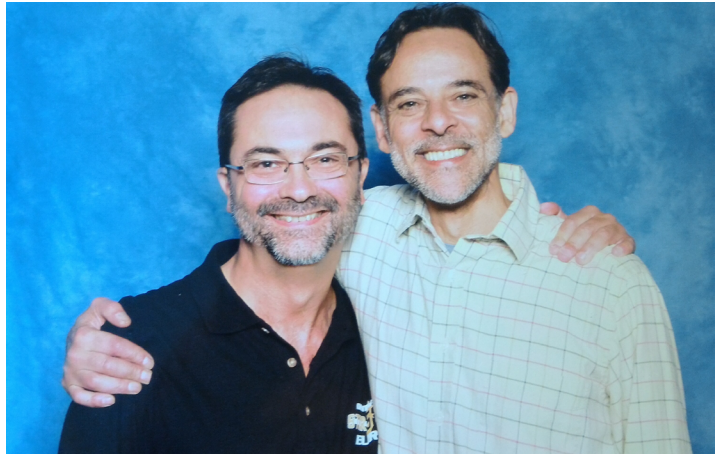


## Doctor by Doctor: Dr. Bashir in Deep Space 9

Victor Grech



Victor Grech and Alexander Siddig  
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### Introduction

THIS AUTHOR'S REVIEW of doctors in *Star Trek* has resulted in papers that deal with Drs. Boyce and Piper who appeared only once each, very early on in *Star Trek: The Original Series* (Grech, 2013a) and Dr. Helen Pulaski who appeared in one season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Grech, 2013b).

*Star Trek: Deep Space 9* is eponymously based on an eponymously named space station and “Julian Bashir, [is] a cocky young physician who will serve as the station’s medical officer” (Erdmann and Block 10).

This paper will review this unique medic and will show that he is genetically engineered to superhuman capacities and therefore well fitted to the role of chief medical officer of this space station. However, the doctor was also deliberately designed to have failings – and to overcome them. Indeed, it is almost as if his gaucheness and brashness are used to counterbalance his mental and physical superiority, and only through a maturation process does he become a likeable person in his own right. “Bashir was supposed to be this arrogant hothead, this young turk” (Erdmann and Block 5). From the very beginning, Bashir is depicted as

fresh out of Starfleet Medical, graduated second in his class and a brilliant specialist in multispecies medicine. He arrives on DS9 with gung-ho expectations about adventures in Starfleet. He’s naive and charming and cocky all at the same time. He’s chosen this remote outpost instead of the cushy job that he was offered at Starfleet Medical because this is where the action is, where heroes are made, in the ‘wilderness.’ [He] is still wet behind the ears and has a lot to learn. He is the antithesis of [...] streetwise, [...] wiser, cynical [...] thinks he knows it all but in fact doesn’t. [...] when it comes to medicine he does know it all (Berman and Piller 15).

The part was reprised by Siddig El Fadil who describes the character thus:

“Doctor Julian Bashir is from Earth,” says Sid-

dig El Fadil, whose deep, dark eyes and charm may well conquer even the 300-year-old Dax. “He’s just left Starfleet med school with flying colors. He chose Deep Space Nine. He specializes in alien life forms. He’s confident because he’s quite brilliant. But in real life, he’s liable to make mistakes, because real life doesn’t work as well as textbooks do” (Bischoff 86).

And indeed, Bashir declaims in the very first episode of *Deep Space 9*

This’ll be perfect. Real frontier medicine. [...] I had my choice of any job in the fleet. [...] I didn’t want some cushy job or a research grant. I wanted this. The farthest reaches of the galaxy. One of the most remote outposts available. This is where the adventure is. This is where heroes are made. Right here, in the wilderness (Carson, “Emissary”)

### Genetically engineered

“He’s a mutant [...] unnatural, [...]. Freak or monster would also be acceptable” (Williams, “Statistical Probabilities”). We learn rather late in the series that Bashir was “genetically enhanced as a child” (Livingston, “Doctor Bashir, I Presume”). “Not only does Dr Bashir expertly apply his amazing 24th century biological technologies—he is the product of those same technologies. He is the created superhuman” (Petraný 132). Bashir himself describes the events thus:

I was six. Small for my age, a bit awkward physically, not very bright. In the first grade, while the other children were learning how to read and write and use the computer, I was still trying to tell a dog from a cat, a tree from a house. I didn't really understand what was happening. I knew that I wasn't doing as well as my classmates. There were so many concepts that they took for granted that I couldn't begin to master and I didn't know why. All I knew was that I was a great disappointment to my parents. I don't remember when they made the decision, but just before my seventh birthday we left Earth for Adigeon Prime. At first, I remember being really excited at seeing all the aliens in the hospital. Then they gave me a room and began the treatments, and my entire world began to change [...] 'accelerated critical neural pathway formation.' Over the course of the next two months, my genetic structure was manipulated to accelerate the growth of neuronal networks in my cerebral cortex, and a whole new Julian Bashir was born. My mental abilities were the top priority, of course. My IQ jumped five points a day for over two weeks. Followed by improvements in my hand-eye coordination, stamina, vision, reflexes, weight, height. In the end, everything but my name was altered in some way.

In this way he was "saved [...] from a lifetime of remedial education and underachievement." But he resents what has been done to him since, to his own point of view, which has made him somehow inauthentic. "After the treatments, I never looked back. But the truth is I'm a fraud." But his parents defend their decision to transform him:

You don't know. You've never had a child. You don't know what it's like to watch your son. To watch him fall a little further behind every day. You know he's trying, but something's holding him back. You don't know what it's like to stay up every night worrying that maybe it's your fault. Maybe you did something wrong during the pregnancy, maybe you weren't careful enough, or maybe there's something wrong with you. Maybe you passed on a genetic defect without even

knowing it [...]. You can condemn us for what we did. You can say it's illegal or immoral or whatever you want to say, but you have to understand that we didn't do it because we were ashamed, but because you were our son and we loved you (Livingston, "Doctor Bashir, I Presume").

But the law is perfectly clear on this point: "DNA resequencing for any reason other than repairing serious birth defects is illegal." Thus, biological (or genetic) manipulation is the new misdemeanor, "and so, the molecular biologist has come to know sin" (Westfahl 60). The motives behind this legislation are twofold.

There are reasons why DNA resequencing is illegal. There are reasons why people like us are barred from serving in Starfleet. We have an advantage. Normal people can't compete. It's not fair [...]. If people like them are allowed to compete freely, then parents would feel pressured to have their children enhanced so that they could keep up. [...] That's precisely what prompted the ban on DNA resequencing in the first place.

Moreover, "they are afraid that people like us are going to take over. [...] happened before. People like us did try and take over. [...] the Eugenics Wars." So "he passed as normal. [...] manage to hide it for so long" since Bashir "did my best not to exploit my abilities [...] so no one would suspect." Indeed, genetically engineered superhumans are depicted in the *Star Trek gesantkumswerk* as

aggressive, arrogant [...] a group of these young supermen did seize power simultaneously in over forty nations.[...] They began to battle among themselves. [...] Because the scientists overlooked one fact. Superior ability breeds superior ambition.[...] They created a group of Alexanders, Napoleons (Daniels, "Space Seed").

However, such individuals who are illegally genetically enhanced are not automatically ostracised or incarcerated. Although they are "barred from certain professions [...] that doesn't mean we can't be productive members of society." Since this genetic

resequencing is illegal, standards of such treatment may be inadequate in certain facilities. Bashir refers to four unbalanced but brilliant individuals who also had “DNA resequencing.”

My parents managed to find a decent doctor to perform the DNA resequencing on me. These four weren't so lucky. They all suffered unintended side effects. By the time they were five or six, their parents were forced to come forward and admit that they'd broken the law so that their children could get treatment. [...] There was nothing the doctors at the Institute could do for them. These cases are so rare there's no standard treatment. [...] It is not a laughing matter.

Due to the illicitness of the procedure, “when we returned to Earth, we even moved to a different city, I was enrolled in a new school using falsified records my parents obtained somewhere. Instead of being the slowest learner, I was the star pupil.” When his secret comes out, he is very worried as “any genetically enhanced human being is barred from serving in Starfleet or practising medicine” (Williams, “Statistical Probabilities”). However, his colleagues support him: “You're not a fraud. I don't care what enhancements your parents may have had done. Genetic recoding can't give you ambition, or a personality, or compassion or any of the things that make a person truly human” (Williams, “Statistical Probabilities”).

Additionally, “one of the advantages to being genetically enhanced is the ability to control my own vital signs” (Posey, “Extreme Measures”). And “we're genetically engineered. We do everything fast” (West, “Chrysalis”). And it is perhaps also because of his transformation that “he is handsome” (Vejar, “The Changing Face of Evil”).

### **Inspiration to become a doctor**

“All I really wanted to do was help people” (Bole, “Equilibrium”). Bashir has illustrious ancestors which include the “fifteenth century poet Singh el Bashir. [A] relation” (Williams, “Statistical Probabilities”). He initially “wanted to be a tennis player. [...] But you knew your parents wouldn't approve of it. So you gave up and you became a doctor instead” (Singer, “Distant Voices”), a decision that he does not regret.

I love medicine. [...] As far as my career is concerned, I may have been a good tennis player, but I'm a great doctor. Maybe I could've been first in my class, but it wouldn't have changed anything in my life. I still would've chosen this assignment. This is where I belong (Singer, “Distant Voices”).

Even his toys participated in his desire to become a doctor:

Kukalaka. [...] My first patient. A teddy bear [...]. [W]hen I was a boy I took him everywhere I went. After a few years, he became a little threadbare until eventually his leg tore and some of the stuffing fell out. My mother was all set to throw him out, but I wouldn't have it, because at the tender age of five, I performed my first surgery. I re-stuffed him and sewed his leg closed. From that day on, I did everything I could to keep Kukalaka in one piece. I must have sewn and stitched and re-patched every square inch of that bear (Auberjonois, “The Quickening”).

He also explains

When I was younger I was terrified of [doctors]. They seemed to know everything. It was as if they held the power of life and death in their hands. I used to think that if I didn't behave, they'd make sure I got sick. Then as I got older, I decided that I wanted to know what they knew, be as smart as they were. [...] medical school [...]. And you know what I learned there? [...] Doctors are there [...] to help. So there's really no reason to be afraid of them (Bole, “Equilibrium”).

### **Excels in everything**

“We knew he was destined for greatness” (Livingston, “Doctor Bashir, I Presume”). Bashir “never fails at the complex medical challenges faced by his genetically manipulated brain” (Petraný 132) and deals with all medical conundrums with great determination. “Science is the answer here. Every puzzle has a solution, every disease a cure. It's just a matter of finding it” (Vejar, “Tacking Into the Wind”). He only qualified second in his medical course because of a trivial mistake in the final examinations (Bole,

“Explorers”). His friends universally acknowledge: “I know you’re talented” (Auberjonois, “Prophet motive”).

Bashir is a multidisciplinary doctor, “an expert on children [...] first in my class in paediatric medicine” (Burton, “To The Death”). He is also an interdisciplinarian and took “elementary temporal mechanics at the Academy” (West, “Trials and Tribble-ations”) and “the engineering extension courses at Starfleet Medical. [...] They were actually quite informative” (Kolbe, “Armageddon Game”).

Indeed, it is for his “work on biomolecular replication [...] both audacious and groundbreaking” that his friends nominate him for the “Carrington award,” “the Federation’s most prestigious medical award.” This “is intended to be the crowning achievement for a lifetime in medicine” and Bashir is “the youngest nominee in the history of the Carrington award.” He is feels “honoured to have been nominated” and his colleagues naturally feel he should be “thrilled beyond belief.”

Although he states: “the undeniable truth is I am way too young to be a serious contender for the Carrington [...] put my name up for nomination in seventy years, and I promise you I will get very excited [...] until then, I don’t plan on giving it much thought,” he secretly hopes to win and indeed, is discovered “working on [his] acceptance speech” but he does not win the prize and expresses his wish to be renominated, “maybe, in forty or fifty years.” Although he seems “to be handling this very well,” he very humanly admits “believe me, I’m not” (Auberjonois, “Prophet motive”).

### **Naïve but open minded**

“He is a child” (Vejar, “The Changing Face of Evil”), “he is an overgrown child” (Brooks, “The Dogs Of War”). Bashir comes across as unevenly enculturated and sometimes even childlike since “he gets excited playing with toys” (Vejar, “The Changing Face of Evil”). But he does have “an open mind. The essence of intellect” (Kolbe, “Past Prologue”). And when asked “you’re a man of science. You probably don’t believe in folk medicine,” he rebuts “actually, you’d be surprised just how often traditional medicine turns out to have genuine value (Livingston, “Rivals”).

### **Insufferably arrogant**

“He’s an arrogant Terran who’s lived a privileged life” (Livingston, “Crossover”). Bashir is young and

callow: “are all the Starfleet Lieutenants as brash as you are?” (Friedman, “The Wire”). He admits that it “makes me feel superior. [...] It’s not always easy walking amongst the common people” (Williams, “Statistical Probabilities”). He even plays a James Bond holosuite simulation and without a tinge of irony, introduces himself as “Bashir. Julian Bashir” (Kolbe, “Our Man Bashir”), an intertextual reference to the Bond *oeuvre*. Bashir also suffers from prolixity, especially in the first two seasons of the show, an excessive garrulousness that lead his colleagues to conclude that “the man never stops talking” (Kolbe, “Armageddon Game”). “You’re such a, forgive me, a talkative man and it’s so unusual for you to have secrets” (Kolbe, “Our Man Bashir”). He is also a womaniser who sometimes fails to detect irony, as shown in this exchange:

Kira: Well, I was very impressed, Doctor.

Bashir: And well you should have been. I impressed myself on this one actually. I can’t imagine what other doctor would even consider examining the scapular nodes for parasitic infection. I just seem to have a talent, I suppose. A vision that sees past the obvious, around the mundane, right to the target. Fate has granted me a gift, Major. A gift to be a healer.

Kira: I feel privileged to be in your presence.

Bashir: Glad to have you along (Lynch, “The Passenger”).

But when it comes to medicine, he usually has insight into any failings. On one occasion, he chastises himself for “being arrogant enough to think that I could help [...] though dozens of other doctors have failed (West, “Chrysalis”). And on another occasion, he also laments “these people believed in me and look where it got them. [...] There is no cure. [...]. But I was so arrogant I thought I could find one in a week,” to which his companion points out “maybe it was arrogant to think that. But it’s even more arrogant to think there isn’t a cure just because you couldn’t find it” (Auberjonois, “The Quickening”).

This “smug, superior attitude” (Auberjonois, “Hard Time”) and equally “smug, sanctimonious face” (Friedman, “The Wire”), while it does not endear him to his Federation colleagues and to non-Federation denizens of Deep Space 9, is just part of a wider “smug Federation sympathy” (Auberjonois, “Hard

Time”).

However, later in the series, he declares “contrary to public opinion, I am not the arrogant, self-absorbed, god like doctor that I appear to be on occasion” (Kolbe, “The Sound Of Her Voice”). Indeed, “people either love you or hate you. [...] I hated you when we first met” (Bole, “Explorers”), but over the course of the series he matures, with the seven years of the series effectively constituting a *bildungsroman* for Dr. Bashir such that “[t]hese conflicts, however, mask a deep, if unspoken, camaraderie” (Wagner and Lundeen 187).

### Ordinary man with friends

“Doctors always hold their conferences at sunny resorts. [...] Ours is a grim profession. Don’t you think we deserve a break from all the illness and death?” (Dorn, “Inquisition”). Bashir’s enduring friendship throughout the series is with the station’s engineer O’Brien.

The friendship between Bashir and O’Brien was something that occurred to Behr only after Siddig El Fadil – who later changed his name to Alexander Siddig – was cast as Bashir. Behr had always liked Colm Meaney’s character on *The Next Generation* and longed to do more with him. “As soon as the role was cast, and I saw that Sid was this proper English gentleman, and we already had Colm as the Irish man of the people...” Behr knew instantly that he had a classic pairing, one that would provide great fodder for the writers (Erdmann and Block 5).

Bashir “knows how to have a good time,” often with his best friend (Vejar, “The Changing Face of Evil”). Bashir and Miles regularly drink at Quark’s bar and on one occasion, also get drunk together and carouse William Blake’s “Jerusalem” (Bole, “Explorers”). They also play games both inside the holosuite -- such a “ridiculous secret agent programme” that is loosely based on the James Bond stories wherein the “character is some kind of rich dilettante with a fascination for women and weapons [...] far more disreputable. [...] a spy” (Kolbe, “Our Man Bashir”) -- and “that stupid Viking programme” (Williams, “It’s Only A Paper Moon”). These comments clearly show that his other friends do not think highly of these activities. Outside the holosuite, he plays darts

and racquetball. And he also enjoys “human mystery novels” (Singer, “Distant Voices”).

The doctor did not have his ageing genetically tampered with and, like the rest of us, is preoccupied with the ageing process, which is emphasised by birthdays.

This year is a little different. [...] This will be my thirtieth birthday [...] in many human cultures, the thirtieth birthday is considered a sort of landmark. It marks the end of youth and the beginning of the slow march into middle age. [...] It’s just that when you hit thirty, it becomes harder and harder to ignore the passage of time. [...] I am aware that aging is part of the natural process of life. It’s just that I don’t want to be reminded of it, that’s all [...] in two days I turn thirty. If I choose to be grumpy about it, that’s my prerogative. (Singer, “Distant Voices”).

Interestingly, when he is telepathically attacked by an alien Lethean, the various aspects of his personality are reified in his coma by different colleagues in a dream, while he also finds himself ageing rapidly. This is because of “the telepathic damage that the real Lethean did to my mind.” His tricorder reveals the truth, that he is within a dream: “actually, I’m not picking up any life signs from you at all” and this is reinforced by the fact that his colleagues are “all behaving so strangely.” Hence the realisation:

I’m in a coma. I’m the only one who’s really here. Which means when I talk to you, I’m really only talking to myself. [...] You all embody different aspects of my personality, different voices inside my head. [...] If I were to guess, Chief, I would say that you represent my doubt and my disbelief. [...] Major, you’re the perfect choice for my aggression. And Odo, you represent my sense of suspicion and fear. Dax, to me you’ve always represented my confidence and sense of adventure. [...] The station represents my mind just as you represent aspects of my personality.

The enemy within the dream taunts a rapidly ageing Bashir

I admire your tenacity, Doctor, but it’s over.

Look at yourself. Your bones are as brittle as twigs, you can't catch your breath. You can't even stand, let alone walk. [...] Take a close look, Doctor. You're dying. Why can't you just accept it?

But Bashir cheerfully soldiers on with a stiff upper lip, "other than that, I feel wonderful." He retorts

Because that's what you want me to do. You may be inside my head, but you don't know me half as well as you think you do. Take Dax. I do have feelings for her, but the important thing is she's my friend. You know? Friend? And I wouldn't exchange that friendship for anything.

In all of these ways, the doctor reveals himself as having feelings and friends just like the rest of his colleagues who represent mundane unmodified humanity - ourselves (Singer, "Distant Voices").

### **A man of ideals and ethics**

"It takes exceptional people to do what we do. People who can sublimate their own ambitions to the best interests of the Federation. People like you" (Dorn, "Inquisition"). To his chagrin, Bashir is picked by "Section 31," the Federation's black ops unit and in effect, the Federation's Jungian shadow (Grech, 2014). Sloan, a member of Section 31 informs him:

I told you. You have an assignment. [...] You passed the test. You were accepted into the organisation. [...] And now it's time to go to work. I'm sure you're dying to know what your mission is, but you won't give me the satisfaction of admitting it. So, I'll just tell you. [...] Section Thirty one is extremely interested in this conference of yours. [...] Your mission is to gather data on the Romulan leadership. In essence, we want you to take the pulse of their government. No pun intended.

But Bashir initially refuses:

I don't work for you. [...] I didn't ask to be accepted. [...] You want me to spy on an ally. [...] This war isn't over and you're already planning for the next. [...] How many times do I have to tell you, Sloan? I don't work for you.

However, Sloan has done his homework and knows his man very well:

You will. It's in your nature. You are a man who loves secrets. Medical, personal, fictional. I am a man of secrets. You want to know what I know, and the only way to do that is to accept the assignment.

At the termination of the episode, Sloan briefly meets him:

I just wanted to say thank you. [...] For being a decent human being. That's why we selected you in the first place, Doctor. We needed somebody who wanted to play the game, but who would only go so far. When the time came, you stood your ground. You did the right thing. You reached out to an enemy, you told her the truth, you tried to stop a murder. The Federation needs men like you, Doctor. Men of conscience, men of principle, men who can sleep at night. You're also the reason Section Thirty one exists. Someone has to protect men like you from a universe that doesn't share your sense of right and wrong. [...] It is an honour to know you, Doctor. Goodnight (Livingston, "Inter Arma Enim Silent Leges").

Bashir's leanings are deontological and eschew utilitarianism (Grech, 2013c), echoing those of the Federation's Captain Picard, "humanity's conscience" (Grech, 2013d 20). "I'm sorry, but the ends don't always justify the means" (Dorn, "Inquisition"). He also embraces the Federation's precepts which preceded each episode of *Star Trek: The Original Series* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*: "To seek out new life and new civilisations, to boldly go where no one has gone before," and this is manifest when he dreamily remarks that "those little points of light out there are the great unknown, beckoning to us. I wish I could visit every one" (Auberjonois, "The Quicken-ing").

His medical ethics are staunch. "I can't go against the decision of my patient. Not without the express consent of his closest relative" (West, "Rapture"). Indeed, he is told:

Doctor, you've been a beacon of light to me.

You're living proof that ideology is a poor substitute for kindness and decency, and that at the end of the day, it's our actions, not our beliefs, that define who we are. What we are (Posey, "Extreme Measures").

Bashir's loyalty to the Federation is demonstrated when he is captured by the "Jem'Hadar," a manufactured enemy who are deliberately addicted to a drug by their masters.

You need to understand that I'm a Starfleet officer, and I won't do any work for you that might potentially be used against the Federation or any other race for that matter. Now, if that's what you want, you'll have to kill me.

But the enemy know the Federation and their medics too well:

As a Federation Doctor, I know you are trained to feel sympathy and compassion for those in pain. These men are suffering now, but it is nothing compared to what will happen if they are not freed from the drug before our supply runs out.

Bashir once again falls back on his deontological beliefs. "I can't promise anything. [...] Yes, I'll try." He fails but not after having done his very best (Auberjonois, "Hippocratic Oath").

In a specific episode, "the doctor struggles with the meaning of pursuing this ultimate heroic measure in the face of the complete erasure of [...] personhood and memories" (Hughes and Lantos 36). He treats a severely injured negotiator called Bareil: "I'm hoping he'll make a full recovery. He should be back on his feet again in a few weeks" but his colleagues express admiration:

You say that so calmly, but it's not every doctor that can lose a patient and then has him back on his feet in a few weeks. [...] Indeed, you are too modest. You've performed nothing less than a miracle here. [...] Whoever deserves the credit, Doctor, I am grateful.

However, he protests "I and the Prophets, were lucky" and his interests are those of his patient: "I realize how important these talks are to Bajor, but as

your physician my duty is to you first." When Bareil deteriorates, Bashir is urged "give him more of the drug [...] you'll need to give him something else" but Bashir is very reluctant and makes it crystal clear that his interests are those of his patient:

He's had enough. [...] Listen to me. I don't care about your negotiations, and I don't care about your treaty. All I care about is my patient, and at the moment he needs more medical care and less politics. Now, you can either leave here willingly or I'll call security and have you thrown out.

When Bareil insists, Bashir futilely attempts to change his mind, and also attempts to persuade others to help him do so. "As the patient, it is his right to make that choice. But I'm asking you to help me change his mind." He fails and further treatment is administered but Bareil develops brain damage. "You were able to replace some of his internal organs with artificial implants. Could you do something similar with the damaged parts of his brain?" Bashir is once again reluctant.

It's hard to say with any certainty. There's still a great deal about the way the brain operates we don't understand. One of my professors at medical school used to say that the brain had a spark of life that can't be replicated. If we begin to replace parts of Bareil's brain with artificial implants, that spark may be lost. [...] One man's life is all I'm concerned with at the moment.

The procedure initially works, "you kept him alive against incredible odds. No matter what happens, you should always be proud of that" but the brain damage proves more extensive than originally thought. "It's the other half of his brain, isn't it? But you can still help him can't you? You can replace the other half of his brain with a positronic matrix." But at this point, Bashir is adamant.

I'm sorry, [...], but this is where it ends. [...] I won't remove whatever last shred of humanity Bareil has left. [...] if I remove the rest of his brain and replace it with a machine, he may look like Bareil, he may even talk like Bareil, but he won't be Bareil. The spark of life will be gone. He'll be dead. And I'll be the one who killed him [...] he'll die like a man, not a machine. [...]

Just let him go (Badiyi, "Life support").

### **Compassionate, cool and collected**

"Compassionate. Brilliant. Lonely" is one of the ways that the doctor is alluded to (West, "Chrysalis"). His attitude toward the opposite sex is perfectly ordinary: "if I find someone attractive, I just, I just tell them" (Brooks, "The Dogs Of War"). Indeed, he was once deeply in love and almost married. "Her father was the top administrator at a medical complex in Paris. He offered me a job, promised I'd be Chief of Surgery within five years [...] but [...] would have to give up [...] Starfleet career" which he refused to do, hence the posting at Deep Space 9 (Kolbe, "Armageddon Game"). "Despite regularly failing at affairs of his unenhanced heart" (Petrany 132), he muses

All these years I've had to hide the fact that my DNA had been resequenced. I'd listen to people talk about the genetically engineered, saying they were all misfits. I used to fantasise about meeting someone who was like me, who could live a normal life. But it never happened (West, "Chrysalis")

Fortunately, Bashir is philosophical about this aspect of his file.

Somehow marriage just doesn't seem fair [...] to them. I mean, look at us. Our lives are constantly in danger. There's enough to worry about without worrying about the wife and kids at home worrying about us. [...] A lot of career officers feel that way (Kolbe, "Armageddon Game").

The doctor is also cool under pressure. "I'm a doctor. You're my patient. That's all I need to know" (Friedman, "The Wire"). He is also highly pragmatic when it comes to treating trauma as evidenced when he reminds his staff:

the thing to remember is that the Klingons prefer to use their knives and bat'leths in close combat. So if we get boarded, you can expect severe lacerations, broken bones, and blunt force traumas. All I can say is, keep calm, remember your training and do the best that you can. Report to your posts (Conway, "The Way of the Warrior").

He triages and treats patients with insouciance. "I know you wanted to try to save as many lives as possible. It's probably what makes you such a good doctor" (Williams, "Statistical Probabilities"). More specifically and with panache:

So far, there's nothing unusual about any of their casualties. I've treated fifteen cases of severe radiation burns, seven thoracic perforation traumas caused by shrapnel and twenty three decompression related injuries. All just what you'd expect following an explosion on a starship (Livingston, "Sons of Mogh").

The doctor also doggedly endeavours to treat his patients to the very best of his abilities. "Well, I wouldn't be much of a doctor if I gave up on a patient, would I?" (Auberjonois, "The Quickening"). Bashir also realises that a crucial part of any treatment is the invocation and projection of confidence. "Trust me. [...] it's my bedside manner. Doctors and nurses are supposed to project an air of caring competence" (Auberjonois, "The Quickening"). This is one of the reasons why he is appreciated: "You're a very dear man, Julian" (Bole, "Equilibrium"). He is also realistic: "I never argue with my patients or my commanding officer" (Conway, "Apocalypse Rising"). Bashir's courage is also dauntless. "Show no fear, that's my motto" (Conway, "Apocalypse Rising"). The doctor is also something of a philosopher, albeit a pragmatic one:

Well, some people don't like to be around the sick. It reminds them of their own mortality. [...] I prefer to confront mortality rather than hide from it. When you make someone well, it's like you're chasing death off, making him wait for another day (Auberjonois, "The Quickening").

He is also disparaging of health care workers who do not share his ideals. "Causing people to suffer because you hate them is terrible, but causing people to suffer because you have forgotten how to care? That's really hard to understand" (Badiyi, "Past Tense part 1").

### **Discussion**

This paper has shown that Dr. Bashir "is a physician of uncommon passion and brilliance who is a tireless



advocate for any and all odd life-forms encountered at the periphery of known explored space, whether they be friend or foe" (Petraný 132). Even more interestingly, this paper has confirmed that *Star Trek*

physicians illustrate a rapidly morphing image of doctors who are becoming less human and more technological and infallible. They evolve from the old country doc, McCoy, to the extraordinarily proficient Dr Crusher, through the genetically enhanced Julian Bashir (Petraný 133).

Indeed, there is "no stigma attached to success" (Williams, "Statistical Probabilities") and as genetically engineered individuals note: "We're not gods [...] but we're the next best thing" (Williams, "Statistical Probabilities"). Less pretentiously, "you're not any less human than anyone else. In fact, you're a little more" (Livingston, "Doctor Bashir, I Presume"). Furthermore, this essay has reinforced the contention that

by using the extraordinary technologies of the day, *Star Trek* physicians rarely fail in curing the most advanced and mysterious ailments. In this way they reflect the often unrealistic expectations of today's patients regarding medicine's ability to cure disease, an attitude that leads to mounting frustration for all involved (Petraný 133).

We may conclude that the writers, directors and producers of *Deep Space 9* have attempted to merge the viewers' expectations of brilliant doctors (albeit genetically enhanced – but hey, who cares!) curing all sorts of ailments with *élan* through the utilisation of high-tech medical gadgetry wherever required. Clearly, we, the viewers and prospective patients, wish our doctors to boldly go where no medic has gone before – just as long as we are cured!

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