

Low Excellence:

A significant convention used in Episode 7 of Breaking Bad is the convention of the makeover. [1] This convention is used to show Walt's development as a character as the narrative progresses towards the season finale. Time is manipulated through footage of days and night passing; accelerating the stages of chemotherapy and Walt's hair loss to set the stage for the makeover. In Breaking Bad the makeover occurs when Walt shaves his head. [1] Through this we see him physically change.

The purpose of the makeover here is to act as a full acceptance of the call. This stage of the narrative is fundamental, according to Vogler's Writer's Journey, in which the main protagonist of a narrative must go through around 12 crucial steps that construct the overall story. [4] Through this makeover we come to understand that Walt has not only changed physically, but the shaving of his head represents an ultimate change in his psyche, and Heisenberg is born. [3] This transformation into Heisenberg serves as a way for Walt to act confidently in his business dealings that surround the dangerous methamphetamine world. Additionally, we see Walt transformed in the household too, as previously he was never taken very seriously. This makeover gives him the confidence to take control of his life and the situations that his wife and son present him with; [3] shown in the shop when he aggressively bets down a boy for laughing at Walt Jr. [2]

This has numerous effects and implications in the narrative. The short term effect of this comes from the reactions of his family: Skyler is clearly shocked and puts her hand over her mouth, whereas, when seeing his father's bald head, Walt Jr. smiles and says "Badas, dad." Although Walter shrugs this comment off as a mindless teenage thought, we get the idea that that's exactly how Walt intended to look to make an impact on his new industry; Badas. The long term effect of this makeover comes from Walt's [now Heisenberg's] meeting with Tuco. He demands money and threatens to blow up the entire building; winning over Tuco, profiting fifty thousand dollars, and even exclaiming to Tuco that "one pound isn't gonna cut it, you have to buy two." [2] Walter is extremely 'badas' in this scene and as he gets back to his car and holds the money, he slams the dashboard and yells "YES". This shows that Walt has asserted his dominance over a big player of the meth industry and is confident and ecstatic about his profit; all thanks to his makeover giving him new determination and confidence. [3]

This makeover has a big effect on the audience as they're not used to this kind of transformation. A generic makeover would consist of an 'ugly duckling' changing into something more attractive. [5] [6] Walt's makeover, however, is almost the opposite, as he is transforming into a drug dealing, 'badas' business man. This is important because it illustrates the scale of Walt's desperation and situation in the narrative; in order to provide for his family he's had to disregard his sound moral code and take on the life of 'Heisenberg'. [5] This shows his character development, which is crucial to the narrative's progression. [7]