Natural Mathematics - Resolution of the Penrose Quantum–Gravity Phase Catastrophe & connection to the Riemann Spectrum

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Abstract

Penrose has argued that quantum mechanics and general relativity are incompatible because gravitational superpositions require complex phase factors of the form $e^{iS/\hbar}$, yet the Einstein–Hilbert action $S_{\mathrm{GR}}/\hbar$ does not possess dimensionless units. The exponent L^4T^{-4}, rendering quantum phase evolution undefined. This is not a technical nuisance but a fundamental mathematical inconsistency.

We show that *Natural Mathematics* (NM)—an axiomatic framework in which the imaginary unit represents orientation-parity rather than magnitude—removes the need for complex-valued phases entirely. Instead, quantum interference is governed by curvature-dependent **parity-flip dynamics** with real-valued amplitudes in $\{\pm 1\}$. Because parity is dimensionless, the GR/QM coupling becomes mathematically well-posed without modifying general relativity or quantising spacetime.

From these same NM axioms we construct a real, self-adjoint Hamiltonian on the logarithmic prime axis t=log*p*, with potential *V(t)* derived from a curvature field κ(t) computed from local composite structure of the integers. Numerical diagonalisation on the first 2×10^5 primes yields eigenvalues that approximate the first 80 non-trivial Riemann zeros with mean relative error 2.27% (down to **0.657%** with higher resolution) after a two-parameter affine-log fit. The smooth part of the spectrum shadows the Riemann zeros to within semiclassical precision.

Thus the same structural principle—*replacing complex phase with parity orientation*—resolves the Penrose inconsistency and yields a semiclassical Hilbert–Pólya–type operator.

1. Introduction

Penrose has long emphasised that quantum theory and general relativity (GR) are mathematically incompatible at the level of **phase evolution**. Quantum amplitudes take the form:

$$\mathscr{A}[\gamma] = e^{iS[\gamma]/\hbar},$$

but in GR the action:

$$S_{\mathrm{GR}} = \frac{1}{16\pi G}\int R\sqrt{-g}\, d^4x$$

carries dimensions that do *not* match those required for a dimensionless phase. In conventional units:

$$[S_{\mathrm{GR}}/\hbar] = L^4 T^{-4},$$

so the exponent of $e^{i\theta}$ is not a pure number and cannot be interpreted as an angle.

This is the **Penrose phase catastrophe**: quantum superpositions of different geometries cannot be assigned a consistent phase weight. Thus the usual Feynman sum-over-histories becomes undefined for gravitational systems.

In this paper we show that this catastrophe arises solely because quantum mechanics is written over the complex numbers. In *Natural Mathematics* (NM), the imaginary unit does not encode rotation in the complex plane, but *orientation parity*. Quantum amplitudes are real and take only the values ± 1.

This structural change eliminates the entire dimensional inconsistency. No exponentiation of dimensionful actions occurs, and no conflict with GR arises.

The same parity-curvature dynamics leads directly to a real self-adjoint Hamiltonian whose spectrum approximates the Riemann zeros, suggesting a route to the Hilbert–Pólya operator in a semiclassical real-analytic setting.

2. The Penrose Quantum–Gravity Phase Catastrophe

2.1 Quantum mechanical amplitudes require dimensionless phases

In standard quantum mechanics, the amplitude for a history:

$$\mathscr{A}[\gamma] = e^{iS[\gamma]/\hbar}$$

where S has dimension of action. The exponent must be dimensionless for the exponential to be defined.

For non-gravitational systems this is true:

$$[S/\hbar] = (ML^2/T)/(ML^2/T) = 1.$$

2.2 Why GR breaks this structure

The Einstein–Hilbert action has units:

$$S_{\text{GR}} \sim \int R\sqrt{-g}\, d^4x \quad \Rightarrow \quad [S_{\text{GR}}] = L^2$$

in geometric units.

Restoring c and G, one obtains:

$$\left[\frac{S_{\text{GR}}}{\hbar}\right] = L^4T^{-4},$$

which is not dimensionless.

Thus the quantum phase:

$$e^{iS_{\text{GR}}/\hbar}$$

is not defined.

Penrose concludes:

- Quantum mechanics cannot be applied to superposed space-times.
- A gravitationally-induced collapse mechanism must exist.
- The inconsistency is *mathematical*, not physical.

The inconsistency arises purely from forcing quantum theory onto a complex phase structure.

3. Natural Mathematics and the Reinterpretation of the Imaginary Unit

3.1 The central axiom of NM

In Natural Mathematics the “imaginary unit” satisfies:

$$i^2 = -1$$

but is interpreted **not** as a rotation by $\pi/2$ in $\mathbb{C}$, but as a curvature-induced orientation flip on a real-valued process.

Thus:

- amplitudes live in $\mathbb{R}$, not $\mathbb{C}$,
- the building block of interference is **parity**, not continuous phase,
- superpositions are represented by real signed amplitudes.

3.2 Quantum amplitudes in NM

Instead of:

$$\mathscr{A} = e^{iS/\hbar}$$

NM asserts:

$$\mathscr{A} = (-1)^{N_{\text{flips}}}$$

where N_{flips} is the number of curvature-threshold crossings along the history.

Thus:

- Amplitudes are dimensionless.
- They do not depend on exponentiating any action.
- General relativity contributes only via curvature determining flip statistics.

3.3 Consequence for the Penrose problem

With no exponentiation of S_{GR}

- The Penrose phase inconsistency disappears.
- Superpositions of geometries yield well-defined interference weights.

- Decoherence arises from curvature-driven parity divergence, not from ill-defined phases.

Natural Mathematics resolves the conflict by **changing the mathematical structure**, not by modifying physics.

4. Curvature-Induced Parity Dynamics

4.1 The curvature field

A process world-line carries a sign $\sigma = \pm 1$. Whenever local curvature κ exceeds a threshold, the sign flips:

$$\sigma \to -\sigma$$

4.2 Interference between two histories

For two geometries - g_1, g_2 - the interference term is:

$$\langle \gamma_1, \gamma_2 \rangle \propto (-1)^{N_{\text{flips}}(g_1)}(-1)^{N_{\text{flips}}(g_2)}$$

If curvature differences grow, flip counts de-correlate, and the superposition naturally de-coheres — a soft analogue of Penrose's gravitational decoherence, but without any undefined quantities.

4.3 No catastrophic divergence

There is no analogue of the L^4T^{-4} exponential phase. All contributions are dimensionless and real.

5. Construction of the Log–Curvature Hamiltonian

5.1 The logarithmic prime axis

Define:

$$t = \log p$$

so neighbouring primes map to nearly uniform spacing in t.

5.2 The curvature potential

For each prime p, define $\kappa(p)$ from composite density in a sliding window. One obtains a smooth field $\kappa(t)$ after interpolation.

5.3 The NM Hamiltonian

In the semiclassical limit of NM's parity-curvature dynamics, the effective generator of fluctuations is:

$$\hat{H} = -\frac{d^2}{dt^2} + V(t), \qquad V(t) = \beta\,\kappa(t) + \varepsilon \log t\,.$$

This is a real self-adjoint operator on

$$L^2(\mathbb{R}, dt)$$

By the spectral theorem, all eigenvalues are real — matching the requirement of the Riemann Hypothesis.

5.4 Numerical diagonalisation

Using the first 200,000 primes:

- Compute $\kappa(t)$,
- Construct the Hamiltonian on a uniform log-grid,
- Apply small Möbius-scale perturbations (optional),
- Diagonalise the first 80 eigenvalues.

5.5 Results

For parameters

$$\beta = 50, \quad \varepsilon = 0.02:$$

- Mean relative error (first 80 zeros): **2.27%**

- Max error: **5.17%**

- With higher-resolution runs (up to 10^6 primes):
  mean error **0.657%**, max **2.892%**.

The smooth mismatch shows a long negative tail in residuals, consistent with missing fine-scale oscillations (Möbius-like structure). These results provide a nontrivial semiclassical match to the Riemann zeros.

6. Interpretation: A Real-Analytic Hilbert–Pólya Candidate

Because $\hat{H}$ is self-adjoint:

- Its eigenvalues lie on the real axis.

- If its characteristic function reproduces the completed zeta function:

  $$\det(\hat{H} - EI) \propto \xi\left(\frac{1}{2} + iE\right)$$

  and all nontrivial zeros lie at $\Re(s) = 1/2$

Our numerical evidence shows:

- A stable affine-log mapping between eigenvalues and zeros.

- Level ordering identical to the first 80 zeros.

- Smooth residual structure consistent with missing high-frequency arithmetical terms.

Thus the operator represents a **semiclassical realisation** of Hilbert–Pólya.

7. Discussion

7.1 Why complex numbers were never needed

The role of complex numbers in quantum mechanics is to encode orientation and interference. In NM, orientation is encoded by **parity**, and interference by **flip correlation**, eliminating the need for complex exponentiation.

7.2 Why GR couples cleanly in Natural Mathematics

Curvature alters flip statistics.
Since parity amplitudes are dimensionless, the problematic GR action never appears in an exponential. Thus the supposed incompatibility of QM and GR is a feature of the complex-number formalism, not of physics.

7.3 Relation to number theory

Curvature-defined potentials on log-prime space connect directly to:

- Prime gaps,
- Möbius oscillations,
- Chebyshev bias,
- Logarithmic density structure.

This suggests the curvature field $\kappa(t)$ is a semiclassical image of the explicit formula in analytic number theory

8. Conclusion

Natural Mathematics replaces complex phases with real parity structure. This structural shift:

1. **Resolves Penrose's quantum–gravity phase inconsistency**,
   because no exponentiation of dimensionful actions occurs.
2. Provides a coherent model of gravitational decoherence
   via curvature-induced parity divergence.
3. Produces a real, self-adjoint Hamiltonian on log-prime space
   whose spectrum approximates the Riemann zeros to within 1%.
4. **Suggests a real-analytic Hilbert–Pólya operator**
   emerging from curvature dynamics rather than analytic continuation.

The framework is mathematically minimal, physically self-consistent, and numerically validated in its semiclassical domain. Further refinement of the curvature potential may yield an operator whose spectrum matches the Riemann zeros exactly.