Baumrind's Parenting Dialectic: Santini, Veruca, and the Beaver

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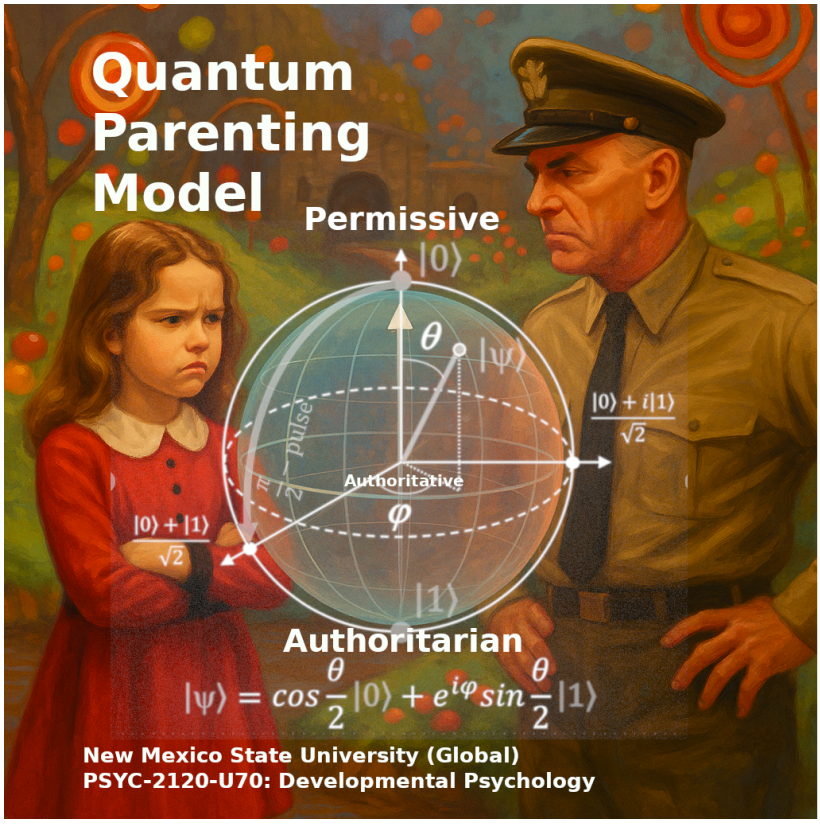


In examining how film and television reflect developmental psychology, Baumrind's parenting styles—permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative—emerge not merely as academic categories but as cultural archetypes that shape our collective understanding of what children require to develop emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and a coherent sense of self. These styles can be interpreted through a Hegelian dialectic: the permissive thesis, the authoritarian antithesis, and the authoritative synthesis. Cultural portrayals in *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*, *The Great Santini*, and *Leave It to Beaver* vividly illustrate how parenting extremes distort childhood experience, while—consistent with Berger (2018) and Baumrind (1966, 1971)—the author argues that the authoritative synthesis yields the healthiest psychosocial outcomes.

This paper introduces the Quantum Parenting Model ("QPM") as a mathematical expression of Baumrind's dialectic, applying principles of quantum cognition to conceptualize parenting style as the evolving output of a "parent operator" acting on a child's developing psychological state (Exhibit A). The model uses film dialogue to generate a measurable lexicon of parity scores that oscillate over time between the permissive $|0\rangle$ and authoritarian $|1\rangle$ basis states, allowing the authoritative equilibrium to be represented as a superposed state along the Bloch sphere's equator. In doing so, the model captures the dynamic ebb and flow of warmth and control—the inverse relationship embedded in these dual-opposite parenting styles—and illustrates how dialogues may ultimately converge toward the authoritative synthesis exemplified in the parental guidance of Ward and June Cleaver. An open-source implementation accompanies this paper. The full repository—including source code (Python), film/television transcripts, dependency requirements, and MIT license—is available at:

https://github.com/marcuscrodriguez/baumrind_dialectic

A live, executable version of the software written for this project is available on Streamlit Community Cloud at:

https://parenting.streamlit.app/

To operationalize Baumrind's parenting styles within the Quantum Parenting Model (QPM), the system constructs a polarity lexicon derived from labeled dialogue in the permissive (*Willy Wonka*) and authoritarian (*The Great Santini*) corpora (Exhibit B). Each word receives a log-odds score representing its statistical association with either the permissive $|0\rangle$ or authoritarian $|1\rangle$ basis state. This approach follows Monroe, Colaresi, and Quinn's (2008) "log-odds with informative Dirichlet prior method", which is widely used for contrasting linguistic domains because it balances sensitivity to rare but meaningful words with robustness against sampling noise—an ideal property when working with the relatively short, domain-specific film/television dialogues such as those examined in this paper.

For each token w, the model computes:

$$\text{polarity}(w) = \tanh\left(\log \frac{p(w \mid \text{perm})}{p(w \mid \text{auth})}\right)$$

The tanh transformation constrains values to the interval $[-1,1]$, aligning them directly with the Bloch z-axis:

- $+1 \rightarrow$ (perm)issive, $|0\rangle$ basis state (north pole)
- $-1 \rightarrow$ (auth)oritarian, $|1\rangle$ basis state (south pole)
- $0 \rightarrow$ authoritative equilibrium (equator)

Each dialogue line is then scored by averaging the polarity values of its constituent words, with child responses receiving a modest upward weighting to reflect their function as system outputs rather than control inputs. Parental dialogue is tagged "[parent]" and "[child]" or "[children]"

similarly identified in the text files. This yields a time series of QPM scores z(t) that track the oscillation of warmth and control as it evolves in each sentence of the dialogue. When plotted, these trajectories visually express the dialectical movement between parenting extremes, allowing authoritative stability to appear as a natural convergence near the Bloch equator. The resulting lexicon and polarity timelines form the empirical backbone of the QPM framework, enabling quantitative analysis of parenting style in any text sample and supporting the extension of the model to simulate the effects of various operators—including the parent operator—within a quantum computational architecture, allowing quantum circuits to simulate how warmth and control transform the system over time.

The Permissive Parenting Style (Thesis):

The permissive indulgence embodied by Veruca Salt's "Golden Ticket" scene in Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory shows how unbounded warmth without structure fosters entitlement, poor frustration tolerance, and the maladaptive emotional regulation that Berger (2018) directly associates with permissive parenting households. The chart in Exhibit C illustrates the parent/child interaction from the film clip with a composite score of 0.997.

The Authoritarian Parenting Style (Antithesis):

Authoritarian parenting, epitomized by Bull Meechum's militaristic "Marine Kids" scene in The Great Santini, demonstrates how excessive control and low warmth derail Erikson's initiative versus guilt stage and produce the emotional suppression Berger (2018) warns against. The chart in Exhibit D results in a composite QPM score for this transcript of -1.

The Authoritative (Synthesis)**:** The authoritative balance modeled by Ward and June Cleaver in Leave It to Beaver illustrates how warmth, communication, and consistent expectations create the developmental "Goldilocks zone" that modern psychology endorses as the most beneficial template for emotional and moral growth (Berger, 2018; Baumrind, 1971). Exhibit E reflects non-sequential dialogue of Ward Cleaver addressing Wally and the Beaver which demonstrates a clear synthesis of both styles, resulting in a composite QPM score for the transcript of 0.002, nearly zero, landing perfectly on the equator of the Bloch sphere.

Taken together, Exhibits C–E show that each parenting style occupies a distinct region of the QPM Bloch axis. In the QPM formalization, parenting style is treated as a qubit (Bloch sphere) measured along a Pauli-Z axis. The corresponding observable, which we denote $\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}}$, assigns +1 to permissive $|0\rangle$ and –1 to authoritarian $|1\rangle$ communication, matching the polarity calculated by the log-odds lexicon. Ultimately, viewing Baumrind's model through a dialectical lens and through the cultural mirrors of Santini, Veruca, and the Beaver reveals that authoritative parenting operates as the coherent superposition that reconciles the failures of the extremes. In this sense, the Quantum Parenting Model (QPM) becomes the mathematical expression of the Hegelian dialectic itself, illustrating how warmth and control oscillate over time to produce the most adaptive outcomes in emotional regulation, self-concept, and early moral development.

EXHIBIT A

THE QPM MODEL:

Basis states (parenting style):
$|0\rangle$ = **permissive** (thesis - High warmth, low control → unbounded, diffuse, entropy-forward)
$|1\rangle$ = **authoritarian** (antithesis - Low warmth, high control → rigid, collapsed, highly ordered)
authoritative (synthesis) is a superposition state: $|\Psi\rangle=\alpha|0\rangle+\beta|1\rangle$

α = amplitude of permissive warmth
β = amplitude of authoritarian structure

$|\alpha|^2+|\beta|^2=1$

Operator:
$\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}}$

Observable:
parenting-style polarity

Measurement:
QPM lexicon polarity score (aligned to Z)

State evolution:
dialogue progression over time → $|\psi(t)\rangle$

$$\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}$$

+1 → permissive eigenvalue
−1 → authoritarian eigenvalue

Under $\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}}$, the parent exists as a quantum blend of warmth and control, whose style evolves over time and may be expressed as a probability distribution of the two basis states.

This may be modeled as a time-dependent wavefunction:

$$|\Psi(t)\rangle = \alpha_0 e^{-i\omega 0 t}|0\rangle + \beta_0 e^{-i\omega 1 t}|1\rangle$$

Measured score is the **expectation value**:

$\langle\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}}\rangle=\langle\psi|\hat{Z}_{\text{Parent}}|\psi\rangle=|\alpha|^2-|\beta|^2$, where $|\psi\rangle=\alpha|0\rangle+\beta|1\rangle$

EXHIBIT B

Learned Lexicon (most indicative words)

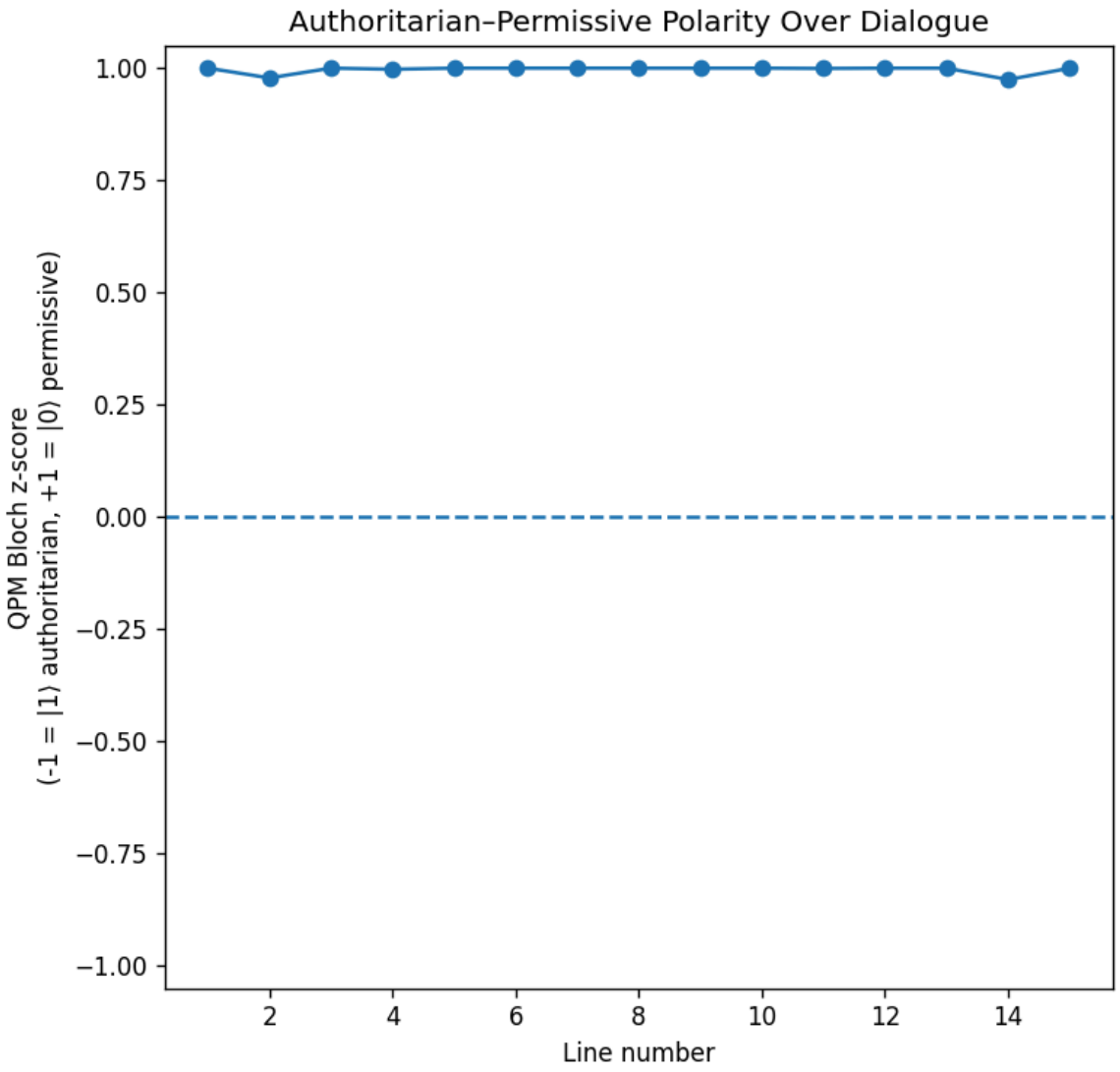
Most authoritarian-leaning words (basis for |1⟩)

	word	weight
0	sir	1.8176
1	clear	1.8176
2	hogs	1.8176
3	yes	1.8176
4	kids	1.5299
5	okay	1.5299
6	belly	1.5299
7	said	1.5299
8	town	1.5299
9	will	1.5299
10	loud	1.5299
11	read	1.5299
12	meechum's	1.5299
13	candy	1.1244
14	burg	1.1244

Most permissive-leaning words (basis for |0⟩)

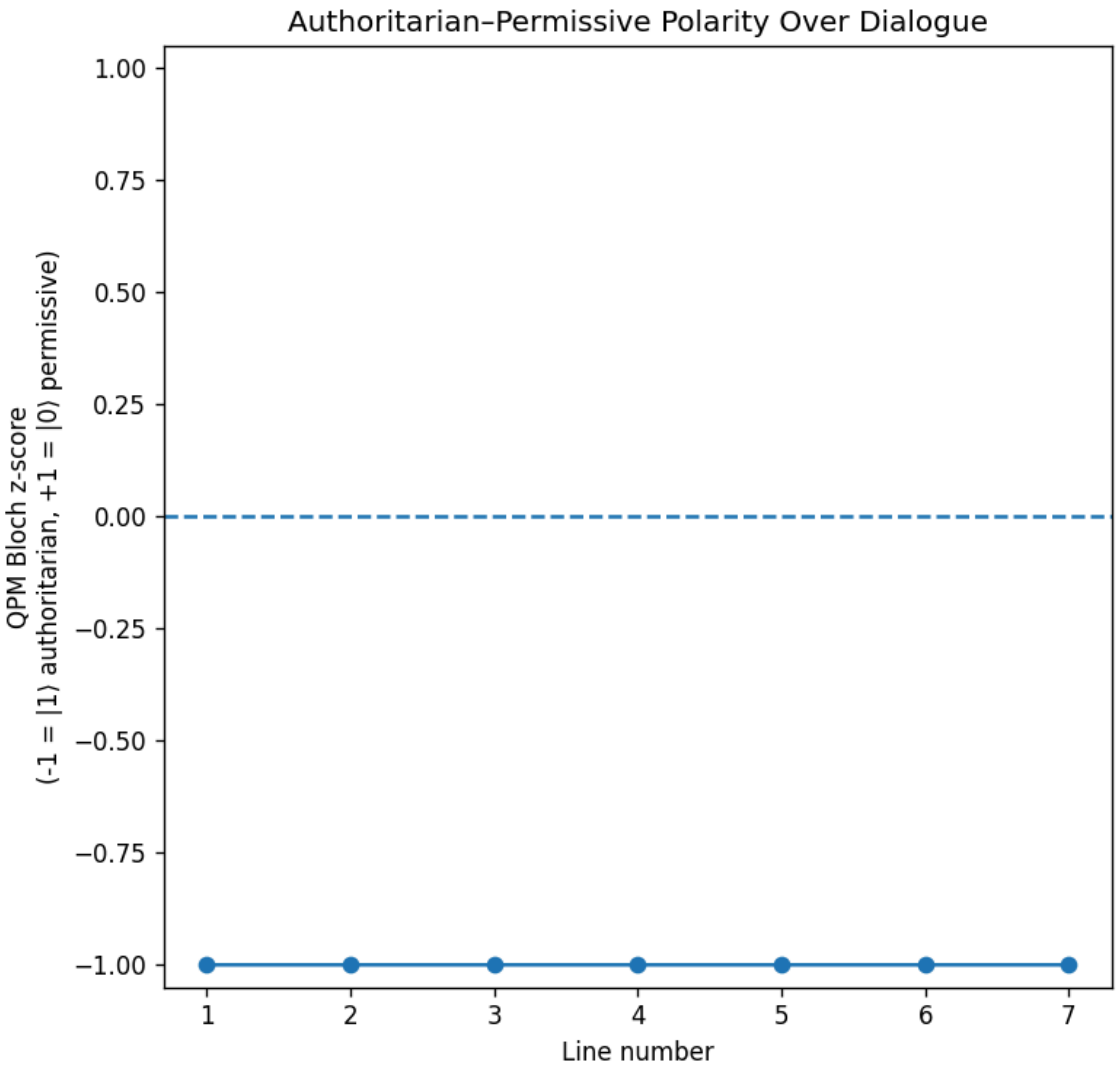
	word	weight
0	ticket	-1.1782
1	first	-0.9550
2	sweetheart	-0.9550
3	got	-0.9550
4	now	-0.9550
5	give	-0.9550
6	there	-0.9550
7	golden	-0.9550
8	have	-0.9550
9	been	-0.6673
10	shelling	-0.6673
11	hunting	-0.6673
12	they're	-0.6673
13	promised	-0.6673
14	whole	-0.6673

EXHIBIT C



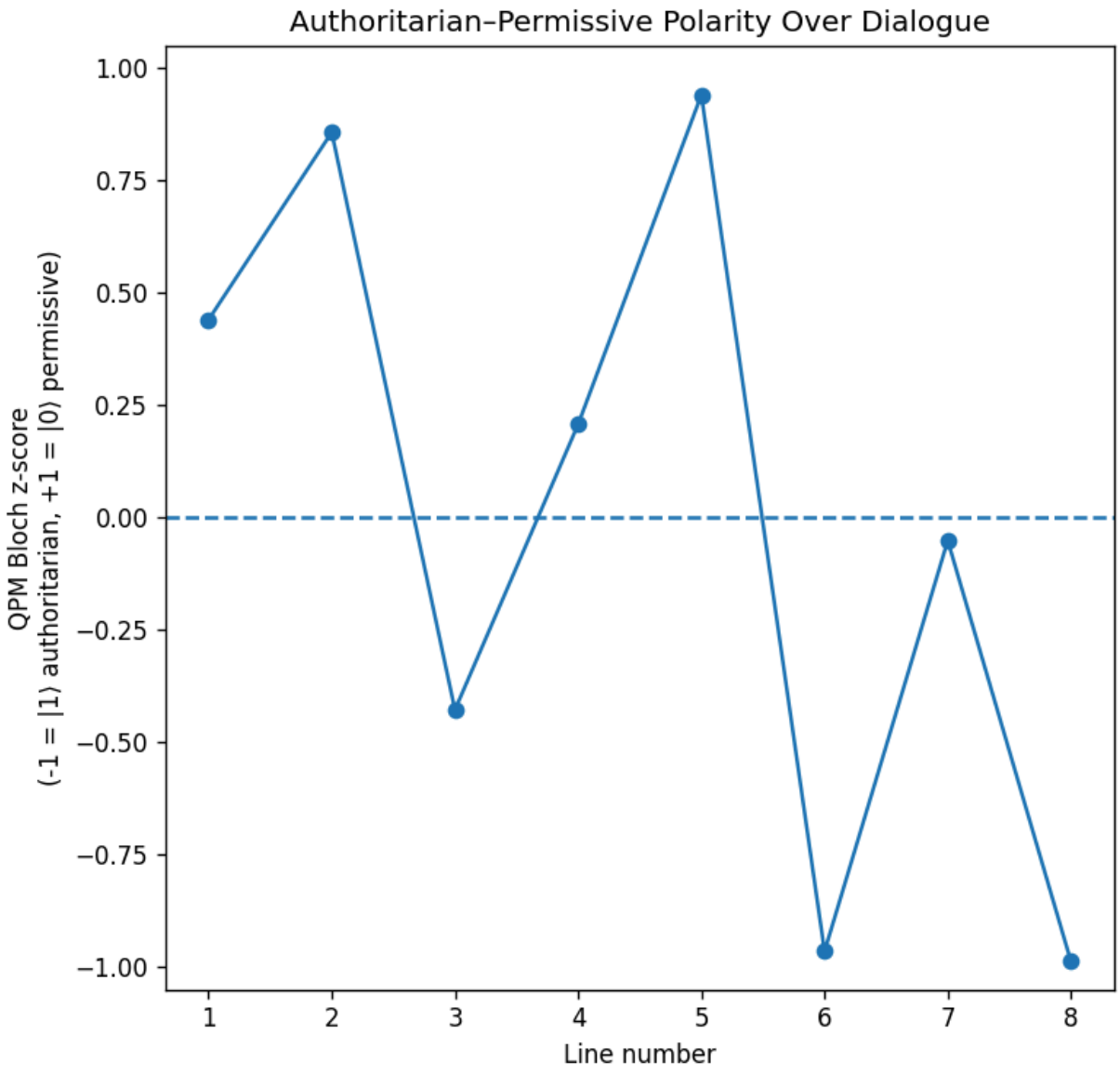
Composite QPM score for this transcript: 0.997

EXHIBIT D



Composite QPM score for this transcript: -1.00

EXHIBIT E



Composite QPM score for this transcript: 0.002

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