# "FOR THE GOOD OF MY FAMILY:" HUMAN AGENCY AND TRANSGRESSIONS OF MORALITY IN *BREAKING BAD*

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## Introduction

Created by Vince Gilligan, *Breaking Bad* was one of the most successful US dramatic television series in recent years. It was aired between 2008 and 2013 on the AMC network, in tandem with the gradually evolving economic recession precipitated by the housing crash that has shaken mainstream understandings of both masculinity and morality in the US. The leading figure of the show is Walter White (played by Bryan Cranston), an average high school chemistry teacher living in a modest suburb of Albuquerque, New Mexico. At the beginning of the series, his stay-at-home wife, Skyler (Anna Gunn), is pregnant with their second child while she also takes care of their first-born, Walter, Jr. (RJ Mitte), who suffers from cerebral palsy. The family only seems to socialize with Skyler's younger sister, the rather self-centered Marie Schrader (Betsy Brandt), and her husband, Hank (Dean Norris), a DEA agent. Like many other families in the US during the gradually evolving recession, the Whites are struggling financially, as a result of which White has taken on a second job: cleaning cars in a local car wash, where he is humiliated regularly by his boss and some of the customers, like his own, low-achieving but well-to-do students. This rather bleak situation is topped by the breaking of bad news: White is diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. This is the complication out of which the storyline evolves: it portrays White breaking bad, his gradual transformation into a criminal, his eventual destruction of his family and of all his social ties, and his engagement in a semi-suicidal act of revenge that ultimately costs him his life.

A number of analyses have investigated a variety of issues in the series, including masculinity (Annus, and Faucette), visual and literary allusions (Wu and Kuo, and Lanham), and social concerns (Lewis, and Logan). The current paper concentrates on the transformation of the leading figure, Mr. White, from a decent teacher and honest family man into "the devil" (5: 12), as he was described in an interview by Jesse Pinkman (Aaron Paul), White's former student, who has risen from being a small-time drug dealer to White's business partner. Logan has argued convincingly that this transformation captures contemporary concerns with human dignity and humility in American society. I find that such a focus tends to tackle issues of social interaction, norms and expectations, and are manifestations of concerns with regard to one's effort to relate to the social milieu, to be integrated into and accepted by it. As Logan put it, "dignity [is] understood ... as pivoting around the desire to act in such a way that one's inner self coheres with, and can be recognized by others through one's outer presentation and deeds" (2).

This understanding seems to correspond with impression management and the presentation of the self in the Goffmanian fashion that is bound to the front region and therefore reflective of social interaction, norms, expectations, formations, etc., and does not necessarily allow for a glimpse into the back region, where the construction of the self and its expression in terms of human agency and personal choice are shaped. Goffman considers individuals as performers when they engage in social interaction and views them as "merchants of morality" (251), as it is through their consideration of morality that "they are living up to the many standards by which they and their products are judged" (251). As opposed to Logan, however, Goffman observes that this does not automatically imply that individuals are deeply concerned with the actual realization of these moral standards—meaning that as long as they appear to live up to them in the public eye, they achieve their goal. But what happens during decision-making processes in the back region? Would morality and social norms equally shape our thinking and the choices we take? To what extent can we practice free agency and autonomy just for ourselves? These are issues this study addresses, by focusing on the significance of morality in the transformation of Mr. White, who presents one image of himself through his face-to-face interactions, as if on the surface, while he undergoes a gradual transformation marked by the slow evolution of an alternate self he calls Heisenberg, hidden from the public eye, in the darkness of his most private region.

As Pinkman employed the concept of the devil to capture White's true, and for most people, hidden character, I approach morality from the perspective of evil. At first, I introduce some pertinent notions to have shaped contemporary conceptualizations of evil as well as pointing out current trends in its representation on screen in the US. I then turn to the specifics of White's transformation, marked by his dual experience with "breaking bad," revealing the conditions and factors behind his gradual metamorphosis. I argue that White's figure reflects a unique duality in terms of his relation to morality: on the surface, he continues to represent himself to his environment as a good, decent, peaceful man, but his secret criminal undertaking reflects his shifting position on morality. However, his discourse and the reasoning that account for his decisions continue to reflect the logic and morality upheld by society, except for the added flavor of growing relativism, leading to denial: after all, he concludes, he is "not a criminal" (1: 1). I propose that this moralizing, relativistic discourse is inherent to his art of deception and is the constitutive power through which he is able to overcome the discrepancy created between his presented self in public and his constructed self in private. Ultimately, however, the various traps of good and evil are matters of morality and conscience, and, as part of human agency, are matters of choice and will – even if concealed in the show by White's self-delusion, rationalized by the traditional Western patriarchal claim throughout the show: "I did it for the good of my family" (5: 16)

## Evil in Contemporary Culture and on Screen

Evil, referring to an extremely harmful, wicked and destructive act or form of behavior, is a powerful word that has been in use to describe and judge human conduct. As a concept related to essential categories of morality, it has been integral to various

types of ideologies, particularly religions. In Christianity, it has been traditionally associated with the devil, and as such has taken on theological significance. Perhaps the most well-known understanding of the binary opposition between good and evil is captured in John 3:20: "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed" *(The Bible)*. A sense of individual agency in terms of engaging in evil acts with regard to intent is implied in the Pauline Principle, which states that "it is not morally permissible to do evil so that good may follow" (Mizzoni 51). It seems to me that Thomas Aquinas, as an acknowledgement of the complexities of human action, developed the Pauline Principle further in his Principle of Double Effect, stating in his Summa Theologica (II-II, Q. 64, Art. 7) that "Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention" (quoted in McIntyre). McIntyre reminds us that this doctrine is observed even today by the Catholic Church under the conditions that (1) the act itself is good; (2) it has been performed with good intentions; and (3) the positive outcome compensates for the negative side-effect.

The Enlightenment philosophy triggered the beginning of a gradual departure from religious understandings of evil and morality. René Descartes' famous dictum, "I think, therefore I am," became the catch phrase of rationalism that emerged during the age in parallel with empiricism, which drew on the Peripatetic axiom: "Nothing is in the mind without first having been in the senses." The great synthesizer of the age, Immanuel Kant, attempted to unite the two schools of thought, ultimately outlining a philosophy of science in which he not only acknowledged the power of scientific thinking, but also argued for the autonomy of the rational, thinking mind. In a sense, notes Mizzoni (105–7), Kant considers freedom as a property of the human will, and thus contends that rational beings possess free will and agency. Free will is exercised through reason, and it is through rational thinking that free will can be guided and even bound by morality, which Kant understands as universally applicable laws. Humans, however, may fail to observe these laws, which "is symptomatic of a character or disposition (Gesinnung) that has been corrupted by an innate propensity to evil, which is to subordinate the moral law to self-conceit" (Hanson). As evil is thus understood by Kant as a moral category, it is also present universally; it is, in fact, "a deed that is the product of an individual's capacity for choice" (Hanson).

The Enlightenment laid the intellectual groundwork for the emergence of modernity, a critical history of which was provided by Foucault. In his genealogy of the particularization and subsequent institutionalization of people who expose a human condition or behavior that was considered to fall outside of social normalcy – and was subsequently defined as illness or deviance – Foucault unveils a new understanding of evil and morality. He divests these concepts of their former religious content and lends them political significance by connecting them to modern state power. In contrast to Kant, he sees evil "not as actions by immoral agents who freely transgress the moral law but ... as arbitrary cruelty installed in regular institutional arrangements taken to embody the Law, the Good, or the Normal" (Connolly 366). In particular, in his *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault maps the way particular types of behavior or actions have become constituted as evil and have thus been considered to be a form of deviance or abnormal condition that could be labeled as a criminal (or medical)

condition and have thus been dealt with by state power. The politicization of morality, of good and evil, he finds, was the basis for the development of the modern legal and subsequent prison systems through which technologies of power/knowledge could be exercised in a systematic manner to survey and discipline subjects and to maintain hegemony.

> Hence, no doubt, the importance that has been given for so long to the small techniques of discipline, to those apparently insignificant tricks that it has invented, and even to those 'sciences' that give it a respectable face; ... hence the affirmation that they are at the very foundation of society, and an element in its equilibrium, whereas they are a series of mechanisms for unbalancing power relations definitively and everywhere hence the persistence in regarding them as the humble but concrete form of every morality, whereas they are a set of physico-political techniques (Foucault 223).

As we can see, he finds that criminality also emerged as a potential subject of scientific inquiry, which would investigate the possible roots of deviant behavior, its characteristics and forms of manifestation, as well as identifying possible methods of punishment to re-integrate the wrongdoer into what has been recognized as the normal society.

Postmodernity presented a challenge to the truth value, singularity of interpretation and indisputable power invested in grand narratives of modernity, be they religious or secular. The does not mean that postmodernity has marked the end of religions – which, as Solomon argues, will always prevail, as they provide the only type of meta-narrative for mankind to deal constructively with the greatest human fear: death – but have transformed them into one type among the many potential narratives that elucidate human realities. In tandem, postmodernity has witnessed the increasing use of the concept of evil in politics: Geddes finds that in current political discourse the concept of evil is primarily associated with extreme violence, used to signify horrific acts committed by one's enemy and thus it also serves to justify extreme violent responses to them. Ultimately, the boundary between good and evil, victim and perpetrator, has become gradually blurred.

By challenging the uni-vocality and singular power of meta-narratives, postmodernity has also allowed for a plurality of interpretations, opening avenues to practices of relativism. This, on the one hand, permits both sides in a conflict to engage in the same discoursal logic, as illustrated for example in the discourse surrounding the American "War on Terror," while, on the other hand, it has "made almost impossible the identification and condemnation as morally wrong of another subject's willed desire to pursue 'inhuman' acts" (Salamon 17). As a result of this moral relativism, the judgment of what evil is has become a matter of perspective: the understanding of evil has been re-conceptualized "as a transgression, as excess, as sublime" (Geddes 2), the boundaries of which, I emphasize, are often not shaped by wide social consensus but by individual needs and perspectives. As a consequence, also noted by Geddes, postmodernity offers "few resources with which to respond to the occurrence of evil, to guide one in making moral judgments" (2).

Consequently, numerous typologies, approaches, and understandings of evil have emerged based on the possible origins of evil, its definitions, intentions, and justifica-

tions, etc., all of which seem to indicate a growing sense of doubt and concern about how to understand and deal with evil. As part of postmodern thinking, we may experience "serious reservations about the very idea of evil" (Garrard and McNaughton 1) or actually challenge the very existence of evil, conceptualizing it primarily as a myth and a discoursal construction (Cole 4). These views, however, acknowledge that evil – whether real or imagined – is always part of cultural construction, and as such, is captured and constituted through both image and text, visual and verbal. As Turnau puts it: "Our understanding of evil is always enculturated, informed by and inscribed across a panoply of texts continually in circulation ... [and] we spot evil ... always by means of a *mediated* gaze" (384).

By now the screen has probably become the most important terrain of visuality where we gaze at cultural products. The various contexts and forms of representation of evil on screen nowadays reflect the ambiguity that postmodernity allows for as well as a resultant plurality of understandings. Explorations of possible depictions of evil on screen – traditionally associated with violence and attendant pain – have a particularly long and unique history in the American film industry: as Salamon puts it, "Evil has a history of its own in American film" (18). Indeed: some of the traditionally more popular American movie genres, such as the western, horror, thriller, mystery, and detective film, bear witness to the cultural centrality of the concern with wrongdoing, violence and the evil, which has been a permanent element of the American cultural landscape since its inception in the early colonial period.

Sharrett (11) finds that violence depicted on the screen heightened in particular in the post–1960s as the result of a series of violent political engagements, such as the Vietnam War, and of some pertinent cultural changes, for example the achievements of the Civil Rights movement. He argues that the intensified "importance of the violent image" on the American screen contributes to the "furthering [of] an atomized society" (10), but at the same time it also "attempts to construct audience consciousness in service of political-economic assumptions" (13). Others, such as Rapping, explain this phenomenon with the emerging influence of postmodernism: he finds that traditional meta-narratives have been divested of their singular power of constituting meaning; we have thus been left with a culture which, as Freeland puts it, "offers few and only shallow resources of symbolizing evil" (3) as well as of accounting for and responding to it. This cultural shift, Rapping proposes, accounts for the recent phenomenon of movies increasingly focusing on rare and cruel crimes as well as predatory criminals (257).

I would argue that the mushrooming of blockbusters, television series and reality shows that carry us to alternative spiritual dimensions with mediums and psychics, such as *Medium* and *Long Island Medium,* or vampires and zombies, such as *The Vampire Diaries, Walking Dead,* and *Twilight,* also signify the indecisiveness of the postmodern cultural construction of good and evil and invite us to explore them along with the borderland between earthly human existence and possible other worlds. Geddes points out another feature of these contemporary programs: namely, that they tend to focus on the perpetrator while "the real sufferings of the victims of evil become eclipsed" (2). Some of the programs, such as *Criminal Minds* and *CSI,* are focused solely on the figure of the perpetrator and his or her act; thus, they capitalize not so much

on the detective work but rather on the scientific investigation of the crime scene and the psychological study or profile of the criminal, in the fashion of the official state practices Foucault described.

### Evil and the Metamorphosis of Walter White

*Breaking Bad* is a series embedded in this cultural tradition. It depicts the life story of Walter White, from experiencing the breaking of bad news to breaking bad and ultimately dying. His journey begins as the consequence of his diagnosis of incurable cancer. Most people's reaction to such a piece of news would be initial astonishment and collapse, followed by an urgent search for potential cures and the extension of life. This is perhaps what we, the viewers, expect of White, too. We feel for him and perhaps recognize him more than before as the everyman, as any man, whose circumstances in life, serial struggles, and efforts to cope with the ever-worsening socio-economic situation around him command sympathy and respect, if not admiration, which we are ready to offer to him. But he does not let such strong emotions overcome him, he rejects any form of self-pity and moralization over his illness: he appears as a man of the Enlightenment in his deep rationalism with which he evaluates this situation.

His real self as a man of reason seems to guide his reaction: he contemplates his own life and makes a reckoning of his current state in terms of his responsibilities to and his legacy for his family. For the first time, he is forced to face the harsh realities of his past critically, realizing that his life has been a failure: from flashbacks, we learn about the great potential he had as a researcher in chemistry, as the key founder of a very successful pharmaceutical company called Gray Matter Technologies, as the partner to the love of his life, and even later as a young husband, but they all seem to have vanished—partly because of his own self: poor judgment, lack of self-confidence and resultant bad decisions, partly because of the changing American realities around him. He has remained, however, a decent man true to himself and his principles, accepting all the hardships that have come along. As a result, after his death, he would leave behind a wife with a young baby and a partially disabled child in poverty.

The decency or morality in him dictates that he must provide for them for when he is no longer around, so he figures out a way to do so within the very short time he has available, by putting his scientific knowledge into practice: producing synthetic drugs. Thus he decides to engage in illegal, criminal activity for the good of his family. Hence, the audience is presented with a twisted broader moral dilemma: can morality justify immorality? Can the long-term positive consequences of a good deed excuse short-term negative effects? Can natural evil, symbolized by cancer, be responded to through moral evil?

As a true representative of the Enlightenment, White is also a man of science. He refuses to contemplate on his medical state in terms of morality because he connects cancer to nature. White views his illness not as a natural evil that occurs with no specific reason or purpose known to us, thus often explained as being God's will, perhaps even punishment; rather, he sees his state rather as part of natural change investigated by the sciences. His position on religion and nature is clear from the following statement: "The universe is random ... It's simple chaos. It's subatomic particles in

endless atomic collision. That's what science teaches" (3:10). He specifically ties natural change to chemistry when he explains to his students in the opening episode that "chemistry is change ... transformation" (1: 1) that can be observed and measured. A flashback to his university years confirms his conviction: as White was adding up the chemical composition of the human body, he recognized that a small segment of mass was missing. "There's got to be more to a human being than that" (1: 3) he concluded, to which his research assistant and then girlfriend Gretchen (Jessica Hecht) suggested: "What about the soul?" White's response seemed conclusive: "The soul? There's nothing but chemistry!"

White calculated how much money would be needed to ensure a middle-class future for his family and joined his former student, Pinkman, a small-time dealer, in establishing a temporary business model they would pursue till the desired amount is reached: White cooks meth in an RV turned meth lab in the desert, and Jesse sells it on the market. White seems to be stressed and confused about the undertaking, as conveyed by his fear of being caught in the very first episode, when he also makes a video message for his family stating: "There are going to be some things that you'll come to learn about me in the next few days ... no matter how it may look, I only had you in my mind" (1: 1). It seems to me, however, that his fear and confusion are not a matter of moral concern, but rather an anxiety about the success of his new project. Moreover, his sense of responsibility towards his family is perhaps somewhat self-imposed, even if rooted in his culturally engrained sense of masculinity: interestingly, he has not considered his wife, Skyler, to be able to deal with hardships and provide for herself and the children. Moreover, his decision to engage in the drug business also marks the beginning of a slow process, through which he has become increasingly focused on and wrapped up in his own secret world, creating his own sense of reality by blowing certain things out of proportion—such as his own significance when telling Skyler she has no idea who he really is, while ignoring or denying the significance of others—including the evil nature of some of his acts.

The audience, interestingly, seem to have their sympathy with him as he makes this decision, understand him, and perhaps even respect or admire him for his moral strength in doing the right thing – caring for his family. As if we were unconsciously identifying with Aquinas' Principle of Double Effect, we feel that his intentions are good, even though they have the negative side-effect of breaking the law and supplying people with a destructive narcotic. He is somewhat excused for this, as implied in the narrative, since drug use already exists in society and someone will surely provide drugs for the market, what does it matter if White adds to it just a little bit? Moreover, the fact that he plans a definite closure to his business—also guaranteed by his fatal cancer—supports his logic as well as the viewers in their moralizing relativism: he will only do wrong for a short time, and we, the viewers are all hoping that he might succeed and evade capture. White is almost constituted in our minds as the lonely hero in a modern fairy tale who fights the unfair system by outwitting it, ultimately gaining justice and obtaining his well-deserved reward.

However, once he becomes engaged, a gradual spiral draws him deeper and deeper, as a result of unexpected problems and complications as well as the nature of the business and his own personality. He ends up meeting and working for Gustavo

"Gus" Fring (Giancarlo Esposito), a powerful drug distributor and merciless murderer who both launders his illegal profits and covers up for his criminal activity by working as a respectable businessman – even involved in charity work, through which he maintains good relations with law enforcement. White also hires a dubious lawyer, Saul Goodman (Bob Obenkirk), who assist him secretly in covering up his criminal activity while continuing to represent himself as a decent lawyer on the surface. By the end, White runs an international drug business, but under the constant watch of his brother-in-law, Hank, who also ends up being murdered at the point when White completely loses control. Still, White ends up ensuring the financial future of his estranged family, and gives Jesse—who by then is also completely estranged from him—his freedom and chance for a better life back. White takes his revenge on the people who have betrayed him and is willing to sacrifice himself and die in the process. He knows he must die, but at least he loses his life to a bullet and not to cancer—because this is his choice. Moral evil has thus been victorious over natural evil on numerous levels.

White's potential relation to wrongdoing is indicated by the typology Leyda proposes when describing him. She contends that White embodies a unique mixture of various types of heroes, two of which embody the potential for morally questionable figures: (1) White is characterized as a reluctant hero, an average man who becomes a hero unwillingly, as a result of his particular circumstances; (2) he is also depicted as a Western hero, who struggles in uncivilized, uncontrolled territories, like the New Mexican desert, dominated by mere physical strength, where the boundary between right and wrong often becomes blurred; and (3) he represents the typical anti-hero as well, thus embodying the opposite of all the positive values that we traditionally tend to associate with lead characters—and therefore also carrying the potential for being evil.

Once White was "in business," he took on the name Heisenberg as his alias, his second persona, by which he became known in the criminal world. This was visually marked by the black hat that he put on as if a cowboy hat, pulling his fingers along its brim to the front, while looking defiantly at his image, evoking allusions to classic western movies: unexplored, dangerous territories of the West, constant threat and physical violence, transgressions of morality, law and order, and the ultimate victory of white hegemonic masculinity. White's choice of his alter-ego is also symbolic: Werner Heisenberg was a theoretical physicist and a Nobel laureate who is known for publishing on the uncertainty principle. White's choice of his name may imply not only White's desire to be identified with a great scientist, but also his acknowledgement of the possibility of the lack of absolute knowledge. In his case, this may refer to his hidden self as a criminal concealed from others, which is in line with Bainbridge's finding: through an analysis of certain father figures on screen, he has concluded that "evil is often manifested in the creation of a secondary persona."

Lewis convincingly argues for the significance of perspective when evaluating White's actions, ultimately capturing the relativism of postmodernity. He finds that initially White is constituted as a victim, whose "sense of mortality erodes his morality" (Lewis 665) and thus he starts to feel liberated and empowered, therefore transforming his self-perception from victim to victor. At the same time, we, the audience, first "see him as a cancer patient" (Lewis 657), and later as a perpetrator, a view that

White himself has rejected in saying: "I'm not a bad person. I'm just trying to fulfill my responsibility to provide for my family. Bad circumstances forced me into these compromising positions ... After all, I am not a criminal" (1: 1). In this statement, White refuses to acknowledge any kind of choice and thus any personal responsibility he may have had in determining his course of action or of any decision that may have resulted from his post-diagnostic empowerment. As if he were in a state of denial or delusion, he presents his position as something he was subjected to, therefore rejecting any sense of agency or of inappropriate moral or legal conduct on his part.

This, I find, actually stands in sharp contrast to some of White's other statements. He admits to a deep desire for agency and choice: "What I want, what I need, is a choice. Sometimes I feel like I never actually make any of my own ... choices. I mean. My entire life it just seems I never ... you know, had a real say about any of it. Now this last one, cancer... all I have left is how I choose to approach this" (1: 5). And he makes his choice. However, his discourse on why he has made this particular choice always centers on his self-tailored image of being a responsible husband and father. This discoursal construction of his identity is only changed in the finale, as it is then that he finally admits to his then-ex-wife, Skyler: "I did it for me. I liked it. I was good at it. And I was really ... I was alive!" (5: 12). He traded his here-life for the afterlife since he did not believe in the latter. Hence he offers his second explanation for engaging in crime. If we look at this, we need to consider whether we can morally despise him for wanting to feel alive in the shadow of death. And we must admit: not at all. But then, this is only part of the question. The other half is the method through which feeling alive is achieved and the price others around him must pay for it.

When White decided to break bad, perhaps we all were tempted to try to break bad with him. He had been a decent person all his life, and it had not been rewarding. Interestingly, he does not seem to question his decisions throughout his life, as if they were not decisions that he had made, which presents the interesting situation of his not taking responsibility for his previous decisions either. This is no different in the case of his turn: he never really considers his moral responsibility as he enters the drug scene, not even in killing a number of people and turning Jesse into a murderer as well. He seems to lose the sympathy of his audience when he decides "to remain in the drug business after he exceeds his monetary target, forfeiting the opportunity to walk away with handsome profits, [which] makes it clear that he is not primarily motivated by money, but by pride" (Lewis 665). I find that White's pattern of thought and reasoning illustrates how postmodernity, through its acceptance of moral relativism and the plurality of interpretations has provided us with mental technologies by which we can constitute our own individual realities.

Therefore, we are not surprised when Jesse, marking the completion of White's metamorphosis, explodes: "Mr. White ... he is the devil ... he is ... smarter than you, he is luckier than you ... whatever you think ... look, you two guys are just guys, OK?" What is particularly noteworthy about this statement is that the two factors Jesse identifies as constitutive of evil are being smart and lucky. In contrast, Zajac claims that White's success "is usually presented as a result of luck and pure coincidence rather than Walter's intelligence or abilities" (134). I rather agree with Jesse: White's schemes, for example, to rid himself of Gus and to silence Hank, were the

doings of a brilliant, twisted mind with no moral limitations to consider, with luck playing a secondary role.

## Conclusion

*Breaking Bad* is a postmodern morality play that depicts the metamorphosis of Walter White, a gradual process that was summarized by Vince Gilligan as "transforming Mr. Chips into Scarface" (Lewis 664). Hit by the news of cancer, he has transformed from any man to anti-hero. By locating the cause of his cancer in nature and in chemical changes, White was able to reject the moralizing and victimizing discourse so common in similar situations and embrace his cancer as an enabling and empowering experience. He created his own postmodern reality in which his transgressions of moral boundaries were no longer considered. His discoursal construction of this reality and of his identity framed his assessment and rationalization of his actions. He has taken his secret journey through the realm of evil with denial, thoroughly concealed, overlooking the fact that he does enjoy free agency and does have a personal responsibility in the matter, which is a matter of choice. *Breaking Bad,* therefore, not only guides our attention to good and evil, but it also presents us, the audience, with various angles of approaches and interpretations, thus aiding us in contemplating morality – and testing our own in the process.

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