

Evolving Patriarchy: Two Different Mr. Bennets in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Pride and Prejudice* (2005)

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Abstract

This paper examines how Joe Wright's 2005 film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* transforms the character of Mr. Bennet from a detached, sarcastic father into a gentle, devoted patriarch, arguing that this transformation constitutes a new mechanism of patriarchal myth. While Peter Glick and Susan Fiske successfully identify hostile and benevolent sexism—both of which operate by defining women—this paper identifies a mechanism that falls outside their framework: one that reshapes the male figure to conceal patriarchal power structures. Drawing on Roland Barthes's concept of myth as naturalized ideology, the paper proposes that Wright's adaptation romanticizes the male figure rather than targeting women directly, thereby diminishing the mother by contrast and making the father's authority appear not only natural but necessary. To assess the effectiveness of this myth, the paper conducts a comparative analysis of 3,527 Korean film reviews and 639 book reviews from Watchapedia and Aladin, alongside reviews from IMDb. Through collocation analysis of these reviews, this study examines how Anglo-American and Korean audiences respond to and absorb the adapted patriarchal tactic in markedly different ways and argues that understanding how patriarchal myth operates requires culturally specific approaches rather than a universal framework.

Keywords: patriarchy, myth, adaptation, *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen

1. Patriarchy: The Longest-Surviving Myth

Why do we continue to remain embedded in patriarchal structures in the 21st century—an era in which even the replaceability of human beings has come to the fore due to AI—despite numerous significant movements aimed at the abolition of patriarchy? What is striking is that patriarchy persists and continues to consolidate the position of men in both social and domestic spheres, even though the concept has been labeled as “anachronistic.” We can find insight into this phenomenon through Roland Barthes' concept of “myth” and patriarchy's survival strategy. In his renowned book *Mythologies*, Barthes distinguishes myth from mythology, which “can only have an historical foundation,” defining

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myth as “a type of speech chosen by history” that “cannot possibly evolve from the ‘nature’ of things”¹. Therefore, for Barthes, myth is fundamentally arbitrary and artificial, as he argues that it “can be defined neither by its object nor by its material, for any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning.”² The formidable power of myth lies in its ability to naturalize the artificial—transforming what is historically constructed into what appears to be simply the way things are. According to him, people consume myth innocently because it distorts reality and naturalizes intentions to be “read as a factual system.”³ Though Barthes primarily focuses on myths rooted in bourgeois ideology in his book, his concept aids in understanding a far more ancient and enduring myth—patriarchy.

In the modern era, patriarchy has faced several challenges strong enough to threaten its maintenance, as myth is not permanent. Barthes explains that myth can disappear and be replaced by new ones, necessitating the patriarchal myth to adapt its tactics to sustain its place and thereby maintain the traditional structure.⁴ Patriarchy, too, was sustained merely a century or two ago by the image of a strong husband and father figure whose authority over the family was maintained through control and coercion, which symbolized and upheld the system. However, as women gained greater access to the public sphere, the once-firm traditional archetype of a man as both the ultimate authority in the household and the breadwinner began to erode. Hence, people have gradually begun to question whether patriarchy genuinely represents the natural and inevitable form of family.

Such suspicions have also been reflected in academia, where discussions of different forms of sexism have long been underway. In their seminal essay “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism,” Peter Glick and Susan Fiske classify sexism into two categories: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism is the most overt form of sexism, rooted in antagonistic prejudice against women⁵—for instance, the belief that women are too emotional to handle important matters. However, benevolent sexism is a far subtler form, because it is “a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles.”⁶ For instance, even within the same profession, a female teacher may be disproportionately expected to assume a nurturing, caretaking role, while her male counterpart is valued for his authority or expertise. Their framework has made these two forms of sexism increasingly discernible, revealing that sexism does not operate solely through overt hostility but can also be embedded within seemingly positive attitudes toward women.

Yet there remains another mechanism that falls outside their categories—one that neither demonizes nor idealizes women, but instead idealizes the male figure himself, thereby concealing the very power structure that sustains patriarchy. By recasting the patriarch as a gentle, accommodating, and self-sacrificing presence, this strategy renders patriarchal power invisible.⁷ The authority that was once maintained through coercion is now disguised as devotion, creating the illusion that male dominance has dissolved when it has merely changed form. In this reconfigured dynamic, women are led not to submit by force but to consent willingly, perceiving the softened patriarch not as a figure of authority but as a partner worthy of voluntary deference. One might argue that a gentle, accommodating partner simply reflects a healthy relationship rather than a patriarchal strategy. However, when this figure is reproduced in media and literary adaptations, a telling pattern emerges: the father figure is elevated—rendered warmer, more devoted, more emotionally present—while the mother is left unreconstructed. She is not explicitly attacked, but the asymmetry itself does the work: against the image of a mature,

articulate, and emotionally generous father, she appears irrational, excessive, and in need of guidance. What might otherwise read as a flawed but autonomous individual is reframed, through contrast alone, as someone who requires the benevolent oversight of her husband. The audience is thus invited not to critique the father's authority but to welcome it—to see his dominance not as power but as a natural and necessary corrective to her inadequacy. The strategy operates not by targeting women directly but by romanticizing the male figure to such a degree that his authority appears as devotion, and her subordination appears as care received.

This is precisely because adaptation is never a neutral act of translation. As Julie Sanders argues, adaptations of canonical works openly position themselves as “an interpretation or re-reading of a canonical precursor,” yet such reinterpretation is inevitably shaped by “a political or ethical commitment” on the part of the adapter.⁸ That is, every act of adaptation involves selection—what to preserve, what to alter, and what to omit—and these choices are never ideologically innocent. Joe Wright's film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) exemplifies this. When Wright chooses to reconstruct Mr. Bennet as a tender, emotionally present father—a figure markedly absent from Jane Austen's novel—this is not a minor aesthetic adjustment but a reinterpretation that carries ideological weight, one that reshapes the audience's understanding of patriarchal authority within the family.

In Austen's original novel, Mrs. Bennet's relentless obsession with marrying off her daughters is grounded in a material reality—the entail that will strip her family of their home, the specter of destitution that haunts women without husbands, the fate of figures like Miss Bates in *Emma*, who survives only through the charity of others. Mrs. Bennet is, in fact, the most pragmatic member of her household, the only one who fully confronts the economic violence of the patriarchal system she inhabits. Moreover, Austen balances this by portraying Mr. Bennet as a father who is witty but ultimately negligent—indifferent to his family's financial future, content to mock his wife. Most critically, he is directly responsible for the Lydia crisis through his careless decision to send her unsupervised among soldiers against Elizabeth's explicit advice, simply out of weariness with managing his own daughters. However, in Wright's adaptation, this balance collapses. Mr. Bennet is recast as a warm, affectionate father who enjoys spending time with his daughters and fulfills his duties as a husband with quiet devotion. Meanwhile, Mrs. Bennet's material motivations—the entail, the economic precarity, the genuine desperation of a mother facing her daughters' destitution—are largely stripped away, leaving only the surface: a shrill, marriage-obsessed caricature. His failures are erased; her flaws are magnified. The result is precisely the mechanism described above: the patriarchal structure is naturalized as benevolence.

This essay, therefore, focuses on the radically different portrayals of Mr. Bennet in Austen's original novel and Wright's adaptation, comparing what kind of father he is depicted as within the domestic sphere and, as a corollary, how Mrs. Bennet is consequently rendered in each version. While other adaptations exist—particularly the 1940 MGM adaptation and the 1995 BBC television series—this study focuses exclusively on Wright's 2005 adaptation for two reasons. First, the BBC miniseries has been widely recognized for its fidelity to Austen's original characterization and character dynamics, with feminist critics noting that its interpolated scenes—especially Mr. Darcy's lake scene and the implied bathing sequence—function to gratify female desire rather than to rehabilitate patriarchal authority; the male body is rendered as spectacle for the female gaze rather than as a locus of domestic

power. Second, Wright's film represents the most recent major cinematic adaptation, making it the most relevant case for examining how patriarchal myth operates in contemporary media consumption; the scope of this study is accordingly delimited to a single-adaptation analysis, with cross-adaptation comparison reserved for future work.

By examining discrepancy between Austen's original work and Wright's adaptation, this study argues that such transformation reveals patriarchy's survival strategy in the 21st century. Indeed, Barbara Seeber have already observed that Wright's adaptation systematically recasts Mr. Bennet as a sensitive, kind father while erasing his parental failures, producing what she terms a patriarchal family utopia that undoes Austen's feminist critique.⁹ This essay builds on Seeber's observation but extends the inquiry beyond the text itself: if Wright's adaptation constructs a romanticized patriarch, the question that remains is whether audiences actually absorb this construction—and if so, how. Therefore, beyond theoretical analysis, this essay also examines how effectively this reconfigured myth of patriarchy operates on contemporary audiences through a comparative analysis of viewer reviews on two platforms: IMDb, an Anglo-American film review platform, and Watchapedia, a Korean streaming and review platform. Through a comparative analysis of viewer reviews on these two platforms, the essay explores whether the patriarchal myth operates more effectively in South Korea—a society where the traditional patriarchal father figure remains relatively familiar—or whether, regardless of cultural context, the myth proves equally effective in its naturalization across both Anglo-American and Korean audiences.

2. Romanticizing the Patriarch: Two Different Mr. Bennets

In Austen's original work, Mr. Bennet is obviously not a good husband, nor a good father. Austen makes this clear throughout the novel. From the very first chapter, she describes Mr. Bennet's character as "so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice," establishing that he is far from an ideal father.¹⁰ One of the most prominent differences lies in Mr. Bennet's attitude toward his daughters. In the beginning of the novel, he displays a dismissive stance toward them. When Mrs. Bennet points out his favoritism toward Elizabeth, Mr. Bennet responds that "they have none of them much to recommend them," followed by "but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters"—thus partially acknowledging his preference, yet premising it on the assertion that "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls."¹¹ Admittedly, given Austen's characterization of him as a sarcastic figure, it is difficult to determine whether he genuinely disparages his daughters or whether this is merely another instance of his dry humor. Nevertheless, what is clear from his very first appearance is that he is anything but a tender and devoted father. His parenting is even more pronounced in his treatment of his other daughters—particularly Mary and Lydia. One notable example is the scene at the Netherfield ball. Mary, whose character is defined by her eagerness to display her knowledge and accomplishments, seizes the occasion to showcase her singing by performing song after song. Elizabeth, mortified by the spectacle, signals her father to intervene. Yet Mr. Bennet's response is no different from the sarcastic tone he employs at home: he "said aloud," "That will do extremely well, child. You have delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit."¹² Mary, "though pretending not to hear, was somewhat disconcerted."¹³ It is true that Mary's behavior was excessive

enough to embarrass her family, but the fact that Mr. Bennet's method of correction takes the form of public humiliation reveals his failure as a parent. Furthermore, the fundamental responsibility for Mary's desperate need for recognition lies in the lack of support she receives at home—Mrs. Bennet lavishes attention only on Lydia and Kitty, while Mr. Bennet engages in no meaningful interaction with any daughter other than Elizabeth. When considered in this light, the portrait Austen paints of Mr. Bennet as a father in the early chapters of the novel is unambiguous.

In Wright's adaptation, however, this portrayal is entirely transformed. The film opens with a long take of Elizabeth reading a book as she walks home, ending with her observing through a window as Mrs. Bennet enthusiastically informs Mr. Bennet of the letting of Netherfield. Already, Elizabeth's face breaks into a smile that radiates affection for her parents—a stark contrast to Austen's original characterization, in which she writes that “[h]ad Elizabeth's opinion been all drawn from her own family, she could not have formed a very pleasing picture of conjugal felicity or domestic comfort.”¹⁴ Where the novel establishes Elizabeth's disillusionment with her parents' marriage from the outset, the film replaces it with warmth and fondness. The scene then cuts to the daughters huddled together, secretly eavesdropping on their parents' conversation. Mr. Bennet emerges from his study carrying a potted plant, gently smiles upon discovering his daughters listening in, and announces to the whole family that he has, in fact, already called on Bingley and that the gentleman will be attending the upcoming ball. The daughters shriek with excitement, Mrs. Bennet rushes to kiss her husband, and Elizabeth playfully winces at her parents' display of affection. Crucially, Mr. Bennet's cruel remark from the novel—dismissing his daughters as “all silly and ignorant like other girls”—is entirely omitted. Thus, from the very first scene, Mr. Bennet is already rendered a markedly different figure under Wright's direction. In this brief sequence alone, Mr. Bennet's position and role within the family diverge significantly from those established in Austen's original text.

In addition, the scene in which Mary sings and Mr. Bennet intervenes remains in the film, but its tone is fundamentally altered. In the novel, this moment occurs within the already-established context of a sarcastic and indifferent father, and his words are delivered “aloud” for all to hear. In the film, however, Mr. Bennet—already portrayed as a gentle and loving father—approaches Mary softly, as though genuinely encouraging her to yield the piano to the other young ladies. When Mary, visibly upset, leaves the room, Mr. Bennet immediately follows her with a look of concern. What is particularly telling is the juxtaposition of two scenes that the film deliberately inserts after this. In one, Mrs. Bennet is shown in a foolish light—slightly inebriated, clumsily spilling food from her cup onto another guest. In the other, Mr. Bennet is shown finding Mary weeping alone, having been unable to secure a dance partner, and embracing her in comfort. The deliberate parallel between these two moments implants a specific dynamic in the viewer's mind: a neglectful, silly mother against a caring, devoted father. This is precisely the mechanism of patriarchal romanticization at work—the father's tenderness is constructed against the mother's absurdity, naturalizing his authority as benevolence.

Austen is even more explicit about Mr. Bennet's failures as a husband. She describes “the impropriety of [Mr. Bennet's] behaviour as a husband,” pointing out his “continual breach of conjugal obligation and decorum which, in exposing his wife to the contempt of her own children, was so highly reprehensible.”¹⁵ As this suggests, the conversations between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are laden with sarcasm and disdain, devoid of any mutual affection. The novel makes clear that Mr. Bennet's “principal

enjoyments” are books and the garden, rather than his family.¹⁶ To him, his wife is not a partner or companion in marriage but a source of “amusement,” whose “ignorance and folly” exist primarily for his entertainment.¹⁷ Austen herself passes judgment on this dynamic: “This is not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to owe to his wife.”¹⁸ In other words, the dysfunction of their marriage is unmistakable, and the fault lies not solely with Mrs. Bennet but equally with Mr. Bennet himself.

However, this balance collapses entirely in the film. Mr. Bennet appears not only as a caring father to his daughters but equally as a gentle and devoted husband. The most striking example occurs when Bingley proposes to Jane. In the novel, Mr. Bennet expresses his approval during a family dinner, sarcastically congratulating the couple: “You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income.”¹⁹ In the film, however, this very line is transformed into an intimate exchange between husband and wife. After everyone has retired for the night, the camera frames the Bennets’ bedroom from outside the window. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet lie in bed together as he delivers the line with a quiet laugh. Mrs. Bennet responds warmly, and the two share a tender moment of laughter and conversation. The crowning detail comes as the camera pans sideways to the next room: Mrs. Bennet says, “I was sure [Jane] could not be so beautiful for nothing,” and Mr. Bennet turns to look at his wife with a smile of genuine affection.

Yet it is precisely this tenderness that makes Mrs. Bennet’s obsession with marriage and her hysterical outbursts appear all the more absurd. When the husband is this gentle and accommodating, her anxieties lose their rational foundation in the eyes of the audience—she becomes simply an irrational woman married to a patient, loving man. This is because the balance Austen constructs in the novel has been dismantled—the balance between an indifferent, irresponsible father who shows no concern for his daughters’ futures, and an overly anxious mother who desperately pushes them toward marriage precisely because she concerns. In the novel, Mrs. Bennet’s motivation is framed quite obviously: “If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield, [...] and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for.”²⁰ Her wish is not without vanity, but it is fundamentally rooted in her daughters’ security—in a system where an unmarried woman without fortune faces destitution. This anxiety is most visible in her bitter complaints about the entail, as she “continued to rail bitterly against the cruelty of settling an estate away from a family of five daughters, in favour of a man whom nobody cared anything about.”²¹ Indeed, women who could not hold professions in this period were, if unmarried, regarded as “financial drain[s] on estates” and as existing “outside of any natural male authority.”²² According to Sarah Shields, older unmarried women in eighteenth-century England, unlike their married or widowed counterparts, had no idealized model to aspire to and were frequently portrayed negatively in literary works.²³ Unable to earn their own income or rely on a husband to provide for them, these women survived only through the goodwill of family and acquaintances, and their existence “outside of male authority” made them easy targets of ridicule. Mrs. Bennet is acutely aware of this danger. Her marriage frenzy is, at its root, driven not only by vanity but by a desperate determination to prevent her daughters from facing a life without inheritance or security. Therefore, the very warmth that romanticizes Mr. Bennet simultaneously strips Mrs. Bennet of her context. Whereas Austen’s Mr. Bennet exposes the absurdity of patriarchy as an inadequate father

figure,²⁴ Wright's portrayal allows it to seep in unnoticed—disguised as warmth, devotion, and quiet masculine authority.

Furthermore, Wright's adaptation does not merely dismantle the balance between a failed father and a failed mother; it fundamentally alters Mr. Bennet's presence within the narrative itself. In the novel, Mr. Bennet is a deliberately absent figure—he retreats to his library, refuses to engage with his family, and consequently occupies remarkably little space in the story. In the film, however, Wright pulls Mr. Bennet out of his library and into the domestic space at every opportunity. More critically, the camera consistently privileges his perspective. One scene where this shift becomes particularly evident is Elizabeth's rejection of Mr. Collins's proposal. In the novel, when Mrs. Bennet storms into Mr. Bennet's library to demand that he order Elizabeth to accept, his response is characteristically detached: "My dear, I have two small favours to request. First, that you will allow me the free use of my understanding on the present occasion; and secondly, of my room. I shall be glad to have the library to myself as soon as may be."²⁵ While he does side with Elizabeth in refusing the marriage, his words end not with comfort or further engagement but with a request to be left alone—revealing that his preference for solitude consistently overrides any impulse toward familial intimacy. This exchange takes place, notably, within his library—the space where Mr. Bennet spends most of his time by choice, deliberately isolating himself from his family.

In Wright's adaptation, however, the same sequence unfolds entirely differently. Mr. Bennet is not confined to his library; he is already standing in the corridor to find something when Mrs. Bennet rushes past, urging him to intervene. He then steps outside with his wife to speak with Elizabeth. And when Mrs. Bennet cries out that the family will be destitute after Mr. Bennet's death, the camera does not follow Elizabeth as she flees—instead, it closes in on Mr. Bennet's face, heavy with concern. Through these choices, the film positions Mr. Bennet as the emotional anchor of the household: the one who feels most deeply, worries most quietly, and bears the weight of his family's fate. What was, in Austen's novel, an abdication of responsibility is recast as quiet guilt and sorrow—a father burdened by his inability to leave his daughters a secure future. The father who was once absent from the narrative now stands at its emotional center. This reaches its climax in the film's final scene. The film does not end with Darcy and Elizabeth's wedding, nor with their life together afterward, nor even with an interaction between the couple. Instead, it closes with Mr. Bennet—alone in his library after he has given Darcy his blessing and heard Elizabeth confess that she truly loves the man—breaking into a weary laugh that dissolves into quiet tears. The very library that, in Austen's novel, served as a refuge from his family is transformed in the film into a space of paternal grief—where a father sits alone, mourning the departure of the daughter he loves. The same space, entirely reinvented in meaning.

This is precisely the opposite of what Austen herself critiques. One of the established readings of how Austen treats marriage in her novels is that it is far from a universally beautiful institution. As Alistair Duckworth observes, Austen "qualified the happiness of the marriages that bring her heroines to prosperous domestic establishments by presenting, in one way or another, the dark alternative of the unaccommodated woman," while also providing "a quite unsentimental critique of marriage as an institution" through "her richly comic and satirical exposure of a varied gallery of ill-assorted couples."²⁶ Therefore, Austen presents her protagonist's romance while simultaneously demonstrating that marriage as an institution cannot be romanticized as it so often is in conventional romance—and

that, even within her own fiction, failed marriages far outnumber happy ones. In doing so, she critiques marriage within patriarchal society, and the Bennets' marriage functions as a prime example of this critique. Wright's adaptation, however, erases this meaning entirely. By softening the father and amplifying the mother's absurdity, the film takes what Austen presents as one of several failed marriages and redirects all blame onto the wife alone, while elevating the husband's influence and emotional presence. This is precisely how the patriarchal myth survives in its new form. It no longer relies on coercion or overt authority but constructs a seductive image—the gentle, wise, and loving father under whose quiet guidance the family thrives. What emerges is not the dismantlement of patriarchy—a move toward partnership in which both parents share the responsibility of guiding the family—but its most effective disguise: a myth so thoroughly naturalized that it is consumed, as Barthes would say, innocently.

3. Consuming the Myth Innocently: A Comparative Analysis of Korean and Anglo-American Reviews

How, then, was this film received by its audience? I have argued that Wright's adaptation functions as an effective disguise for patriarchal myth. However, for this claim to hold, it is necessary to examine how viewers actually responded to the film—for the mere presence of such devices does not guarantee that audiences accepted them uncritically. Thus, in order to assess the effectiveness of this revised patriarchal myth in concealing the power dynamics inherent in the image of the gentle father, I undertook a comparative analysis of reviews of both the original novel and the film on two platforms: IMDb, an Anglo-American film review platform, and Watchapedia, a Korea's most widely used review platform for films and books.²⁷ Previous digital humanities research has already shown that online review data can serve as meaningful evidence of literary and cultural reception. For example, Pianzola et. al. have demonstrated the scholarly value of such data through their analysis of reader comments on Wattpad, arguing "neglecting its role in the contemporary reading landscape will inevitably lead to misleading assumptions about reading behaviours."²⁸ Furthermore, though Melanie Walsh and Maria Antoniak caution that Goodreads data also could serve corporate interests, their computational analysis of over 120,000 Goodreads reviews affirms such data as "a boon for literary criticism," demonstrating how it can reveal the ways in which readers collectively construct and negotiate literary value.²⁹ More directly relevant to the cross-cultural dimension of this study, Hu et. al. have conducted a comparative analysis of book review data across Goodreads and Douban—a U.S.-based and a China-based platform respectively—demonstrating how cross-platform comparison can help scholars reflect on "existing views about the development of literary genres and the reception of books."³⁰ Building on this body of scholarship, this study extends such cross-platform, cross-cultural comparison to film and book reviews across Anglo-American and Korean platforms, a pairing that remains largely unexplored.

Therefore, my focus lies particularly on Korean reviews, given a cultural context in which the traditional patriarchal father figure remains deeply embedded in media and societal structures—despite significant resistance such as the 4B movement, which calls on women to reject dating, sexual relationships, marriage, and childbirth altogether.³¹ However, it is worth noting that this resistance has predominantly targeted the overt, exploitative forms of traditional patriarchy,³² while the subtler

mechanism this essay identifies—the concealment of patriarchal authority behind the image of the gentle father—has received far less scrutiny. This makes the Korean reception of Wright’s adaptation a particularly revealing case study.

To assess the effectiveness of this revised patriarchal myth, all available reviews up to the date of collection were retrieved: Watchapedia film reviews on 8 April 2025 (n=3,527), Watchapedia book reviews on 23 May 2025 (n=426), and Aladin book reviews on 6 June 2025 (n=213). English-language reviews were collected from IMDb (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0414387/reviews>), which displays reviews on a single continuously scrolling page; all visible reviews as of 20 April 2025 were retrieved (n=1,999). Although the two corpora differ in size (3,527 vs. 1,099 reviews), the collocation analysis examines co-occurrence patterns within each corpus independently, comparing the qualitative nature of collocate profiles rather than raw frequencies across corpora. Collection dates differ across platforms as data collection was conducted in phases; book review sources were identified subsequent to the initial film review collection. Korean book reviews were drawn from two platforms: Aladin, Korea’s leading online book retailer, and Watchapedia, which functions primarily as a film and media review platform. The two platforms may attract distinct audiences: Aladin may draw a readership with greater prior investment in the source material, potentially yielding more analytically oriented reviews, while Watchapedia is more likely to capture a broader cross-section of general audience response. Thus, to minimize platform-specific effects on user composition and review culture, reviews from both platforms were combined to ensure broader coverage of book reception.

Collocations were extracted using a Python pipeline (kiwipiepy v0.23.1) targeting the lemmas “아버지(father)” and “아빠(dad)” separately, as the two terms carry distinct registers in Korean: “아버지(father)” is the formal/respectful form, while “아빠(dad)” carries affectionate and colloquial connotations. It was therefore hypothesized that “아빠(dad)” would attract more personally inflected responses, while “아버지(father)” would produce more evaluative or character-focused collocates. Separating the two terms allows for potential differences in reception patterns to be captured. Furthermore, of the 92 reviews that mention “아버지(father)” and “아빠(dad),” only 2 contain both terms, indicating that the overlap is negligible and does not materially affect the independence of the two collocate profiles. “베넷/베넷씨(Mr. Bennet)” was additionally queried to identify reviews that explicitly reference the filmic character rather than fatherhood in general. For IMDb reviews, the lemmas father and Mr. Bennet were targeted. Surface forms (아버지도, 아버지는, 아빠의, etc.) were lemmatized to base forms prior to analysis using kiwipiepy’s morphological analyzer, with stopwords (functional morphemes including case markers, verbal endings, and punctuation) excluded. Collocations were computed within a symmetric window of L5–R5 tokens. Association measures reported include Mutual Information (MI), T-score, and log-likelihood; a minimum frequency threshold of 3 was applied. The top 15 collocates by log-likelihood for each search term are reported in Table 1; for 베넷/베넷씨(Mr. Bennet), all 8 collocates meeting the minimum frequency threshold are reported, as fewer than 15 were identified. This study does not employ automated sentiment analysis; rather, the

semantic orientation of collocated words is interpreted contextually, functioning as a form of qualitative coding guided by the collocational data. As this coding was conducted by a single researcher, inter-annotator agreement statistics (e.g., Cohen's κ) could not be calculated, which constitutes a limitation that future research could address through independent coding verification.

Table 1. Top Collocates by Log-Likelihood for Each Search Term (Korean Film Reviews)

아빠 (dad, affective)

Collocate	Freq	MI	T-score	LL
눈물 (tears)	6	7.60	2.44	53.77
리지 (Lizzie)	8	5.71	2.77	50.20
행복 (happiness)	6	6.96	2.43	48.03
사랑 (love)	13	3.65	3.32	47.41
마지막 (last/final)	6	6.01	2.41	39.78
베넷 (Bennet)	4	7.48	1.99	34.84
남자 (man)	6	5.31	2.39	33.83
생기다 (come to have)	4	6.59	1.98	29.53
장면 (scene)	6	4.66	2.35	28.51
멋지 (wonderful)	4	6.17	1.97	27.14
보이다 (appear)	5	4.62	2.15	23.33
모습 (figure/appearance)	4	5.35	1.95	22.51
사람 (person)	5	3.59	2.05	16.46
생각 (thought)	4	4.12	1.89	15.85
영화 (film)	8	2.33	2.27	14.53

아버지 (father, formal)

Collocate	Freq	MI	T-score	LL
눈물 (tears)	16	7.78	3.98	155.52
마지막 (last/final)	20	6.52	4.42	151.90
웃음 (laughter/smile)	14	7.40	3.72	125.60
사랑 (love)	31	3.68	5.13	114.86
엘리자베스 (Elizabeth)	15	5.16	3.76	82.43
미소 (smile)	7	7.28	2.63	60.53
장면 (scene)	8	3.85	2.63	28.80
입맞춤 (kiss)	3	7.42	1.72	26.52
대화 (dialogue)	4	5.89	1.97	25.59
최고 (best)	6	4.32	2.33	25.25
명장면 (iconic scene)	3	7.06	1.72	24.63

모든 (all/every)	6	4.17	2.31	24.05
생각 (thought)	7	3.70	2.44	23.77
리지 (Lizzie)	6	4.07	2.30	23.21
인상 (impression)	4	5.43	1.95	22.95

베넷/베넷씨 (Mr. Bennet, character-specific)

Collocate	Freq	MI	T-score	LL
아빠 (dad)	4	7.48	1.99	34.84
눈물 (tears)	3	7.21	1.72	24.77
행복 (happiness)	3	6.57	1.71	22.03
다아시 (Darcy)	5	3.62	2.05	17.05
오만 (pride)	4	2.89	1.73	9.72
편견 (prejudice)	3	2.44	1.41	5.56
영화 (film)	4	1.94	1.48	5.31
사랑 (love)	3	2.14	1.34	4.56

Note. Freq = raw co-occurrence frequency; MI = Mutual Information; LL = log-likelihood. Window: L5–R5; minimum frequency threshold = 3. Korean terms are followed by approximate English glosses.

The first notable finding concerns the sheer visibility of Mr. Bennet across the two formats. Mentions of Mr. Bennet in book reviews are remarkably rare—only 5 out of 639 reviews (0.8%). In the film reviews, however, they surge to 112 out of 3,527 (3.2%)—a proportion approximately four times greater, a difference that is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10.49$, $p = 0.001$), though the small absolute number of book mentions precludes formal statistical comparison. The qualitative contrast is nonetheless suggestive: Wright’s reimagined Mr. Bennet made a measurable impression on Korean audiences in a way that Austen’s original simply did not. As only five book reviews mention Mr. Bennet, these were examined individually rather than through collocation analysis. The reviews present a mix of positive and negative evaluations, using words such as “귀찮은(annoyed),” “좋은(good),” “냉소적이지만(though sarcastic),” and “유머(humor).” One reviewer captures Austen’s intended ambivalence with striking precision: “냉소적이지만 따뜻한 중년 남성. 멋졌다. 많은 면에서 현대적인 사람이었지만 그의 무관심은 가족의 생계를 위협할만큼 치명적인 것이 될 수도 있었다” (Though sarcastic, a warm middle-aged man, he was cool. In many ways he was a modern person, but his indifference could have been fatal enough to threaten his family’s livelihood). This reviewer recognizes both the charm and the danger of Mr. Bennet—precisely the balance Austen constructs.

The collocation analysis of the film reviews, however, reveals a starkly different picture. Mentions of “아버지 (father)” and “아빠(dad)” in film reviews are overwhelmingly surrounded by positive

associations: “최고 (the best),” “사랑 (love),” “명장면 (iconic scene),” and “행복(happiness)” —as reviewers put it, “아버지의 눈물이야말로 진짜 명장면 (The father’s tears are the real iconic scene)” and “최고는 아버지의 행복한 눈물ㅠㅠ (The best part is the father’s happy tears)” (see Table 1). Furthermore, the words “마지막(last/final)” and “눈물(tears)” frequently co-occur with both “아버지(father)” and “아빠(dad)” (see Table 1), pointing directly to the film’s closing scene—the very moment I have identified as the climax of the film’s romanticization of the patriarch. The affective intensity of this reception becomes vivid in individual reviews. One reviewer writes, “마지막 아버지가 딸의 진심을 알고 눈물 흘렸을 때 괜시리 나도 울게된 (When the father shed tears upon learning his daughter’s true feelings at the end, I found myself crying too).” Such responses to the film’s closing scene—a moment entirely of Wright’s invention, absent from Austen’s novel—recur throughout the reviews; of the 112 reviews that mention Mr. Bennet, 21 explicitly link the father to tears. Yet what is most striking is not the emotional intensity itself but the ease with which reviewers move from the fictional father to their own. One reviewer describes “엘리자베스 아버지의 모습에 우리 아빠가 겹쳐보이는 마법까지 (Even the magic of seeing my own father overlapping with Elizabeth’s father),” while another reflects, “정말 사랑해서 결혼하고 싶은 남자가 생겼을 때 리지처럼 아빠 앞에서 말할 수 있을까. 그리고 우리 아빠는 베넷씨같은 반응일지. 그렇다면 정말 행복할 것 같다 (When I find a man I truly love and want to marry, could I speak before my father the way Lizzy does? And would my father react the way Mr. Bennet does? If so, I think I would be truly happy).” For the former, Wright’s Mr. Bennet is no longer a fictional character but a lens through which their own father is seen; for the latter, he has become a standard against which their own father is measured. In neither case does the reviewer recognize this image as constructed—it is simply felt, absorbed into the texture of personal longing and familial expectation. Furthermore, contrary to expectations, the collocate profiles of “아버지(father)” and “아빠(dad)” prove largely convergent, despite their distinct registers in Korean. The formal term “아버지(father)” does not produce more evaluative or character-focused collocates, nor does the colloquial “아빠(dad)” attract exclusively personal responses—both terms are equally saturated with affective vocabulary. This convergence reinforces the argument: the naturalization of Wright’s patriarch is so complete that it operates across registers, collapsing the distinction between fictional character and personal ideal.

This affective saturation becomes all the more striking when set against the reception of Mrs. Bennet. Reviews about Mrs. Bennet are predominantly negative, featuring terms such as “짜증(annoying),” “극성(overbearing).” Her mention rate remains nearly identical between book reviews (0.9%, 6 out of 639) and film reviews (1.2%, 41 out of 3,527), and the sentiment is consistently negative in both. In other words, while Mr. Bennet undergoes a dramatic transformation—from an ambivalent figure in book

reviews to an overwhelmingly admired one in film reviews—Mrs. Bennet remains fixed in her negative reception. The film does not make Mrs. Bennet worse; it makes Mr. Bennet better, and it is this asymmetry that produces the romanticized patriarchal dynamic—one that evades the label of sexism precisely because it never appears to target women directly.

Table 2. Top Collocates by Log-Likelihood for Each Search Term (IMDb Reviews)

father

Collocate	Freq	MI	T-score	LL
sutherland	28	7.70	5.27	260.62
donald	23	7.56	4.77	206.97
mother	12	7.77	3.45	109.38
miscast	5	9.07	2.23	55.32
family	8	6.07	2.79	52.82
addled	3	12.14	1.73	50.64
daughters	6	6.67	2.43	44.52
bumpkin	3	10.56	1.73	44.04
portrays	4	8.47	1.99	40.25
doting	3	10.14	1.73	39.55
suffering	3	9.82	1.73	37.32
elizabeth	9	4.23	2.84	36.94
like	8	4.21	2.68	32.57
bennet	7	4.44	2.52	30.54
character	6	4.70	2.36	28.19

mr. bennet

Collocate	Freq	MI	T-score	LL
mrs	172	7.20	13.03	1760.75
elizabeth	239	5.57	15.13	1552.21
family	85	6.09	9.08	607.56
blethyn	63	6.43	7.85	491.10
brenda	62	6.37	7.78	475.02
sutherland	72	5.67	8.32	460.76

donald	65	5.67	7.90	414.67
knightley	85	4.69	8.86	414.63
keira	84	4.41	8.73	374.52
sisters	47	5.96	6.75	322.08
darcy	87	3.69	8.61	301.43
jane	71	3.83	7.84	258.04
collins	33	5.19	5.59	183.54
character	44	4.19	6.27	180.17
girls	28	5.73	5.19	180.03

Note. Freq = raw co-occurrence frequency; MI = Mutual Information; LL = log-likelihood. Window: L5–R5; minimum frequency threshold = 3.

However, the reviews on IMDb present a markedly different pattern. Unlike Korean reviewers, who embrace the gentle father with admiration and longing, Anglo-American reviewers express frustration—but notably, their complaints center on fidelity to the source material, not on the patriarchal implications of Mr. Bennet’s transformation. The two highest-ranking collocates by log-likelihood are “Sutherland” and “Donald” (referring to Donald Sutherland, the actor cast as Mr. Bennet), suggesting that Anglo-American audiences’ engagement with the character is primarily mediated through casting discourse. The co-occurrence of evaluative terms such as “miscast,” “addled,” and “bumpkin” indicates that this casting discourse is predominantly critical—reviewers contest the portrayal of Mr. Bennet rather than emotionally investing in it. The sole affective collocate, “doting,” appears only three times. This stands in stark contrast to the Korean reception, where “아버지(father)” and “아빠(dad)” are surrounded by emotionally charged vocabulary such as “눈물(tears),” “행복(happiness),” and “사랑(love),” with no equivalent critical discourse around casting or portrayal. Some note that this shift weakens key themes of the novel, such as Elizabeth’s bond with Jane and the unhappy Bennet marriage—yet even these critiques remain within the register of fidelity to Austen, never questioning what ideological work Mr. Bennet’s transformation performs. They recognized that something had changed, yet never asked what that change served. Another stark difference is the complete absence of any desire to have such a father. While Korean reviewers express affection for such a gentle father, no IMDb reviewer voices a similar wish. A few do mention the final library scene that so captivates Korean audiences, but only in passing, as plot summary or as a moment that compensates for their disappointment with the adaptation’s Mr. Bennet—never as an emotionally immersive experience.

This divergence may be partly explained by the degree of familiarity with Austen’s original text. Anglo-American audiences, for whom Austen is canonical, arrive with fixed expectations that resist alteration. The existence of devoted fan communities such as the self-described “Janeites” attests to the intensity of this attachment; for such audiences, evaluating an adaptation inevitably becomes an exercise

in measuring fidelity to the source. It is worth noting that Anglo-American reviewers' fidelity-based rejection of Wright's Mr. Bennet might, at first glance, appear to constitute resistance to the patriarchal myth this essay identifies. After all, by refusing the gentle father, these reviewers decline the very image through which the myth operates. However, their resistance is directed at the adaptation's departure from Austen, not at the ideological work that departure performs. One reviewer, for instance, dismisses Sutherland as "completely miscast," arguing that "all of the subtlety and most of the wit and humour is missing, making the film adaptation of arguably the best book ever written into nothing more than a mildly enjoyable rom-com." The reviewer explicitly identifies the loss—Austen's ironic wit has been replaced by something softer and more sentimental—yet frames this entirely as an aesthetic failure rather than an ideological transformation. The question of why Wright chose to strip Mr. Bennet of his detachment, or what cultural work the resulting gentle father performs, is never raised. Another reviewer offers an even more revealing critique, objecting that Sutherland "portrays the father as an addled country bumpkin when the father is actually a witty gentleman who [...] distances himself from [his family] via his witty remarks." Here, the reviewer not only recognizes the transformation but articulates precisely what has changed: Austen's Mr. Bennet maintains emotional distance through wit, while Wright's version collapses that distance entirely. Yet once again, the critique operates within the register of fidelity—the reviewer objects that the portrayal is inaccurate, not that the replacement of ironic detachment with tender devotion serves to naturalize a particular form of patriarchal authority. In both cases, reviewers see what was lost but not what was constructed in its place. They object to Wright's Mr. Bennet because he is unfaithful to the novel, not because he naturalizes patriarchal authority—and in doing so, they leave the underlying mechanism entirely unexamined.

Korean audiences, by contrast, approach Austen as relatively unfamiliar foreign literature, with correspondingly lower familiarity and attachment to the original text. But the divergence also reflects a deeper cultural difference. In a society where the authoritarian, emotionally distant father remains a familiar figure, the gentle patriarch fills an affective void that Anglo-American audiences simply do not experience in the same way. Had the image of a gentle, devoted father been equally novel in the Anglo-American context, one would expect some reaction to it—whether positive or negative. The near-total absence of such response suggests that this image holds nothing new for them. Anglo-American popular culture is already saturated with the protective, emotionally invested father—from sitcoms to the ubiquitous "overprotective dad" trope—making Wright's gentle Mr. Bennet unremarkable rather than revelatory. For Korean audiences, however, it resonates as something deeply longed for yet rarely encountered. It might be argued that Korean viewers' longing for a gentle father constitutes a critical rejection of the authoritarian father model—and in one sense, it does. These viewers are indeed refusing the rigid, emotionally distant patriarch that has long dominated Korean familial culture. However, what is significant is where this rejection leads. Rather than questioning the structure of patriarchal authority itself—the assumption that the father should occupy the center of familial emotional life, that his approval should constitute the ultimate validation—viewers replace one form of patriarchy with another. The authoritarian father is rejected, but the father's structural position as the emotional anchor of the family is never interrogated. The gentle patriarch is embraced precisely because he appears to resolve the problem of patriarchy while leaving its fundamental architecture intact. This is the myth's most effective operation: it channels genuine dissatisfaction with patriarchal authority not

toward structural critique but toward an alternative that preserves the same power relations in a more palatable form.

Consequently, no reviewer on either platform interrogates the ideological function of this transformation. Korean audiences accept the gentle father as an ideal; Anglo-American audiences reject Wright's Mr. Bennet, but their objection is that he is unfaithful to Austen, not that he naturalizes patriarchal authority. In both cases, the romanticization of the patriarch as a mechanism of patriarchal myth goes unidentified. The myth, then, operates differently in each context but succeeds in both: in Korea by being embraced as a welcome alternative, and in the Anglophone world by diverting criticism toward questions of fidelity rather than ideology.

4. Continuing Resistance, Evolving Patriarchy

It has been over a century since the first wave of feminism began with the suffrage movement, and if one counts the earlier efforts of proto feminists such as Mary Astell and Mary Wollstonecraft, the struggle spans several centuries. That patriarchy has survived into the twenty-first century despite this prolonged resistance is due, in part, to its capacity to evolve. Glick and Fiske succeeded in identifying one such evolution—benevolent sexism—revealing how patriarchy operates not only through hostility but through seemingly positive attitudes that confine women within socially prescribed feminine roles. Yet as this essay has argued, patriarchy has since advanced beyond even this tactic: by romanticizing the male figure rather than targeting women directly, it diminishes the mother by contrast, making the father's leadership of the household appear not only natural but necessary—a benevolent authority under whose protection the entire family thrives. This mechanism is more insidious than its predecessors precisely because it operates within the bounds of what appears virtuous—the “good father”—and is therefore consumed, as Barthes would say, innocently. Furthermore, just as third wave feminism recognized that gender oppression cannot be understood apart from race, ethnicity, and culture, the analysis of patriarchal tactics must also account for cultural difference. As this study has demonstrated, the same romanticized father figure elicits entirely different responses in Anglo American and Korean contexts—embraced as a longed for alternative in one, and unquestioned as an already familiar norm in the other. A critical framework that attends to these culturally specific modes of reception is essential if we are to trace how patriarchal myth adapts, persists, and naturalizes itself across borders.

¹ Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. The Noonday Press, 108.

² Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. The Noonday Press, 108.

³ Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. The Noonday Press, 130.

⁴ Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. The Noonday Press, 108.

⁵ Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996). “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70-3, 492.

⁶ Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1996). “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70-3, 492.

⁷ This mechanism resonates with what scholars of masculinity studies have identified as “inclusive masculinity” (Anderson) or “new fatherhood” (Dermott), in which the male figure adopts softer, more nurturing traits. However, while these frameworks focus on shifts in masculine identity and practice, the mechanism this essay identifies

operates at the level of ideological representation: it is not that fathers are genuinely becoming gentler, but that the image of the gentle father is strategically constructed to obscure patriarchal authority. Similarly, while Glick and Fiske's concept of benevolent sexism shares the logic of concealment, it operates by defining women—as fragile, pure, or in need of protection—whereas the mechanism identified here operates by redefining the male figure, leaving women untargeted in appearance yet diminished by contrast.

⁸ Sanders, J. (2006). *Adaptation and Appropriation*. Routledge, 2.

⁹ Seeber, B. K. (2007). "A Bennet Utopia: Adapting the Father in *Pride and Prejudice*." *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal On-Line*, 27-2.

¹⁰ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 7.

¹¹ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 7.

¹² Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 144.

¹³ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 144.

¹⁴ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 236.

¹⁵ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 228.

¹⁶ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 228.

¹⁷ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 228.

¹⁸ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 228.

¹⁹ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 329.

²⁰ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 11.

²¹ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 60.

²² Shields, S. (2021). "'An Old Maid in a House Is the Devil': Single Women and Landed Estate Management in Eighteenth-Century England." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 44-4, 423.

²³ Shields, S. (2021). "'An Old Maid in a House Is the Devil': Single Women and Landed Estate Management in Eighteenth-Century England." *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 44-4, 423.

²⁴ Burgan, M. A. (1975). "Mr. Bennet and the Failures of Fatherhood in Jane Austen's Novels." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 74-4, 537.

²⁵ Austen, J. (2005). *Pride and Prejudice*. Penguin Books, 110.

²⁶ Duckworth, A. M. (2020). *The Improvement of the Estate*. Johns Hopkins UP, xxv.

²⁷ The analysis code and tokenized review data are publicly available at <https://github.com/Blackwing776/pride-prejudice-reception> (archived at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20462430>).

²⁸ Pianzola, F., Rebor, S., & Lauer, G. (2020). "Wattpad as a Resource for Literary Studies." *PLoS ONE*, 15-1, 39.

²⁹ Walsh, M., & Antoni, M. (2021). "The Goodreads 'Classics': A Computational Study of Readers, Amazon, and Crowdsourced Amateur Criticism." *Journal of Cultural Analytics*, 6-2, 245.

³⁰ Hu, Y., & Underwood, T., Layne-Worthey, G., & Downie, J. S. (2026). "Comparative Analysis of Classics Book Review Data Created by Users across Douban and Goodreads." *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 41, i103. <https://doi.org/10.1093/lle/fqaf084>

³¹ Sussman, A. L. (2023). "A World Without Men." *The Cut*. 8 March 2023, <https://www.thecut.com/2023/03/4b-movement-feminism-south-korea.html>. Accessed 10 April 2026.

³² Sussman, A. L. (2023). "A World Without Men." *The Cut*. 8 March 2023, <https://www.thecut.com/2023/03/4b-movement-feminism-south-korea.html>. Accessed 10 April 2026.

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