

A Criticism of the SSH

My issues with Vox Day's social-sexual hierarchy.



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Most of my readers will be familiar with Vox Day's socio-sexual hierarchy, which he first developed at his now defunct Alpha Game blog, and continues over at his [Sigma Game substack](#). If you're not familiar with it then you can check it out at the link. I have been along for the ride of his development of his ideas since the beginning. In private I have discussed it with various people, but this is the first time that I'm going to go public with my thoughts. Vox has just released a book based on his work on this topic, but I have not read the book as of this time.

On the SSH itself, in short, I am not a fan. But before I go into why, I first want to talk about what I do like about Vox's development of his ideas. The SSH is an attempt at formulating clear motivations for men's behaviour in different social settings. To do this, Vox has used and invented several archetypes such as the alpha male, gamma male and others. Much of what Vox has observed and catalogued is very accurate, which is the primary reason for the success and longevity of the SSH framework. There is a lot of truth in his breakdown of the various male groups, and his work is rather a big slap in the face to the feminised and homosexualised worlds of psychology and psychiatry; in over 100 years, neither of those two professional fields have ever attempted to catalogue and define the behaviour of men in this manner. Why that is the case would be a topic for another post.

The most contentious group in the SSH is the gamma male, and much of Vox's writing on the subject tends to cover that group. The gamma male is the problem group; the men who habitually lie, or manipulate; the men who have trouble finding or accepting their natural place in a group of men. Read Vox's writing on the subject if you want more information.

I have two issues with the SSH as it is presented. I come from a background of leading men in stressful situations, the type of situations where lives are on the line if things go wrong. Professions such as whitewater rafting, firefighting, emergency team management. So I have seen a lot of different men in critical situations. I have seen how they act, I have seen what motivates them to succeed, I have seen them fail, and I have seen various types of leadership styles. I have often been the leader, but not always. I did that for around 30 years.

So in that context the SSH resonates with me, but it also doesn't. Here's what I believe: every man has each of the SSH sub-categories within him. But depending on the situation, his place in the male pecking order at the time, his life experience, and where he generally is in his life, based on these and I am sure other contributing factors will depend on which SSH behaviour pattern will emerge in any given moment.

The SSH has a term for this which is 'situational'. Such as a situational alpha, which means that the guy in question is not an alpha but in a particular situation he will be the alpha. Well, that is what I'm talking about. Every man has each of these categories within him, and what comes out depends on the moment.

Now, it is also true that the average man will have one of the sub-groups which tends to dominate his behaviour in a general sense. So if the majority of his behaviour patterns are that of a delta then it would be safe to say that he is a delta. I get that. But this then feeds into my main problem with the SSH as it is presented.

Vox Day is of the very strong opinion that a man is chained to his group and that no change is possible. The only possible change is that a man will learn to overcome and control the instinctive behaviour patterns that define his identified group. Or in other words, once a gamma then always a gamma.

This is an anti-Christian viewpoint. It is a world without hope or the possibility of redemption. It is a categorization of despair. And it is the antithesis of Christianity. Vox is a declared Christian, although a protestant but I'll let that go for purposes of this discussion, but at no stage in his documentation of the SSH that I have seen is there any mention of Christianity.

There are almost no categories in the SSH which implicitly infer the status of good or even godly men on an individual. In fact, Vox has correctly stated many times, and with some patience I might add, that being a sigma as one example, does not confer on the individual the assumption of acceptable moral behaviour. Completely evil men may be any category of the SSH, and they must be if we are to infer that the SSH is universally applicable. Epstein is in there somewhere.

But the gamma male category is different. The gamma category confers on the individual the automatic moral judgement that they are an untrustworthy man due to their inherent abhorrent behaviour. Vox's writing is full of advice to never trust a gamma, never hire a gamma, the list goes on. I understand why men categorized into such a reality react as they do, which is very negatively. They react that way because this is a profoundly un-Christian approach. It offers no hope nor any possibility of redemption. The best that they can get is that maybe they will be able to control their self-destructive impulses, but probably not because gammas are going to gamma.

We are all, each and every one of us, beset by sin. And the ways to approach sin, to overcome it, and to continue to resist it are the same for everyone. The Church's teachings and the teachings of the saints are not broken down into what sort of man you are in a system like the SSH. We are all the same before God. And this is my big problem with the SSH. In this aspect it is simply not true.

I have seen men who displayed gamma tendencies overcome them and become completely different men. Yes, the gamma tendencies are still within them, but they are within all of us at any time. The gamma man is the man who is most beholden to sin, who is most the slave to sin. To offer him no hope is quite frankly evil as far as I am concerned.

I believe the SSH to be a very useful tool to examine men's behaviour. But I do not go around in real life categorizing the men that I know, that I meet and with whom I interact. I deal with them as their behaviour permits me to deal with them in any given situation. But I will say this; men who are trapped in a gamma behaviour pattern respond best to honesty and mercy. The SSH is replete with often brutal examples of honesty. What it completely lacks is any sense of mercy.

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Matador Mar 12 Edited

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Brutal yet kind answer from the Dark Lord.

These churchians should read any Gospel paying attention to Jesus behaviour. He wasn't 'nice' in interactions with people or giving superficially comforting answers.

Everything that is not soft and instantly pleasant is antichristian for them.

Jesus Christ challenged and called out people, yet giving a clear path to hope and meaning when accepting harsh truths and enduring the cross.

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Ron Tomlinson Mar 11

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In my limited experience that bit about honesty and mercy rings true. Part of the problem is how to deal with gamma behaviour online. Mocking gamma behaviour only exacerbates it. Permapans show no mercy.

Granting a measure of respect with firm boundaries aligns with 1 Peter 2 v.17 'Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.'

Respect begets respect, especially from those accustomed to being disrespected and hated.

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