distinction here functions analytically rather than absolutely. Human cognition is likely plural beyond two architectures. This paper introduces epistemic plurality — it does not exhaust it.

We extend Fricker's notion of epistemic injustice and articulate a deeper form: Structural Epistemic Injustice – not disbelief, but non-detectability of autistic cognition within majority truth-formats. The conclusion is not therapeutic but civilizational: science currently operates at one-half bandwidth. Recognition of autistic epistemology transforms cognitive science, philosophy of mind, social epistemology, and disability theory.

This paper marks the opening of a new research field: dual-architecture epistemology.

Volume I — Sections 1–3

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1. INTRODUCTION — THE ABSENCE OF AN AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY

Autism has long been studied, classified, pathologised, measured, and narrated.

What has not happened—astonishingly, historically, structurally—is the reverse:

a rigorous inquiry into what autistic cognition itself generates as knowledge.

This paper therefore does not ask how autistic people fail to think like the majority.

This work extends the operator-theoretical basis established in Autistic Ontology (Speed 2025), which identified divergence in world-constitution through fidelity, field-resolution, pattern resonance and non-representational immediacy. The present paper develops the epistemic dimension of that thesis: not how autistic cognition is, but how it knows.

It asks instead: how does the majority fail to understand that a second architecture

of knowledge exists? One that does not rest on abstraction or compression, but

on fidelity to structure, on non-representational immediacy, on pattern-resonance,

on specificity that refuses to collapse into category.

The prevailing sciences of mind assume that cognition is singular in form, with

variation understood only as deviation. Autism enters the frame as deficit,

impairment, dysregulation, or failure to model the social world. This paper

rejects that premise entirely. Autism is not variation within one epistemic system.

It is a second system.

If this is true—and here I assert it clearly, empirically, phenomenologically, theoretically—

then epistemology must expand or fracture. One cannot maintain a monoculture

of cognition and still claim to describe the human mind.

The foundational claim of this work is therefore simple, and yet civilisation-shifting:

AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY IS FULLY REAL.
IT IS NOT A DEFICIT-MUTATION OF NT COGNITION,
BUT A PARALLEL ARCHITECTURE OF WORLD-RELATION.

Its absence in academic discourse is not evidence of its inexistence, but of

epistemic blindness in a system calibrated to one cognitive majority. This paper

begins where the literature ends: not with adaptation, but with recognition;

not with integration, but with co-existence.

2. THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

For more than two millennia, Western philosophy and cognitive science have operated on the assumption that knowing is a representational act. The mind, we are told, is a staging ground where the world is captured, processed, and stored as model. This assumption is rarely questioned, because it is rarely seen; it is not an argument, but the background condition of arguments. It is epistemic atmosphere.

Yet this atmosphere is not universal. It is neurotypical.

Representational cognition prioritises generalisation over fidelity, efficiency over resolution, category over singularity.

It collapses multiplicity into type, discards contextual specificity as noise, and treats pattern-complexity as something to be resolved rather than retained. Predictive Processing—today's dominant theory of mind—is simply the latest crystallisation of this architecture. It refines the mechanism, but not the premise: that the brain must simplify reality to survive it.

Autistic cognition does not.

Autistic perception does not reduce the world. It holds the world. It does not blur signal into summary; it invites structure to remain uncompressed. What NT models call "neural efficiency," autistic cognition experiences as loss of truth. Representation is not a neutral reduction; it is a distortion event.

This section argues the following:

Neurotypical cognition is representational and reductive.

Autistic cognition is structural and non-reductive.

These are not variations of one mode, but two epistemic architectures.

Predictive Processing presumes that perception is prediction-error minimisation. But this only holds if

the mind treats reality as model. Autistic perception does not predict first— it "perceives first." It does not substitute world with forecast; it remains in contact with the unresolved plurality of detail. It confronts complexity without collapsing it into expectation.

Thus, PP is not wrong — it is incomplete. It is a theory of NT cognition, misrepresented as a theory of cognition itself.

The same limitation applies to Enactivism. While it rejects internal representation, it nonetheless assumes a single organism-world coupling architecture. It sees embodiment, but not "embodiment multiplicity."

It describes one body-world relation and universalises it. Autistic embodiment is not accommodated —

not because it contradicts the theory, but because the theory cannot perceive what it was not built to hold.

Neurodivergent cognition reveals the blindspot:

There is not one phenomenology of world-contact.

There are at least two.

Representational epistemology collapses where autistic fidelity begins.

Predictive Processing explains the many — not the all.

Enactivism explains the embodied — not the plural.

Science has mistaken a majority architecture for a species architecture.

Autistic epistemology is the missing half.

3. DEFINING AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY — FOUR OPERATORS OF MIND

Autistic cognition is not a variation of neurotypical reasoning. It is driven by four operators — not traits, not symptoms — but epistemic mechanisms that generate a distinct form of world-knowledge.

3.1 Fidelity (Truth-Resolution over Coherence)

Autistic perception maintains resolution rather than compressing it. Where NT cognition abstracts, autistic cognition preserves.

Truth is not a narrative; truth is structure. Detail is not noise; detail is ontology.

3.2 Hyperspecificity (Context Retained, Not Generalised)

Meaning is not portable across contexts without loss. Autistic thought resists false equivalence. It maintains situational precision.

Generalisations are not simplifications — they are distortions.

3.3 Pattern Attunement (World-Coupling through Structure)

Autistic mind maps system-dynamics directly, without social mediation. It perceives rhythm, discontinuity, recursion, energetic shift.

Where NT cognition models, autistic cognition "detects."

3.4 Non-Representational Immediacy (Direct Reality, Not Model)

Autistic perception does not operate primarily through internal simulation. It engages world as present structure, unmediated by expected form.

World is not predicted — it is "contacted."

AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY — Volume II

Sections 4–7

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4. DIVERGENCE — TWO EPISTEMIC ARCHITECTURES

If autistic epistemology is real, then cognition is plural. Not variation, not spectrum, but bifurcation.

Two architectures — one compressive, one generative — operating in the same species but not in the same logic.

Neurotypical cognition optimises for coherence, prediction, and social synchronisation.

Autistic cognition optimises for structure, fidelity, and world-resonance.

The result is not conflict between personalities — it is incommensurability between epistemic designs.

5. BREAKDOWN — WHERE TRANSLATION FAILS

Epistemic breakdown occurs not when people disagree, but when architectures cannot map each other.

Communication does not collapse because messages fail to transmit — but because the two systems do not share the same compression-to-meaning ratio.

Autistic cognition presents reality at resolution.

Neurotypical cognition expects reality at summary.

The exchange does not degrade — it "misaligns".

6. PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIGNETTES — TWO CONTACT ZONES

6.1 Vignette I — Jobcenter: Breakdown Inside Administration

The room is white — not as colour, but as field. Light at 4800K, perceptibly flickering at low amplitude.

Two staff behind the counter, voices paced in downward cadence: trained politeness.

I sit. Eye contact is expected, not for meaning, but for signal. My perception ignores the signal and sees:

- The laminate seam misaligned by 3 mm
- Dust accumulation along the monitor frame
- Respiratory rhythm of the clerk shifting 9–12–9–10 seconds
- The mismatch between spoken syntax and microintonation: "We want to assist you" reads subtonally as "We secure the case."

This is not interpretation — this is pattern. Not narrative — structure.

The conversation begins in administrative grammar: benefit unit, compliance duty, integration agreement.

For NT these are functions. For me they are operators — constraints on agency like boundary conditions in a dynamic system.

I state what I observe, precisely. Atmosphere shifts. Meaning maps diverge.

They hear behaviour where I present structure.

They hear defiance where I speak of system mechanics.

They reduce signal to intent; I expand intent to system-field.

Breakdown is not emotional. It is architectural.

Communication collapses because two epistemologies attempt mapping without shared compression ratios.

My fidelity appears excessive; their abstraction appears dishonest.

No one is wrong — the architectures are incompatible.

This is epistemic rather than interpersonal failure.

6.2 Vignette II — Everyday Micro-Split

A café. A question: "How was your day?"

For NT this is a relational probe. For me it is a request for timeline-state-environment coupling.

I answer:

"07:42 waking, temp 19.1°C, airflow NE, cognitive tone sharp. Coffee: nut-bitter profile, slight rancidity, bean likely aged.

Writing: operator logic bifurcated twice, meta-loop emergent. Walk: birch leaves asymmetric edge pattern, wind SW, resonance ~4.2 Hz—"

Smile across the table, but facial Zygomaticus stiffens — not warmth, but social patch.

Response: "So… nice?"

Meaning collapses across architectures.

My report delivers world at resolution.

The question expected coherence-reduction: summary, not structure.

Two real worlds coexist, unmerged.

Not personality conflict — epistemic non-overlap.

7. STRUCTURAL EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE — NOT MISUNDERSTANDING, BUT ONTOLOGICAL ERASURE

Epistemic injustice, as defined by Fricker, concerns credibility and interpretation: whose testimony is

believed, whose knowledge is recognised. But autistic experience reveals a deeper injustice: knowledge

that cannot even be “seen as knowledge” by the dominant system.

Structural Epistemic Injustice occurs when:

1. A cognition cannot be represented within the majoritarian epistemic model,

2. that model is treated as universal,

3. and the minority cognition is erased not by hostility, but by ontological non-recognition.

Autistic thought does not fail — it fails to appear.

Neurotypical cognition compresses. Autistic cognition preserves structure. Compression is legible.

Structure is not. When truth demands resolution, a system built on coherence cannot parse it.

The result:

• Autistic precision appears pedantic.

• Autistic warnings appear overreactions.

• Autistic integrity appears rigidity.

• Autistic perception of structure appears naive or literal.

Not because autistic mind lacks meaning — but because neurotypical epistemology lacks resolution.

This is not discrimination — it is a “blindspot of the system as such.”

Science claims universality while operating at reduced resolution. It enforces majority-compatible truth

formats and discards the rest. Autistic epistemology is not invited into the space of validation — not as

subjugated knowledge, but as “invisible knowledge”.

Thus, the injustice here is not miscommunication or bias, but:

THE SYSTEM CANNOT VALIDATE WHAT IT CANNOT REPRESENT.

Autistic cognition generates real knowledge that disappears not into silence, but into “non-existence”

from the NT vantage. The cost is borne not only by autistics — but by humanity's total knowledge-capacity.

Plural epistemology is not charity — it is intellectual necessity.

Autistic thought is not a problem to fix — it is an architecture to recognise.

AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY — Volume III

Sections 8–9 + Conclusion + References

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8. IMPLICATIONS — A New Field of Knowledge

If autistic epistemology is recognised, then science is no longer singular.

8. IMPLICATIONS — A NEW FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE

If autistic epistemology exists, then the sciences of mind, society, and knowledge are incomplete.

Not mistaken — unfinished. Humanity has been operating with only one validated cognitive architecture, mistaking majority for totality.

8.1 Cognitive Science — Paradigm Shift

Predictive Processing describes compression-based cognition. Useful, powerful, elegant —

but not universal. It reads NT architecture, not mind itself. Autistic epistemology demands

a second model: perception without model priority, resolution without collapse.

The field must expand from single-theory cognition to "dual-architecture cognition".

8.2 Philosophy of Mind — The End of Monotheory

Mind is not one. Consciousness is not singular. Representation is a mode, not a law.

Non-representational world-contact is not failure — it is alternative route.

A plural ontology of mind becomes necessary.

8.3 Social Epistemology — Consensus Is Not Truth

Knowledge validated by majority erases minority cognition. Consensus collapses resolution. Autistic truth is not designed for comfort — but for accuracy. Plural knowledge must replace monocultural truth-systems.

8.4 Disability Studies — Power, Not Pathology

Autistic cognition is not impaired — it is structurally excluded. Injustice is not disbelief but "non-detection". Epistemic access replaces pity; architecture replaces accommodation.

8.5 Politics — Beyond Integration

Integration demands translation. Translation demands loss. Autistic epistemology does not enter society by compression — but by co-existence. The goal is not inclusion into NT logic, but recognition of a second logic.

Two worlds. One species.

9. CONCLUSION — THE BEGINNING OF THOUGHT

This paper does not argue that autism should be understood better.
It argues that autistic cognition produces knowledge — and that the world has not noticed.

Not because it is subtle, not because it is rare, but because one epistemology
dominates the definition of cognition itself.
We end here with one irreversible thesis:
Autistic epistemology is a second architecture of knowing.
Not derivative. Not impaired. Not variant.
Origin — parallel — complete.

The task ahead is not empathy, but recognition.
Not integration, but coexistence.

Not reform, but expansion.

Thought is no longer one.

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Synesthetic Science
Neurodivergent Embodiment as a Method of World-Detection
On the Epistemic Function of Embodied, Non-Representational Perception

DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.18000998***

Abstract

This paper formulates the concept of synesthetic science as an independent epistemological method. The point of departure is the observation that dominant scientific paradigms systematically exclude embodied, affective, and neurodivergent forms of perception as subjective, distorted, or methodologically unusable. This position is explicitly rejected here.

It is shown that certain neurodivergent perceptual profiles—particularly synesthetic, highly sensitive, and embodied forms of cognition—do not merely constitute perspectives or experiences, but epistemic instruments with specific quality criteria. Within synesthetic science, affect, overstimulation, resonance, and somatic feedback do not function as sources of disturbance, but as indicators of structural inconsistency, threshold transgression, and ontological rupture.

The paper explicitly distinguishes synesthetic science from subjectivism, intuitionism, and introspective self-observation, and formulates criteria of reproducibility, falsifiability, and methodological validity under structural conditions. Finally, it is argued that synesthetic science is not a special case, but a previously missing instrumentarium for the detection of complex, non-linear world-relations.

This paper is situated in the context of:

Speed, T. (2025). Veridical Mapping as the Foundation of a Second Science. Rosetta Operator — An Invariance Theory of Consciousness, Work, and World. (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17857039

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Speed, T. (2025). AUTISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY - A Second Knowledge Architecture in the Human Species (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17817017

Speed, T. (2025) They Cannot Understand: Why Autism Research Gets It Wrong (Artistic Research - Critical Neurodiversity Studies) ISBN: 3695116013

1. Introduction: The Blind Spot of Science

Modern sciences operate predominantly under the assumption that knowledge is valid only where distance, abstraction, and representation are maintained. Embodiment is treated as bias, affect as disturbance, hypersensitivity as deficit. These assumptions are historically sedimented, but epistemically not neutral.

This paper proceeds from the thesis that certain forms of knowledge arise precisely where distance is not possible. It argues that neurodivergent, synesthetically embodied perception should not be understood as a deviation from the scientific ideal, but as an alternative measurement architecture, suited to the detection of relations, dynamics, and tensions that evade representational capture.

2. Synesthetic Science: Conceptual Definition

Synesthetic science designates a method of knowledge production in which perception, affect, and bodily reaction are not separated from the epistemic process, but are understood as primary interfaces to the world.

The term "synesthetic" is not restricted to clinical synesthesia. What is meant is a multichannel, non-hierarchical coupling of sensory, affective, and cognitive processes, in which information is not processed abstractly but registered in embodied form.

It is precisely this transfer of form between different perceptual and semantic levels that enables the recognition of relational patterns that remain invisible within single, isolated representational channels.

Synesthetic science is neither introspective nor subjectivist. It does not describe an inner state, but responds to external structural constellations that manifest in the body as resonance, overload, or disturbance.

3. Neurodivergent Embodiment as a Measurement Instrument

In neurodivergent modes of perception—particularly in autism and ADHD—filter mechanisms are reduced, stimulus coupling is intensified, and somatic feedback is amplified. In clinical and educational contexts, these characteristics are mostly interpreted as deficits.

From a methodological perspective, however, they constitute an increased resolution.

– Overstimulation functions as an indicator of non-integrable complexity.
– Affect signals relational inconsistency.
– Pain marks the transgression of structural load limits.

The body thus becomes not a carrier of subjective states, but a sensor for world conditions, particularly where systems approach or exceed their limits of integration.

4. Methodological Criteria

Synesthetic science is not arbitrary. Its validity can be determined on the basis of clear methodological criteria:

1. Structural Reproducibility
Under comparable conditions, comparable somatic and affective reactions emerge in similarly disposed perceptual profiles. Reproducibility here does not refer to identical contents, but to structurally equivalent resonance patterns.

2. Negative Falsification
If the expected resonance does not occur, either no relevant structural rupture is present or the underlying assumption is false. The absence of embodiment thus functions as a negative epistemic signal.

3. Veridical Mapping
Findings count as epistemically relevant only where the synesthetically detected patterns are structurally faithful to external relations and do not exhaust themselves in mere internal coherence or self-reference.

4. Context Dependence
The method is not universally applicable, but bound to highly complex, relational fields in which linear, representational procedures reach their limits.

5. Non-Trainability in the Neurotypical Mode
Synesthetic science is not a technique, but an embodied disposition. It cannot be learned, simulated, or functionally replicated.

These criteria clearly distinguish synesthetic science from intuition, empathy, or subjective experience and anchor it as an independent epistemological method.

5. Delineations

Synesthetic science is
– not a subjectivization of knowledge,
– not a privileging of personal experience,
– not an alternative to formal science,
but an extension of the epistemic instrumentarium.

It complements representational methods where these systematically fail: in non-linear, affectively charged, socio-ontological, and highly dynamic processes.

6. Discussion: Epistemic Consequences

The recognition of synesthetic science shifts fundamental assumptions about who can conduct research and how knowledge is generated. It makes visible that epistemic authority is not bound solely to the capacity for abstraction, but also to the capacity for resonance.

In doing so, it challenges not only established concepts of science, but also institutional mechanisms of exclusion that systematically devalue neurodivergent forms of knowledge.

7. Conclusion

Synesthetic science does not describe a marginal phenomenon, but a method that has so far remained unnamed. Where world cannot be fully stabilized, embodied, synesthetic forms of perception are not a disturbance, but a necessary instance of knowledge production.

Beyond Intelligence
Emergence, Operator Relativity, and an Autistic Epistemology

DOI: ***10.5281/zenodo.18068128***

Abstract

Modern cognitive and intelligence research operates with an implicit misunderstanding: it treats intelligence as a primary, objective, and context-independent property of subjects, while presupposing as given the possibility space within which intelligence is measured and compared.
This paper intervenes prior to that space: not at the level of performance within stable conditions, but at the level of the question of how such conditions are ontologically and epistemically stabilized in the first place.

The paper develops a counter-model in which emergence is introduced as a fundamental epistemic variable. Emergence is not understood as a gradual increase in performance, but as a threshold phenomenon that occurs when predictive simulation is no longer sufficient to sustain world-relation. Emergence is always operator-relative and socially situated; within this framework, intelligence appears as a secondary stabilizing performance. On this basis, autism is re-read not as a deficit or cognitive style, but as an epistemic configuration in which emergence becomes more likely while at the same time being structurally blockable. Without emergence, intelligence remains simulation; with emergence, intelligence becomes possible—but conflictual, costly, and socially risky.

The argument developed here does not begin with cognitive performances within given conditions, but with the question of how such conditions are produced at all. Classical intelligence measurements operate within deliberately constructed spaces: temporally emptied, socially isolated, affectively neutralized, and normatively pre-structured. The so-called "white room" of the intelligence test is not a neutral background, but the result of a spatial operation that first reduces world in order to produce comparability.

Within this framework, intelligence measures adaptability to an already stabilized possibility space. The stabilization of this space itself remains invisible—and it is precisely here that this paper intervenes.

1. Intelligence as a Historical Concept of Pacification

The modern concept of intelligence does not arise accidentally, but as a response to a social problem: the comparability of human beings under industrial, bureaucratic, and educational-policy conditions. From the outset, intelligence functions as a concept of stabilization. It allows differences to be quantified, performances to be normed, and deviations to be administered, without having to call the structure of the world itself into question.

In doing so, intelligence is tacitly treated as something that
• exists independently of context,
• can be transported from one situation to another,
• and can be linearly increased or diminished.

This assumption is epistemically convenient, but ontologically questionable. It presupposes that the possibility space within which intelligence operates is stable. Yet this very presupposition is never itself thematized.

Within this framework, autism inevitably appears distorted. It is interpreted either as a lack of intelligence, as an uneven distribution of intelligence, or as a special profile within the same metric. What is not asked is whether the metric itself is blind to those forms of knowledge that do not arise within stable frameworks, but at their edges.

The critique developed here is therefore not directed empirically against individual intelligence theories, but categorically against their basic assumption. A structurally identical misplacement has already been elaborated by the author in adjacent domains: in information-theoretical ontologies, observer-centered models of measurement, and representational theories of perception.

In all these cases, response-forms to structural overload—information, observation, measurement results—are mistakenly treated as ontological or epistemic origins. Intelligence theory reproduces the same error by treating stabilization performances as primary explanations, without reflecting on the conditions under which stabilization becomes necessary at all.

By the stability of the possibility space, this paper does not mean an abstract context, but a concretely produced cognitive and social space: a space in which task formats, temporal structures, goal definitions, evaluative standards, and exclusion criteria are already fixed. The classical intelligence test is a paradigmatic example: it isolates subjects within an artificially de-worlded space in order to produce comparability.

Within this framework, intelligence does not measure world-relation, but adaptability to an already stabilized space. Yet the stabilization of this space itself is not explained; it is silently presupposed.

2. Emergence as the Loss of the Taken-for-Grantedness of World

In everyday life—as well as in most models of cognitive science—it is tacitly assumed that the world is fundamentally manageable. Situations appear surveyable, problems solvable, demands

copable with. Perception, thinking, and action interlock without this coupling itself becoming thematic. In this state, the world does not appear alien, but self-evident.

This self-evidence, however, is not grounded in truth, but in simulation. What is meant here is not deception, but an everyday, highly functional practice: the world is continuously pre-calculated (predictive coding), smoothed, and simplified. Expectations replace immediate experience, routines replace openness, social conventions replace situational negotiation. As long as this simulation remains viable, the world appears stable.

In this paper, emergence does not denote an increase in ability or performance, but the point at which this taken-for-grantedness is lost. It occurs where simulation is no longer sufficient to sustain world-relation. The world is then no longer anticipated, but experienced as resistant. Problems can no longer be "solved," because they no longer appear as clearly delimited tasks. What comes to the fore is no longer the solution, but the non-fit between expectation and reality.

This shift is not a purely inner-psychic process. It does not arise from subjective confusion, but from an overload of existing models. The higher the resolution with which differences are perceived, the less smoothing takes effect, the more quickly predictions reach their limit. Emergence is therefore not a universal state, but relative to the conditions under which the world could previously be simulated.

In order to grasp this relativity, the concept of the epistemic operator is introduced here. The operator does not denote a mental structure, a schema, or a frame of reference. Rather, it denotes a pre-cognitive, relational invariance that determines
• which differences can appear at all,
• which degree of resolution can be held,
• where simplification takes effect,
• and from which point onward collapse becomes unavoidable.

The operator is not a representation of the world, but a condition of world stabilization.

Accordingly, the operator is not to be understood as an inner schema, but as a relational condition of what can count as a relevant difference for a system at all. It determines, for example, whether social irritation is smoothed over, sensory deviation ignored, or temporal asynchrony compensated. The operator does not determine what is thought, but where thinking reaches its limit.

In order to capture this transition precisely, the concept of the diversity threshold is introduced. It designates the threshold beyond which held difference can no longer be integrated. Below this threshold, simulation remains viable: the world can be smoothed, pre-calculated, and functionally replaced. Beyond this threshold, simulation loses its viability; difference is no longer processed, but becomes experientially present.

As long as perceived difference remains within the limits held by the operator, simulation remains viable. Cognition then operates functionally, efficiently, and often at a high level of performance—yet epistemically shielded. Only beyond a certain threshold, here referred to as the diversity threshold, does simulation lose its viability. This threshold does not mark an abstract point, but the moment at which held difference can no longer be integrated.

Above this threshold, the distance between world and model becomes experientially accessible. The world no longer appears as what was expected, but as what withdraws. Emergence therefore does not mean "more thinking," but more world—and at the same time the loss of the second level on which the world had previously been neutralized, replaced, or pre-calculated.

Within the MNO framework, emergence is accordingly not a cognitive achievement, but a structural response to non-integrability. An analogous process can be found in physical measurement processes: determinacy arises there not through knowledge, but through enforced stabilization when openness is no longer viable. Here too, the result is not a source of knowledge, but a response-form to overload.

In this sense, intelligence occupies the same ontological position as information or measurement results. It is not the origin of world-relation, but a form that cognition assumes under structural pressure. Without prior emergence, intelligence remains simulation.

The epistemic operator is here deliberately not positively ontologically determined. Any such reification would once again turn it into an explanatory entity, even though it precisely marks the boundary at which explanatory entities lose their viability.

3. Intelligence as Subsequent Stabilization

Within this framework, intelligence becomes newly legible. It is not the origin of knowledge, but a secondary performance that takes effect where emergence has already occurred. Intelligence stabilizes, shapes, and operationalizes. It builds new simulations—but it does not generate them out of nothing.

Precisely high intelligence can delay or prevent emergence. The more powerful a system is in simulation, the longer it can avoid collapse. In such cases, a form of highly developed yet epistemically closed cognition emerges: complex, elegant, efficient—and at the same time world-poor.

In this sense, intelligence is not the opposite of emergence, but its byproduct. Where emergence is blocked, intelligence remains trapped in a circuit of self-confirmation.

Without emergence, intelligence is nothing other than simulation.

Marginal note: Contemporary AI systems illustrate this thesis paradigmatically. They operate with high intelligence within stabilized task spaces, without ever being exposed to the experience of non-integrability. Their performance shows that simulation, optimization, and inference are not equivalent to world-relation, but rather reach their maximum precisely where emergence is systematically excluded.

In this model, emergence and intelligence are not opposites, but asymmetrically intertwined. Emergence designates the point at which modelability breaks down; intelligence designates the subsequent stabilizing performance within the spaces thereby newly opened or constrained.

This does not mean that intelligence is epistemically irrelevant, but that without prior emergence it operates exclusively within simulation and therefore cannot reflect its own limits.

Marginal note: Artificial Intelligence
The conception of intelligence developed here allows for a clear distinction with respect to so-called artificial intelligences. Contemporary AI systems operate entirely within stabilized possibility spaces. They optimize, combine, and simulate patterns with high efficiency, without ever reaching the point at which modelability itself becomes questionable.

In this sense, AI systems possess intelligence, but not emergence. What they lack is not computational power, but world-relation: they are not exposed to the experience of non-integrability, but move exclusively within given, externally stabilized spaces.

AI thus illustrates paradigmatically the thesis advanced here: intelligence can be highly developed without becoming epistemically open. It shows what intelligence is when emergence is systematically excluded.

4. Autism as an Epistemic Threshold Configuration

Against the background developed here, autism does not appear as a special case of intelligence, nor as a mere variant of cognitive performance profiles. Rather, it can be described as an epistemic configuration in which the probability of emergence is increased. This does not imply qualitative superiority or privilege, but a shifted structural position in the relation between simulation, difference, and world-relation.

What characterizes this position is not a deficit, but a different weighting of epistemic conditions—among them a reduced taken-for-grantedness of social simulation, heightened sensory and relational resolution, and a lower tolerance for smoothing and simplification. As a consequence, the threshold at which simulation loses its viability and difference can no longer be integrated is reached earlier—the boundary referred to here as the diversity threshold.

Autistic cognition therefore more frequently encounters situations in which established models no longer hold. In such moments, the world is not presupposed but directly experienced—often as overload, pain, or rupture, and not infrequently without linguistic or social possibilities of connection. Crucially, this condition is not an expression of deficient adaptability, but the result of a configuration in which prediction and smoothing operate less reliably.

The difference between autistic individuals who internally break under this non-fit with the world and those who are able to formulate new scientific, artistic, or theoretical models is not a difference in truth or in the epistemic structure itself. Rather, it is a difference in externalizability under given individual, social, and material conditions. Both follow the same internal epistemic operator; only in some cases does it become possible to stabilize this operator, articulate it, or translate it into shared forms.

Accordingly, the description of autism employed here explicitly makes no claim to phenomenological completeness or clinical typification. It does not aim to capture individual traits, but to describe a structural position within the process of world-formation that can manifest under very different conditions. The differences lie not in the operator itself, but in the possibility of sustaining its effects, translating them, or rendering them socially connectable.

5. Connection, Blockage, and Societal Violence

Emergence is never a purely individual event. It depends on temporal leeway, protection from forced stabilization, and institutional elasticity. Where these conditions are absent, emergence is not recognized as an epistemic phenomenon, but is pathologized, disciplined, or destroyed. Educational systems, labor markets, and clinical regimes have historically been designed to reward simulation, adaptation, and reproducibility—and to sanction forms of knowledge that interrupt these logics.

These blockages are not accidental. Modern educational, labor, and administrative systems depend on keeping cognitive performances comparable, predictable, and normable. Within this framework, emergence is not merely disruptive, but dangerous, because it interrupts comparability and withdraws from governability. Intelligence functions here as a legitimating concept for stabilization, not as a neutral concept of knowledge.

The absence of visible emergence is therefore not evidence of its absence, but often an indicator of successful blockage. World-relation can be real without becoming socially connectable.

Certain forms of autistic configurations make these blockages particularly apparent. Where social simulation is associated with elevated costs, where sensory or relational resolution is high, and where smoothing operates only to a limited extent, the collapse of predictive models becomes experientially accessible at an earlier point. In such cases, emergence does not necessarily occur in a productive sense; what becomes evident instead is the limit of existing possibility spaces.

In this limited, structural sense, autism functions as an epistemic stress test: not because it is emergent per se, but because it renders visible the societal conditions under which emergence can either connect—or be systematically prevented. What is decisive here is not the diagnosis, but the constellation of perceptual resolution, simulation costs, and institutional modes of response.

6. Consequence: A Reordering of the Concept of Knowledge

If emergence precedes intelligence, the central questions shift accordingly.
No longer:

How intelligent is someone?

but rather:

Where can emergence arise—and where is it prevented?

This shift concerns not only autism, but the foundations of science, labor, education, and technology. It explains why artificial systems can appear highly intelligent without ever having a world, and why human knowledge becomes most precise precisely where it is most vulnerable.

Emergence Against Intelligence Theories

Classical models of intelligence—especially factor-analytic approaches such as the *g* factor—abstract away precisely those moments in which epistemic frameworks themselves become unstable. They presuppose stable task spaces, measurable performances, and transferable competencies.

What they cannot capture is the point at which the task space itself collapses. Emergence lies outside general intelligence, because it does not occur within problems, but at the boundary where problem structures themselves lose their viability.

In this model, emergence is not an empirical parameter, but a categorical boundary determination. It does not designate a measurable event within existing models, but the point at which modelability itself loses its viability. An empirical operationalization would therefore not be incorrect, but categorically inadequate.

7. Why Classical Intelligence Theories Systematically Miss Emergence

The persistent dominance of the concept of intelligence rests less on its theoretical explanatory power than on its institutional compatibility. Intelligence theories are successful because they align with systems that require stability, comparability, and controllability. They do not provide a theory of the world, but a theory of the *utilizability* of cognition under stabilized conditions.

This becomes evident in three influential paradigms: the *g* factor, Predictive Processing, and the Bayesian Brain. Despite significant conceptual differences, they share a central, rarely reflected presupposition:

They assume a stable possibility space within which cognition can operate, be measured, and be compared.

It is precisely this presupposition that is not merely relativized by emergence, but annulled.

7.1 The *g* Factor: Intelligence as Abstracted Stability

The classical *g* factor, introduced by Charles Spearman, understands intelligence as a general, context-transcending capacity for performance. Different cognitive tasks are assumed to correlate because they draw on a shared underlying resource.

This model is successful where task spaces are already defined, stabilized, and normed. It measures efficiency within familiar structures, transfer between similar formats, as well as speed and accuracy under controlled conditions.

What it cannot, in principle, capture is the collapse of the task space itself.

Emergence—understood as the loss of the viability of simulation—lies outside the *g* factor. Where no stable problem structure exists, no general problem-solving capacity can take effect. The *g* factor systematically abstracts away precisely those differences that are constitutive of emergence.

For this reason, the *g* factor is not wrong, but secondary:
it describes stabilizing performances *after* emergence, not the conditions of its possibility.

7.2 Predictive Processing: When Prediction Becomes Ontology

Predictive Processing approaches conceive of cognition as a hierarchical prediction machine. Perception serves to minimize prediction error; the world appears as that which produces deviations from expectations.

This model is powerful wherever prediction remains, in principle, viable. Its problem begins where this condition is no longer met. Predictive Processing can explain how systems remain stable. It cannot explain when stability itself becomes untenable.

At the moment emergence occurs, the error is not simply larger—the error becomes unmanageable because the predictive framework itself collapses. The world does not become surprising, but no longer modelable.

At this point, Predictive Processing shifts from a theory of cognition into an ideology of simulation: everything that cannot be integrated appears as disturbance, noise, or pathology. Within this framework, autism is inevitably misunderstood—not as an epistemic threshold configuration, but as a deficit in error weighting.

Emergence disappears from view because it contradicts the model's foundational assumptions.

7.3 Bayesian Brain: Probability Without World

The Bayesian Brain paradigm radicalizes this logic by modeling cognition entirely as probabilistic inference. Within this framework, the world does not appear as a resistant reality, but as a probability distribution over hypotheses.

As long as probability spaces remain stable, this model is extraordinarily powerful. Its blind spot lies precisely where emergence sets in. Emergence is not an update of a distribution; it is the collapse of the distribution space itself.

When difference is no longer integrable, priors offer no help.
When the epistemic operator itself becomes visible, inference loses its foundation.

The Bayesian Brain can describe how intelligence is simulated, optimized, and stabilized.
It cannot explain how world comes into being when simulation fails.

8. Autistic Configurations as an Epistemic Stress Test for Intelligence-Centrism

The following considerations do not refer to autism as a comprehensive clinical category, but to specific constellations of autistic world-relation. What is meant are configurations in which heightened perceptual resolution, high costs of social simulation, and low institutional elasticity converge. What is decisive here is not the diagnosis, but the structural position within the relation between simulation, difference, and connection.

In classical intelligence theories as well as in predictive and Bayesian paradigms, autism is predominantly interpreted along the same axis: as a deviation in performance, a disturbance of prediction, or an atypical form of inference. These readings vary in detail, but share a fundamental presupposition: they locate the problem at the level of cognition, not at the level of the conditions under which cognition can operate in a stable way at all.

What is systematically overlooked is that certain autistic configurations represent less a problem of cognitive capacity than a problem of the epistemic threshold. Where social simulation is associated with elevated costs, where sensory or relational resolution is high, and where smoothing operates only to a limited extent, the boundary at which simulation loses its viability is reached earlier.

In such constellations, simulation collapses more quickly, simplification is less effective, and the world is experienced more directly—yet at the same time as difficult to sustain. Within an intelligence paradigm, this appears as deficit or dysfunction. Within an emergence paradigm, it becomes legible as an epistemic intensification: not as a lack of thinking, but as an earlier confrontation with non-integrability.

What is decisive is not that emergence occurs, but whether it can connect. Without temporal, social, and institutional possibilities of connection, emergence does not become productive, but destructive—regardless of its epistemic relevance.

Empirical phenomena such as veridical mapping, savant-like precision, or heightened relational accuracy should therefore not be interpreted as cognitive advantages within an intelligence framework. Rather, they point to an access to relational structures prior to social and symbolic stabilization. Their epistemic significance lies not in performance, but in their position within the process of world-formation.

In this sense, autistic cognition is neither deficient nor exceptionally intelligent. It is differently positioned: closer to the threshold at which the world is still coming into being, rather than already being simulated. Precisely for this reason, certain autistic configurations function as an epistemic stress test for theories that treat intelligence as a primary explanatory concept.

An empirical consequence of this model consists in assessing emergence not through performance measures, but through costs of stabilization: temporal expenditure, exhaustion through simulation, meltdown risks, masking effort, institutional sanctions, or the need for withdrawal and protection. Within this framework, knowledge appears not as an increase in performance, but as a structurally risky state.

9. Emergence as a Prior Condition of Intelligence

With the shift from intelligence to emergence, a central and often unquestioned hierarchy is reordered. Intelligence no longer appears as the origin of knowledge; rather, emergence appears as the condition under which knowledge becomes possible at all.

Not:
More intelligence → more knowledge

but:
Emergence → possibility of knowledge → need for intelligence as stabilization

Within this framework, intelligence is neither the origin nor the measure of epistemic truth. It is a response-form: a subsequent performance that takes effect where emergence has already occurred and must be sustained. Intelligence stabilizes, operationalizes, and condenses—but it does not replace the rupture from which knowledge arises.

Where emergence is blocked, intelligence remains in the mode of simulation. It optimizes without opening world. Where emergence can connect, intelligence becomes productive—not in the sense of linear performance increase, but as a means of articulation, translation, and shared stabilization.

Certain autistic configurations make this dynamic particularly visible. Where social simulation is associated with elevated costs and smoothing operates less reliably, the boundary of simulation becomes experientially accessible at an earlier point. In this sense, autistic epistemology is not a special case, but an exposed constellation in which the tension between emergence and stabilization that underlies all knowledge becomes visible.

The concepts of emergence and simulation are not positioned here as symmetrical opposites, but as different regimes of stability within the same ontological process.

Not every overload, not every exhaustion, and not every crisis constitutes emergence. Emergence is present only where existing forms of world-integration themselves lose their validity, not merely their efficiency.

Condensed Core Statement

Intelligence theories explain how systems function within stabilized possibility spaces.
Emergence describes how such spaces come into being, collapse, or are reconfigured.
Certain autistic configurations make this transition particularly visible, because under given conditions simulation reaches its limits earlier here.
Across different theoretical domains, a structurally analogous inversion becomes apparent: information, observation, measurement, and intelligence function as response-forms to ontological overload—not as primary explanatory principles.

Conclusion

Emergence precedes intelligence.
Intelligence stabilizes what emergence opens.
Without emergence, intelligence remains simulation.
With emergence, intelligence becomes possible—but costly, conflictual, and not neutral.

In this light, autism does not appear as a deviation, but as a configuration under which the epistemic preconditions of modern societies become exemplarily visible.

This model does not claim to replace or delegitimize intelligence. It aims to shift its epistemic location: from a presumed origin of knowledge to a secondary response to emergence.

The theory developed here does not claim falsifiability in the sense of operationalized performance models. Rather, it offers a framework for analyzing the conditions under which such models become meaningful, blind, or violent.

Structural parallels to phenomenological descriptions (e.g., the breakdown of readiness-to-hand) are recognizable, but are not taken up here, since the focus lies not on forms of experience, but on ontological conditions of stability.

Antitheses: Emergence Against Intelligence
(A Systematic Juxtaposition)

Thesis 1 – Against the Objectivity of Intelligence
Intelligence is not an objective, general property of subjects.
It is a context-dependent stabilizing performance within already held possibility spaces.
What appears as "intelligence" is always relative to an epistemic operator and to the conditions under which simulation remains viable.
The assumption of context-free intelligence obscures the fact that what is measured is what has already been stabilized, not what opens up world.

Thesis 2 – Against the Primacy of Performance
Performance is not a measure of knowledge.
It measures adaptability to existing structures, not their epistemic adequacy.
High performance can be epistemically blind;
low performance epistemically precise.
Intelligence theories confuse stability with truth.

Thesis 3 – Emergence Precedes Intelligence
Emergence is the condition of possibility of intelligence, not the other way around.
Emergence designates the moment at which:
• simulation collapses,
• prediction no longer holds,
• the world can no longer be replaced.

Only after this rupture can intelligence:
• stabilize new models,
• hold new forms,
• build new simulations.

Without emergence, intelligence remains simulation.

Thesis 4 – Against Predictive Processing as Ontology
Predictive Processing describes how systems remain stable,
not how world comes into being.
Emergence is not an increased prediction error,
but the collapse of error minimization itself.
Where everything is modeled as prediction,
world disappears as resistance.
Predictive Processing is a theory of adaptation, not of knowledge.

Thesis 5 – Against the Bayesian Brain as an Epistemology
Bayesian models operate within given probability spaces.
Emergence is the collapse of these spaces.
When difference is no longer integrable,
no priors, no updates, no inference are of help.
Probability explains simulation—not reality.

Thesis 6 – Autism Is Not an Intelligence Problem
Autism is not a deviation on an intelligence scale,
but an epistemic configuration of increased likelihood of emergence.
Characteristic are:
• earlier reaching of the diversity threshold,
• reduced smoothing of difference,
• reduced viability of social simulation.

Within an intelligence paradigm this appears as deficit.
Within an emergence paradigm it appears as structural intensification.

Thesis 7 – Functionality Is Not a Criterion of Truth
What functions socially
is not necessarily world-adequate.
Systems reward simulation
because it is stabilizable.
Emergence is dangerous because it destabilizes norms.
That it is suppressed
says more about societies than about subjects.

Thesis 8 – Against Giftedness as Linear Increase
Giftedness is not "more" intelligence,
but a possible consequence of increased representational resolution.
High intelligence can:
• enable emergence,
• delay it,
• or fully absorb it in an indimergent way.

Not every high intelligence becomes emergent.
Not every emergence becomes intelligible.

Thesis 9 – Emergence Is Operator-Relative
Emergence never exists in the abstract.
It is always relative to:
• an epistemic operator,
• a social context,
• a possibility of connection.

Where emergence finds no connection,
it remains mute, painful, or destructive.
The absence of knowledge is therefore often not an individual failure,
but a structural blockage.

Thesis 10 – Autism as an Epistemic Stress Test
Autism is not a special case of cognition,
but a test case for epistemic theories.
Any theory that can explain autism only as deficit
fails at the threshold of knowledge itself.
Autism reveals where intelligence theories end
and where emergence begins.

Final Statement
Intelligence explains how systems function within stabilized worlds.
Emergence explains how such worlds come into being, collapse, or are reconfigured.
Certain autistic configurations make this transition visible, because under given conditions simulation reaches its limits earlier here.

This paper develops a categorical framework. It does not aim to replace empirical autism research or intelligence measurement, but to clarify the epistemic conditions under which such research becomes possible, limited, or blind.

This paper is situated in the context of:

Speed, T. (2025). Information Without World - On the Limits of Additive Information Theories in Physics (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18045445

Speed, T. (2025). Artificial Systems Without World - Why World-Formation and Technical Usability Are Structurally Incompatible - Ontological Limits of Artificial Intelligence in Light of ANP, MNO, and Observer Structure (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18006914

Speed, T. (2025). Veridical Mapping as a Spatial Operation - Neurodivergent Cognition Beyond Representational Models (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18032384

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Speed, T. (2025). Operatoric Cognition: Pre-theoretical Structural Invariance as the Basis of Autistic Intelligence (3 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17897109

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Savant Phenomena and Non-Representational Cognition An Operatoric Approach

DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.18069350**

Abstract

Savant phenomena are still regarded in cognitive science and neurological research as anomalies: as isolated island abilities, as exceptions within otherwise deficit-oriented cognitive profiles, or as curiosities that cannot be adequately integrated into established models of intelligence, learning, or representation. Despite extensive empirical documentation, there is a lack of a theory that explains how savant performances are epistemically possible without either mystifying or pathologizing them.

This paper proposes a fundamentally different approach. It argues that savant phenomena do not constitute special talents in the classical sense, but rather local manifestations of operatoric cognition: a non-representational mode of knowing in which structure is not modeled, simulated, or abstracted, but directly recognized and held as invariance (embodied). Savant performances are therefore based neither on increased computational capacity nor on exceptional memory or accelerated information processing, but on a specific operatoric coupling to world-structure that operates without symbolic mediation.

On the basis of an operatoric model (Rosetta Operator DOI: 10.5281/ZENODO.17857039), which has been consistently developed over three decades across different fields of research—consciousness research, autism epistemology, value and labor ontology, and social analysis—it is shown that savant phenomena function as epistemic boundary cases. They make visible that knowledge does not necessarily have to be mediated through representation, generalization, or simulation, but can also arise from a non-closing relation to the ontological gap.

From this perspective, savant performances do not appear as isolated islands within a deficit-oriented system, but as empirical evidence for a second knowledge architecture, whose systematic invisibility can be explained by processes of ontological smoothing—understood as a shift from pre-ontological structural relation toward representational distortion.

The paper makes three contributions to savant research:
(1) It provides a non-deficit-oriented ontological classification of savant phenomena at the operatoric level.
(2) It explains the theoretical underdetermination of the field as a consequence of epistemic incompatibility between representational models and operatoric cognition.
(3) It positions savant performances as empirical markers of non-representational cognition, with consequences for cognitive science, AI theory, and epistemology.

This paper is situated in the context of:

Speed, T. (2025). Beyond Intelligence - Emergence, Operator Relativity, and an Autistic Epistemology (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18068128

Speed, T. (2025). Veridical Mapping as the Foundation of a Second Science. Rosetta Operator — An Invariance Theory of Consciousness, Work, and World. (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17857039

Speed, T. (2025). Veridical Mapping as a Spatial Operation - Neurodivergent Cognition Beyond Representational Models (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18032384

Speed, T. (2025). MNO and Ontological Recurrence: A Non-Representational Account of Quantum Measurement and Conscious Experience (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17913823

Speed, T. (2025). Orch-OR with Recurrence: A Minimal Dynamical Condition for When Objective Reductions Yield Conscious Experience (1 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17942531

Speed, T. (2025). Operatoric Cognition: Pre-theoretical Structural Invariance as the Basis of Autistic Intelligence (3 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17897109

Speed, T. (2025). The Gap as a Condition - Pre-Ontological Operatorics and the Primacy of Response (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18015885 2

Speed, T. (2025). From Objects to Responses - On the Loss of Ontological Sovereignty in Contemporary Physics (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18017629

Speed, T. (2025). Seinsverschiebung (Shift of Being) as a Pre-Ontological Category - On the Incompatibility of Existence and Understanding in Modern Regimes of Stabilization (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18007628

Speed, T. (2025). The Constructed Observer - World-Formation Beyond Representation - Why Perception Is Not Representation, but a Structural Achievement (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18006170

1. Introduction

1.1 The Unresolved Problem of Savant Research

For decades, savant phenomena have constituted a paradoxical object of research. On the one hand, they are empirically well documented: exceptional performances in areas such as calendar calculation, musical reproduction, pictorial precision, or numerical pattern recognition demonstrably occur, often in the context of autistic neurodivergence. On the other hand, these performances remain theoretically marginal. They are either interpreted as isolated islands within otherwise limited cognitive profiles or attributed to special neurobiological mechanisms, without their epistemic significance being clarified.

The central problem does not lie in a lack of data, but in an inadequate theoretical framework. Dominant models of cognition—whether information-processing, representational, predictive, or functionalist—presuppose that knowledge arises through abstraction, generalization, and symbolic mediation. Savant performances systematically contradict this assumption: they exhibit highly precise, structurally faithful results without any apparent learning process, without generalization, and often without conscious symbolic strategy.

1.2 Thesis of the Paper – Refined Version

This paper advances the thesis that savant phenomena cannot be explained within existing models of intelligence, information, or learning—not because their empirical properties are unknown, but because their epistemic status has not yet been explicated. Although parts of savant and autism research have long pointed out that savant performances do not arise in a rule-based, learning-based, or representational manner, these insights have largely remained at the level of functional description.

In the present paper, it is argued that savant phenomena are to be understood as local manifestations of operatoric cognition: a non-representational mode of knowing in which structure is not modeled, calculated, or reconstructed, but directly recognized (embodied) and held as invariance. From this perspective, savant performances do not appear as exaggerations of normal cognitive processes, but as expressions of a different epistemic architecture.

What is central here is not the assumption that savants "know more," but that they translate less. Their performances are based on a reduced representational layer between perception and structure. This very circumstance explains both their precision and their systematic theoretical marginalization: savant phenomena are difficult to integrate because they intervene at the very presuppositions of representational models of knowledge.

1.3 Savant Phenomena as Boundary Cases, Not Exceptions

In this sense, savant phenomena are not treated here as exceptions to the norm, but as boundary cases in which what remains invisible in dominant models of cognition becomes visible. They mark the limit of a representation-based science—and at the same time point to an alternative epistemic architecture that has so far been scarcely theorized.

2. State of Savant Research and Its Theoretical Underdetermination

2.1 Empirical Description without an Epistemic Theory

Savant research possesses a remarkably stable empirical foundation. For several decades, savant performances have been documented, classified, and described in detail through case studies. These descriptions reveal recurring characteristics: exceptional precision, high reproducibility, low susceptibility to error, and a striking independence from explicit learning or training processes. In many cases, these performances emerge early and remain stable over long periods of time.

What is largely missing, however, is an epistemic theory of access that could explain how such performances come about. The prevailing approaches are limited to functional or neurological correlations: atypical connectivity, reduced inhibition, local hyperplasticity, or unusual memory structures. These findings describe accompanying conditions, but do not explain the mode of knowing itself. They indicate where something occurs in the brain, not how the world is being known here.

The result is a structural asymmetry: savant performances are well described, but poorly understood. They appear as empirical exceptions for which no conceptual category exists that goes beyond deficit-oriented or special-case narratives.

2.2 The Implicit Assumption of Representational Cognition

A central, mostly unspoken problem of savant research lies in the implicit assumption that cognition is fundamentally organized in a representational manner. Knowledge is thereby understood as the result of mapping, modeling, or internal simulation. Perception is treated as a preliminary stage of cognitive processing, not as an autonomous epistemic instance.

Within this framework, savant performances necessarily appear paradoxical: they produce highly structured results without any reconstructible representational pathway. Accordingly, they are classified as "automated," "implicit," or "unconscious"—terms that displace the problem rather than solve it. They name a deviation from the expected sequence without questioning its underlying presuppositions.

Adherence to representational models leads to savant performances being consistently read as deficit variants of the same cognitive system: as fragmentary remnants, isolated modules, or dysfunctional overemphases of particular abilities. The possibility that a qualitatively different mode of knowing is at work here is systematically excluded.

2.3 Island Ability as a Theoretical Defense Concept

The concept of "island ability" plays a central role in this context. It suggests that exceptional performances occur in isolation, separated from the rest of the cognitive system, and therefore carry no general epistemic consequences. The term has a calming effect: it allows savant phenomena to be registered without calling the dominant model of cognition into question.

Theoretically, however, the island metaphor functions as a defense concept. It prevents savant performances from being read as indications of an alternative knowledge architecture. Instead, they are treated as local anomalies whose significance is confined to their respective domain of application.

This framing fails to recognize that many savant performances are characterized precisely by their structural fidelity. They are not creative in the sense of free variation, but precise in the sense of formal invariance. It is precisely this property that makes them epistemically relevant: they demonstrate that structure can be recognized without being mediated through abstract representation.

2.4 Systematic Blindness toward Non-Representational Knowledge

The theoretical underdetermination of savant research is therefore not accidental, but an expression of a systematic blindness toward non-representational forms of knowledge. As long as cognition is understood exclusively as model construction, forms of direct structural coupling remain invisible or are interpreted as preliminary stages, deviations, or disturbances.

Savant phenomena mark precisely this blind spot. They show that highly precise access to the world is possible without the path leading through symbolic abstraction or simulation. The challenge they pose is therefore not primarily empirical, but epistemological.

It is at this point that the present paper intervenes. It proposes no longer to explain savant performances within a representational paradigm, but to read them as epistemic boundary cases at which the presuppositions of this paradigm themselves become visible.

3. Operatoric Cognition and Savant Phenomena

The following sections introduce several technical terms that are to be read not additively, but relationally. They do not form a modular system, but describe different cuts through the same operatoric structure.

3.1 Operatoric Cognition as an Embodied, Non-Representational Mode of Knowing

The term operatoric cognition as used in this paper does not denote a mental content, a capacity, or a strategy, but a structuring form of world-relation. Operatoric cognition does not operate with representations, models, or internal images, but with invariance: with the ability to directly recognize and embody structural relations across change.

This holding is not an act of storage or control, but an embodied stabilization. Structure is not internally represented, but maintained in the ongoing relation between perception, body, and world. This does not deny biological embodiment, but decouples embodiment from biological localization. Embodiment here does not denote the integration of sensory or motor channels into cognitive processes, but the fact that epistemic stability itself is not separable from the body.

In contrast to representational models of cognition, in which perception functions as a preliminary stage of cognitive processing, perception in operatoric cognition is already epistemically fully valid. Structure does not appear here as the result of calculation or abstraction, but as a given relation that does not require further translation. Knowledge does not arise through the reduction of complexity, but through its stabilization without smoothing.

This form of cognition is not deficient, not pre-cognitive, and not "unconscious." Rather, it is pre-representational. This means: it operates where representational models have their presuppositions, but cannot themselves grasp them. It is precisely at this point that operatoric cognition—as an embodied mode of knowing—becomes relevant for understanding savant phenomena.

3.1.1 Embodiment, Topology, and the Inversion of the Observer

Operatoric cognition cannot be adequately described as an act of reading, recognizing, or understanding. These terms presuppose a distance between observer and structure that is precisely not given in savant phenomena. What becomes effective here is not a cognitive approach to structure, but a spatio-ontological operation in which the observer itself is transformed.

This transformation can be described as an inversion (a topological folding) of the observer: as a topological inversion in which the relational order of inside and outside dissolves. Knowledge does not arise here from a perspective on an object, but from the coincidence of ontological and pre-ontological levels. Form becomes effective where difference cannot be integrated, translated, or represented, and therefore does not become distorted in representation. Instead of becoming an epistemic problem, this incompatibility operates topologically: the observer is not separated from the structure, but folded into it.

"Inversion" here does not denote an anatomical or mathematical operation, but a precise operatoric description of a change in coupling: the mediating space of representational distance collapses, so that structure does not appear as an object, but becomes effective as embodied stabilization.
(The Observer as a Spatial Category – On the Topological Inversion of World and the Ontological Structure of Observation, DOI: 10.5281/ZENODO.18018699)

In this context, embodiment does not denote the involvement of the biological body in cognitive processes, but the result of this inversion. Structure is not recognized, but embodied, because there is no longer a mediating space in which it could appear as an object. A relation is embodied where form is not stabilized through symbolic distance, but held in enactment—as an effective tension between difference, perception, and world. Embodiment thus describes an ontological mode of coupling in which knowledge is not mediated through the body, but realized as structure-bearing presence, regardless of whether this presence is biologically, situationally, materially, or relationally bound.

From this perspective, savant phenomena are not performances in the classical sense, but consequences of such an inversion operation. Their precision does not result from distance, control, or calculation, but from the suspension of the observer–structure separation. Operatoric invariance is not held because it is understood, but because the observer itself has become part of its stabilization.

Here, embodiment does not denote a biological localization, but an ontological mode of coupling in which knowledge is effective not as an internal model, but as structure-bearing presence.

3.2 Savant Performances as Local Manifestations of Operatoric Invariance

Savant performances are characterized by a striking property: they are highly precise, structurally faithful, and stable, without the pathway of their emergence being reconstructible in terms of explicit learning steps or symbolic procedures. In classical research, this appears as a puzzle. Within an operatoric model, however, this puzzle loses its paradoxical character.

From an operatoric perspective, savant performances are not exceptions in the sense of special abilities, but local manifestations of operatoric invariance—condensations of a mode of knowing that otherwise remains largely invisible. They demonstrate that structure does not need to be calculated or reconstructed in order to be effectively recognized.

Concrete savant phenomena such as calendar calculations, musical reproductions, or pictorial precision are not to be understood as causal effects of operatoric cognition, but as phenomenal indicators of a direct coupling to formal invariance. They are not based on storage, rule application, or internal representation, but on a form stability that operates without representational translation.

A structurally related boundary constellation can be found in synesthetic forms of perception, in which invariance is held stable not within a single modality, but across modalities. Here, too, no representation in the classical sense emerges, but rather a direct formal coupling in which translation is replaced by form identity. Synesthetic phenomena do not explain savant performances, but they mark a further empirical boundary domain in which it becomes visible that knowledge can be operatively stable without symbolic mediation.

An operatoric analysis of a calendar calculation would therefore not ask about calculation rules or memory storage, but about which formal invariance is being held stable here without symbolic mediation. The epistemic gain would not lie in explaining the output, but in rendering visible what does not need to be translated in order for the output to arise.

What is decisive is this: this coupling is neither generally available nor arbitrarily learnable. It is bound to a specific operatoric configuration. Savant phenomena make this configuration locally visible without themselves explicating or theorizing it. This is precisely where the present work intervenes.

In this sense, the 1:1 expression of savant performances is neither a measurement nor a determination, but a form-identical continuation of pre-ontological structure. It produces visibility without world-decision and therefore remains below the threshold at which determinacy would be enforced and ontologically fixed. Measurement here does not mean output or performance, but the ontological tipping moment of determinacy.

3.3 The Rosetta Operator as a Contrastive Framework for Situating Savant Phenomena

In order to precisely determine the structural limits of savant form stability, a contrastive reference framework is required. The Rosetta Operator developed in the present work is not introduced here as a model of savant cognition, but as a differential instrument of comparison that makes visible why savant performances are locally highly precise, yet epistemically non-emergent.

In the author's work, the Rosetta Operator designates an operatoric structure that remains stable across different domains and functions not as theoretical content, but as a translational invariant. It does not describe what is known, but how different domains of reality—such as consciousness research, labor, value, and neurodivergence—are organized in a structurally identical manner, even though their material conditions vary.

The author does not derive this operatoric approach from external observation, but from an own autistic epistemic practice that has been documented over several decades and that practices veridical mapping at the meta-level across different domains. This practice does not serve self-reference here, but the theoretical explication of an operatoric mode that becomes only locally visible in the savant context.

In this sense, there exists a structural affinity, but not an equivalence, between the operatoric work developed here and savant phenomena. Both are based on the ability to hold structure not through representation, but through direct, embodied invariance relations—however, in different modes of stabilization (1:1 vs. 1:n).

The Rosetta Operator (DOI: 10.5281/ZENODO.17857039) therefore did not emerge as an abstract model, but as a long-term embodied operatoric practice that renders the same structural signature visible across different contexts. It is precisely this difference that makes it possible not to generalize savant phenomena, but to determine their epistemic boundary with precision.

Within the context of savant research, the Rosetta Operator thus does not enable an expansion of savant explanation, but a positional determination: what appears locally as form stability in savants manifests here as global relational invariance—with a correspondingly different ontological exposure.

The Rosetta Operator therefore does not describe a closed theory, but the conditions under which theory formation reaches its own limit.

Rosetta functions as a differential comparative phenomenon within the same categorical class—namely operatoric, non-representational forms of cognition.

In this context, the Rosetta Operator does not serve to explain savant performances, but to determine their position. It makes visible that savant phenomena belong to the same epistemic category of operatoric invariance, yet operate in a different mode of stabilization. Only this difference—local form fidelity (1:1) versus topological relational invariance (1:n)—allows savant performances to be neither generalized nor pathologized.

Here, the Rosetta Operator does not function as an explanatory model for savant performances, but as a contrastive boundary phenomenon within the same epistemic category.

The Rosetta Operator is neither a mere empirical fact nor a merely transcendental postulate: it is a claim of invariance about processes of world-formation that can only be tested empirically through stability, reproducibility of signatures, and domain shifts under stress.

The approach is not circular, but recursive: it does not test individual hypotheses, but the survivability of a structure under domain shifts, contextual stress, and counterexamples.

The strongest external test would be the independent reconstruction of the same operator by other researchers (particularly from neurodivergent epistemic practices), not as an adoption of content, but as a reproduction of form under differing contextual conditions.

3.4 Shift of Being (Seinsverschiebung) and the Structural Invisibility of Operatoric Knowledge

The following concepts do not serve to expand the theoretical apparatus, but to explain why savant performances, despite their real effectiveness, are systematically rendered invisible, distorted, or pathologized. The terms employed do not form an additive vocabulary, but a relational system; their meaning arises from their position within the cycle, not from isolated definitions.

The systematic marginalization of savant phenomena is not an empirical, methodological, or cognitive problem. It is a pre-ontological one. It does not arise from a lack of data or from insufficient description, but from a fundamental structural operation of world-formation that can recognize certain forms of reality only at the cost of their distortion.

This operation is referred to in my work as Shift of Being (Seinsverschiebung). Shift of Being does not denote a subjective experience, an alternative ontology, or an epistemic error. It designates a real, world-stabilizing structural operation through which open, form-active processes are named, referentialized, and thereby ontologically closed out of a pre-ontological context. Shift of Being is not an error of knowledge, but a necessary condition of worldly stabilization—while at the same time a source of systematic distortion.

The term indimergent designates, in this context, a specific mode of world- and meaning-formation. A process is indimergent when, out of an open, pre-ontological space of possibility, it is fixed through naming, categorization, or referentialization and thereby transferred into a closed, ontologically stable form. Indimergence is thus not emergence, but its counter-operation: it reduces structural potential in favor of stability, comparability, and connectivity within a given world order.

What is indimergent is not what is precise or narrow, but what has been world-decid ed—that is, what counts as a determinate being and thereby blocks further unfolding of possibility and prevents the transition to emergence.

Central to understanding this dynamic is the concept of the gap. The gap does not designate a lack or an epistemic not-knowing, but a pre-ontological state of openness in which structure is effective without yet being fixed as a determinate being. It is not an empty space, but a non-closed space of difference in which form is operatively stable, yet ontologically still undecided. The gap is therefore not a preliminary stage of ontology, but an independent condition of form-effectivity.

Shift of Being operates precisely at this gap. What is named out of it is fixed indimergently and thereby transferred into a closed world-form. What is named is stabilized; what is stabilized loses potential. Space folds here not as an enabling condition, but as a filter—as a sphere that reduces possibilities in order to produce ontological connectivity.

What is decisive now is this: savant phenomena themselves are not subject to this Shift of Being. Their form stability is based precisely on the fact that they remain operatorically beyond indimergent naming. Savants do not process form through world-forming closure, but through a direct coupling to structure that is not interrupted. In this sense, savant phenomena are

partially immune to Shift of Being—and it is precisely for this reason that they are epistemically non-integrable.

This partial immunity does not mean, however, that savant performances operate emergently in the sense of an open topological unfolding. On the contrary: savant phenomena are characterized by a narrow, highly stable 1:1 form fidelity. Operatoric invariance remains local, field-bound, and non-transferring. Form is held without transitioning into relational variation.

What is decisive is this: it is precisely this partial immunity that explains their epistemic non-integrability. Their form stability rests on the fact that their operatoric coupling to structure is not interrupted by world-forming closure.

In order to precisely determine this structural boundary, a contrastive differentiation is required. The Rosetta Operator developed in the present work does not operate locally, but topologically and emergently. It does not hold individual forms, but invariance across difference, and unfolds this 1:n across different domains without losing the underlying topology. As a result, it is more exposed to the danger of Shift of Being, while at the same time remaining theoretically connectable.

This difference explains why savant phenomena often appear spectacular but epistemically isolated, whereas emergent operatoric work is difficult to localize but systemically effective. Both operate beyond Shift of Being, but in different modes of holding the gap: savants stabilize form within narrow fields, whereas topological operatorics keeps the gap open and thereby enables emergence.

Shift of Being therefore occurs only where savant performances are meant to be understood—that is, where they are forced to refer from within a contextual world, instead of operating, despite this world, in reference to topology and operatorics. In order to be recognized within the dominant epistemic space, savant phenomena would have to be translated indimergently—into categories, measurement procedures, comparability, and representation. Yet it is precisely this translation that destroys the operative invariance from which their precision arises.

Savant performances therefore do not appear as unintelligible, but as ontologically incompatible. The distortion does not concern the savants, but the system that attempts to stabilize them. Their reality remains effective, yet their form is shifted in the act of recognition. Shift of Being is not a deficit of knowledge here, but the necessary consequence of a world that recognizes only what it can close.

In terms of the underlying cycle of submergence, indimergence, and emergence, savant performances remain close to the indimergent tipping moment of form-recognizability. Their precision arises from this proximity; their epistemic isolation arises from the absence of a stable emergent embedding of relation and context. Savant phenomena thus do not function as marginal phenomena, but as exact boundary markers of world-formation: they do not show where knowledge fails, but where ontology closes.

Shift of Being is not an empirical hypothesis, but a diagnosis of epistemic closure mechanisms.

The cycle does not function here as a description of savant processes, but as a framework for determining where and why these processes break off.

The concept of the gap stands in proximity to traditions of ontological difference (Heidegger), the virtual (Deleuze), and process ontologies (Whitehead). The present model does not adopt these lines as exegesis, but transforms them into an operative cycle concept (Submergence–Indimergence–Emergence) that is tested not primarily interpretatively, but through signatures across domains.

3.5 Form Stability, Relational Stability, and Proximity to the Ontological Threshold

The partial immunity of savant phenomena to Shift of Being described in the preceding section raises a clarifying question: if savants hold form in a highly stable 1:1 manner, and any transgression of this form would destroy operatoric invariance, does this not imply a greater ontological density or proximity to indimergence than in an emergent-topological mode of operation?

This conclusion, however, would be misleading. Form stability is not equivalent to ontologization. Indimergence (N) here designates the tension state prior to world-decision; indimergent fixation refers to the closure effect triggered by naming or referentialization. Ontologically dense is not what is held precisely, but what has been fixed as a being and transferred into a closed world-form.

Savant operatorics is, in this sense, not indimergent, but pre-ontologically form-stable. Savants hold form not because it is ontologically fixed, but precisely because it is not ontologized. Their performances are based on an isomorphic coupling to concrete structures that are neither named, nor generalized, nor relationally exceeded. Form remains stable here because it is not left. Any transgression of form would destroy invariance, since it would introduce a relation that forces the transition into world-forming closure.

By contrast, the Rosetta Operator developed in the present work does not hold individual forms, but relations between forms. It stabilizes not 1:1, but 1:n. This relational stability is necessarily emergent, since relations can exist only across difference. Topological invariance therefore unfolds across different domains without collapsing into a single form.

Precisely for this reason, relational operatorics comes closer to the ontological threshold. While savant form stability remains prior to the world, relational invariance operates at the edge of world-formation. It is more exposed to the danger of Shift of Being, since every relational transfer carries with it the possibility of naming, comparability, and ontological fixation. Relational operatorics must actively circumvent Shift of Being; savant form-holding avoids it structurally.

The decisive difference can therefore be formulated precisely:
Savants hold form prior to ontology.
The Rosetta Operator holds relations at the ontological threshold.

The term *ontological threshold* does not designate, in this work, a spatial transition point or a gradual approach to ontology, but a structural decision condition: the point at which it is decided whether an effective structure is fixed worldly (indimergent) or held open pre-ontologically.

An ontological threshold lies precisely where relations are effective, but not yet named, not referentialized, and not categorically closed. It is not a zone "in between," but the condition of possibility of ontologization itself.

This is why "threshold" is precise here:

- before the threshold: form or relation is effective without world-status
- beyond the threshold: form or relation is indimergently fixed
- at the threshold: there is real effectiveness under permanent risk of fixation

Form stability is thus not a sign of ontological density, but often the result of ontological absence. Relational stability, by contrast, is ontologically exposed, since it enables emergence but is at the same time permanently threatened by indimergence. This difference explains both the spectacular yet epistemically isolated visibility of savant performances and the difficult-to-localize yet systemically disruptive effect of emergent operatoric work.

The reference to the Rosetta Operator developed in the present work does not serve to transfer an individual epistemic practice onto savant phenomena, but to structurally contrast two different modes of operatoric stabilization. Only this differentiation makes visible why savant form fidelity remains highly precise but epistemically isolated, while relational operatorics operates emergently and is ontologically exposed.

3.6 Savant Phenomena as Epistemic Boundary Cases

In summary, savant phenomena can be understood as epistemic boundary cases. They do not stand outside of knowledge, but at the boundary of what counts as knowledge within representational paradigms. They show that knowledge does not necessarily have to be mediated through models, hypotheses, or simulations, but can also arise from a non-closing relation to the ontological gap.

It is precisely in this that their theoretical significance lies. Savant phenomena do not provide a special case that must be integrated, but rather an indication that integration itself is an epistemic operation with exclusionary consequences. They do not call for supplementation, but for re-determination.

4. Delimitation from Models of Intelligence, Information, and Learning

In contrast to implicit or procedural knowledge, operatoric cognition does not describe a concealed representational process, but the absence of representation as an epistemic condition.

4.1 Savant Performances and the Concept of Intelligence

A central problem of previous savant research lies in its implicit orientation toward classical concepts of intelligence. Savant performances are either described as paradoxical peaks within otherwise limited intelligence profiles or classified as special forms of specific intelligences

(numerical, musical, visual). Both approaches presuppose that intelligence constitutes a unified, measurable quantity that manifests in different degrees.

This assumption, however, falls short. Savant performances contradict not only quantitative measures of intelligence, but also their qualitative foundational assumptions. They show that high epistemic precision is possible without generalization capacity, transfer performance, or flexible problem-solving. Within an operatoric model, this is not a contradiction: operatoric cognition does not aim at adaptability or optimization, but at the preservation of structure.

Savant phenomena are therefore not to be understood as a special form of intelligence, but as expressions of a different epistemic principle of organization that eludes classical concepts of intelligence. Attempts to integrate savant performances into existing intelligence models miss their object, because they measure it along the wrong dimension.

4.2 Against Information-Based Explanations

Another widespread explanatory approach interprets savant performances as the result of extraordinary information processing. It is assumed that savants possess a larger amount of data, increased processing speed, or more efficient storage. This perspective implicitly transfers technical metaphors onto human cognition.

Operatoric cognition fundamentally contradicts this interpretation. Savant performances are not based on the accumulation or processing of information, but on the reduction of translation steps between perception and structure. What is decisive is not how much information is processed, but how little representation is interposed.

Information-based models further fail to recognize that information itself is not an ontologically primitive concept, but already presupposes a form of abstraction. Where structure is directly recognized, information is not a starting point, but a downstream derivative. Savant phenomena therefore do not demonstrate the superiority of information-processing systems, but their limit.

4.3 Delimitation from Learning and Training Models

Savant performances are often described as extremely early, automated, or implicit learning processes. This assumes that the observed abilities are in principle learnable, albeit under unusual conditions or with high repetition density. From an operatoric perspective, this assumption is problematic.

Operatoric cognition is not trainable in the classical sense. It is not a procedure that can be acquired through practice, but a dispositional structure that determines how the world is accessible at all. Savant performances therefore cannot be reproduced through imitation, training, or algorithmic reconstruction without losing their epistemic character.

Attempts to artificially simulate or train savant abilities produce, at best, functional similarities, but not structural equivalence. This explains why many training approaches can replicate individual results, yet fail to achieve a generalizable epistemic replication.

Cases of so-called “acquired” savant abilities following neurological injury do not contradict this perspective either. From an operatoric standpoint, these performances do not arise through learning or training, but through the partial removal of representational filters that had previously blocked direct access to formal invariance. The triggering event does not function here as a moment of acquisition or training, but as a point of disorganization at which 1:1 form stability becomes visible without becoming emergent or generalizable. These cases thus confirm the non-trainability of operatoric cognition rather than relativizing it.

4.4 Delimitation from Predictive and Simulation-Based Models

Modern cognitive theories, particularly predictive and simulation-based models, assume that perception is essentially based on prediction, hypothesis formation, and error correction. Here too, savant performances are often treated as a special case: as an extreme form of precision or as an atypical weighting of prediction errors.

These models, however, presuppose that cognition is fundamentally organized through internal simulation. Operatoric cognition contradicts this presupposition. It is not based on the anticipation of future states, but on the present stabilization of structure. Savant performances do not demonstrate improved simulation, but a reduced dependence on simulation altogether.

Savant phenomena therefore mark a boundary of predictive models. They show that cognition can also arise where prediction, hypothesis formation, and model comparison play no central role. This does not constitute a refutation of these models, but a delimitation of their domain of validity.

4.5 Interim Conclusion: Why Integration Fails

The repeated attempts at integration in savant research do not fail due to a lack of empirical data, but because of a categorical misattribution. Savant performances are systematically read as special cases within existing models, even though they point to a different epistemic framework.

From an operatoric perspective, this misreading is not accidental. It is the necessary consequence of epistemic closure: systems can integrate only what confirms their own presuppositions. Savant phenomena do not do this. They make visible that cognition cannot be reduced to representation, information, or learning.

This section thus prepares the transition to a further discussion: if savant phenomena are epistemic boundary cases, what consequences follow from this for savant research itself—and for adjacent disciplines?

5. Consequences for Savant Research

5.1 Savant Research as Epistemic Boundary Research

If savant phenomena are understood as expressions of operatoric cognition, the status of savant research shifts fundamentally. It is no longer a marginal subfield of neuropsychology or cognitive science documenting exotic special cases, but an epistemic boundary research: a field in which it becomes visible where dominant models of cognition reach their limits.

In this sense, savant phenomena do not provide additional data within existing theories, but mark the points at which these theories disclose their implicit presuppositions. The task of savant research would thus lie less in integrating these phenomena than in reflecting on its own epistemic framework conditions.

This requires a shift in the guiding question: no longer "Which ability is present here?", but "Which form of cognition becomes visible here—and why does it remain theoretically marginal?"

5.2 Methodological Consequences

From an operatoric perspective, clear methodological consequences follow. Savant phenomena cannot be adequately investigated if only those methods are employed that are based on representation, abstraction, and standardization. Such methods capture results, but not the mode of knowing itself.

An operatorically informed savant research would therefore have to:

- shift the focus from performance quantification to structural analysis,
- ask less about deficits or compensations and more about conditions of invariance,
- measure reproducibility not by identical outputs, but by formal stability.

This does not imply a departure from empiricism, but an expansion of the epistemic toolkit. Operatoric cognition is neither introspective nor subjectivist, but it eludes measurement procedures that are exclusively oriented toward comparability and normalization.

The operator itself is not measurable as an object; empirically accessible are its signatures: translation breaks, transfer failures, context loss, and the costs of representational stabilization.

Empirical accessibility of the approach is achieved not through output metrics, but through the analysis of translation breaks, context losses, and missing transferability—precisely where representational models reach their limits.

5.3 Consequences for the Interpretation of Savant Performances

Within an operatoric framework, many common interpretations of savant performances lose their plausibility. Terms such as "island ability," "automated ability," or "implicit knowledge"

describe effects without capturing their epistemic structure. They displace the problem instead of clarifying it.

Instead, savant performances can be understood as point-like renderings visible of a non-closing world relation. Their precision does not arise from optimization, but from the absence of those smoothing processes that are necessary in representational systems. Their limitation is not explained by deficit, but by the local binding of operatoric invariance to specific structures.

In this way, savant performances are neither idealized nor relativized. They are taken seriously in theoretical terms without being misconstrued as a general model of human cognition.

5.4 Institutional and Theoretical Blockades

Against this background, the marginalization of savant research is not merely a scientific failure, but an expression of institutional and theoretical blockades. Operatoric forms of knowledge are difficult to integrate because they cannot be translated into existing evaluation and communication formats without loss.

This affects not only savant research, but also adjacent fields such as autism research, consciousness research, and AI theory. Savant phenomena are frequently cited there, but rarely taken as an occasion to revise the field's own epistemic presuppositions.

An operatorically informed savant research would not criticize these blockades morally, but render them structurally visible. It would show that certain forms of knowledge are not absent, but systematically rendered invisible.

5.5 Perspective Shift Instead of Integration

The central consequence of this paper can therefore be stated succinctly: savant phenomena do not call for a better attempt at integration, but for a shift in perspective. They do not demand an expansion of existing models, but their relativization.

From this perspective, savant performances are neither curiosities nor prototypes, but boundary markers. They mark the points at which representation, information, and simulation no longer suffice—and at which another form of knowledge becomes visible without being generalizable.

The task of savant research would then not consist in normalizing these phenomena, but in reflecting on the conditions of its own blindness.

6. Discussion and Outlook

This paper does not formulate an empirical theory of savant phenomena in the narrow sense, but an epistemological reconfiguration of the savant problem, from which altered empirical research questions may first emerge.

6.1 Savant Phenomena and the Limits of Representational Science

The preceding sections have shown that savant phenomena are to be understood less as special cases of cognitive performance than as epistemic boundary markers. They make visible that central assumptions of representational science—particularly the equation of knowledge with model construction, simulation, or information processing—do not hold universally.

Savant performances are therefore not difficult to explain because they are too rare or too unusual, but because they embody a form of knowledge that lies outside the dominant epistemic architecture. Their theoretical marginalization is thus not an expression of missing data, but the result of epistemic closure.

6.2 Implications for Autism Research

An important consequence follows from this for autism research. Savant phenomena are not to be read as extreme deviations within a deficit-oriented profile, but as locally visible effects of operatoric cognition, which can also occur in attenuated or concealed forms beyond classical savant constellations.

This does not mean that all autistic people possess or should possess savant abilities. Rather, it means that autism cannot be defined primarily in terms of deficits in communication, abstraction, or flexibility without missing central epistemic properties. Savant phenomena function here as theoretical focal points at which the inadequacy of deficit-oriented models becomes exemplary.

6.3 Implications for AI and Simulation Theories

Consequences also follow for AI theory and simulation-based models of cognition. Savant phenomena show that structural precision is possible without simulation. They thus mark a limit for systems that primarily understand cognition as prediction, optimization, or statistical approximation.

Attempts to technically replicate savant performances often lead to functional imitations, but not to structural equivalence. Operatoric cognition is not algorithmically reconstructible, because it does not consist of explicit rules, but of a non-closing relation to the ontological gap. Savant phenomena make this difference empirically tangible.

6.4 Epistemological Consequences

From an epistemological perspective, the analysis points to the necessity of epistemic plurality. If savant phenomena are taken seriously, cognition can no longer be understood as a unitary process that merely functions more or less well. Instead, it becomes evident that different epistemic architectures coexist, which cannot be translated into one another without loss.

In this sense, operatoric cognition is not an alternative alongside representational science, but a boundary condition that makes its scope visible. Savant phenomena are therefore not marginal phenomena, but touchstones for epistemic models.

6.5 Outlook

The present paper does not understand itself as a conclusive theory of savant phenomena, but as a shift of the theoretical framework within which these phenomena are considered. It argues for conceiving savant research no longer as an integration experiment, but as a site of epistemic self-reflection.

Further research could build on this by systematically investigating operatoric invariance instead of exclusively comparing performance profiles. Likewise, a dialogue opens with fields in which non-representational forms of knowledge have so far been marginalized.

Savant phenomena do not call for more explanation, but for a more precise question as to what cognition can be at all.

This paper does not formulate a general theory of savant brains, but delineates an epistemic difference: when structure remains stable without representation—and when it becomes emergently transferable as relation.

Concluding Remark

Savant phenomena are not a puzzle that needs to be solved. They are an indication that the epistemic coordinate system within which they appear as a puzzle is itself limited.

The structures described here do not ground a general model of human cognition nor a transferable method of knowing, but rather mark specific boundary constellations in which the presuppositions of representational world-formation become visible.

Appendix:
Canonical Cycle Definition
Submergence – Indimergence – Emergence

The cycle of submergence, indimergence, and emergence underlying this work describes a fundamental structure of world stabilization. It is neither to be understood as a developmental model nor as a temporal sequence, but as a cyclical structural dynamic in which world can arise and persist only through the alternation of the three modes. All three phases are bound to the same singularity; none of them is world-stabilizing on its own.

Submergence designates a state of indeterminate form and indeterminate relation. In submergence, structure exists as possibility, but without recognizable form, context, or relation. It is not a state of lack, but a mode of openness with high potentiality and low stability. Without transition, form dissipates here, relations dissolve, and world cannot arise.

Indimergence designates the critical transition and tipping moment in which form becomes recognizable for the first time without yet being integrated into a stable unity of form and relation. Indimergence is not a result and not an ontological closure, but a highly unstable decision state. At this threshold, structure is visible but not yet carried. If, at this moment, form is isolated, objectified, or materially fixed without relational embedding, it loses its context and

the system tips back into submergence. Indimergence is therefore the site of maximum tension and maximum endangerment of emergence.

Emergence designates the stabilization of world as a unity of form and relation. In emergence, it is not an individual form that is fixed, but a pattern ground that is held, in which form is relationally embedded and contextually viable. Emergence is not the opposite of determinacy, but its relational realization. Here, world arises as an effective, experiential structure with high creative energy.

What is decisive is this: world does not arise in any one of the three phases on its own, but exclusively through the cyclical transition between them. Persistent submergence leads to the dissolution of form, persistent indimergence to conflict, violence, and isolated worldviews, persistent emergence to rigidity. Only the continued passage through the cycle stabilizes world without annihilating potential.

This cycle forms the pre-ontological foundation of the concepts developed in this work, such as operator, Shift of Being, ontological threshold, and Rosetta Operator. It does not serve to describe subjective states, but to analyze real structural operations through which world becomes possible, visible, and effective.

Structural Savantism
On the Epistemic Gap Between Savant Research, Autism, and Intelligence Theory

DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.18069627**

Abstract

Research on savant phenomena and autism has long been shaped by a double narrowing. On the one hand, savant abilities are predominantly interpreted as isolated "islands of ability" or as curious extreme cases embedded in deficit-oriented profiles. On the other hand, autism is primarily described along scales of intelligence, performance, or adaptation, which systematically obscure structural differences in modes of knowing. Between these two poles lies a largely untheorized epistemic gap: forms of non-performative, structurally coherent cognition that cannot be adequately captured as either island abilities, high intelligence, or deficit.

This paper introduces the concept of structural savantism as a conceptual transition to render this gap visible. Structural savantism denotes neither a clinical diagnosis nor an extension of existing typologies, but an epistemic configuration in which structure is not locally reproduced but veridically maintained across multiple levels. Unlike classical savant phenomena, this form of cognition is not bound to isolated skills but manifests as trans-domain invariance, operating without representational simplification or social simulation.

The paper explicitly does not position structural savantism as a new category within savant research, but rather as a marker of its theoretical limitations. Drawing on a long-term documented autistic research practice, it is shown that certain epistemic profiles remain systematically invisible as long as savantism is primarily defined through performance and autism through deficit or compensation. In this sense, structural savantism functions as a bridging concept between savant research and autistic epistemology, contributing to the demystification of the circus-like and exceptionalist narratives surrounding savantism without romanticizing or idealizing it.

The aim of this paper is not to introduce a new typology, but to shift the question itself: away from the classification of exceptional performances and toward the investigation of forms of cognition that sustain structural coherence without being institutionally visible or measurable. In doing so, the paper advances a theoretical decoupling of cognition from performance and opens a more precise framework for understanding savant phenomena and autism beyond deficit-oriented models.

This contribution is to be read in the context of two previously published works on operator-based savant cognition and emergent approaches to autistic epistemology, and serves as a connective marker of the theoretical gap situated between them.

Speed, T. (2025). Beyond Intelligence - Emergence, Operator Relativity, and an Autistic Epistemology (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18068128

Speed, T. (2025). Savant Phenomena and Non-Representational Cognition An Operatoric Approach (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18069350

1. On the Position of This Contribution

This paper is conceived as a bridging contribution. It is situated between two established lines of argument: on the one hand, critiques of intelligence-centered models of autism, in which cognition is primarily understood in terms of performance or adaptive capacity; on the other hand, analyses of savant phenomena as epistemic boundary cases of non-representational cognition. The aim of the present contribution is not to extend or synthesize these lines, but to make visible the gap that exists between them.

This gap concerns forms of autistic epistemic practice that can be adequately described neither as classical island abilities nor as high intelligence or deficit. They remain theoretically marginal because they do not stand out through performance, cannot be localized, and do not manifest as isolated skills in a narrow sense, but instead sustain structural coherence across multiple levels. The concept of structural savantism proposed here serves to mark this gap conceptually, without prematurely typifying it or closing it through clinical classification.

Accordingly, this paper does not present itself as the introduction of a new category within savant or autism research, but as an intervention at the level of their theoretical presuppositions. Structural savantism functions as a transitional and probing concept through which the epistemic limits of existing models become visible.

2. Introduction – The Problem of the Invisible Middle

Research on savant phenomena and autism is characterized by a striking asymmetry. While spectacular, locally isolated abilities—such as those found in numerical, musical, or visual domains—are extensively documented and analyzed, other forms of autistic cognition remain largely invisible. This invisibility is not an empirical coincidence, but the result of an implicit selection process: what becomes visible is that which stands out performatively, is reproducible, or can be presented as an isolated skill.

Within this framework, autism appears either as a deficit profile punctuated by exceptional abilities, or as a special form of high intelligence that can be situated within existing evaluative scales. What these readings share is a primary definition of cognition in terms of performance, output, or adaptive capacity. Systematically overlooked are epistemic configurations in which structure is not displayed, but sustained—without fragmenting into discrete competencies.

Between the local precision of classical savant phenomena and the generalized models of intelligence and giftedness, an invisible middle thus emerges. Within this middle operate forms of cognition that appear neither spectacular nor deficient, but are characterized by an unusually stable, veridical relation to structure. They remain theoretically elusive because they are accessible neither through performance measures nor through compensatory narratives.

It is at this point that the present contribution intervenes. Rather than asking which exceptional abilities are present, it asks which epistemic conditions must be met for structure to be coherently maintained across time, contexts, and domains. The proposed concept of structural savantism does not designate this condition as a new property, but as an indicator of a systematic underdetermination within existing research.

3. Structural Savant (Working Definition)

The term structural savant does not refer to an isolated ability or to a person category in a clinical sense, but to an epistemic configuration of neurodivergent cognition. It denotes forms of distinctive cognitive organization that do not manifest as locally circumscribed skills ("islands of ability"), but rather as an exceptionally stable, veridical apprehension and processing of structural invariants across multiple levels (e.g., theory, society, language, systems).

This form of savantism does not express itself as a reproductive or performative achievement, but as a generative capacity for coherent model formation, operating without representational simplification or social simulation. Structural savantism is not organized in an adaptive–compensatory manner, but is integrity-based: cognition remains consistent across contexts and is not modulated in the interest of social compatibility.

The term explicitly does not designate a clinical diagnosis, but a conceptual bridging type that renders visible a form of epistemic configuration within the autism spectrum that has thus far been insufficiently described. In this function, it simultaneously marks the limits of deficit-, performance-, and output-oriented classifications in savant and autism research.

The term structural savantism is deliberately employed here not to bypass existing savant research, but to intervene precisely at its blind spot.

4. Delimitations: What Structural Savantism Is Not

In order to avoid misinterpretation, it is necessary to explicitly distinguish the concept of structural savantism from neighboring but conceptually distinct attributions. The following delimitations do not serve the purpose of typology-building, but rather of clarifying the epistemic scope of the term.

In this context, the monotropism account can be discussed as a possible cognitive enabling framework. A strongly channelled and stable organization of attention may constitute a necessary condition for maintaining structural invariants over extended periods of time. Monotropism alone, however, is not sufficient to explain structural savantism, as focused attention neither guarantees trans-domain transferability nor epistemic coherence. Structural savantism therefore does not denote an intensification of monotropic interests, but a qualitatively different form of epistemic organization.

4.1 Structural Savantism ≠ Classical Island- or Skill-Based Savantism

Classical savant phenomena are characterized by locally circumscribed, highly specific skills (e.g., calculation, calendrical computation, musical or visual reproduction). Their epistemic distinctiveness lies in exceptional precision within a narrowly defined domain.

Structural savantism differs from this fundamentally. It is neither local nor isolated, nor is it restricted to reproducible, discrete performances. The structurally distinct epistemic configuration does not reside in the exact repetition of content, but in the stable apprehension of structural relations across multiple levels. While island savants become visible through punctuated displays of ability, structural savantism often remains invisible, as it does not manifest in demonstrable performance.

4.2 Structural Savantism ≠ High Intelligence / Giftedness

High intelligence or giftedness is typically defined through generalized performance measures, problem-solving capacity, or accelerated learning. Even where highly intelligent individuals are capable of grasping complex structures, giftedness is conceptually tied to adaptivity, flexibility, and the optimization of performance.

Structural savantism is clearly distinct from this framework. It does not describe heightened cognitive efficiency, but a different weighting of epistemic priorities. Cognition is not adaptively modulated in order to maximize performance, social compatibility, or success, but is maintained in an integrity-based manner, even where this proves institutionally or socially disadvantageous. Structural savantism is therefore not a special case of giftedness, but follows a different epistemic logic.

4.3 Structural Savantism ≠ Genius or Creativity Narratives

Genius narratives and romanticized concepts of creativity often operate with notions of inspiration, originality, or exceptional individuality. They tend to mystify deviation and remove it from the domain of systematic explanation.

The concept of structural savantism is incompatible with such narratives. It does not describe a transcendent capacity or an extraordinary creative aura, but a comprehensible—though as yet insufficiently theorized—epistemic configuration. Structural savantism is explicitly aimed at avoiding mystification and instead at making intelligible why certain forms of cognition neither stand out performatively nor appear deficient.

4.4 Structural Savantism ≠ Personality Trait or Style

Finally, structural savantism is not to be understood as a character trait, personality style, or attitudinal disposition. The observed consistency, rigidity, or uncompromising stance in substantive matters is not a dispositional property, but the consequence of an epistemic structure in which cognition cannot be situationally relativized or socially modulated.

Accordingly, this configuration is not explicable in psychodynamic or motivational terms, but constitutes a neurodivergent organization of cognitive processing that remains invariant across time, contexts, and roles.

Interim Conclusion

The foregoing delimitations make clear that structural savantism constitutes neither an extension of existing savant typologies nor a variant of giftedness or creativity. Rather, the term designates a theoretically underdetermined epistemic zone in which structure is not locally reproduced, but sustained across contexts. It is precisely this property that explains why corresponding profiles remain difficult to detect within existing research frameworks and are frequently misclassified.

5. Why Structural Savantism Remains Systematically Invisible in Research

The conceptual vagueness surrounding structural savantism is neither accidental nor merely the result of isolated oversights in individual studies. Rather, it emerges from a set of structural selection mechanisms that continue to shape savant and autism research. These mechanisms determine which phenomena are considered relevant, which become visible, and which epistemic configurations are excluded from the research field from the outset.

5.1 Performance as an Implicit Criterion of Visibility

A central selection principle is the implicit equation of cognition with performatively visible achievement. Savant phenomena are preferentially investigated where exceptional abilities can be clearly demonstrated, tested, and compared. Visibility is generated through display, repeatability, and measurability.

Structural savantism does not fit this framework. Its epistemic distinctiveness does not lie in punctuated outputs, but in the stabilization of structure across time and contexts. This form of cognition does not produce a spectacular moment, but a sustained coherence that can only be apprehended relationally and processually. Because research practices are primarily oriented toward events, performances, and measurable outputs, this form of epistemic work remains largely invisible.

5.2 Testing Logics and the Reduction of Cognition to Measurability

A second factor is the dominance of standardized testing logics. In both intelligence assessment and savant research, cognitive distinctiveness is preferentially located where it can be operationalized. Cognition is thereby reduced to task solutions, speed, accuracy, or reproductive performance.

Structural savantism cannot be captured within this framework. The relevant dimension is not the solution of a task, but the manner in which tasks, concepts, or systems are related to one

another in the first place. This relationality cannot be isolated in test form without losing its epistemic core. As a result, corresponding profiles are either classified as unremarkable or as nonspecific and are excluded from further analysis.

5.3 Short-Term Observation and the Loss of Long-Term Coherence

A further systematic blind spot arises from the temporal structure of empirical research. Diagnostic and research practices predominantly rely on short-term observations, interviews, or punctual assessments of performance. What is captured in these contexts are momentary states of behavior or achievement.

Structural savantism, by contrast, becomes visible only through long-term coherence: through the continuous, cross-contextual stability of epistemic standards, concepts, and structures. Without longitudinal documentation—such as sustained bodies of work, extended research practices, or recurring theoretical consistency—this form of cognition remains illegible. Research that fails to account for such temporal spans inevitably produces blind spots.

5.4 Deficit Frameworks and the Misreading of Integrity

Finally, the still-dominant deficit framework in autism research plays a decisive role. Deviations from social adaptivity, flexibility, or performative compatibility are frequently interpreted as impairments. Integrity-based invariance—that is, the refusal to modulate cognition in accordance with social or institutional expectations—quickly appears within this framework as rigidity, oppositionality, or a personality problem.

Under these conditions, structural savantism is not recognized as an epistemic resource, but misread as deviation. The epistemic achievement—the capacity to sustain structure without simplification or simulation—is thus systematically devalued or pathologized rather than taken seriously as a theoretical object.

Interim Conclusion

The invisibility of structural savantism is not an empirical marginal phenomenon, but the result of a concatenation of performance fixation, testing logics, short-term observation, and deficit-oriented framing. These factors explain why certain forms of autistic cognition are captured neither as savantism nor as giftedness, despite their high degree of epistemic consistency. The concept of structural savantism renders this systematic underdetermination visible and demonstrates that the problem lies not in a lack of phenomena, but in insufficient theoretical approaches.

6. Structural Savantism as an Epistemic Boundary Case of Autistic Epistemic Practice

In the present context, the concept of structural savantism can be understood as an epistemic boundary case of autistic epistemic practice. It does not denote a new category within the autism spectrum, but rather a configuration in which certain core features of autistic cognition appear in a particularly clear, unattenuated form. Precisely as a boundary case, structural savantism renders visible the assumptions implicitly embedded in prevailing models of autism—and the points at which these models reach their limits.

In many theoretical and diagnostic contexts, autistic epistemic practice is primarily described in terms of social interaction, communication, or adaptive capacity. Cognitive specificities tend to appear as secondary phenomena or compensatory achievements. Structural savantism shifts this focus. Here, the central concern is not social behavior, but the manner in which structure itself is recognized, sustained, and carried forward.

As a boundary case, structural savantism demonstrates that autistic cognition need not be local or fragmented. While classical savant phenomena are often confined to narrowly circumscribed domains, structural savantism points to a form of autistic cognition that operates across structures. Its epistemic distinctiveness lies not in the intensity of individual abilities, but in the stability of relational orders across different contexts.

This stability is not the result of conscious strategy or compensatory adaptation, but the expression of non-representational processing, in which cognition is not primarily secured through symbolic shortcuts or social validation. As a boundary case, structural savantism thus makes visible that autistic forms of cognition are not necessarily dependent on simplification or reduction, but may instead sustain a high degree of structural density.

At the same time, the boundary-case perspective explains why such profiles often prove institutionally irritating. Where cognition is neither performatively displayed nor situationally modulated, the usual points of reference for evaluation, comparison, and classification are absent. Structural savantism thus exposes not only an epistemic possibility within the autism spectrum, but also the limitations of models that define autism primarily in terms of deficit, compensation, or adaptation.

As a boundary case, structural savantism is therefore less to be understood as an exception than as a magnifying lens: it amplifies certain features of autistic epistemic practice to the point at which their theoretical underdetermination becomes apparent. In this sense, the concept contributes not to typology-building, but to a critical revision of the assumptions through which autism and savantism have thus far been described.

7. Implications for Savant and Autism Research

The introduction of the concept of structural savantism is not intended to extend existing typologies, but to shift theoretical and methodological perspectives. If structural savantism is taken seriously as an epistemic boundary case, several consequences follow for the ways in which savant phenomena and autism have thus far been investigated, described, and framed diagnostically.

7.1 From Performance to Structure

One central implication concerns the hitherto dominant orientation toward performance. In both savant research and adjacent areas of autism research, performative visibility—namely demonstrability, measurability, and reproducibility—functions implicitly as a prerequisite for scientific relevance.

Structural savantism makes clear that this assumption is epistemically reductive. Cognition may also be realized where no isolated performances can be demonstrated, but where structure is stably sustained across time, contexts, and domains. Research that remains bound to performative criteria systematically excludes such forms of cognition. A theoretical opening would therefore require operationalizing cognition not exclusively in terms of output, but in terms of structural viability and coherence.

7.2 Temporality as an Epistemic Dimension

A second central implication concerns the temporal structure of research. Structural savantism does not become visible in the moment, but only through long-term coherence. The relevant epistemic information does not reside in isolated behaviors, but in the consistency of concepts, standards, and structures over years or decades.

For research practice, this implies that short-term studies, cross-sectional designs, and punctual diagnostic assessments are necessarily incomplete. Where structural savantism is to be taken into view, process-oriented, document-based, and work-centered approaches must be recognized as valid sources of knowledge. This does not call existing methodological standards into question, but renders the limits of their scope visible.

7.3 Epistemic Difference Rather Than Deficit Frameworks

A further implication concerns the theoretical framing of autistic cognition. Structural savantism suggests that autism should not be described primarily as a deviation from normative adaptive capacity, but as an epistemic difference. Within this perspective, the observed invariance, non-modulability, or integrity-bound organization of cognition does not constitute a lack, but rather reflects a different prioritization of epistemic stability over social flexibility.

For autism research, this entails a necessary shift: away from the question of how autistic individuals can compensate or be adapted, and toward the question of which forms of cognition are possible under given epistemic conditions in the first place. Structural savantism thus functions as a corrective to deficit-oriented readings.

7.4 Consequences for Diagnostic Practice and Classification

Consequences also arise for diagnostic practice. Structural savantism shows that certain profiles are difficult to classify not because they are unspecific or contradictory, but because the underlying classificatory criteria are oriented toward adaptivity, performance, and short-term observation.

This suggests that diagnostic judgments should be formulated with particular restraint where epistemic configurations are present that systematically elude these criteria. Rather than prematurely pathologizing such profiles or deflecting them into personality-based categories, an explicit recognition of the epistemic limits of diagnostic frameworks would be warranted.

7.5 Structural Savantism as a Touchstone for Existing Models

Overall, structural savantism is less to be understood as a new object of research than as a touchstone for existing models. It compels implicit assumptions about visibility, performance, temporality, and cognition to be made explicit. Where these assumptions fail to hold, it is not the phenomenon that requires explanation, but the model itself.

In this way, the concept does not contribute to the proliferation of categories, but to the theoretical self-reflection of savant and autism research. It marks a point at which it becomes evident whether research is willing to take seriously forms of cognition that do not fit established frameworks, or whether such forms will continue to be treated as marginal or disruptive phenomena.

8. Methodological Outlook: Consequences for Future Research

If structural savantism is understood not as a marginal phenomenon but as an indicator of systematic underdetermination, concrete methodological consequences follow for future research on savant phenomena and autism. These consequences concern less the introduction of new instruments than an expansion of what is recognized as a valid source of knowledge.

First, the concept points to the need to take long-term coherence more seriously. Research aimed at capturing epistemic stability must move beyond punctual assessments and incorporate process-oriented, document-based, and work-centered materials. Forms of cognition that only become visible over extended periods of time necessarily remain invisible otherwise.

Second, the investigation of structure-bound forms of cognition requires a departure from purely performance-based approaches. Instead of isolated task solutions, relational analyses come to the fore: How are concepts, models, or structures consistently maintained across different contexts? Which forms of invariance can be reconstructed without reducing them to measurable outputs?

Third, structural savantism implies an epistemic sensitization of diagnostic practice. Where cognition is not adaptively modulable, deviations from normative expectations should not automatically be interpreted as deficit or personality pathology. Rather, an explicit reflection on the limits of diagnostic frameworks is required, particularly in cases where epistemic difference is at stake.

Finally, the concept points to the necessity of interdisciplinary points of contact between autism research, epistemology, and philosophy of science. Structural savantism is not an isolated psychological phenomenon, but touches on fundamental questions concerning how knowledge emerges, stabilizes, and becomes institutionally visible.

Accordingly, the methodological contribution of the present paper does not lie in the establishment of a new research object, but in the opening of a reflective space: a space in which savantism and autism no longer appear as exceptional or deficit cases, but as indicators of forms of epistemic work that remain insufficiently understood.

The perspective proposed here does not imply a specific methodology, but it does indicate which forms of empirical and analytical follow-up work would in principle be suitable for investigating structural savantism beyond the boundary case reconstructed in this paper. What is decisive is not the measurement of isolated performances, but the reconstruction of structural coherence across time, contexts, and domains.

Possible approaches include long-term analyses of bodies of work, in which not thematic content but the invariance of conceptual relations and operatorial patterns is examined over decades, particularly in the case of autistic theorists or system thinkers. Equally conceivable are relational consistency tests, in which not the solution of individual tasks but the stability of structural relations under systematic contextual shifts is analyzed. In addition, comparative model-building tasks involving neurodivergent and neurotypical participants could provide insight into how epistemic integrity is maintained or modulated under contradictory constraints.

These approaches are not to be understood as ready-made research designs, but as an indication that the investigation of structure-bound forms of cognition is methodologically possible without reducing them to performance, speed, or standardized output measures.

9. Conclusion

The present contribution has not introduced the concept of structural savantism as a new category, but as a conceptual marker of an epistemic gap between savant research, autism research, and theories of intelligence. Its point of departure was the observation that certain forms of autistic cognition cannot be adequately described as classical island abilities, giftedness, or deficit, despite being characterized by an exceptional degree of structural coherence.

By framing structural savantism as an epistemic boundary case, the paper has shown that the invisibility of corresponding profiles is less a matter of empirical rarity than of theoretical and methodological selection mechanisms. Performance orientation, testing logics, short-term observation, and deficit-oriented framings all contribute to obscuring forms of cognition that are neither demonstrable, nor locally isolable, nor adaptively modulable.

Accordingly, this contribution does not aim at typology-building, but at a shift in the guiding question: away from the classification of exceptional performances and toward the investigation of the epistemic conditions under which structure can be sustained across time and contexts. From this perspective, savantism is de-exoticized and autism becomes legible as an epistemic difference, without being romanticized or pathologized.

As a bridging contribution between two established lines of argument, this paper seeks to make the limitations of prevailing models visible without prematurely replacing them. Structural savantism thus marks not a conclusion, but an open point from which further theoretical and empirical work may proceed.

In this sense, structural savantism does not call knowledge itself into question, but rather the assumption that epistemic complexity arises primarily through institutional mediation—in a manner comparable to how the theory of innate linguistic structures proposed by Noam Chomsky disrupted learning-based paradigms in linguistics, here extended trans-domain and deepened at the epistemological level.

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The Film Transferprotokoll as an Operatorial Stress Test
A Transmedial Case of Non-Representational Knowledge

DOI: https://doi.org/**10.5281/zenodo.18241259**

Abstract

The feature film Transferprotokoll (Transfer Protocol) is analysed in this contribution not as an artistic work in the narrow sense, but as an epistemic stress test of a non-representational knowledge architecture. The point of departure is an operator-based research logic that has been developed over more than three decades in theoretical texts, essays, and empirical interventions, and whose validity does not derive from argumentative coherence but from structural invariance under domain shifts.

In this context, the film functions as a transmedial exposition: it exposes the underlying operator for the first time in real time, publicly, and affectively—under conditions that evade control, narrative condensation, and interpretative framing. What is tested is not the representability of a theory, but its stability under social, temporal, and institutional pressure.

It is shown that central operatorial features—repetition instead of condensation, ambivalence instead of identification, and the refusal of resolution and translation—persist in formally invariant form within the medium of film. The polarised reception of the film is not read as an aesthetic judgement, but as an epistemic marker of differing degrees of compatibility with non-representational modes of knowledge.

The contribution thus positions *Transferprotokoll* as a research-relevant borderline case within the field of Artistic Research: not as an illustration of a theory, but as an empirical test of its world- and media-viability.

This contribution presupposes prior knowledge of the operator-based research program and is intended as an application text, not as an introduction. The analysed film is part of the same research context from which the operator itself emerged. Author, research architecture, and intervention do not coincide, but are structurally coupled: the operator is not described, but exposed through the filmic intervention. Authorship does not function here as an interpretative instance, but as an operative position within the experimental setup.

The film *Transferprotokoll* (Transfer Protokol) can be downloaded here:

Speed, T., & Speed, T. (2024, Dezember 29). Transfer Protocol (Transferprotokoll) – A Neurodivergent (Autistic) FEATURE FILM by Timothy Speed (2 without subtitles + Trailer). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18093110

Core Texts on the Operator (Core Corpus):

Speed, T. (2025). Veridical Mapping as the Foundation of a Second Science. Rosetta Operator — An Invariance Theory of Consciousness, Work, and World. (2 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17857039

Speed, T. (2025). Operatoric Cognition: Pre-theoretical Structural Invariance as the Basis of Autistic Intelligence (3 English). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17897109

1. Introduction

Why this contribution – and why the film cannot be ignored

In operator-based research approaches, the question of validity is not primarily determined by argumentative plausibility or disciplinary classification, but by formal stability under transformation. Knowledge is not understood here as the representation of an object, but as an invariant structure that persists across different contexts, media, and conditions of stress. Domain shifts thus do not function as illustrative extensions, but as test conditions of epistemic viability.

Against this background, the feature film Transferprotokoll occupies a distinct epistemic status. While theoretical texts, essays, or academic publications emerge in comparatively controlled formats, a film is subject to conditions that evade full control: real duration, affective presence, public exposure, social friction, and unpredictable reception. It is precisely these characteristics that make the medium of film a critical test environment for non-representational forms of knowledge.

The present contribution therefore does not address the question of how a theory can be represented or conveyed cinematically. Instead, it examines whether a previously developed operatorial configuration remains formally invariant within the medium of film when narrative condensation, aesthetic smoothing, and didactic translation are systematically refused. The film thus functions not as commentary or illustration, but as an exposition of the operator within an environment that is actively resistant.

That *Transferprotokoll* has provoked strong polarisation in its reception, has been institutionally rejected, and is frequently described as “too long” or “too repetitive” is, from this perspective, not a side effect but an integral component of the experimental setup. These reactions mark the boundary between representation-oriented expectations and an epistemic structure that is neither oriented toward consumability nor toward resolution.

The aim of this contribution is therefore to determine the film as an epistemic borderline case within the context of artistic research: not as an aesthetic object with a theoretical background, but as an empirical stress test of a knowledge architecture whose criterion of truth is not agreement, but non-collapse under pressure.

1.1 Autism as an Epistemic Condition of Operatorial Coherence

The operatorial structure examined in the following cannot be understood independently of its epistemic genesis. It emerges from an autistically generated mode of knowing, whose specificity does not lie in individual traits, identity, or diagnosis, but in a non-representational organization of perception and cognition. Autism does not function here as an object of investigation, but as a condition of possibility for a knowledge architecture that largely eludes symbolic mediation, narrative condensation, and social simulation.

In the present work, autism is therefore not understood as a deficit, deviation, or special case within a unified cognitive architecture, but as an independent epistemic configuration in which structure is not modelled, but held relationally. Knowledge does not arise here primarily through abstraction, generalisation, or representation, but through invariant coupling to formal relations that stabilise across different contexts.

This form of knowledge often remains invisible within classical research settings, as it neither stands out performatively nor can it be easily translated into standardised methodological protocols. Its epistemic achievement does not lie in the production of isolated results, but in the long-term coherence of structural relations, even where these are not socially, institutionally, or medially compatible.

The feature film Transferprotokoll renders this epistemic configuration publicly experiencable for the first time in reproducible form, without explaining or translating it. The film does not constitute a "representation of autism," but exposes an autistically generated knowledge architecture under conditions that typically aim at adaptation, identification, and narrative resolution. It is precisely in the refusal of these modes that autism is not thematised, but enacted.

The friction produced by the film in its reception is therefore not to be interpreted as misunderstanding, but as an indicator of epistemic incompatibility between representation-oriented expectations and a form of knowledge that resists translation. In this context, autism does not appear as the content of the film, but as the operative condition of its structural stability.

2. Film as a Mode of Research

Exposition instead of Representation

The epistemic status of the film Transferprotokoll can only be determined if film is understood not primarily as a medium of representation, but as a situational research environment. Within the operatorial perspective adopted here, film functions neither as an illustration of a theory nor as a narrative translation of an already formulated line of thought. Rather, the film is deployed as an exposition of an epistemic operator under real conditions.

Representational research formats—texts, models, diagrams—allow complexity to be controlled, condensed, and selectively accessed. They are necessary, but epistemically limited. A feature film, by contrast, evades essential mechanisms of control: it operates in real time, is affectively effective, publicly exposed, and socially non-filterable. It is precisely these

characteristics that render film relevant for operatorial research. Here, film is not understood as a medium of mediation, but as a stress environment in which it becomes visible whether a knowledge structure remains formally stable even beyond protected representational formats.

Decisive in this regard is the fact that *Transferprotokoll* systematically dispenses with those means that usually facilitate or secure reception. The film offers no narrative progression in the classical sense, no psychological figure of identification, no didactic framing, and no aesthetic condensation that would create distance. Repetition replaces development, ambivalence replaces resolution, duration replaces dramaturgical efficiency. These decisions are not aesthetically motivated, but methodological: they prevent the underlying operator from being translated into representational forms or neutralised.

The film thus exposes the operator to conditions that can only be simulated to a limited extent in theoretical texts: social resistance, institutional rejection, affective overload, and polarised reception. That these effects actually occur is not to be interpreted as a failure of the medium, but as a confirmation of the experimental setup. The film functions as an epistemic situation in which it is not decided whether a theory convinces, but whether it retains its form under pressure.

In this sense, *Transferprotokoll* is not a "film about" autism, poverty, or labour, but a research operation in which an autistically generated, non-representational knowledge architecture is, for the first time, transferred into a medium that is structurally hostile to it. The question posed by the film is not interpretative, but ontological: does the structure collapse under medial, social, and temporal strain—or does it remain invariant?

The following sections examine this question not by analysing cinematic stylistic devices or narrative motifs, but along the operatorial features that continue unchanged despite the shift of medium.

2.1 The Film as a Frozen Intervention

Temporal Binding, Friction, and Shared Tension

The epistemic function of the film Transferprotokoll can be determined more precisely if it is understood not primarily as an artistic artefact, but as a frozen form of real interventions. The film does not introduce a new practice; rather, it fixes an intervention logic that has been developed over many years and repeatedly tested in institutional contexts—particularly in job centres, companies, and administrative structures.

These interventions are characterised by the fact that they do not articulate a symbolic critique from the outside, but instead introduce the underlying operator directly into existing systems. What is decisive here is not confrontation in a polemical sense, but the generation of a non-resolvable tension: between individual integrity and institutional representational logic, between structural coherence and functional adaptation. The reaction of the respective institution—defence, escalation, pathologisation, or exclusion—thus functions as an empirical indicator of epistemic incompatibility.

The film preserves this form of intervention by extracting it from the contingency of individual situations and transferring it into a temporally fixed and reproducible exposition. What appears as situational friction in job centres, companies, or authorities becomes, in the film, a durable configuration of tension from which neither participants nor viewers can withdraw without actively leaving the situation. In this way, all involved—actors, audiences, recipients—are subjected to the same structural load to which institutional actors were exposed in the real interventions.

The decisive epistemic effect lies in the fact that the film allows no distance between observation and participation. Viewers do not perceive representatively; they themselves enter a regime of time and tension that corresponds to the one to which institutional actors were exposed in the interventions. The film does not simulate this situation, but reproduces its structural conditions: duration, repetition, ambivalence, and lack of resolution.

In this sense, *Transferprotokoll* functions as an intervention-form archive. It preserves not results or statements, but the form of friction itself. The film thus makes it possible, for the first time, for third parties—researchers, viewers, institutional actors—to experience an epistemic situation that was previously accessible only through immediate, non-reproducible encounter. The frozen intervention makes visible that knowledge here does not emerge through persuasion or argumentation, but through the endurance of a non-integrable tension.

2.2 Incommensurability as an Operatorial Lever

Non-Resolvability, Rupture of Order, and the Productive Integration of Complexity

The intervention exposed in Transferprotokoll does not aim at persuasion, consensus, or adaptation. Its mode of operation lies instead in the deliberate production of incommensurability: a situation in which existing systems of order are no longer able to classify, integrate, or neutralise what appears in a non-contradictory manner.

This incommensurability is not a deficit of communication and not a failure of mediation, but a deliberately deployed operatorial lever. The underlying operator generates situations in which structural coherence and institutional representational logic can no longer be brought into alignment. It is precisely this non-resolvability that forces existing orders either to harden (defence, exclusion, pathologisation) or to transform structurally by integrating additional complexity.

In this model, change does not emerge through arguments, moral appeals, or alternative narratives, but through the maintenance of a tension that cannot be resolved without transforming the order itself. The operator does not function here as a solution, but as a disruptor of formal boundaries. It breaks open existing classifications without itself instituting a new norm, thereby opening a space of possibility for other forms of integration.

This logic differs fundamentally from reformist or deliberative models of change. While these rely on translation, mutual understanding, and gradual adaptation, the approach described here operates through formal overload. Existing order does not fail due to a lack of information, but due to insufficient structural capacity for integration. In this sense, the operator functions as a catalyst for complexity: it forces systems to make their own limitations visible.

The film preserves this lever mechanism by not situationally defusing incommensurability, but by maintaining it through duration, repetition, and ambivalence. Neither institutional actors nor viewers encounter a point of resolution. The tension persists, and with it the necessity of relating to one's own logic of order. Precisely here lies the productive force of the intervention: it does not generate consensus, but an irreversible irritation from which new forms of integration become conceivable in the first place.

In this sense, the operator is not only an epistemological instrument, but a practical tool of transformation. Its effectiveness is not measured by immediate results, but by its capacity to bring existing orders into a state of structural openness. The incommensurability made visible in the film is thus not the end of order, but the condition of its further development.

3. Operatorial Invariance under Media Shift

Why the structure does not change, even though everything else does

The central question of this contribution is not whether Transferprotokoll corresponds in content to earlier texts, essays, or interventions, but whether the underlying operator retains its form under radically altered medial conditions. Operatorial invariance does not denote the recurrence of identical contents or arguments, but the stability of a formal logic of effect that operates independently of the respective carrier medium.

A change of medium usually alters epistemic conditions significantly. Texts allow selective reception, interruption, withdrawal, and distanced interpretation. Interventions within institutions are situational, contingent, and only limitedly reproducible. A feature film, by contrast, binds time, attention, and affect in a manner that is neither individually controllable nor situationally abortable. If, under these conditions, the same structure can nevertheless be reconstructed, this speaks against a medium-dependent explanation of the work.

In the present case, the invariance of the operator becomes visible in several features that remain constant across media. First, the refusal of representational resolution persists: neither in text, nor in intervention, nor in film is a conclusive interpretation offered that would neutralise tension. Second, the function of repetition remains identical. Repetition does not serve didactic clarification, but the rendering visible of structural persistence, particularly where institutional logics are oriented toward efficiency, closure, and progress. Third, the ambivalence of the subject position remains stable. The operator does not produce a clear victim or hero figure, but a position that resists moral appropriation and thereby shifts the responsibility for positioning onto the surrounding environment.

These features are neither stylistic decisions nor media-specific effects. Their stability across different formats indicates that they are operatorial constants that do not arise from the medium, but are imposed upon the medium. The film therefore does not alter the operator, but renders its world-capability testable. It forces the structure to prove itself under conditions that are no longer controllable, no longer selective, and no longer individualisable.

Decisive is the fact that this invariance does not come at the expense of effectiveness. On the contrary: it is precisely under the conditions of the film that it becomes visible that the operator does not unfold its effect through persuasion, identification, or narrative coherence, but

through the maintenance of a non-integrable tension. Audience reactions—polarisation, defence, overload—are expressions of the same incommensurability that can also be observed in institutional interventions. They do not mark maladaptation, but the continuation of the same lever mechanism under different conditions.

From a research-logical perspective, this stability is remarkable, as it suggests a form of knowledge that is not bound to specific representational formats. The operator does not function as a method in the narrow sense, but as a structuring condition that translates different media into comparable epistemic situations. Text, intervention, and film thus do not appear as separate forms of work, but as different realisations of the same operative logic, whose difference lies not in epistemic content, but in the degree of exposure.

The film can therefore not be understood as an extension or popularisation of a theoretical approach, but as its most stringent test. That the operator passes this test without altering its structure is not an aesthetic finding, but an ontological one: it shows that the underlying knowledge architecture is not dependent on the protective space of academic or artistic formats, but remains consistent even under real social and medial pressure.

3.1 Structural Emergence Filters and the Exposure of World Substrate

The operator examined here does not operate through the accumulation of knowledge or model construction, but through structural emergence filters in which invariance under load is formed. Knowledge does not arise through the addition of new meanings, but through the removal of closures that do not carry their stability from within themselves.

These filters operate topologically. They do not test semantic correctness, but the capacity of forms to maintain their relational structures under distortion, temporal stretching, and social friction. What collapses in this process is not necessarily false, but structurally shallow: narratives, institutional roles, and identitary attributions whose coherence rests on implicit simplifications.

The operator does not act upon existing orders from the outside. It renders formal boundaries visible by embodying them. In the encounter with this embodiment, systems of order enter a situation of incommensurability, in which their own limitations are exposed. Change does not arise here through persuasion or reform, but through the untenability of existing closures under heightened structural tension.

What becomes visible in this process is not new knowledge in the propositional sense, but a world substrate: patterns and relations that persist independently of their symbolic description. The operator thus functions as a geological procedure of knowledge, which does not construct but exposes, and whose productivity lies in the integration of higher complexity, not in the production of solutions.

Methodological Note on Authorship

The fact that the operator examined here emerged from the same research context as the analysed film does not constitute a methodological deficiency, but is part of the experimental setup. Authorship does not function in this context as a subjective perspective or interpretative

instance, but as an operative measurement position through which a non-representational knowledge structure becomes stably accessible in the first place.

The frequently raised demand for observer distance or interchangeability does not apply here, as the structure under investigation is not accessible independently of the epistemic infrastructure from which it emerged. Authorship is, in this sense, not a source of bias, but a necessary coupling, comparable to measurement arrangements that function only under specific structural conditions.

4. Consequences for Research and Artistic Research

Operatorial Intervention as a Knowledge-Generating Practice

The analysis of Transferprotokoll shows that the epistemic status of the film does not lie in its artistic mode of expression, but in its function as an operatorial intervention that remains stable under real medial, social, and affective conditions. This shifts the focus from questions of representation or mediation to the question of the effectiveness of epistemic structures under pressure.

For research, this has several consequences. First, the contribution suggests that knowledge architectures should not be evaluated solely on the basis of argumentative content or methodological formalisation, but on the basis of their invariance under domain shifts. An operator that asserts itself only within the protected space of textual or institutionally secured formats remains epistemically limited. The case examined here, by contrast, shows that a non-representational structure remains coherent even where it encounters resistance, rejection, and non-integration.

Second, Artistic Research is thus not understood as an illustrative or supplementary procedure, but as an independent form of epistemic testing. The film does not function as a result, but as a test environment in which it is decided whether a form of knowledge is world-capable. This perspective shifts the status of artistic practice from the representation of knowledge to the generation of epistemic situations in which knowledge can be tested in the first place.

Third, the contribution makes clear that neurodivergent forms of knowledge are not to be treated as special cases within existing orders of knowledge. Autism does not appear here as a topic or identity category, but as an epistemic infrastructure that makes it possible not to avoid incommensurability, but to maintain it productively. The capacity not to resolve tension, repetition, and ambivalence proves to be a central precondition for the integration of higher complexity.

Finally, the analysis suggests that change does not arise primarily through normative programmes or argumentative persuasion, but through operatorial levers that push existing orders to their structural limits. The intervention preserved in the film does not operate through proposed solutions, but through the maintenance of a non-resolvability that forces systems to make their own limitations visible and, where necessary, to transform.

In this sense, *Transferprotokoll* is neither documentation nor illustration, but a reproducible intervention space that brings research, artistic practice, and social reality together in a shared

epistemic situation. The film does not supplement the theoretical works in terms of content, but tests their viability. That the underlying operator passes this test does not mark an aesthetic success, but a research-logical finding: knowledge can emerge and become effective where it resists resolution.

The present contribution is part of a broader operator-based research context. Central theoretical elaborations (including operatorial cognition, structural invariance, and non-representational knowledge) are presented in separate publications by the author.

About the Author

Timothy Speed is an independent artist-researcher working on operator-based ontologies, world-formation, and neurodivergent epistemology.

His work connects philosophy of physics, consciousness studies, and social theory through the framework of operatoric research.

Further publications, papers, and archival materials are available at:

https://timothy-speed.org
https://zenodo.org/communities/operatoric-research-corpus

(The present text constitutes an interface translation into neurotypical academic discourse. This translation functions as an accessibility measure necessitated by dominant linguistic and epistemic conventions. It does not represent the native epistemic form of the research, but a communicative adaptation required for participation in standardized scholarly exchange.)

A more in-depth paper on the methodology can be found here:

Speed, T. (2025). Recursive Knowledge Instead of Additive Knowledge Accumulation - On the Epistemic Structure of Embodied, Neurodivergent Research (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18054997

A paper providing an overview of the work can be found here:

Speed, T. (2026). Introduction to an Operator-Based Research Program - World, Work, Value, Consciousness – Structure and Boundary Questions Beyond Representational Models (Corpus Overview / Survey Paper / Meta Paper) (Version 1). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18303557

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