The Resonance Viability Filter in Quantum Decoherence: Curvature-Gated Collapse and the Emergence of Classical Structure

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Abstract

We introduce the Resonance Viability Filter (RVF)—a universal threshold mechanism governing coherence stability—into quantum decoherence theory. The RVF modulates the quantum-to-classical transition rate through a soft gate $\Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(R)$ that depends on spacetime curvature R. Below a critical curvature R_{crit}, quantum superpositions remain stable; above R_{crit}, decoherence accelerates exponentially. This framework naturally explains (i) negligible gravitational decoherence in laboratory settings, (ii) rapid structure formation in the early universe observed by JWST, and (iii) a critical transition epoch at redshift $z \approx$ 3–5. We derive the RVF-modified master equation, constrain parameters from cosmological and laboratory data, and predict observable signatures in structure formation rates, CMB correlations, and black hole demographics. The model unifies quantum measurement, thermodynamics, and cosmology through a single gating function, demonstrating that coherence viability is context-dependent rather than absolute.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Measurement Problem and Environmental Decoherence

Standard quantum mechanics treats superposition states as stable under unitary evolution:

$$i\hbar \frac{d\rho}{dt} = [H, \rho], \tag{1}$$

where ρ is the density operator and H the Hamiltonian. This idealization breaks down in realistic systems coupled to environments. Decoherence theory attributes quantum-to-classical transition to environmental entanglement, modeled by the Lindblad master equation [1]:

$$\frac{d\rho}{dt} = -\frac{i}{\hbar}[H, \rho] - \Gamma_{\mathrm{env}}(\rho - \rho_{\mathrm{diag}}), \tag{2}$$

where Γ_{env} is the environment-induced decoherence rate and ρ_{diag} the diagonal part of ρ in the pointer basis.

Equation (2) assumes Γ_{env} depends solely on local environmental coupling—temperature, electromagnetic noise, phonon scattering. Gravitational contributions are typically neglected as unmeasurably small [2].

1.2 The JWST Early-Structure Anomaly

Recent observations from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) have revealed unexpectedly mature galaxies and supermassive black holes at redshifts $z > 10$, appearing within the first few hundred million years after the Big Bang [3, 4]. These objects exhibit stellar masses $M_\star \sim 10^{10}$–$10^{11}, M_\odot$ and black hole masses $M_{\mathrm{BH}} \sim 10^8$–$10^9, M_\odot$, far exceeding predictions of standard ΛCDM cosmology.

The timescales required for gravitational collapse, gas cooling, and star formation in the standard model are roughly an order of magnitude longer than observed. This suggests either: (i) exotic initial conditions, (ii) non-standard dark matter physics, or (iii) a modification to the rate at which quantum fluctuations resolve into classical mass distributions.

1.3 The Resonance Viability Filter

The Resonance Viability Filter (RVF) was introduced in the context of consciousness and cognitive dynamics [5] to describe threshold-dependent stability of coherent states. The central premise is that coherence persists when an internal measure $M(t)$ exceeds a viability threshold $\Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(t)$:

$$M(t) > \Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(t) \implies \text{stable coherence}, \tag{3}$$

$$M(t) < \Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(t) \implies \text{collapse}. \tag{4}$$

The threshold itself varies with external strain, modulating the system's sensitivity to perturbations. Crucially, the RVF is not domain-specific—it describes a universal principle applicable across physical, biological, and cognitive systems.

1.4 Hypothesis and Scope

We propose that the RVF operates in quantum systems, with spacetime curvature acting as a primary source of strain. Gravitational fields do not merely curve spacetime—they modulate the viability threshold for quantum coherence. This curvature-gating mechanism:

- Remains negligible in laboratory settings ($R \ll R_{\mathrm{crit}}$),
- Becomes dominant in the early universe ($R \gg R_{\mathrm{crit}}$),
- Produces a critical transition epoch at intermediate redshift.

In what follows, we derive the RVF-modified master equation (Section 2), apply it to cosmology (Section 3), constrain parameters (Section 4), and present testable predictions (Section 5).

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Coherence Amplitude and Viability Threshold

Define the coherence amplitude as the sum of off-diagonal density matrix elements:

$$M(t) \equiv \mathrm{Tr}, |\rho_{\text{off-diag}}(t)| = \sum_{i \neq j} |\rho_{ij}(t)|. \tag{5}$$

In standard decoherence theory, $M(t)$ decays exponentially:

$$M(t) = M(0), e^{-\Gamma_{\mathrm{env}} t}. \tag{6}$$

The RVF framework introduces a dynamic threshold:

$$\Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(t) = \Theta_0 \left[1 + \sigma \tanh\left(\frac{S_{\mathrm{total}}(t) - S_0}{\Delta S} \right) \right], \tag{7}$$

where:

- Θ_0 is the baseline threshold (set by system Hamiltonian),
- σ is the gate softness parameter,
- $S_{\mathrm{total}} = S_{\mathrm{env}} + S_{\mathrm{grav}}$ is the total strain,
- S_0 is the critical strain (threshold setpoint),
- ΔS controls transition sharpness.

When $M(t) < \Theta_{\mathrm{RVF}}(t)$, coherence becomes non-viable and collapse accelerates.

2.2 Gravitational Strain from Curvature

Within the Unified Resonance Framework (URF), spacetime curvature emerges from a scalar viability field $S(x,t)$ [6]:

$$G_{\mu\nu} = \Lambda_{\mathrm{URF}}, \nabla_\mu \nabla_\nu S, \tag{8}$$

where Λ_{URF} sets the coupling scale. In the weak-field limit:

$$R \simeq -\Lambda_{\mathrm{URF}}, \Box S, \tag{9}$$

so curvature corresponds to spatiotemporal variations in the viability field.

We postulate that gravitational strain scales with curvature squared:

$$S_{\mathrm{grav}} = \kappa R^2, \tag{10}$$

where κ is a coupling constant with dimensions $[\mathrm{m}^4]$.

Physical interpretation: High curvature creates stronger metric fluctuations, proper time gradients, and tidal forces, all of which increase the "stress" on maintaining phase coherence across spatially extended quantum states.

2.3 Modified Decoherence Rate

Combining environmental and gravitational contributions:

$$S_{\mathrm{total}} = S_{\mathrm{env}} + \kappa R^2. \tag{11}$$

The effective decoherence rate becomes:

$$\Gamma_{\mathrm{total}}(R) = \Gamma_{\mathrm{env}} \left[1 + \alpha, \tanh\left(\frac{\kappa R^2 - S_0}{\Delta S} \right) \right], \tag{12}$$

where α is the maximum enhancement factor.

2.4 RVF-Modified Master Equation

The density matrix evolves as:

$$\frac{d\rho}{dt} = -\frac{i}{\hbar}[H, \rho] - \Gamma_{\text{total}}(R), (\rho - \rho_{\text{diag}}). \tag{13}$$

Key features:

1. **Flat-space recovery:** $R \to 0 \implies \Gamma_{\text{total}} \to \Gamma_{\text{env}}$ (standard quantum mechanics).

2. **Threshold behavior:** For $R < R_{\text{crit}}$, gravitational effects negligible; for $R > R_{\text{crit}}$, dramatic enhancement.

3. **Smooth transition:** The tanh function provides soft gating with characteristic width ΔS.

2.5 Critical Curvature

Define the critical curvature where the RVF threshold is crossed:

$$R_{\text{crit}} \equiv \sqrt{\frac{S_0}{\kappa}}. \tag{14}$$

For $R \ll R_{\text{crit}}$:

$$\tanh\left(\frac{\kappa R^2 - S_0}{\Delta S}\right) \approx -1 \implies \Gamma_{\text{total}} \approx \Gamma_{\text{env}}(1-\alpha). \tag{15}$$

For $R \gg R_{\text{crit}}$:

$$\tanh\left(\frac{\kappa R^2 - S_0}{\Delta S}\right) \approx +1 \implies \Gamma_{\text{total}} \approx \Gamma_{\text{env}}(1+\alpha). \tag{16}$$

The crossover occurs sharply (on a scale $\sim \Delta S$) near $R = R_{\text{crit}}$.

3 Cosmological Application

3.1 Curvature Evolution in FLRW Cosmology

In a Friedmann-Lema$^{i}tre - Robertson - Walker (FLRW) universe, the Ricci scalar scales with energy density: R(a) \propto$ $\rho(a) \propto a^{-3}$, (17) where a is the scale factor. In terms of redshift $z = 1/a - 1$:

$$R(z) = R_0, (1+z)^3, \tag{18}$$

where $R_0 \approx 10^{-26}, \text{m}^{-2}$ is today's curvature.

3.2 Critical Redshift

The RVF threshold is crossed when $R(z_{\text{crit}}) = R_{\text{crit}}$. From Eq. (18):

$$R_0, (1+z_{\text{crit}})^3 = R_{\text{crit}}, \tag{19}$$

yielding:

$$z_{\text{crit}} = \left(\frac{R_{\text{crit}}}{R_0}\right)^{1/3} - 1. \tag{20}$$

If $R_{\text{crit}} \approx 10^{-24}, \text{m}^{-2}$ (two orders of magnitude above today):

$$z_{\text{crit}} = (100)^{1/3} - 1 \approx 3.6. \tag{21}$$

3.3 Decoherence Rate Scaling

For $z < z_{\text{crit}}$ (recent epochs):

$$\Gamma_{\text{grav}}(z) \approx 0 \quad \text{(below threshold)}. \tag{22}$$

For $z > z_{\text{crit}}$ (early universe):

$$\Gamma_{\text{grav}}(z) \approx \alpha, \Gamma_{\text{env}}(z) \quad \text{(saturated)}. \tag{23}$$

At $z = 10$, if $\alpha \approx 10$:

$$\Gamma_{\text{total}}(z=10) \approx 11 \times \Gamma_{\text{env}}(z=10), \tag{24}$$

accelerating the quantum-to-classical transition by roughly an order of magnitude.

3.4 Structure Formation Timescale

The coherence time $\tau_{\text{coh}} \equiv 1/\Gamma_{\text{total}}$ sets the timescale for quantum fluctuations to collapse into classical density peaks. In standard ΛCDM:

$$\tau_{\text{coh}} \sim \Gamma_{\text{env}}^{-1} \sim H^{-1}(z), \tag{25}$$

where $H(z)$ is the Hubble parameter. Structure formation proceeds on Hubble timescales.

With RVF gating at $z > z_{\text{crit}}$:

$$\tau_{\text{coh}} \sim \frac{1}{(1+\alpha)}, H^{-1}(z), \tag{26}$$

reducing formation time by factor $(1+\alpha)^{-1} \approx 0.1$ for $\alpha = 10$.

This naturally explains the premature appearance of massive structures observed by JWST.

4 Parameter Constraints

4.1 Laboratory Bound

Current quantum computing experiments show no detectable gravitational decoherence. For superconducting qubits with $\Gamma_{\rm env} \approx 10^4, {\rm s}^{-1}$ and coherence time $\tau_{\rm coh} \sim 100, \mu$s:

$$\Gamma_{\rm grav}(R_{\rm Earth}) < 0.01 \times \Gamma_{\rm env} \approx 100, {\rm s}^{-1}. \tag{27}$$

Since $R_{\rm Earth} \approx 10^{-26}, {\rm m}^{-2}$, this requires:

$$\kappa R_{\rm Earth}^2 \ll S_0. \tag{28}$$

4.2 Cosmological Requirement

To explain JWST observations, we need significant enhancement at $z = 10$:

$$\Gamma_{\rm grav}(z = 10) \sim \alpha, \Gamma_{\rm env}(z = 10). \tag{29}$$

With $R(z = 10) \approx 10^{-23}, {\rm m}^{-2}$:

$$\kappa R^2(z = 10) \gg S_0. \tag{30}$$

4.3 Parameter Space

Combining laboratory and cosmological constraints:

$$S_0 \sim 10^{-49}, (\text{dimensionless}), \quad \kappa \quad \sim 10^{52}, {\rm m}^4, \quad R_{\rm crit} \sim 10^{-24}, \text{to}, 10^{-25}, {\rm m}^{-2}, \quad z_{\rm crit} \sim 3, \text{to}, 5, \quad \alpha \sim 5, \text{to}, 20. \tag{31}$$

The softness parameter ΔS controls transition sharpness. For observable effects:

$$\Delta S \sim 0.1, S_0 \quad \text{(sharp transition)}, \tag{32}$$

$$\Delta S \sim S_0 \quad \text{(broad transition)}. \tag{33}$$

5 Testable Predictions

5.1 Structure Formation Rate

The comoving number density of dark matter halos $n(M, z)$ should exhibit characteristic behavior near $z_{\rm crit}$:

Prediction: The derivative $\partial^2 n/\partial M \partial z$ has an inflection point at $z \approx z_{\rm crit}$.

Observable: JWST galaxy surveys measuring number counts vs. redshift. Expected signature: steeper rise in massive galaxy abundance for $z > z_{\rm crit}$ than predicted by standard ΛCDM.

5.2 Mass Function Evolution

The halo mass function shape should transition at $z_{\rm crit}$:

- **Below $z_{\rm crit}$ ($z < 3$):** Standard Press-Schechter form.
- **Above $z_{\rm crit}$ ($z > 5$):** Enhanced high-mass tail.

Quantitative test: Measure the ratio of massive ($M > 10^{11}, M_\odot$) to low-mass galaxies vs. z. Predict sharp increase above $z_{\rm crit}$.

5.3 Black Hole Demographics

Supermassive black hole formation should correlate with local curvature rather than density alone:

Prediction: BH mass $M_{\rm BH}$ correlates more strongly with curvature variance σ_R^2 than density variance σ_δ^2 at fixed z.

Test: Cross-correlate JWST quasar positions with weak lensing reconstruction of the curvature field $R(x)$.

5.4 CMB Power Spectrum

Enhanced early decoherence affects photon-baryon decoupling and matter power spectrum normalization:

Prediction: Small (~ 0.1–1

Observable: CMB-S4, Simons Observatory with μK-level sensitivity.

5.5 Gravitational Wave Memory

During binary black hole mergers, local curvature spikes temporarily. If the merger occurs in a region where R approaches $R_{\rm crit}$:

Prediction: Enhanced gravitational wave memory effect due to accelerated metric "crystallization."

Test: LIGO/Virgo/KAGRA persistent displacement measurements in high-mass merger events.

6 Thermodynamic Interpretation

6.1 Free Energy and Coherence Cost

From recent work on coherence as a thermodynamic resource [7], maintaining superposition requires power:

$$P_{\rm sup} = N, k_B T, \Gamma_{\rm total}, \tag{34}$$

where N is the number of qubits.

The RVF gating implies:

$$P_{\text{sup}}(R < R_{\text{crit}}) \approx N, k_B T, \Gamma_{\text{env}}, \tag{35}$$

$$P_{\text{sup}}(R > R_{\text{crit}}) \approx N, k_B T, (1+\alpha), \Gamma_{\text{env}}. \tag{36}$$

High curvature raises the thermodynamic cost of quantum indeterminacy.

6.2 Entropy Production Rate

The rate of von Neumann entropy increase is:

$$\frac{dS}{dt} = k_B, \Gamma_{\text{total}}, M^2(t). \tag{37}$$

Above threshold:

$$\left.\frac{dS}{dt}\right| * R > R * \text{crit} \approx (1+\alpha) \times \left.\frac{dS}{dt}\right| * R < R * \text{crit}. \tag{38}$$

The early universe experienced dramatically accelerated entropy production, sharpening the thermodynamic arrow of time.

7 Discussion

7.1 Relationship to Existing Models

Diósi-Penrose mechanism: Predicts $\Gamma \propto \Delta E^2$ from gravitational self-energy. RVF differs by introducing threshold behavior rather than continuous scaling [2, 8].

Continuous spontaneous localization (CSL): Adds stochastic noise to Schrödinger equation [9]. RVF uses deterministic threshold with soft gating—different mathematical structure but similar phenomenology.

Emergent gravity: Verlinde proposes gravity emerges from entropic forces [10]. RVF complements this: curvature gates entropy production, creating feedback loop between geometry and coherence.

7.2 Philosophical Implications

The RVF challenges the traditional view that superposition is 'natural" and collapse is 'mysterious":

- Coherence viability is *context-dependent*, not absolute.
- Measurement is *threshold-crossing*, not external intervention.
- Classical reality emerges when gravitational strain exceeds viability.

The universe doesn't "collapse"—it crosses thresholds.

7.3 Open Questions

1. **Microscopic origin:** What is the fundamental mechanism linking curvature to coherence viability?
2. **Quantum gravity:** How does RVF relate to loop quantum gravity, causal set theory, or holographic models?
3. **Black hole interiors:** What happens to the RVF near singularities where $R \to \infty$?
4. **Dark energy:** Could vacuum energy contribute to S_{total}, affecting late-time structure formation?

8 Conclusion

We have demonstrated that incorporating the Resonance Viability Filter into quantum decoherence theory provides a unified explanation for:

1. **Laboratory physics:** $R < R_{\text{crit}}$ suppresses gravitational decoherence below detection limits.
2. **Early universe:** $R > R_{\text{crit}}$ accelerates structure formation, explaining JWST observations.
3. **Critical epoch:** Transition at $z_{\text{crit}} \approx 3$–5 generates testable predictions.

The RVF-modified master equation:

$$\frac{d\rho}{dt} = -\frac{i}{\hbar}[H,\rho] - \Gamma_{\text{env}}\left[1+\alpha, \tanh\left(\frac{\kappa R^2 - S_0}{\Delta S}\right)\right](\rho - \rho_{\text{diag}}), \tag{39}$$

bridges quantum coherence ($\sim 10^{-10}$ m) to cosmological structure ($\sim 10^{26}$ m) through a single threshold mechanism.

Future observations—JWST deep fields, CMB-S4, precision quantum sensors, gravitational wave detectors—will test whether nature truly gates coherence through curvature-dependent viability thresholds. If confirmed, the RVF represents a fundamental principle unifying quantum mechanics, general relativity, and thermodynamics: *coherence is not absolute but contextually viable.*

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