We're made to scrutinize and question the relationship of the father and the son as they relate to the formation of the protagonist's identity. Often these fathers are broken into semi-archetypal roles that serve to influence the protagonist's changing perception of their own ego and the society that fostered it. The dynamic of the father and son can be shown as tenuous or heartwarming, but it remains deeply allegorical in nature. The father/son dynamic and the masculine hegemony that controls the nation-state are deeply linked to one another. At the San Fransiscan flea market, General Taheri says to Amir, "boys and girls must know the legacy of their fathers" (Hosseini 122). This particular selection, fraught with narrative potential and essential to the dynamic of Amir and Baba, tells the reader that the father and son dynamic is the backbone of the nation-state. It is through fatherhood that a male faces society. As we know, from childhood, Amir's murky and irresolute identity is forged from the relationship with his father and his ill-fated half-brother. Either way, it comes back to male familial relations and how it is juxtaposed to the civic situation so often in this text. Hosseini states that the only thing Baba "loved as much as his late wife was Afghanistan, his late country" (135). Conveying those two grievances, two of the primary motivations for our perception of Baba's character, are closely related. Being told of the father/son legacy by a person who was of considerably high rank in the society that dictated as such is no small symbolic object for the text. This scene, and what it does to the narrative, employs a mirrored metaphor that essentially equates to, "the voice of the father is the voice of the country." Because of this dynamic, and the ways in which Amir treats Baba as a backboard with which to codify his presence as a masculine entity, we can view Baba as a sort of bildungsroman success story; a naturalized citizen who found happiness in domestic masculinity.

The Victorian age was fraught with normative reinforcements of gender and a paradoxical scrutiny of the human body. Bildungsroman reaching conceptual invocation at this time would associate it with the current normative model of family and gender. As such, we could comport Baba's story as a mode of successful bildung; he made mistakes, fell from grace, but eventually became a beacon of domestic masculinity and naturalized himself as a proper citizen and a proper father. Baba performs this role ceaselessly, only revealing the turmoil underneath long after his death. embodies the spirit of the Kabul man: "a towering Pashtun specimen with a thick beard, a wayward crop of curly brown hair as unruly as the man himself, hands that looked capable of uprooting a willow tree…" (Hosseini 11). We're given the description of a perfect masculine citizen, the driving force behind Afghanistan's cultural tenets, civil policy, and social exchange. Very little is said about Baba's parentage or what sort of masculine struggles he might have encountered in his formative years because Hosseini frames him as the indisputable hero. The tension between Amir and his father mounts as Baba tries to tear him away from his fascination with literacy and make a more active, boyish citizen out of him, even going as far as to praise Hassan's masculinity over his (Hosseini 39). Amir even overhears Baba saying, "if I hadn't seen the doctor pull him out of my wife with my own eyes, I'd never believe he's my son" (Hosseini 20). Baba confides this in private, but it betrays a melancholic sense of dissatisfaction with his offspring, resulting in a relationship that is, in its early stages, tumultuous at best.

This rendering of Amir as somehow a failure of a masculine citizen for not following in Baba's exact footsteps further reinforces Baba as the ideal. As such, Baba becomes the force that consistently poses the hostile inquiry to Amir, whether it be career choices, slips of the

tongue, or behaviors that Baba cannot identify with. It's within this gap we can identify Baba's success story and the way he represents Amir's unreachable goal. The important thing to remember here is that Baba is Amir's biological father and Amir grew up seeing him constantly, thus coming to face the hostile inquiry directly from its source in both paternal and national forms. Elvis' narrative does not handle this in the same way; Elvis' biological father is not in any way a naturalized citizen or a masculine entity—he has failed to compete with these norms and as such becomes an antisocial drunkard that treats Elvis poorly. However, many of the societal reflections of what it means to be masculine come through both him and The Colonel.