



The Noteworthy Reflections of Hypermasculinity in Sung Yu's *Master Teng-Tu*

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Abstract

This paper underlines matters of hypermasculinity in Sung Yu's flash fiction entitled *Master Teng-tu*. This story tells about Sung-yu who is accused as an immoral man by the King. He asks help from Master Teng-tu then successfully escapes from the accusation concerning his morality. Through qualitative method and theory of hypermasculinity, the analysis of the story includes how the dialogues of Sung-yu and Master Teng-tu are matters of male superiority and underestimation to women. Sung-yu may win but his effort is not manly since he prioritizes himself more than the others. In conclusion, masculinity may always exist in society, but being a hyper version of it should be hindered. People should take care more of other people by concerning better moral considerations hereafter.

Keywords: *Femininity; Hypermasculinity; Master Teng-tu; Patriarchy*

INTRODUCTION

Flash fiction is relatively a new wave in the world of literature concerning how to tell a story in a short but meaningful way. Flash fiction in the depth of its initial emergence is an experiment to suit modern readers who because of the change of lifestyle tend to choose a short reading for soul and mind consumption. Needless to say, the existence of flash fiction in this time and era constructs a

certain type of mentality inside the physical aspect of the readers. That is a sharp desire to look into the deepest meaning while consuming the shortest form in order to take a position in actual problems of the day, including matters of hetero and homonormativity.

The analysis of traditional beliefs regarding gender, including associated concepts like biological sex, sexuality, masculinity, and femininity (Salenius, 2023), reveals a binary opposition between men and women. This dichotomy extends to biological sex, masculinity, and femininity, as well as to sexuality, often framed as heterosexual versus homosexual or as "normal" versus "deviant." In exploring the significance of gender, biological sex, sexuality, and gender roles, it becomes evident that contemporary societies often categorize individuals into a dominant or mainstream group, with those who diverge labeled as "others" and deemed "deviant" from the norm. This hierarchical structure reinforces control by one group over another (Salenius, 2023).

Master Teng-Tu is basically a simple flash fiction story with extreme intricacy or in other word the concept is extremely broad and comprises any kind of action about a hypermasculine gentleman named Sung-Yu who is being accused by a chamberlain named Master Teng-Tu in front of a King. Originally, the character of Sung-Yu is a fictional version of the original author of the story whose original name is the same. Through the process of reading, the researchers find the interesting aspect from this story is how an appropriate manly hypermasculine gentleman behaviour is portrayed elegantly, an aspect rarely be found in degenerate feminization society.

METHOD

The researchers use the qualitative method to analyze, explain, and interpret the given data so-called flash fiction, the theory of hypermasculinity in the flash fiction entitled *Master Teng-Tu* and other supportive data that are related to answer this journal research question. All the collected data above are then read intensively after that is interpreted by the researchers' understanding. Sources were obtained from various physical and digital libraries and also obtained from several credible websites. Data analysis includes obtaining sources, reading carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting expert opinions in the field and not forgetting to write them in a reference list.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A Gentleman's Self Control as Sign of Hypermasculinity

Looking deeply into the age today, seems like almost the whole world was enraptured in the embrace of degraded feminism. Social media has constructed male and females to be weaker than before (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). Men and women alike especially and primarily men were forced to act like the usual nature of a woman like gossiping all the time, posting whiny statuses, roaming around posting their narcissistic picture for craving likes from others, and even using fake accounts to make personal attacks on other people. Most men today have almost lost the unique feature of masculine gentlemen owned by men from the past (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). However,

many of them show hypermasculinity but not the masculine one one that shows men's charismatic domination.

Looking rationally and carefully at all the progression in social media stature, one could plainly argue that actually the entire comfortability provided by the advancement of social media and technology has one purpose in mind, namely weakening the men or feminizing the men (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). In order to have a healthy society, men are the fortress and the true true line of defense that protects women and children. When the fortress collapses and the defense line is wiped out, there is nothing left to hinder all bad influences from attacking women and our children.

The existence of *Master Teng-Tu* draws up essential points pertaining to how to be a hypermasculine manly man yet at the same time never lose for a second gentlemanship and masculinity (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). It is usually described as patrimonial and patriarchal domination as stated clearly below:

"... His character is licentious. I would submit that your Majesty is ill-advised in allowing him to follow you into the Queen's apartments." (Yu, 2024)

Master Teng-tu plays the accusation elegantly and beautifully. He is not harsh in making ad hominem or personal attacks like most men nowadays. Although it has fierce poison inside, Master Teng-Tu's accusation is covered under the blanket of a soft appearance (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021; Yu, 2024). He is not direct and does a headshot but gently starts with praising the superiority of Sung-Yu which is his handsome features, calm bearing, and smooth tongue. This shows how men from the past dealt with their enemies in old China, especially in its kingdom period. They have strong self-control, or in other words suppress emotions they actually feel (Scheff, 2006). They highly regard not only the wittiness and cleverness of the mindset but also sincere acknowledgment about the truth of others. This is the first lesson to being a hyper-masculine gentleman is having strong self-control is undoubtedly a way to maintain power within (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023).

"The king repeated Teng-tu's words to Sung Yu..."
(Yu, 2024)

Interestingly, The King is not trapped in a sort of blind belief. He is a real character that can harmonize his inner balance and self-feelings (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021; Yu, 2024). Whatever shows up in social media most of the time is accepted as the original truth without scrupulous checks and re-check, examining, and re-examining whether it is true or fake. The King does not add and subtract the accusation to make it hotter and more destructive especially at crucial areas like the sphere of power and class (Scheff, 2006). He just lays the bare plain truth of the accusation.

"The king said: "Can you substantiate your statement that you are not licentious? If you cannot, you must leave the court." (Yu, 2024)

What is more to say is that the King is mostly regarded as a symbol of high wisdom. His wisdom clearly shines forth by giving a chance to Sung-Yu for self defence which is carried out brilliantly and successfully by Sung-Yu at last. He is not quick to judge and easy to pronounce punishment against Sung-Yu (Nababan & Nurmaily, 2021; Yu, 2024). Otherwise, modern society just acts contrary to the wise King. Whoever is informed by the news being guilty of something, does not matter if it is simple truth or just baloney, must be ready to be widely criticized as if perfection is a treasure owned by netizens only. Interesting fact is that after he gives the chance for Sung-Yu self-defence, based on the simple reason that he is the chairmanship person who renders the decision (Damayanti, et al., 2023; Majerski, 2024). The King also added a serious consequence if Sung-Yu failed in his defence that is leaving the court. The second important lesson to be a hypermasculine gentleman here is having high wisdom because a real gentleman person is a man of wisdom, a brave truth seeker and a considerate risk taker (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024).

"Of all the women in the world, the most beautiful are the women of the land of Ch'u." (Yu, 2024)

In the above statement, Sung-yu shows the art of counter attack manliness that is poured out in front of the King's highest possibility in which he is being accused of being wrongly targeted. Sung-yu does not attack right to the person which simply shows the lack of self control and emotional regulation (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). It is interesting to compare the technique which was used by Sung-Yu as the true symbol of hypermasculine man with most men in today's time and era nowadays regarding producing the high-quality defence argument. People tend to react *ad hominem* when they get to the point of being accused of something. It is an effort to be able to react in such a way so that repression becomes habitual and out of consciousness like Sung-Yu did (Scheff, 2006). A man needs to study hard to fill his brain with high quality material like reading a lot of beneficial virtuous books and fill his heart with positive feelings about others. Without an excellent filled brain and a well trained heart, it is very hard for a man to reach the high hypermasculinity level as Sung-Yu (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024).

"... And in my village there is none that can be compared with the girl next door." (Yu, 2024)

From the line above, over and over, Sung-Yu tirelessly shows off the main power of hypermasculinity that is herculean self-control (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). He still plays around with symbolism and metaphorical praise of a woman and has not touched directly on the accusation yet. This just shows how great his soul really is and the personhood he really got so far in the realm of systematic measures of emotion (Scheff, 2006).

"For three years this lady has been climbing the garden wall and peeping at me, yet I have never succumbed."
(Yu, 2024)

By saying such a thing, Sung-Yu wants to say that a beautiful woman does not always attract him to commit adultery with her. The statement clearly shows how strong self control must be built by Sung-Yu inside out especially when dealing with beautiful women naturally without being labeled as the sign of weakness (Scheff, 2006). He would like to oppose the label of the passion of lust usually put to man's figure and an act of adultery. That once again shows the unique feature of hypermasculine man. A man should defend himself by prioritizing self-control rather than always feeling guilty for simply being a man (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024).

*"...How different is the behavior of Master Tēng-t'u!
His wife has a woolly head and misshapen ears..."* (Yu, 2024)

A wife is a dignity for a husband. Sung-Yu knows better how to attack his enemy that is by shooting at his weakest point and destroying his enemy's ego by breaking apart his Achilles' heel (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). It seems like Sung-Yu already knows that Master Teng-tu's weakest point is his wife. Now, one of the most powerful characteristics of a hypermasculine man is knowing the proper time and occasion to be dangerous and to attack. People with this characteristic study ahead in time everything about their enemies in order to never be defeated and as self protection (Scheff, 2006). After Sung-Yu proves his chastity, now he differs himself from his enemy. Then he continues to make an outright *ad hominem* attack on the physical side of Master Teng-Tu's wife.

*"...Yet Tēng-t'u fell in love with her and caused her to
bear him five children."* (Yu, 2024)

From the statement above, as if Sung-Yu wants to declare that with such a horrendous ugly wife, Master Teng-Tu was passionately falling in love and most of the time which caused her to bear him five children. Such a genius comparison and a dense sense of masculine mystique there (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). This is an unseparated power from a hypermasculine man that is hyper in brain and produces hyper in tongue meaning having great eloquence.

Hypermasculinity and Its Noteworthiness

The concept of hypermasculinity encompasses an elevated degree of stereotypical behaviors commonly associated with males, exemplifying the essence of masculinity itself, which is further amplified by a multitude of factors. These factors encompass callousness towards women, the perception of violence as a characteristic of manliness, and the perception of danger as an exhilarating element (Damayanti, et al., 2023; Majerski, 2024). These notions shed light on how hypermasculinity transcends mere masculinity and utilizes this attribute to assert dominance over others.

Masculinity pertains to the societal and cultural expectations, personal characteristics, and behaviors, such as aggression and dominance, that are considered appropriate for men, particularly in Western cultures (Vokey, 2008). Gender, as a cultural construct, is distinct from biological sex, which refers to the physiological differences between males and females. When an individual excessively embraces masculine ideals, hypermasculinity can emerge (Vokey, 2008). It represents an exaggerated manifestation of traditional masculine gender norms.

Although hyper-masculine attitudes can be adopted by any man, they are most commonly observed during adolescence and young adulthood, stages characterized by identity formation and strong peer influence supporting hyper-masculine behaviors (Mills, 2001; Vokey, 2008). During adolescence, there is heightened emphasis on masculine norms like toughness and aggression. Non-conformity to these norms often results in social consequences such as exclusion, physical or verbal harassment, or derogatory labeling with terms suggesting inferiority such as a homosexuality and feminine guy in the form of minorities as 'sissy' or 'fag' (Vokey, 2008).

The concept of hypermasculinity characterizes a cultural environment that overtly prioritizes stereotypical male behaviors and thought patterns. Heteronormativity serves as a mechanism for shaping male dominance, power, and behavior, highlighting the systemic reinforcement of traditional gender norms. Within this framework, women are typically portrayed as maternal and nurturing, while men are associated with attributes of stoicism and authority (Hickey & Mooney, 2018). Men are conditioned to exhibit toughness and aggression as the only acceptable responses to fear, as expressions of pain and vulnerability are discouraged by societal expectations of masculinity. The pressure for men to conform to the ideal of masculinity is significant, leading to the potential influence of advertising and media representations on gender beliefs (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Vokey, 2008).

Moreover, the aforementioned three aspects also serve to highlight how hypermasculinity is diametrically opposed to femininity (Damayanti, et al., 2023; Majerski, 2024). This ideology exhibits a noticeable indifference towards women, perceiving them solely as objects. Even if these objects prove to be useful, they are merely perceived as tools to enhance one's own circumstances. By adopting such a stance, individuals embracing hypermasculinity invariably perceive men as the definitive embodiments of the world, wherein the attainment of heightened significance is paramount (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). This perspective further reinforces the belief that men inherently deserve superior conditions, viewing themselves as the most preeminent entities in the world, with the unwavering conviction that they are entitled to preside over it without any exceptions.

In addition, hypermasculinity represents an intensified form of masculinity characterized by stereotypical behaviors. These behaviors, driven by various factors, encompass callousness towards women, glorification of violence as a symbol of manliness, and the thrill-seeking perception of danger (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). It is crucial to recognize that hypermasculinity extends

beyond mere masculinity, utilizing this attribute as a means to establish dominance over others. Furthermore, this phenomenon stands in stark contrast to femininity, displaying a disregard for women and regarding them merely as objects. Consequently, men are perceived as the ultimate arbiters of the world, with an unwavering belief in their entitlement to wield unparalleled power and influence without any exceptions (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023).

Hypermasculinity originates from the deeply entrenched historical dominance of men over the world (Vokey, 2008). This mindset encompasses beliefs such as viewing sexual interactions with women as demonstrations of male power and female submission, endorsing violence as a hallmark of masculinity, romanticizing danger as exciting, and esteeming emotional control as a masculine attribute. Within the framework of hypermasculinity, the display of 'feminine' emotions like sensitivity and compassion is often disparaged as a sign of weakness (Vokey, 2008).

Another aspect highlights the notion that violence is associated with masculinity, indicating that violence serves as a means through which hypermasculinity expresses its exaggerated connotations within society. Men are also perceived as the arbiters of all definitions and understandings on this planet (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Although this concept may initially appear to have sexual undertones, it later expands to encompass sexism as a core element. Merely being different does not suffice for hypermasculinity, as anyone who deviates from the norm must submit to the authority of men. Failure to comply with this regulation inevitably results in the application of violence (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Furthermore, the act of being violent serves to amplify the power and strength that men possess, which must be exerted upon others. In fact, it even manifests sadistic tendencies if necessary to establish that the strength of men always surpasses that of others.

Another aspect also suggests that hypermasculinity tends to gravitate towards perilous situations. Rather than avoiding danger, hypermasculinity embraces it as a means to demonstrate one's strength (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). The characteristic of toughness further exemplifies hypermasculinity, as men are accustomed to engaging in fierce competition to assert their dominance. Psychologically, by magnifying physical power, men can acquire heightened confidence, bolster their self-esteem, and cultivate a distinct sense of masculinity. However, hypermasculinity lacks any hint of affection, as it solely revolves around a competitive mindset that stems from the negation of other individuals (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023).

Hypermasculinity, which is the excessive emphasis on the qualities and ideals associated with men, operates on the premise that men are inherently superior to any other gender and must maintain this superior position as they progress in society (Hickey, 2016; Majerski, 2024). This perspective is perpetuated by various forms of aggression that slowly and continuously reinforce the notions of hypermasculinity. Additionally, hypermasculinity is strongly linked to the notion of control, as individuals who embody hypermasculine traits tend

to desire and seek control over others (Hickey, 2016; Majerski, 2024). Within this context, it becomes evident that hypermasculinity not only showcases power and strength but also forcefully imposes a sense of absolute obedience upon others. The dynamics of hypermasculinity, therefore, encompass a complex interplay between power, control, and the expectation of complete submission (Damayanti, et al., 2023; Majerski, 2024).

As a term on psychological and sociological aspects, hypermasculinity plays such roles in emphasizing physical strength, aggression and sexuality of men. Its condition relates to gender expectations and the ways that boys are taught to be men (Damayanti, et al., 2023; Majerski, 2024). Masculine men have their own character. It is about a character who is under stress on something or someone is not going to cry like a woman or baby. Therefore, hypermasculine men must always show strength to deny all the childish conditions that they face in everyday problems. Coping up with the childish aspects are how each situation must always be faced in showing such physical values. It is why hypermasculine men do not like it when they see a boy or a man who is crying for the reason that they think is simple (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Hypermasculine men have a mindset that men must be strong and become the alpha in every relationship.

It is also indicated how hypermasculine men leads boys and men to be competitors than build a connection between each other. Being hyper in masculinity makes men think that fear, love, shame, and grief are weaknesses (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). They believe that any problem must be dealt with through being such superior persons and even those who do bullying towards other persons. That is why hypermasculinity could be really bad considering the fact that the men could suffer such a superiority complex that may be good for them but look really bad to wider societies.

Regarding their superiority complex, hypermasculinity men used to hide their vulnerable feelings in silence. They do not want people to think that they are weak. When boys or men face their problems, they may complete it with silence or express their feelings with anger when they can not hold it. that is why, there is always indication that hypermasculinity is bad for men's mental health. Boys and men who conform to hypermasculinity can be impacted in their health and relationships. They are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour, experience body dissatisfaction and depression. Assuming men should be protectors, leaders, or associating men with anger, selfishness, and aggression can be problematic for men.

Hypermasculinity and Its Cruciality in Master Teng-Tu

Hypermasculine men are silent about their own feelings to the point of repressing them altogether (Scheff, 2006). In so doing, a hypermasculine man tries to give a sign of power to the surrounding area. This stance was expressed clearly by Sung-Yu, who is a main figure studied by his self-defence argument. In replying to the accusation, he does not point to his accuser in *ad hominem*, but starting with a praise (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). The characteristic like

this is rarely hard to find this very day where men acted out by babbling their feelings out too often even more too many times without any rational reason behind it.

The matter of hypermasculinity is not about being masculine. It is about moral values in which ethical problems may involve either. Philosophically, the matter of being hyper is not suitable to any society (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). Indeed, it includes the matter of being egotistical in an ethical sense. It also relies on ideas that hypermasculinity contains more than merely being masculine. It is about being hyper that really brings in embracing values of patriarchal structures (Hickey, 2016; Majerski, 2024). Furthermore, the exaggerated patriarchal condition is nothing but such condemnation against any other issue, including women beings and even children.

Being hyper masculine indeed will prolong the matter of having a stigma of a man that is the center of everything (Hickey, 2016; Majerski, 2024). Male is considered superior and could not even be blamed for any of his faults. It is because hypermasculinity prioritizes any kind of supporting attribute to control power of himself. He never tries to understand others besides himself. Its purpose is solely for the sake of being a man, not by being humble for other creatures (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). In this case, male as a creature in his completeness is enough even to preside over the whole world.

It is interesting to see the story of *Master Teng-tu* not only as a story of a courtful law, but as an idea of hypermasculinity. The suspect does everything to defend himself, yet what he shows is himself being a man that should never be blamed at all (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). He must find any alibi to say that masculinity is never wrong. He may be correct, but the arguments are not. He tends to merely indicate that man is the center of the world. His arguments are not about himself, but about how himself as a man must be treated as always (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Therefore, he argues more about being in other's shoes and even in reverse.

Though this flash fiction shows what are the best options to be hyper masculine shown by the actions of the main characters, the matter of hypermasculinity is not without problems. The tensions could be found in the following. First, being hyper masculine seems to overpower what he has had before. Everyone is indeed possessing power, but hyper masculine people think that they must always exaggerate it (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Being a man is already a privilege, but hyper masculine ones demand more. If someone is given power, the hypermasculine ones will ask for more. If he does not get it, he will try to take more from other people. The reasons behind it are exactly the sense of himself being able to do everything, including being overpowered at once (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023).

Therefore, hypermasculinity could always be related to violence. Hypermasculinity also supports men's dominant position in society, a position that is detrimental to gender equality and further strengthened by the hypermasculinization of boys, with both factors feeding into the continuation of

violence against women (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). Men often show how great they are through their masculinity. They usually followed some role models of masculinity. A group of men usually will compare their masculine and have a "man test" to show how masculine they are. If they cannot follow or acquire to be masculine, then these men felt that they had failed the "test", so they found more aggressive ways to produce self-esteem, and violence became the primary way to gaining resources (Powell: 2018; Wijaya, et al., 2023). They usually show their power through violence and other aggressive behaviours.

Second, the attribute of hypermasculinity is indeed prioritizing masculinity and underestimating the matter of femininity. For these people, women are merely predicates to enhance more power of masculinity (Fitriani, et al., 2023; Yu, 2024). Therefore, any woman should bow before the man. It is more than looking down at women. It is such undermining of any womanness in all senses. A woman is nothing but the number two behind the man. This flash fiction is showing the example in its underlying sense (Rottweiler, et al., 2021; Yu, 2024). By showing that he is innocent, he is the one that could always handle any seduction from any woman. It is implied that he says it is always the woman that teases the man, therefore a man must be strong. This is such an undermining deed towards any woman (Pasopati, et al., 2023; Yu, 2024).

Another weakness of hypermasculinity is men's sexual attitude towards women. A lot of men solve anything with violence and assume that the experience of danger is exciting (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). This is why people will still hear news about domestic violence, and physical abuse. Certain examples like war, sports, sexual music videos play the main reason in this. Because of these things, society shows these false ideas that this is the only way to become man (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). The actions may uplift the conditions of men but it will only really improve their illusive superiority complex.

Third, being hyper masculine somehow also brings such disadvantages to other men as well. The reason is that any kind of overpowering will always perish other's power as well. If someone is being hyper masculine, the other masculine person is undermined (Fitriani, et al., 2023; Yu, 2024). Somehow, it is quite normal in society as no one has the equal power at all. The possession is always hierarchical. However, if this prolongs, hypermasculine people will only show their strengths without considering any of their weaknesses (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022).

Hypermasculinity makes most men behave as they please. Hypermasculinity also makes men suffer in mental health and anxiety. Men with hypermasculinity cannot express their emotions well (Hickey & Mooney, 2018; Aulia, et al., 2022). A tough guy cannot express sadness, a feeling that can be perceived as a weakness. It also prevents them from asking for help when they feel depressed, anxious, or lonely. Indeed, the shame is not on other people, but it is actually on the hyper masculine one (Ramos & Cerqueira-Santos, 2020; Pujimahanani, et al., 2023). Logically, the one who has more strength will always bear more weaknesses as well. However, they must always hide away their situations of succorance that will erode their thick senses of hypermasculinity.

CONCLUSION

This flash diction shows how the main character bears hyper masculine attributes. He is characterized by his high self control accompanied by his ability and endurance for bearing painful accusations cleverly. He is also having majestic eloquence and wisdom, smart, full of compassion and strong built emotional regulation. However, being hypermasculinity is not without problems. People with this attribute will always be likely to overpower themselves, undermining femininity in any woman, and underestimating other masculine power beside what they possess. Hypermasculinity is needed in recent days to defend any masculinity to be purer than before. However, if it prolongs, it will diminish other values, including the idea of masculinity itself. It will go further but not by defending itself. It is rather to be done by showing arrogance to any living beings indicated at a lower level than the hypermasculine beings.

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