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The Concierge of Crime

Representation of Manipulation in the Character Raymond Reddington in
The Blacklist

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ABSTRACT

Manipulaation ja manipulatiivisen henkilön representaatiosta fiktiossa on tehty yllättävän vähän tutkimustyötä, vaikka niiden vaikutus ja tärkeys tarinan kulkuun sekä hahmojen henkilökemiaan on selkeästi havaittavissa. *The Blacklist* -sarjassa erilaiset psykologian manipulaatiotaktiikat on rakennettu hyvin monipuolisesti sarjan manipulaatiotilanteissa. Tilanteet vaikuttavat perusteiltaan hyvin psykologian teorioiden mukaisilta riippumatta esitettyjen manipulaatiotaktiikoiden monimutkaisuudesta.

Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää miten *The Blacklist* -sarjassa rakennetaan Raymond Reddingtonin manipulaatiota analysoimalla sarjan manipulaatiotilanteiden representaatiota hyödyntämällä psykologian teorioita. Tämän tutkimuksen yksi keskeisimmistä päämääristä on selvittää miten representaatiot muodostuvat manipulaatiotilanteissa eri 'kielien' kautta hahmojen toimintana ja miten sellaiset taktiikat ja tilanteet muodostuvat, joissa kysymys ei ole kahden tai useamman hahmon välisestä kanssakäymisestä. Manipulaattorin ja hänen uhrinsa moniulotteisen toiminnan lisäksi myös manipulaatiotaktiikoiden tarkoitus sarjan sisällä on osa tätä merkitystä rakentavaa prosessia.

Vaikka representaatiot vastaavat perusteiltaan manipulatiivista persoonaa sekä manipulaatiotaktiikoita, niiden esiintymistavoissa on huomattavia eroja psykologian teorioihin. Analyysissä selvisi, että manipulaatiotilanteet yleensä rakentuvat hahmojen kanssakäymisessä pääasiallisesti heidän ilmeissään, eleissään, sanoissaan, olemuksessaan, äänensävyssään ja tilanteita ympäröivästä rekvisiitasssa. Osa manipulaatiotaktiikoista ei kuitenkaan muodostu tällä tavalla vaan manipulaatio on jo aikaisemmin tapahtunut jakson aikana piilossa ja sen olemassaolo välittyy henkilöiden puheesta ja tapahtumien kulusta.

1   INTRODUCTION

The Concierge of Crime is what Raymond Reddington is called in the political thriller *The Blacklist* because his trade is mostly in negotiating deals for and between criminals and in hiding people from the law by effectively making them disappear from the world. He facilitates crime and efficiently manipulates situations and people towards his own ends that typically lead to an expansion of his criminal empire or an increase in his wealth. Essentially, his entire life revolves around manipulation.

The kind of psychological manipulation Reddington uses is a very particular and strongly negatively connotated way of dealing with people. In its essence is social influence used with malevolent or selfish intent. Manipulation is primarily used to make other people advance one's own selfish ends. This is what separates manipulation from persuasion: both use influence but a person that persuades tends to seek out compromises that benefit all participants, not just themselves. Influence is the key to both approaches to get what one wants, but it is intent and what psychologists call "other-focus" in persuasion as opposed to the "me-focus" of manipulation that truly separates the two.

Characters like Reddington, the questionable villains, are slowly turning more multidimensional and at the same time more relatable or at least more worthy of sympathy. Many of these villains such as Maleficent in the movie *Maleficent* (2014), The Black Siren in the TV series *Arrow* or Rumpelstiltskin and Queen Regina in the TV series *Once Upon A Time* do not appear to be beyond redemption, and therefore they are often given a chance or two. With these chances they tend not only to influence what happens around them but also inspire change in the "good guys". These characters have a fine balance about their deeds that gives them ground to stand on even as these deeds are designed to serve their own interests. This is the beauty of truly manipulatively talented individuals.

Recently the TV-series *Game of Thrones* sparked interest in manipulative characters in fiction. However, the research done on the series only touches on psychological manipulation in Ricarda Hacker's (2016: 33 – 39) master's thesis on gender myths in describing

Cersei Lannister as the manipulator woman and Beth Pedersen's (2017: 36 – 37) master's thesis on literacy and power when mentioning the facility of Cersei's manipulation of her two sons during their reigns as the King of Westeros.

There is a surprising lack of research into the subject of manipulation overall as well. It has mostly been researched in psychology for self-help book purposes in cases of manipulative spouses and superiors. However, most of the academic articles dealing with manipulation are from the philosophical perspective of whether manipulative actions are ethical or not and in which situations. The most relevant manipulation theories for the thesis could be found in George Simon's (2010) *In Sheep's Clothing* relating to the covert-aggressive personality type coined by him.

Studying fictional characters and their use of manipulation tactics can provide insight into the way in which manipulation is generally represented in television and how it differs or aligns with how manipulation functions in reality. Manipulation allows for more believable plot twists as well as more flowing continuation from potentially plot-closing situations. Also, understanding how manipulation and the personality type tied to it can be utilised in fiction could prove a useful tool for writing more well-rounded and believable characters and plots.

This thesis studies how the manipulative behaviour of Raymond Reddington is represented in the political thriller series *The Blacklist*. The aim is to analyse how the manipulative character and manipulation tactics are constructed in the series drawing on George Simon's (2010) theory when studying Reddington. The manipulative situations each present a different primary manipulative tactic although certain tactics overlap in some scenes.

The central work concerning this thesis is the TV series *The Blacklist*, an intricate FBI[1] political thriller based in Washington but spread throughout the world in the business ventures and assignments carried out by Raymond Reddington and the FBI. The material is gathered throughout all the seven seasons. Moreover, the overview of the series is given

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[1] FBI = Federal Bureau of Investigation

in subchapter 1.3 that one may better understand the position of Raymond Reddington, the tension surrounding him as well as his complicated role in the series as both a villain and a friend. Some necessary details have been added in the overview to elucidate the examples given in the analysis.

Reddington offers a very varied and intriguing subject for studying manipulation due to his high-standing position in the criminal world as well as his intricate relationship with the FBI. He is very capable of playing multiple games, long and short, at the same time. He also prides himself in being honest which owes to his own separate concept of honesty. Furthermore, he is habitually ten steps ahead of his adversaries as well as his acquaintances in the FBI. However, he does occasionally find himself cornered or in situations where there seems to be no way out and yet he remains calm and collected. These situations best lend themselves to analysis of how he manipulates situations as well as people. Essentially, his entire life revolves around manipulation.

The definition of manipulation is discussed further as it seems to fluctuate depending on the field it is utilised in as a word, or even the person using it. Joel Rudinow (1978) deals with the issue in his article "Manipulation" in the psychology journal *Ethics*, which is elaborated on in the theory section of this thesis. He opens the definition of manipulation in an interesting way through concrete examples arguing through common understanding of what constitutes manipulation. A slightly modified version of his definition was accepted for the thesis stating that manipulation is attempting the complex motivation of the subject's behaviour or thinking by means of deception or by playing on a supposed weakness.

The representation theories of Stuart Hall (1997) serve as a guide for what to look for when studying Reddington's behaviour. The languages creating meaning vary across different scenes from expressions and gestures to speech and props. Occasionally, because a series is a moving progression, the previously established relationship between the characters also provides meaning within a manipulative situation. However, within the limitations of the thesis, I will only pay close attention to a selected number of manipulative situations and the characters involved in them.

Representations of various manipulative situations are analysed in the thesis drawing on George Simon's (2010) psychological approach to manipulation. The analysis is rendered easier by the manipulations' exceptional visibility and transparency within the series. Consequently, the analysis goes into detail unusual to the dominant understanding of the act of manipulation. This creates the possibility of in-detail analysis of the manipulator's behaviour and the victim's reactions as well as what is gained by the manipulation or what the purpose of the manipulative act is.

As both manipulation and persuasion work with social influence, and because successful manipulation has prerequisites, the personality of the person using social influence in this way is of importance. Therefore, it is important to discuss the theory of George Simon on the covert-aggressive personality in order to better analyse Reddington's personality and how it applies itself to his manipulative tendencies. In the analysis, the manipulator's character and personality are analysed before the manipulation tactics as this made more sense considering these significantly influence the manipulations themselves.

1.1   Aim and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how the manipulative behaviour of Raymond Reddington is created in the political thriller television series *The Blacklist*. This will be done with a functional definition of manipulation whilst drawing on the manipulation theories of George Simon (2010). The research question is separately given below.

- How is Raymond Reddington's manipulation represented in *the Blacklist*?

The idea is to analyse how manipulation manifests in each manipulative situation considering the 11 diverse manipulation tactics from the manipulation's apparent purpose into the fine details on full display in the scenes. These details can be seen or heard or felt building on the same manipulative situation in different ways.

1.2   Material Acquisition

George Simon's (2010) *In Sheep's Clothing* offered a helpful list of manipulation tactics to serve as the category basis to draw on for studying Reddington's manipulative behaviour. However, the manipulation tactics needed to be adjusted to align with Reddington's habitual manipulative behaviour. Consequently, the repetitive manipulation tactics, adjusted and found in the series, were seduction, lying, weaponised attention, diversion, evasion, covert intimidation, guilt tripping, manipulative giving, manipulation through others, the Benjamin Franklin Effect and provocation. Two of the last three are based on psychological effects and principles that are not dealt with in Simon's theories.

The material was collected by watching the series on Netflix with and collecting exemplary situations within the episodes. There are 27 different examples showing diverse manipulation tactics, explanations to them or something important regarding the theory or approach. Some additional examples are written into the analysis giving general manipulative practices or a complete situation written together with the analysis. These examples are all analysed into what makes them manipulative situations through diverse meanings befitting each situation and built within the 'languages' of representation. These examples were selected for the different manipulation tactics represented in them, their clarity and the different perspectives given into a manipulation that is fundamentally the same as another but serves a completely different purpose. This effectively shows Reddington's ability to diversify manipulation tactics. However, some examples were also selected for their explanatory value and some to show how a manipulation is created hidden in the past and brought to the present as Reddington explains the situation or refers to it.

1.3   *The Blacklist* Overview

The television series *The Blacklist* starts with Raymond Reddington, the FBI's fourth most wanted criminal walking into the FBI headquarters to surrender. This surrender initiates a sequence of events that entirely turns over the life of one Elizabeth Keen, an aspiring profiler of the FBI with a rather simple life that includes a dog and a loving

husband. Reddington insists on only talking to agent Keen, informing the FBI that he has valuable information regarding a list of criminals that the FBI are not even aware of. He quickly establishes his position with the FBI as a valued asset, despite frequently raising tensions with his straightforward and seemingly arrogant persona.

Reddington's deal with the FBI includes a list of his closest underlings for the FBI to choose two from as his private security detail. They choose Dembe, Reddington's closest friend and bodyguard as one and Luli Zang, an economist, as the other. Dembe is often viewed as a threat by prejudice for his sheer size, overall appearance, and his dark skin. Reddington saved Dembe from slavery when he was an adolescent, and he has been by his side ever since. Whilst he seems intimidating, his integrity and kindness are balancing forces in Reddington's dealings.

Throughout the series the reason regarding Reddington's insistence of working with only Elizabeth Keen is a tightly kept secret to everyone involved. The mystery adds drama and psychological tension into the relationships of Keen and Reddington within the FBI as well as between the two. Reddington refuses to share his reasons in the same way he strategically omits certain details from the cases he brings to the FBI.

The first and second seasons focus on developing a rather dysfunctional relationship between the FBI taskforce and Reddington. He gives one name after another for the FBI to chase down and arrest with no apparent link. However, eventually a link does surface as Elizabeth works out that Reddington has used the taskforce for acquiring things like information, items, and contraband, accessing and finding certain people as well as disposing of certain rivals. Considering the kind of criminals that were caught, the FBI cannot really complain that Reddington keeps using them as his own private army at his beck and call. The symbiotic relationship is tense but productive to both parties.

The third season is more intimate as it is of Elizabeth on the run as a fugitive for being accused of 16 counts of capital offenses, including the murder of the US Attorney General. She notably spends much time with Reddington on the run and more is revealed of the way he runs his criminal empire and how things function within his world. At the end

of the season as Reddington manages to clear Elizabeth's name, the tension shifts in their relationship towards Elizabeth's choice of husband as well as the reality that she is pregnant.

Season four deals with Reddington's criminal empire crumbling around him as he managed to turn one of his most loyal friends into an enemy through his inability to compromise with his own principles and code. He considered himself betrayed irrespective of the reason why Mr. Kaplan did what she did. Mr. Kaplan came to Reddington's employ early in his criminal career. She was employed just after her girlfriend, Annie Kaplan, was killed before her eyes and she herself was injured by a criminal who said to her "So you must be Mr. Kaplan then", which made her adopt the name in Annie's memory. Her history with Reddington makes her a potent enemy. Consequently, people start turning against Reddington and so he struggles to re-establish himself whilst figuring out who is after him and his finances. It is critical that he succeed, or he would cease to be of any use to the FBI.

Season five goes through Reddington's efforts to rebuild his empire from the ground up. He starts by recruiting new people whilst giving the FBI barely enough to hold them close. His relationship with Elizabeth gets more complicated as it is revealed that Reddington is her father. She becomes more accepting of her own criminal tendencies even as she enforces law. Her change towards the criminal becomes a complication for Reddington's ability to manipulate her as with her own scheming she becomes more resistant to his. By the end of the season, it becomes unclear whether he is Elizabeth's father or not and her husband Tom dies trying to find out the truth.

Season six delves even deeper into the relationship between Reddington and Keen as Elizabeth discovers the truth that Reddington has been hiding from her at the expense of her husband and many others. She keeps it to herself and betrays Reddington in the process when trying to research his past. Reddington knows he has been betrayed and once he finds out he cannot fathom that Elizabeth was the person responsible. He ends up in a moral conflict within himself and does not know how to move forwards.

Season seven introduces a new complicating factor as Elizabeth's mother comes to the picture and Elizabeth will have to choose between Reddington and her. Considering how ruthless her mother is in her obsessive search for truth, the choice is not difficult as it is between the devil she knows and the one unknown but familial. Reddington himself is also undecided as to whether he can trust Elizabeth or not.

1.4   Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with Chapter 2 explaining how manipulation is generally understood. The subchapters 2.1 and 2.2 cover the definition of manipulation and the manipulation tactics explained and reflected upon with certain personal additions to George Simon's mentioned tactics. The subchapter 2.3 describes and opens Simon's covert-aggressive personality type and 2.4 discusses exploitable vulnerabilities a manipulator can use to render his or her manipulations more successful. Stuart Hall's (2009/1997) representation theory is briefly explained to guide the analysis.

Chapter 3 explains Raymond Reddington in depth drawing on George Simon's (2010) covert-aggressive personality with subchapters 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 giving differing sides of him as an extremely complicated person. Chapter 4 delves into Reddington's manipulation tactics in action, the subchapters each describing a different manipulation tactic in different ways if possible. Chapter 5 will elaborate on the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

2   MANIPULATION

As seen in Noggle's (2020) article "The Ethics of Manipulation", manipulation in the psychological aspect of the term is most regularly defined as social influence exerted over a person in order to change their perception or behaviour to advance the interests of the manipulator. Its exact definition is difficult to pinpoint because of its fluidity as well as the confusion surrounding the question: what kind of influence can be considered manipulation? There are three reigning modern definitions of manipulation: it is considered either bypassing rational deliberation, a form of trickery closely tied to deception or exertion of pressure. Together all these definitions appear to form a conjunctive whole which would suggest that manipulation can be either pressure-based or trickery-based as Noggle (2020) puts it in his paper "The Ethics of Manipulation". Following Jan Štěpánek's (2013: 194) understanding of combinatory vague terms, there is no linear order to the significance of the term "manipulation" and it is impossible to pinpoint the exact conditions it takes to call something a manipulation. Felicia Ackerman (1995: 337 - 338) also attaches combinatorial vagueness in "manipulation" in her article "The Concept of Manipulativeness" explaining it by its inclusion of an array of negatively connotated conditions like shrewdness, deceptiveness and pressure and yet the term does not necessarily produce any one condition on the list but selectively pairs the condition with an action whilst each pairing would still be considered manipulation.

George Simon (2010) does not really define manipulation. He only refers to it as controlling and explains the feelings of uncertainty and frustration that typically bother the victim afterwards. However, he does point out the prerequisites of successful manipulation. Firstly, the manipulator's aggressive intentions must be kept concealed. Secondly, he or she must know certain psychological vulnerabilities in the victim so as to strategize an approach. Thirdly, and probably most importantly, the manipulator must be ruthless and not scared of hurting the victim. This stands to reason considering the negative connotation that overwhelmingly circles manipulation.

2.1 Defining Manipulation

As previously noted, defining manipulation is problematic as the whole concept of manipulation or what constitutes manipulative behaviour is fluid and even elusive. The greatest difficulty lies in creating sufficient boundaries for which actions should be included and which should be left out. Further difficulty arises in any attempt to pin down the intent involved in the action or words of the manipulator. These are not always evident even to the manipulator. (Noggle 2020)

In his article "Manipulation" on the journal *Ethics* Joel Rudinow (1978) develops a definition of manipulation grounded on deception. He suggests that the earlier attempts at a definition do not include all cases of manipulation and lack precision in the included cases. Rudinow's interests lie in the differences and relations between what people tend to distinguish as manipulation and attempted manipulation as well as being and feeling manipulated. An attempt at manipulation does not necessarily always yield success and one can feel manipulated even though one is not actually being manipulated.

Consequently, the inadequate and complex definition of manipulation provided Rudinow a sufficient cause for reviewing it. He exemplifies the flaws in the definition with hypothetical cases that bypass the definition despite their obvious manipulative nature. Criticising previous definitions, he recognises that contrary to the prerequisites pointed out by George Simon (2010), manipulation does not necessarily require deception. Rudinow shows cases in which mere resistible or irresistible incentives are provided instead of deception. For example, a woman wishes to prevent his husband from going to his poker night by putting on a see-through dress and seducing him, thus offering him a positive resistible incentive. This incentive is resistible as he can say no but she assumes it is irresistible to him due to his desires. No deception is required as he knows what she is doing and still falls for it because of its irresistible nature. Now the question is whether this should be considered manipulation despite its blatant execution. Despite of the lack of furtivity in this example, the strong incentive is offered as an alternative to make the recipient deviate from his original plans of going to the poker game. It is not necessarily or even likely offered as an honest equal alternative but one that is designed to keep him

at home. This intention behind the action seems to be the most common denominator between manipulative actions.

Occasionally one can feel manipulated even though one is not being manipulated as Rudinow (1978) demonstrates with his example of a guy seeking to be admitted for observation as he could not go home due to trouble with his wife. The guy is refused for not meeting the requirements for being admitted. He then tells the officer what he intends to do to be admitted and a little while later comes back with policemen who believed to have saved him, requesting him to be admitted. In this case, the policemen were manipulated where the officer was not, even though he ended up feeling manipulated due to his knowledge of the man's intentions and wishes for admission. He was forced to follow protocol linked to his position both when the man seeks to be admitted and when he comes back to be admitted.

However, it could be argued that the officer in the previous example was manipulated via the manipulation of others. Wholly excluding manipulation by the lack of its directness would exclude a variety of nefarious acts from what should rightly be called manipulation. Although Rudinow (1978) feels that the officer was not manipulated, it is not as clear a matter as he lets on. The officer could have potentially complicated matters by interfering with his knowledge about the man's plans. Instead, as expected by the man, he chose not to complicate things and complied with the admittance. The guy played on the officer's position as well as his sense of duty in how he came back to be admitted. He expected the officer to act in alignment to his duty as the admittance officer and therefore felt safe to divulge his plan to the officer as the judgement over his situation would not be his to make.

Another similar way of manipulating, following the same principle, would be the manipulative giving which is based on the reciprocity principle: when someone gives you something, you feel the need to reciprocate and thus it is possible to manipulate people by giving gifts and guiding them towards granting you something you want from them. In this latter case, the incentive has been given for action in the future and therefore the urge

for most people would be to consider it consciously resistible, but subconsciously irresistible by the way of one's conscience. This sort of manipulative giving is often committed in anticipation for a future need of getting something one wants from the other. Then the other is cautiously directed towards giving the manipulator exactly what he or she wants. Both these indirect manipulation tactics could be argued to be pressure-based as one applies psychological pressure, in one form or another, for achieving or receiving something later (Noggle 2020).

Generally, manipulation seeks to elicit behaviour from other people usually to the manipulator's benefit. It functions as a tool for the manipulator to reach his goals with psychological trickery or pressure. As Rudinow (1978) points out, manipulation is considered to require a certain kind of finesse which makes it futile to attempt on beings of lesser intellectual capacity such as infants, animals or mentally challenged people. Simple coercion does not typically fit the bill of manipulation either as it blatantly states the obvious with a clear irresistible incentive.

Rudinow (1978) concludes at his seventh proposition that manipulation is best described so that one manipulates the subject if one attempts the complex motivation of the subject's behaviour by means of deception or by playing on a supposed weakness. He thinks the most common way of manipulating is by deception as playing on a supposed weakness requires intimate insights to the subject's personality. However, his understanding of someone playing on a supposed weakness could be understood as the pressure-based manipulation as in effect it is pushing or nudging someone in a direction of the manipulator's choosing (Noggle 2020).

Rudinow's (1978) reasoning regarding the definition functions as a solid and well-rounded base to build on. However, it should be added that manipulation of every kind is used in at least two distinct ways: by trickery or by pressure. However, in some cases where manipulation is executed by either sound reasoning or by bypassing reason, it is difficult to argue the existence of either. As using all these different ways of influencing people to forward one's own ends can be considered manipulation of various kinds, it stands to reason that the fluidity of the definition is required to a certain degree.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, Rudinow's (1978) approach will serve as the core of my definition on manipulation with the manipulator's malevolent intent as an implied addition. In other words, in this thesis manipulation is attempting the complex motivation of the subject's behaviour and thinking by means of deception or by playing on a supposed weakness. The word "attempting" is deliberately included in the definition because a manipulation does not need to be successful for someone to be called manipulative for trying it. However, this is what manipulation is as an act. On a deeper level, it is encoding a message, an imperative into something said or done by the manipulator. The imperative is coded into a combination of various ways of conveying messages. This is how manipulation functions on a general level.

2.2   Manipulation Tactics

Manipulation overall is often an insidious art form as whatever the manipulator's ends are, it is used as a tool to bring another or the situation at hand under the manipulator's control. In his book *In Sheep's Clothing* George Simon (2010) offers a concise and reasonable view into the deceptive covert tactics used to manipulate others. For the purposes of this thesis, these tactics considered in their respective categories so as to better keep track of all the diverse ways of manipulating others that Raymond Reddington uses in *The Blacklist*. Some tactics have been added that could not be found in Simon's theories as the people he has observed are not criminal masterminds like Reddington.

In the book *In Sheep's Clothing,* Simon explains the different tactics of manipulation via examples from his own real-life sessions and even occasional failures of treatments he admits to having committed. For the purposes of this thesis, only the tactics themselves will be explained as compactly as possible. However, some additions had to be made outside the book to establish the full extent of the categories as Reddington's manipulations exceed the base level of manipulation presented in Simon's cases. The idea behind the manipulations remains the same. Only the execution and complexity differ. Some tactics have also been added from outside the book.

The compilation of the most frequently used manipulation tactics begins with lying, both by commission and by omission. In its simplicity, lying by commission refers to lies told for the purpose of lying whilst lying by omission is what one leaves unsaid. Simon (2010: 116 – 117) says the most common purpose of lying is to get out of trouble or to avoid conflict. Lying by commission being a successful tactic depends on the victim's willingness to believe a lie as and in reference to the manipulator's credibility. Knowing this, the manipulator generally seeks to create a situation in which his lies are more likely to be believed. Paradoxically lies by omission require no such premises. Their function typically lies in the victim's unwitting cooperation as the victim colours in the missing parts of the story or does not question what he or she does not know. Another way of lying briefly mentioned by Simon (2010: 116) is lying by distortion as the manipulator distorts the details given to the victim. Whilst Reddington uses lying by omission with everyone, lying by commission he uses anyone except for those closest to him.

The following tactics work side by side with lying as defensive mechanisms of the manipulator either denying or shifting blame for what they have done. Denial in practice is essentially the manipulator's inability to admit that they have done something wrong. In fact, whilst the classical view into the act of denial maintains that the manipulator is denying the bad he or she has done to protect oneself. By the way of rationalization, the manipulator seeks to excuse his or her bad behaviour. Minimization is related to both denial and rationalization as it allows the manipulator to downplay the harm done by his or her actions, in part denying responsibility and reasoning down the weight of the consequences. These are explicitly shown by Simon in the case by case studies in *In Sheep's Clothing*. (Simon 2010: 115 – 122). Reddington does not typically engage in these tactics as he detests any kind of dishonesty and this is what he views as dishonest.

Attention is a powerful manipulative tool as by paying attention to certain people, certain things or certain details will draw others' attention into them instead of some other details. Simon (2010: 118 – 121) describes it as selective attention or inattention and narrowly explains its function in the manipulator refusing to pay attention to something someone says or does as it contradicts with their preferred way of doing something. However, attention can also be used to direct someone else's attention from something by some ploy

or distraction. This can often be seen when Reddington needs to distract people from what he is doing or when he needs them out of the way for some other purpose. Another way of using attention is closely tied to seduction as it is an effective tool for charisma. Giving complete attention to somebody can create an addictive effect that can be used to manipulate the person. This kind of manipulative attention giving is typically used by Reddington with Elizabeth or previously with her ex-wife Naomi.

However, seduction has other aspects about it as a tactic in its own right. Seduction works through flattery, praise, charm, and overt support to build up the trust and loyalty of others (Simon 2010: 130). Seduction of this kind is not necessarily nefarious unless it is intentionally used to build up a relationship so as to take advantage of the person later. Moreover, there is another psychological phenomenon, called the Benjamin Franklin Effect, linked to seduction as a form of very subtle and powerful flattery. He describes it in the following quotation.

> (1)   Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I return'd it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became great friends, and our friendship continued to his death. (Franklin 1793: 164)

This is how Benjamin Franklin made the discovery of this effect that was later studied to larger extent by Jecker & Landy (1969) and later David McRaney (2013). In this quote from his autobiography, Franklin explains his realisation of how the simple and tiny request of a favour would provide unforeseen consequences that would have a prolonged positive effect in the relationship between him and the other person, an actual adversary of his. It is, however, important to note that it was not the request for the favour alone but also the appreciation shown after that finalised the impact earning the favour giver's respect and liking. The Benjamin Franklin Effect is very contradictory in our human understanding as the favour giver is actually the person being manipulated into liking the person

he or she does the favour to. It also contradicts the understanding that we do nice things for people who we like and instead shows that we like the people we do nice things for. He concluded his thoughts on the effect with the following quotation.

> (2)   He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged. (Franklin 1793: 165).

As is made obvious by both examples, the phenomenon maintains that people are generally more likely to grant you favours if they have already granted you favours. In effect this tactic utilises cognitive dissonance which in turn means people's inability to sustain contradictory beliefs, ideas, values, or actions, causing significant psychological stress until resolved (Festinger 1962: 93 – 107). Therefore, when one is asked a favour which is often initially small, one tends to reason that the reason why they decided to grant the favour is because they like the person asking the favour. As this liking is established, another favour does not sound bad even if it was a bigger one this time. Although this effect appears to contradict the manipulative giving, it does leave room for that as well. However, this is a more subtle, less pressurised, and yet more psychologically charged way of manipulating with a more prolonged and often permanent effect. Where the manipulative giving extends from the time of giving a gift or doing a favour into the moment it is received back, the Benjamin Franklin effect has the potential of permanent favour with the people influenced by the effect..

The avoidance tactics diversion and evasion work in similar ways although diversion is a much more conscious endeavour with the manipulator intentionally steering the conversation as well as attention away from what was being discussed towards a completely new topic (Simon 2010: 122 – 123). Diversion can also be done on a much larger scale as it can involve complete events distracting the victim from something else. Reddington puts this tactic to good use when acquiring things and when he needs to misdirect people. He typically uses it together with attention tactics. Evasion on the other hand has the manipulator respond using vague, rambling and often irrelevant language so as to not commit

to the conversation at hand. Choosing one's words with care also functions as evasion insomuch as the result is noncommittal. Evasion of this kind often relies on the victim's cooperation as with lying by omission. Not committing to a conversation allows the victim to create his or her own reality. This is one of Reddington's favourite manipulations as it allows him to be honest but secretive.

Covert intimidation is used by the manipulators when they are issuing implicit and indirect subtle threats in order to throw their victim on the defensive or to keep them in a one-down position (Simon 2010: 124 – 125). People tend to lose focus in their argument as they become defensive so the manipulator's argument or reasoning seems sounder than it initially would have. Whilst covert aggression in Simon's book is used in this way to put the victim on the defensive, it can also be used to threaten someone to reluctant compliance. Reddington deals with most men of power like politicians and the rich in this way. These threats can be anything from describing a seemingly innocent current or hypothetical situation to the tone of one's voice when saying something apparently innocent like one's name. Reddington also knows how to use this when it is necessary to lean on his notoriety or to pressure someone to talk.

Guilt tripping, shaming, or vilifying the victim all serve the same purpose as the blame is shifted from the manipulator and usually directed towards the victim. Guilt tripping the victim essentially means having insinuation weaponised, suggesting that the victim does not do something because they do not care enough or because they are too selfish. Occasionally it is also utilised in making one doubt oneself or one's position in an organisation or in someone's life. Reddington only uses this when he is frustrated or betrayed by someone close to him. It serves as his only proper defensive mechanism, as other dilemmas are easily solved by killing or scheming. Shaming the victim is typically done by putting them down somehow or by using sarcasm when speaking to the victim so as to make them feel unworthy and fearful, causing them to self-doubt and therefore seek acceptance and advice. Shaming has a complete repertoire of tactics in itself: changing the tone of one's voice from disapproving to condescending or otherwise unpleasant, casting an angry glance, giving subtle sarcasm and rhetorical comments. (Simon 2010: 126 – 127) Even vilifying the victim has similarities with the two previous tactics as it serves to cast blame

upon the victim, to accuse and cause him or her to go on the defensive whilst at the same time masking the aggressive intent of the manipulator (Simon 2010: 128 – 129). Reddington uses shaming and vilifying the victim when he wishes disorient people, place them on the defensive and have them reveal something they otherwise would not. Sometimes he also uses them to rectify situations in which his connection with the FBI has been revealed to other criminals.

A manipulative person can also opt to play the victim in order to portray the situation in a way that someone else's behaviour welcomes pity, sympathy and compassion to the manipulator (Simon 2010: 127 - 129). The more empathetic people tend to fall for this easily and thus become easy targets for the manipulator to have them side with him or her. The manipulator can also play the role of a servant when they wish to cloak their true agenda using the greater good of some kind (Simon 2010: 129 - 130). Reddington does not typically do either of these because of his special relationship with dishonesty as mentioned above in the defensive tactics.

Often manipulators seek to project the blame onto someone else in various ways, creating scapegoats with practiced subtlety. This also often leads to the manipulator taking it further by accusing the victim of believing lies or even as they get caught, they manage to spin it so that it seems as though the manipulator had no choice but to be deceitful. They often tell lies that compound lies only to burnish the original lie making it more appealing to the victim. The manipulator seeks to make the victim believe him or herself crazy for not believing the manipulator's "truth". This is also commonly known as gaslighting. (Simon 2010: 133 – 137) Reddington does not approve of these tactics either. He seems to think that once you get caught, you have to admit it or you are not being honourable and worthy of respect.

The manipulators also frequently feign or act certain emotions or states of mind like innocence, confusion and even anger. Simon (2010: 132 – 133) says manipulators exhibit these emotions deliberately to confound the victim or to make them doubt their position. Feigning innocence, they act as though the bad thing they did was not intentional or that he or she did not even do it. Usually this involves a feigned look of surprise or indignation

in order to properly drive in the doubt about the matter. Feigning confusion on the other hand involves acting as though he or she does not understand what he or she is being accused of exactly, thus again introducing doubt into the equation. Anger is another thing that can be brought in as a method of concealing intent or avoiding confrontation or telling the truth. Occasionally, it is also used to scare the victim into submission. Usually this anger is completely feigned and called forth simply for the purpose of manipulating the victim. (Simon 2010: 132 – 133). Whilst Reddington does sometimes feign emotions when dealing with the other criminals, he typically binds these occasions onto more significant manipulative tactics.

As the manipulators formulate their arguments, they tend to use a lot of logical fallacies. One of the most common though is the bandwagon effect which means explaining away one's behaviour with how widespread it is: how everyone else is doing it too. This peer pressure method serves as an attempt to bypass rational deliberation as for how common something is does not necessarily mean that it is right. (Simon 2010 & Noggle 2020) These logical fallacies are more something that Reddington likes to break when other people use them, so they are not a common occurrence in his own manipulations unless they serve a purpose within a much greater plan.

In addition to all these tactics of manipulation given by George Simon (2010), there is also manipulative giving that should be considered. It relies heavily on the psychological principle of reciprocity and tends to require a heavy psychological toll of the victim if the gift is not reciprocated (Paese & Gilin 2000). However, the most nefarious part of this kind of manipulation is that the manipulator can steer the reciprocation of the gift or favour towards his own ends. If one is skilled enough manipulator, he or she can direct this reciprocity effectively to almost any chosen favour regardless of its magnitude or the effort required to complete it. Naturally, the bigger the initial favour or gift by the manipulator, the easier it is for him or her to manipulate the way of reciprocation. With this tactic it is not even necessary for the person to initially like you as long as what you give them or grant them as a favour is something that they need or want. This will later compel them to reciprocity.

In addition to all these tactics, Reddington practices the previously mentioned manipulation through others when he wishes to get something that can only be achieved by manipulating events as well as people. This requires the manipulation of other people often using the social constructs and emotions like duty, love, position, roles, and rules as weaknesses against them. This is how Reddington typically makes money or expands his business.

2.3   Covert-Aggressive Personality Type

Typically, manipulative people are what George Simon (2010) describes as having covert-aggressive personalities. Traditional psychology looks at an aggressor under the assumption that something is wrong and that the aggressive behaviour is somehow an unconscious uncontrollable instinct, a defence mechanism against a threat or an undesirable emotional state. It is believed that people only aggress when they are being attacked in some way and that otherwise these problematic behaviours only come to the surface when one is emotionally troubled or anxious about something. The most known aggression theories come in form of the Instinct Theory of Aggression by Sigmund Freud (2011/1905: 55 – 58), the Frustration-Aggression Theory by John Dollard, Neal E. Miller, Leonard W. Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert R. Sears (1939) and the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (2015/1973). The second maintains that all frustration within our lives serve to create a need for an outlet, for taking it out in aggression.

According to Bandura's (2015/1973: 227 - 366) theory, the aggression response to frustration is not inborn but learnt and this is the one part of the theory that George Simon (2010) can agree to as he says that the erroneous thinking patterns of covert-aggressive people are learnt with practice. The Social Learning Theory also finds that aggression as a response is learnt although by reinforcement, imitation or modelling. In Simon's theory the learning is more of a covertly or overtly aggressive approach taken again and again by the manipulative person and then learning that it works and therefore reasoning that it must work also in the future. Considering all these theories together, it is clear that people are not so simple to understand and sometimes aggressive behaviour should be seen just as it is in order to better respond to it (Simon 2010: 23). It is not always necessarily

sprung from frustration or circumstances but rather learnt erroneous thinking patterns that make one think this is the way to do things. Certainly, it is true that there are people who repress their feelings to the extent that these repressed feelings then appear in the form of problematic behaviour and aggression. However, when viewing aggression that is less easily detectable, it is often the case that these aggressors should be diagnosed as aggressive personality types instead of the repressive troubled kind.

George Simon's (2010: 21 – 36) research offers a different theory and perspective to looking at the aggressor. He thoroughly grounds his perspective in his book *In Sheep's Clothing* first laying out the aggressive personality types as well as the spectrum between neurotic and character disordered personalities on which everybody falls closer to one end or the other. The neurotic end of the spectrum represents people that are conforming to social etiquettes due to their excessive conscience. Being prone to anxiety in the form of shame and guilt, they are afraid to pursue satisfaction to their own needs and wants. These mostly neurotic personalities are imperative for a society to function properly as the mostly character disordered individuals operate with little conscience and under erroneous thinking patterns and attitudes which often lead them on a path of crime or aggression in general. Their lack of self-restraint causes them to pursue goals of satisfaction with different levels of relentlessness.

Simon's (2010: 34 – 36) spectrum between the neurotic and the character-disordered personalities needed to be opened to at least some degree as the mostly character-disordered are commonly found among the manipulators he has encountered during his 30 year career as a clinical psychologist. Usually the manipulators are covert aggressors, character-disordered personalities whose primary goals in life consist of winning regardless of the consequences for others and regardless of what they have to do to win.

As an aggressive personality subtype, covert-aggressive personality can become detrimental to the people who have to deal with these individuals. Sometimes one ends up in a situation where one feels somehow wronged but cannot quite pinpoint the wrong that has been done to them. This is usually the first clue one has of the manipulation attempt directed at him or her. Whilst manipulation does not necessarily need to always be covert,

it is the covert kind that is the focus of this thesis as it is often much more insidious and much harder to detect. Additionally, it is an important part of George Simon's suggestion for a perspective change regarding dealing with aggressors of the covert kind: the manipulators.

Simon (2010: 38 – 50) says the covert-aggressive personalities can be extremely charming in their demeanour and even in their overt actions. They have learnt that the best way to get past an obstacle tends to be to go around it, thus facing no resistance. Consequently, they use cunning, unscrupulous tactics to deceive people in their fight for position or some other goal to win. Simon explains it is only with time or with ample experience that one comes to see their true nature, if at all, for they are usually great at convincing people of their integrity and positive intentions. However, these personas can best be identified by their habitual behaviour, the repeated choice of response to different situations in life and by how they pursue their desires or goals. Covert aggression per se does not make one a covert-aggressive personality, but when it is the way someone habitually perceives, relates to and interacts with other people and their surroundings, this negative personality type can safely be assigned to that person.

Contrary to passive aggression, covert aggression is in fact very active, although subtle, aggression. These covert aggressors actively seek to dominate, control, and win in a deceptive and underhanded manner. They actively fight their victims for position, advantage, or gain. This tends to be one of the greatest problems for a layperson or even professionals to understand for according to Simon (2010: 25 – 27) their way of operating in the world goes against the taught assumptions about an aggressor of this kind in human psychology. In fact, because of their cunning and active manner, the covert-aggressors are often considered a subtype of predatory aggressors, or psychopaths and sociopaths as we more commonly know them. This is a fair evaluation even if the rare psychopaths still considerably exceed the covert aggressors in how dangerous they are. These more predatory aggressors can also be found in popular culture in for example the movie *Psycho* (1960) and the TV series *You* in their typical predatory function as serial killers and stalkers. Moreover, as these individuals are most commonly mostly character-ordered, their

actions and even their thinking differs radically from that of a mostly neurotic personality which most conscientious people are.

The more character-disordered personality one has, the more aggressive and ruthless one tends to be. As these people think radically different from the average layperson, it is of extreme importance to understand where they come from with their actions and thinking patterns. The character-disordered personality tends to lack conscience and have diminished capacities for experiencing guilt and shame. This renders them undeterred by any social consequences or condemnation which in turn allows them much more freedom in pursuing their ruthless goals. Their self-esteem tends to be inflated and not by compensation of anything, but rather by their erroneous thinking regarding themselves as invincible. Their inflated ego even covers their own family as an extension of themselves, and so they are expected to appear equally great. Additionally, these people do not deal with anxiety and their habitual behaviour patterns are most definitely deliberate and conscious. (Simon 2010: 35 – 38) They know what they are doing. The monopoly capitalism of our society inspires a growing number of these character-disordered personalities of varying degrees due to its competitive nature. These individuals fuel their constant need for fighting and winning by competition at work for position and power, competition with their neighbours and friends and family. Any hostility towards them furthers their own aggression (Simon 2010: 163 – 165).

Simon (2010: 51 – 53) also writes about how a person comes to have a covert-aggressive personality. The problem seems to be both in not learning certain skills and in overlearning others. These people learn that the best way to get something is by using these underhanded methods and it does not seem wrong in their thinking. Obsessed with winning, they label everything that stands in their way as an enemy as they have never learnt when it is truly just and necessary to fight and when backing away is the right choice. Additionally, for their complete aversion to submission, they have failed to learn that sometimes one has to give ground and concede for an end-game goal. Consequently, they also fail to learn from their mistakes as it would require them to admit that they have been wrong and submit to higher wisdom. They do not change because they simply cannot submit. In the long run this can cause severe issues within relationships

These covert-aggressive personalities regard the weaknesses of others as simply opportunities to take advantage of these people. It requires a truly ruthless persona to use the weaknesses of others to manipulate them. Therefore, even if many people do covertly aggressive things to others, they are not able to make it a habitual thing because of their conscience. (Simon 2010: 28 – 55)

Covert-aggressive people excel at deflecting blame and redirecting it to their accuser. Simon (2010: 56 – 62) gives an example of a father who pressures his child to have only have the top grades like she used to, and the mother intervenes asserting that it is not fair to demand so much of the child. The father counters by saying something like "shouldn't any good parent want what is best for their child" successfully planting the seeds of doubt into the mother's mind, making her feel guilt over her own apparently inadequate response to her daughter's problems. Interestingly, Simon (2010: 56 – 62) confesses that this example case was in fact an instructive treatment failure from which he learnt that if one wishes to help someone else in a manipulator's family to win, one needs to craft a win-win situation for the manipulator. Losing is an unacceptable result for a manipulator and therefore any situation that ends with him losing is bound to come back to his victims. The manipulator's favourite turn of events is when he wins and others lose, but in order to actually deal with a manipulator, it is important to offer the next best thing by crafting him a win-win situation (Simon 2010: 155 – 157).

2.4 Exploitable Vulnerabilities

For successful manipulation it is integral for the manipulator to know what vulnerabilities the victim possesses in order to know which strings to pull and to choose his or her approach. Vulnerabilities can range between opposite ends of many spectrums like excessive humility and arrogance or neediness and insistent independence. Naturally, the most powerful vulnerabilities to use are the personal ones and those afforded by the situation one is in or the relationship one has with someone.

Harriet B. Braiker (2004) has written self-help books dealing with people's relationships with manipulative people. She recognises some clear vulnerabilities that manipulative people have a tendency of exploiting. The most exploited vulnerability is the desire to please, the common denominator among people who are unable to say no. This is commonly paired with the need for approval and for the acceptance of said people that Braiker also sees as a separate vulnerability. The fear of disapproval as a form of a social phobia on the other hand is another vulnerability in which instead of needing the approval or acceptance of people, one fears disapproval or any other negative emotion and avoids them at all costs. A blurry sense of identity with soft personal boundaries also allows a degree of manipulation shaping and influencing one's identity. Additionally, there are the lack of assertiveness, low self-reliance, and external locus of control that Braiker considers common exploitable vulnerabilities.

George K. Simon (2010: 141 – 142) approaches the matter of exploitable vulnerabilities from another perspective. He focuses more on the victim's position in assessing the motives and intent of the manipulators. People who are willing to give the manipulator the benefit of the doubt, are in the greatest danger of being manipulated. Trying to understand this kind of manipulators can also prove detrimental to the victim as he or she is bound to excuse the manipulator's aggressive behaviour with various scenarios where one should simply consider the manipulator as someone who is always fighting to gain. The naivete grows more likely with people who are in close contact with the covert-aggressive person because of how charming these people are. Emotionally dependent, submissive, and defensive people are also in danger as the way they are works in favour of the manipulator, providing ammunition through doubt.

2.5   Representation of Manipulation

Above I have presented a definition of manipulation stating that it is an attempt at the complex motivation of the subject's behaviour or thinking by means of deception or by playing on a supposed weakness, usually accompanied by malevolent intent. This will serve as the theoretical starting point for my analysis of manipulation in the TV series

The Blacklist. The following theories of representation will set the tone and direction for the analysis.

Stuart Hall (2009/1997:16 – 19) says representation is the production of meaning through language. Language in a broad sense covers everything from written words and spoken sounds to visual images and they are referred to as *signs* representing concepts and conceptual relations between the concepts. They are used to symbolize, stand for or reference objects, people, or events in the 'real world' or a fictional one (Hall 2009/1997: 28). According to Hall (2009/1997: 275 – 277), there is no fixed meaning to anything, and meaning is only created after it has been represented and therefore it is a constitutive part of the event. In other words, everything is representation and representation is not the reflection of reality, but the source of meaning to it. However, although people attempt to fix meaning onto things, it is never actually fixed as it floats and shifts depending on who 'decodes' the representation. Sometimes meaning is contested and even actively and viciously fought for within what Hall calls the 'politics of representation'.

Two systems of representation are established: the shared conceptual map that is what we understand as things in themselves and the shared language in the broad sense so we can communicate the concepts. However, in order to interpret what is being represented as correctly as possible, we need the codes that fix meaning, correlating the conceptual system with the language system. These shared codes allow us to unlock the concepts communicated with signs close to their respective meanings. These representational systems together are called 'languages'. Each of these is called a 'system of representation' because "it consists not of individual concepts but of different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them". (Hall 2009/1997: 16 – 23)

Consequently, with Hall's (2009/1997: 16 – 19) theory, the thesis analyses representation of manipulation drawing on a theory of manipulation by George Simon (2010) based on his experience of encounters with manipulators and their victims. Essentially, Simon's theory and other theories explained throughout chapter 2 together establish the meaning for the word "manipulation" as well as the actions these different types of manipulation

describe, thus creating a dominant understanding for the purpose of this thesis. However, creating representations with a dominant understanding like this is a flawed process due to everyone's individual pre-adjusted understanding of "manipulation" and the differing shared conceptual maps and codes of each culture through which understanding happens

This constructivist theory of representation presents difference, similarity, sequence, and causality as the most common signifiers of meaning. For example, a tone or an expression means something because it is different from another tone or expression and traffic lights partially owe their significance to the sequence in which they turn on and off as well as the difference between the colours. The lights are classified by their difference of colour as well as their sequence. (Hall 2009/1997: 26 – 28)

The thesis covers Hall's (2009/1997: 19) broad understanding of language in languages of expressions, gestures, tones, words, clothes, and even external props. With these meaning is created and conveyed into the act of manipulation within diverse manipulation tactics through the shared conceptual maps of the characters within the scenes as well as the audience. The representations are carefully constructed to be understood in roughly the same way by anyone watching the series.

3   THE CONCIERGE OF CRIME

Stuart Hall (2009/1997: 18) says that meaning depends on the relationships between things in the world and the conceptual system, which can operate as *mental representation* of them. Therefore, it is important to consider Reddington's way of relating to the world for better understanding of his conceptual map and the relationship between him and his victims when studying his manipulation. Whilst the overview gives an idea of how events progress throughout the series, this chapter will give much more detailed glimpses into Reddington's life and decisions throughout the series.

The chapter will build Reddington's surroundings, personality, and character. The analysis will start by examining how Reddington dresses for his role as the head of a criminal empire and how his surroundings reinforce the believability of his world, relating it to the "real world" and thus structuring frames and boundaries for his actions. Second subchapter opens the curious, selectively conscientious, and appealing side of Reddington. The subchapter 3.3 studies his covert-aggressive personality that leads him to using underhanded tactics.

Throughout the series Raymond Reddington is known as the Concierge of Crime for his position in the criminal world. He is the FBI's fourth most wanted criminal and later reaches the top of the list. He is also extremely similar to the manipulative personality type theorised by George Simon (2010). Reddington's character is a representation of a manipulative character that crosses certain boundaries between the aggressive personality types. His clearly erroneous thinking patterns shine through with conflicts often afflicting the character-disordered personalities. His appearances also play a role in his character within the worlds he needs to balance between.

3.1   Surroundings and Appearances

Reddington's world is a representation of the "real world" and similar rules apply. A measure of authenticity is given by the functioning society filmed in the background with normal people from all walks of life doing their jobs and leading their lives. People around

Reddington also react to things happening around them as people normally would in the 'real world'. Attention has been paid to details varying from the busy New York street in the background all the way to Reddington's views into the contemporary issues we face in modern society and the topics presented by other criminals. For example, Reddington takes a decisive and typically liberal or centre stance to issues such as sexuality, human trafficking, sex trafficking, various religious views, sexism, politics, poaching, homophobia and even the caste system of different countries like the USA, India and Iran. The following quotation serves as a great example of Reddington's tendency of expressing his opinions on contemporary issues.

> (3)   Honestly, is it just me, or is the human race, armed with religion, poisoned by prejudice, and absolutely frantic with hatred and fear, galloping pell-mell back to the dark ages. (Season 4, Episode 3: *The Djinn (No. 43)*).

In this quotation Reddington monologues about humanity in the presence of a man who forced his eldest son, Nasir, under the knife for being gay. Turning him to a woman and changing his name to Nasim, this man effectively condemns his eldest son to live as a second-class citizen. This implies the status quo regarding women in Iran, where the characters in the episode are from. Homophobia, which is why the father really did what he did, is a very prevalent issue in modern western societies and so it lends legitimacy to the society created within the series.

The believability of the world around Reddington comparing it to the "real world" is important because once we accept this as the frame for the series, it imposes the rules, laws and regulations of the "real world" into his. Consequently, the crimes and manipulations have to be presented in a way befitting the "real world". This sets the parameters for Reddington's plans and actions as although he does not attempt to conform to the laws, he needs to work around them to get things done whilst balancing between the criminal world and the one with order provided by laws and regulations. Naturally, this causes tension and conflicts rendering some of his manipulations of the FBI even more necessary. The conflict of interests forces him to balance between the necessity of appearing law-abiding to the higher-ups of the FBI, keeping the task force's confidence in

him and his information while running his criminal empire in a way in which he is respected, feared and considered as a threat. All this works to convince the audience of the shared conceptual map, languages, and codes necessary for representation to be interpreted in a certain way (Hall 2009/1997: 20 – 23).

Moreover, Reddington's appearances build up his character for his clean tailor-made suit ensures that he is always taken seriously regardless of whether his bodyguard Dembe is around or not. He is always classy and well-mannered. He carries himself with elegance and dignity, giving him an air of importance that is further enhanced by his suit, and the accessories of a hat, a tie, a watch, and the occasional sunglasses. These are some of the many reasons why Reddington has status and is often even considered a threat as he stands in stark contrast to the typical criminals that are always depicted somehow dirty or unkempt. This is shown in the episode 1, *Smokey Putnum (No. 30)*, of season 5 where he uncharacteristically wears a more casual assemblage and is treated by the rich as a servant whereas criminals consider him harmless and barely worth answering to despite his gun. This way even the criminals around Reddington give meaning to his status and person. In this case difference is marked, it signifies, as is consistent with Stuart Hall's (1997: 229 – 230) theory of representation.

Similarly, Reddington's bodyguard and best friend, Dembe, creates a stark contrast to Reddington who is a ruthless criminal and a white man in his sixties with all that it entails, whereas Dembe is young, black, kind, spiritual and just. Dembe is also a cluster of binary opposites himself as he appears tall and muscular, as is to be expected of a bodyguard, but then Reddington reveals that he is also scholarly having graduated among the best in his class in literature. Tall and muscular is usually associated with dumb and therefore the revelation of his scholarly prowess and intellect comes as a surprise to a degree. He can be black, tall, and muscular and at the same time smart, conscientious, and just. Paradoxically, Reddington also calls him his light in the darkness referring to himself being dark where Dembe embodies the light. In this way they come a full circle and could be considered to represent yin and yang, two sides of the same coin, balancing forces that are in harmony together.

3.2　The Good Guy Reddington

Examining Reddington's life and personality through manipulative traits and manipulative behaviour will undoubtedly cast a one-dimensional or at least one-sided light on an extraordinarily complex character. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that the scope of this study is restricted not only by the fact that Reddington is a fictional character and his world is fictional but also by the limitations of this thesis studying something highly negatively connotated. On the other side, Reddington is an eccentric and captivating man for a variety of reasons outside manipulation as well and this subchapter will briefly explore that side of him.

Reddington's persona is created with the focus on his lack of fear owing to acceptance of his own mortality. He has fully come to terms with the inevitability of his own death and therefore he lives every day of his life as though it were his last. He wears his heart on his sleeve and talks openly about his feelings. This is likely another thing that allows non-criminal people to approach him more easily as it makes him more human, not just the Concierge of Crime. His genuine curiosity and prodigious memory, whilst mighty assets to his manipulative nature, also function as attractive features on the benign side of his persona. Despite having numerous responsibilities and living in a dangerous world, he approaches life with the enthusiasm and seriousness of a child.

Reddington is often seen playing board games and even reading children's magazines and struggling with their "spot the differences" sections. Dembe once even spoils his fun by revealing the last difference, much to Reddington's chagrin, when business awaits. His playfulness endears him to people in a more benevolent way as it is not something he does to influence people, but rather to enjoy himself.

Furthermore, Reddington adores animals and abhors poaching and the torture of innocent and often endangered creatures. He even occasionally brags about having used a rifle, not to kill an elephant but the poacher trying to kill it for its tusks. Occasionally he also comes across endangered animals that someone is either holding in captivity or planning to eat.

Without thinking he rushes to their aid, using his notoriety to protect the previously unfortunate creatures. Reddington loves dogs as well and quickly makes friends with the animals when visiting their typically criminal owners without an invitation. This protection of the species, under the mercy of humans, is one of the most magnanimous qualities Reddington has. This typically functions as a disorienting factor among the people Reddington deals with for they, and the audience, expect him to be ruthless in everything.

3.3   Reddington, The Manipulator

Reddington's personality is explored more closely in this subchapter because as a manipulator he himself is a constitutive factor of meaning in a manipulative situation and because some manipulative situations have elements that require intertextual reading in relation to him and his relationships. Studying Reddington's personality gives background to his manipulative actions, thus also functioning as a meaning maker to manipulation. This subchapter also reveals more about his relationship with Elizabeth which influences Elizabeth's reactions as a victim to his manipulation.

Reddington does not generally shy away from hurting people although he does not seem to derive pleasure from it either. He is a criminal through and through which allows him a range of behaviour that would be at the very least frowned upon by society if not thoroughly illegal. Nearly all his actions and plans have a clear "me-focus", thus ruling benevolent "other focused" persuasion out. His actions are deliberate and conscious which is typical for a covert-aggressor (Simon 2010: 35 – 36). Also, because of his very apparent lack of both conscience and respect towards societal norms, rules and regulations, he can be found at the far character-disordered end of George Simon's (2010: 31 – 36) spectrum between neurotic and character-disordered personalities. Reddington's position on the spectrum is further elucidated by his obvious lack of guilt and shame in social situations. There are no social consequences or condemnation that affect him in any way.

Similarly, congruent with the character disordered end of the spectrum, Reddington's self-esteem seems inflated and, in his arrogance, he seems to consider himself invincible, often placing himself in the middle of the action (Simon 2010: 35 – 36). However, there

is another possible interpretation to his daring as well. As previously mentioned, Reddington has come to terms with the fact that he might die at any point. Considering how chaotic and unpredictable his life is, he has gotten comfortable with his own mortality and therefore he lives every day to the fullest, always ready for anything. He does not fear for himself at all. In fact, he does not fear most things.

Reddington exhibits certain overtly violent aggression throughout the series but judging by the situations in which he resorts to violence, it seems to be out of perceived necessity. Although it is possible that Reddington's rage and determination are the result of built up frustration as shown by the Frustration-Aggression theory as when Reddington's wife is kidnapped, it is not his habitual way of reacting to situations (Miller et al. 1939). It is more likely that this frustration and rage are tied to this one unique turn of events. Reddington's willingness to do what he deems necessary is simply testament to his ruthlessness.

However, Reddington's ruthlessness is tempered by a personal moral code that he has fashioned for himself. This moral code does not seem to apply to all manipulation, but it appears to serve to determine who he or anybody else is allowed to hurt or kill and who he will not lie to by commission. Despite having a moral code, Reddington's habitual response to situations comes through underhanded tactics. His first instinct is to deceive or play. The habitual nature of acting in this way is congruent with Simon's (2010: 20) covert-aggressive personality type. Reddington's moral code is important when studying his actions because it structures his world in a meaningful way by giving it order. In the following example, he explains his difficulty in forgiving Elizabeth for her betrayal and thus breaching the structure of his world.

(4)   I live and work by a very strict code built on loyalty, justice and trust. I survive because I eliminate those who betray it. Up until now, no one has been spared. Not even my closest associates, not even Kate Kaplan. (Season 6 Episode 20: *Guillermo Rizal (No. 128)*)

Although this quotation does not explain the contents of the moral code, it gives direction to what to expect from the code. He further explains how Elizabeth lives in a world with institutionalized codes, imposed order, laws and rules. He does not. He lives in his own world where no rules apply. His world is chaos and there is no order, rules, or laws in the chaos, so he has to impose his own. Reddington is not conflicted about killing Elizabeth after she has betrayed him, but he is conflicted because he cannot kill her and because he cannot trust her either. Considering this is a moral code that Reddington fashioned for himself to guide his actions, it is effectively a part of his erroneous thinking patterns. However, as it is his own creation as a covert-aggressive person with psychopathic tendencies, the code has a rigidity congruent with a deep instilled belief. This rigidity causes him to live in constant conflict during season 5 as his code cannot be executed sufficiently due to this contradiction within, resulting from external factors not within his control. Another example of a similar although somewhat lesser conflict comes with Mr. Kaplan's perceived betrayal.

Throughout the first three seasons Mr. Kaplan, otherwise known as Kate Kaplan or Kathryn Nemec, is by Reddington's side. She is his most trusted advisor, his crime scene cleaner and his confessor. She knows everything about him as she joined him at the beginning of his criminal career. Therefore when Mr. Kaplan acts according to her own opinion of what is best for Elizabeth, Reddington feels deceived as what she ultimately does involves deceiving him in the process. She helped Elizabeth fake her death and move to Cuba, later bringing in her husband and child. However, due to certain external factors relating to Elizabeth's identity as a daughter of a notorious KGB[2] agent, Mr. Kaplan unwittingly places her in grave danger. This perceived betrayal is hurtful because Reddington loves Mr. Kaplan. This causes him to act erratically and with considerable spitefulness. His mind is in conflict as his personal moral code tells him he has been betrayed by someone he thought he could trust bearing all his deep dark secrets and therefore she must be dealt with. On the other hand, Reddington does not have a lot of people that he loves so even the thought of killing Mr. Kaplan is painful enough for him to create a conflict of

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[2] KGB = Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Russian secret police and the main security agency which is translated to "Committee for State Security" in English)

interests in his brain. Consequently, he struggles with what to do with her, but eventually decides to follow the code and kill her.

Although the difficulties with Mr. Kaplan were resolved to the benefit of Reddington's moral code, when Elizabeth betrays him things get considerably more difficult as not hurting Elizabeth is a central part of his code. This conflict creates problems to him as he cannot kill or trust Elizabeth. This perfectly demonstrates the rigidity of his self-created moral compass. In his mind there are no alternatives as to how to deal with betrayal. Death is the solution. Forgiveness is not attainable, and he demonstrates this belief consistently throughout the series. Naturally, the closer the betrayer is to him, the harder he takes the consequences and the harder he struggles with the process. Therefore, as random underlings betray him, he shoots them without a second thought or flings them out of an airplane mid-air. The closer comrades he assures that he will take care of their family. Mr. Kaplan is his first real problem of heart and Elizabeth is even worse, especially as she deliberately betrays him more than once. Elizabeth's betrayal gets even more complicated by her making Dembe complicit in her lies as he lies to Reddington by omission when asked if Elizabeth is the one who betrayed him. In the following example, he tells Elizabeth his truth referring to his code.

> (5)   Being honest means one doesn't lie, deceive or cheat. Where you are concerned, I don't. (Season 6, Episode 1, *Dr. Hans Koehler (No. 33)*)

This quotation is a part of Reddington's code revealed. He acknowledges that he can be dishonest, but when it comes to Elizabeth, he is not. Despite his rigidity in judging others, Reddington does not seem to have a problem betraying others and when he would have a problem with it, he finds convenient loopholes in his own rules. For example, lying to Elizabeth is strictly off limits in his moral code but he allows misrepresentation of himself, lies by omission or lies directed to others through her. This way he manages to convince himself that he is being honest to Elizabeth directly. He just leaves some things untold and allows her to create her own reality within her head with the clues she has in

hand at that moment. This kind of deception includes partial deception of himself as he actively convinces himself that he is doing right by his personal moral code.

Reddington is extremely comfortable with indebting people to him and taking favours from people he has manipulated or intentionally made friends to forward his own ends or covering his basis. However, when Elizabeth endangers her own life in order to save his, he seems devastated and tells her never to do it again. This furious attitude towards Elizabeth would argue against Reddington's need to win, unless he considers Elizabeth an extension of himself as in Simon's (2013: 56 – 62) example of the father demanding unreasonable results from her daughter. In the following example Reddington does do something that covert-aggressors are typically averse to.

(6)   Look, I'm a technological moron. I just don't get it. Which is why I surround myself with people who do. Tadashi gets it.
        (Season 5, Episode 12: *The Cook (No. 56)*)

Another uncharacteristic move by a covert-aggressive person is to divulge a weakness or one's inability to do something on their own and even more so when this results in having to trust somebody else to do it (Simon 2010: 47 – 35). In example 6, Reddington is actively admitting his own incapability and his dependency of people who are capable of doing what he is not. However, although in this case the words are said to Elizabeth around whom Reddington is usually open about such things, he does seem rather comfortable divulging his inadequacies to everyone else as well when those people are considered friendly or neutral. Contrary to the covert-aggressive personalities in Simon's theories, Reddington does not hide these inadequacies. However, he can afford to do this because he creates the circumstances in which betrayal is unlikely. He is confident in his ability to read people. He leans comfortably on his notoriety and is always able to get whatever he wants. Furthermore, Reddington's notorious ruthlessness with allies and underlings alike, is another reason he can rely on their loyalty. If they betray him, he simply disposes of them and finds someone to replace them.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Raymond Reddington, however, is that he fancies himself an honest man. Especially with Elizabeth he vows to never lie to her, thus he forms his answers to her in a way that allows him to uphold his moral code. In effect, he lies to Elizabeth only in ways that he himself does not consider lying. His typical ways of doing this would answering any question honestly, but often omitting certain details, applying vagueness, or circling the answer around the subject. Another way he confuses the people he speaks to is by answering honestly whilst effectively contradicting his own answer as can be seen in the next example.

(7)   Elizabeth: "So I should trust you?"
      Reddington: "No, of course not. I am a criminal. Criminals are notorious liars."
      (Season 1, Episode 1: *Pilot (No. 52)*)

This way Reddington answers the question honestly and straight-forwardly, pointing out the obvious whilst effectively strengthening Elizabeth's belief in him actually telling the truth about the case he has given them. Paradoxically, telling Elizabeth that he cannot be trusted, reinforces the belief that he should be trusted as it is an honest answer. He put himself into a position in which he has nothing to gain by lying. He effectively manipulated his surroundings to reinforce his words and to establish the appearances of a truthful base for his relationship with Elizabeth.

Another of Simon's (2010) prerequisites for successful manipulation, of understanding psychological vulnerabilities and learning them about one's victim, is reached with Reddington's passion for reading, studying and learning. He has a profound understanding of the human mind including the more complex minds of high-end criminals so as to work with them. He is called a high functioning sociopath by Elizabeth who is an FBI profiler. This is congruent with his ability to connect patterns and hold an elaborate plan with many branches within his mind. Others within the series say that he has psychopathic tendencies and some even outright call him a psychopath. It is hard to tell what exactly he is as however open he may appear about everything surrounding him, he does not give

much about himself. Agreeing with the last of Simon's prerequisites for successful manipulation, the concealment of aggressive intentions and behaviour, he always keeps his plans to himself and only reveals things on need-to-know basis. He also never lets people get too close to him if he can avoid it.

Another clear aspect of a manipulative personality possessed by Raymond Reddington is the manner in which he conducts himself with elegance and eloquence alike. His quick wit paired with the erroneous thinking patterns allows him to deal with certain rapidly escalating situations in a way that confounds his adversaries. It also helps him to create the appearances of an open person which in turn facilitates approaching him with trust, friendship, or information. This charm of his will be further discussed in the seduction part of the manipulation tactics in subchapter 4.1.

Being intuitive and having a basic understanding of human psychology are also integral in recognising vulnerabilities so as to exploit them more efficiently. There is a range of things that can be utilised as vulnerabilities in people (Simon 2010: 141 – 142). Some are specific to one's personality and others are more universally applicable subconscious things often taught to us on a societal level, such as preferring to hear of a survival rate of 90% rather than a mortality rate of 10% (Noggle 2020). This kind of influence is called nudging and it seems unclear whether it can be considered manipulation or not as the information remains the same, it is just sugar-coated as a high survival rate rather than a small, but still significant, mortality rate.

In the episode 5, *The Front (No. 74)* in season 5, Elizabeth appears to detest Reddington's interest in this other woman who he has been searching for and whom everyone assumes to be his daughter. This leads to Elizabeth acting in a manner that is very clearly rooted in jealousy. She moves against Reddington, jeopardising his plans and stubbornly fighting to apparently win back his full attention by misbehaviour. Reddington notes this in the following example.

> (8) As a rule I consider jealousy to be a base emotion, but in this case it is quite endearing. (Season 2, Episode 5: *The Front (No. 74)*).

In this quotation, Reddington bluntly points out Elizabeth's jealousy, having anticipated it and anticipating what follows from it. Elizabeth seems to have a need for a father figure having grown up without even knowing her biological parents. She believes her father was lost in a fire when she was four years old and her mother is not much talked about for many seasons. Reddington also put Elizabeth in the spotlight from the very beginning and now the loss of this attention bodes badly for her. This kind of special attention often turns addictive especially when it is abruptly lost. In Elizabeth's case this jealousy regarding the disruption in her relationship with Reddington is further fuelled by everything unravelling in her life. He next moves to reassure Elizabeth in the following example.

(9)   I assure you, Lizzie, my quest to find this young woman will in no way compromise our relationship. (Season 2, Episode 5: *The Front (No. 74)*).

This is how Reddington seeks to calm Elizabeth down whilst clearly acknowledging her need for his attention. In a way he establishes his own dominance in the relationship between them. She is dependent on him for his special attention and care even as she is repulsed by the idea of it. In this instance Reddington also shows how he understands others. Elizabeth even tells a colleague of hers that she feels possessive and as if that were not embarrassing enough, it was exactly how he had expected her to feel.

Having observed Elizabeth's entire life from afar up until the point she joined the FBI, Reddington knows a great deal about her. This gives him an arsenal of tools to manipulate her specifically as the better one knows a person, the easier he or she is to manipulate. Consequently, when Reddington cuts a deal with the FBI and insists upon all communication between him and the FBI going through Elizabeth, he gets the chance to create a relationship with her. This relationship not only allows him deeper knowledge of her character, but also more hands-on opportunities to direct her behaviour, thinking and action. Instead of pulling her strings from afar without her knowledge of his very existence, he becomes able to manipulate the way she relates to him and others.

4   REDDINGTON'S MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Manipulation is reproduced in its own element in *The Blacklist*. It functions as a tool to conceal intentions as well as character. Manipulation also works as an instrument for forwarding one's own ends and getting what one wants. It allows using people as a means to an end in many ways usually appealing to their emotions, values and morals, sometimes even their reason. Contrary to real life situations, manipulation in *The Blacklist* is represented as something almost visible and definitely observable by the audience. In reality manipulation is much less obvious to the outsider and often also to the victim, leaving them with a mere feeling that something is off, as is shown by George Simon (2010: 15 – 17) in *In Sheep's Clothing*.

Reddington's manipulations have been categorised below under headings of the dominant manipulation tactic used within the examples given in each section. The material did not have instances of all the manipulation tactics mentioned by Simon (2010: 109 – 137), and some did not require a subchapter of their own. For example, Reddington does not play the victim nor does he feign innocence as he proudly, in his own way, sticks to the truth in all things. He also does not bother with denial as is evident from his admission of guilt whenever he is caught, despite not actually expressing guilt or the remorse that should follow it. He even casually gives the FBI some of their cases whilst it is blatantly obvious that he is in the middle of criminal activity like money laundering or underground business deals. Reddington sees no need for subtlety in these matters because he has managed to put himself into a position in which he can be as blatant as he wants.

As for the bandwagon effect, Reddington seems to use it in both the actual way and in the opposite way. Contrary to debating someone to do something because everyone else is doing it, he says that whatever everyone else is doing, one really should not do. This he shows in every episode in which he criticises Elizabeth for how she has been taught to think by the FBI. All the agents have been taught how to think and how to reason into

conclusions about the criminals whereas Reddington suggests that in order to catch criminals, one must think like a criminal. This way of thinking is also thoroughly congruent with the character-disordered personality.

Curiously, Reddington often seeks to manipulate people that manipulate others, other criminals or politicians that seek to achieve their own ends. Therefore, his manipulations need to be exceptionally well tailored to perfectly fit each victim. The fact that he manipulates manipulators requires him to understand their individual erroneous thinking patterns so as to satisfy their needs in order to achieve his own. Similarly to Simon's (2010: 155 – 156) suggestion on how to deal with a manipulator, he looks to win-win situations that mostly benefit himself without the other party actually knowing the extent of his gain. Same approach also applies to his relationship with the FBI and the cases he brings them. Again, he shows his understanding of the mind of others. He is even capable of successfully dealing with covertly and overtly aggressive people that easily resort to manipulations and violence.

When studying manipulation, it is important to know why manipulation actually works when it does. People make it possible simply by having faith in other people. Having faith in other people is normal in a society and a prerequisite for a society to function. People depend on each other whether they want to or not. It is easy to expect others to tell the truth when communication would be pointless were this not the expectation. If people expected others to always tell lies, there would be no point in talking. Lying therefore is always the exception, never the rule. However, this does not remove the chance of catching a lie when it is told. As truth is the expected value of an utterance, other reasons for successful lying need to be considered. Some of these are well argued in the fantasy novel, *Wizard's First Rule* (Goodkind 1994) in the following example.

> (10) People are stupid: given proper motivation, almost anyone will believe almost anything. Because people are stupid, they will believe a lie, because they want to believe it's true, or because they are afraid it might be true. (Goodkind 1994: 398)

Despite being a fantasy book, *Wizard's First Rule* offers sound reasoning for why manipulation usually works and why people believe lies. This quotation explains one of the prerequisites of magically applicable understandings in the core of being magically inclined within the *Sword of Truth* book series, but the same reasoning functions with manipulation in general. In fact, the magically inclined are the manipulators and influencers within the fictional world created by Terry Goodkind (1994). Considering this thesis, the rule ascertains that victims of lying or other manipulations are more inclined to believe in lies or fall prey to manipulations because of their willingness or fear towards the indicated fictitious outcome. The victim's hope and fear function as motivations for the victim to believe a lie. This can also be aided by both knowing the victim and his or her desires and one's charm in delivering the deception. The third common motivation for a victim to get fooled comes with creating a situation in which the manipulator has nothing apparent to gain by deception.

Reddington's weaponry in manipulation tactics allows him to create various relationships and connections. They also function as tools for him to further his own ends and therefore effectively facilitate expanding his criminal empire. These tactics are integral to his survival in the criminal world along with his acute memory and genuine curiosity to know everything there is to know about everything and everyone. Reddington's manipulation manifests itself in various ways, often linking various tactics together as well as using the same tactic in different ways.

4.1   Seduction

George Simon (2010: 130) explains seduction simply as flattery, praise, charm, and overt support, typically taking advantage of other people's neediness. Every aspect of seduction is extremely difficult to pinpoint because it is not something that comes in any one action but is rather involved in every action committed by a manipulator. It is in one's appearance, gestures, the way one carries oneself, the tone of one's voice, the words spoken and even the things one does. For Raymond Reddington, seduction as a manipulation tactic is always on. This is also consistent with Simon's (2010: 38 – 50) research on the covert-

aggressive personality type. According to him, all the aggressive personality types are typically extremely charming and persuasive.

Seduction of both active and passive kind as a tactic involves Reddington's easy-going charm which extends his influence and allows people to trust him readily. He is often depicted praising and flattering people to make them feel comfortable around him especially at times when he anticipates the need to have these people on his side in the future. Regardless of the situation, Reddington always stays calm and collected, allowing himself time to think and act instead of reacting. He takes keen interest in the people around him to best ascertain any potential way of using the information he gains. In episode *Berlin (No. 8): Conclusion* he explains that it is critical to his survival to know and remember everyone's name and everything about them and the people that surround them.

Reddington also takes advantage of the Benjamin Franklin Effect as he is quick to ask for help and favours that are often personally fitted to the interests of his victims. Sometimes he asks them of bank workers of a bank he is robbing or a trade partner he is about to deal with. It usually requires an actual favour, but sometimes even a relatively profound and personally stimulating question will do. This is how Reddington primes others to be helpful to him. They think they like him because they already agreed to help him, even if it were only to answer a question. Staying faithful to the approach, he also shows his gratitude over the favours granted and acknowledges when someone has given him important information. This will be further discussed and exemplified in the subchapter 4.10.

Reddington's charm shines through mostly from his quick wit, overwhelming confidence, and his ability to tell stories that resonate with the people who hear them in all the appropriate ways. People relate to his stories in ways tailored specifically for them. The storytelling gift is visible in almost every episode, but it is most clear in the episode *Madeline Pratt (No.73)* where Reddington creates an illusion of him and Madeline being kidnapped. His clothes grimy from apparent mistreatment and torture, he is brought to the cell and he proceeds to tell Madeline a heart wrenching story of what happened long ago. He speaks of how he ran out of gas one Christmas about 20 years ago and how he had to walk for miles just thinking of how disappointed his family would be and how he would

have ruined Christmas by being late and leaving the gifts in the car. He expertly sets the background for the story with ample detail whilst he himself appears first reminiscent and then becomes visibly emotional towards the end. He describes the traumatising scene in example.

> (11) ...and then finally… I got there. I walked… I walked through the door… and there was… just blood. All I saw was blood. All there was was blood. I can… I can still smell the nape of her neck. Feel her little fingers on my cheek. Her whisper in my ear. That's why I didn't show up in Florence. That's why I haven't showed up in a lot of places over the years.
> (Season 1, Episode 14: *T. Earl King VI (No. 94)*)

His voice slows down and occasionally breaks a little despite maintaining a steady volume. He takes long pauses to let the words sink in. All of this adds to the emotionality of the account adding to the effect of his words. This entire scene is carefully considered as everything from his grimy and slightly bloody clothes and face to his tonality and use of pace in his voice signify entrapment, dread, and impending doom. He has created the scene as though he was preparing to die, and this was his last confession. The ending he gives matter-of-factly, as though anyone who would go through something like this would not show up in places. He gives a reason for Madeline to feel sorry for him whilst explaining his lack of commitment to their past. Tears flow down Madeline's cheek towards the end of the story and as Reddington is taken for more torture, she protests and agrees to divulge the information they want if they release him.

This scene consists of more than one kind of manipulation as Reddington has created an illusion with the function of misdirecting Madeline. At the same time, he effectively guilt trips Madeline for her grudge over him not showing up in Florence whilst eliciting her compassion for the reason he did not show up. Consequently, in this case her compassion is the exploited weakness that elicits her decision to divulge the information in order to save Reddington from further torture. Once Madeline gives the information, Reddington shows up to claim it all clean and fully dressed, thus showing his hand once he has won. The difference is so staggering that it stuns Madeline before she realises to protest. The difference signifies here as well (Hall 1997: 229 – 230). First his unusually dirty clothes

for the illusion make him appear pitiful and helpless, then when he dresses up back to his full splendour as the elegant gentleman, he appears much more emotionally distant if not cold. It is impossible to know whether he was telling the truth in the story or not as something similar did happen, but his use of this story as a deception to elicit the information from her is obvious.

This storytelling gift is one of the most effective and seductive ways of directing the victim's thinking. It utilises sensory language in the creation of vivid visuals over diverse situations. This makes the situations themselves come alive and appear more legitimate than they would if described more plainly because although they did not necessarily exist before coming out of the manipulator's mouth, they now do exist in the victim's mind.

Furthermore, Reddington's wit is unparalleled in all situations. Occasionally he uses quick comebacks to rattle his enemies and at other times it is used to charm the people he needs for something they have whether it is information, a skill, or a position they hold. He has also understood that in the long run it pays to be kind to most people, and it is even better if the effect is long-lasting as afforded by the Benjamin Franklin Effect. Accordingly, he applies his charm freely to everyone around and in a way his wit has become an integral part of who he is. Also, as a rule he treats people with respect regardless of their position in life. Although it appears as though he affords more respect to laymen doing the essential jobs than the politicians and the criminals. Anyone has the potential of being useful to him. Consequently, he is often seen using drifters as tails to people he wants to keep an eye on and he sometimes finds people by setting up a bounty for the service people or the illegal immigrants in all walks of life.

Reddington is always more than willing to talk to people, discovering their hidden talents that have often passed them by because life happened. As an example, in the episode *Monarch Douglas Bank (No. 112)*, he introduces his manicurist to Elizabeth also revealing that she is trained as a trauma surgeon. He is even found using her ability as a surgeon in the episode as the Bank's formula, a girl serving as the bank's financial books due to her complete and detailed memory, gets shot.

The base of seduction as a tactic of its own is sometimes difficult to pinpoint as natural charm is different for everyone and whilst it can involve trickery and even pressure or be tied to them, it does not necessarily need either. Although seduction is an immensely powerful tactic to use on its own, it also passively and sometimes even actively enhances the other tactics of manipulation especially in situations where the manipulator is personally interacting with the victim. The more people like the manipulator, the more likely it is that his manipulation will be successful. Naturally, this is the case as people are more likely to listen to and be influenced by a charming person than someone who does not know how to command attention. This is masterfully shown in the episode *Greyson Blaise (No.37)*. Reddington marches into Blaise's estate as if he owns the place right after arranging Blaise's arrest. He quickly and confidently takes charge, pretending as though he is there under Blaise's orders. Reddington effectively makes his staff hand him what he wants and proceed to destroy and throw the rest of his assets in the lake. His voice and his entire demeanour ring with an authority that compels compliance. Nobody dares to question him or his vague orders.

There are not a lot of people in the series or otherwise that are not susceptible to this kind of manipulation as charm is a universal tool for benevolent interaction as well. Comparably to influence having the potential to be thoroughly benevolently used, charm acts as the social glue facilitating the forming of friendships and the creation of relationships. The most obvious difference between the benevolent and malevolent kinds of charm is the intent of the person actively or passively using it. With Reddington it is difficult to always tell his intent even though he appears to treat everyone as a potential resource.

4.2 Lying

George Simon (2010: 116 – 117) describes lying in the two primary ways of doing it either by commission, constructing lies for the sake of lying, or by omission, leaving things unsaid. Considering Reddington's position as career criminal, it is safe to say that despite his pride in his honesty, he often lies. In fact, as demonstrated by the earlier example of telling Elizabeth how criminals are notorious liars, Reddington is a fan of exact

words and technical truths. Lying either by commission or by omission is always a trickery-based tactic of manipulation for its tendency to misleading the victim, directing him or her or inducing faulty emotional states.

Usually Reddington's lies are the most flamboyant when he faces danger. He even uses them as distraction as when he is saving Elizabeth from the Serbian consulate by telling an elaborate fictional story of Elizabeth's actions whilst acting it out equally well. This instance would actually serve as an example of a clever combination of lying by commission and seduction. Reddington's easy charm in a way charges his lies with more potential for influence. Although he does lie often to his criminal partners and collaborators as well as innocent people that happen to cross his path, his personal moral code forbids him from lying to Elizabeth in a way that he would construe as a lie.

Although, lying by commission is a trickery-based manipulation tactic, pressure can be added to it as well (Noggle 2020). However, usually the lies that are based in pressure include covert intimidation. The trickery part of the equation applies always as the whole idea of a lie is to give someone a view of the world that is fictitious in one way or another. After the first lie the victim starts living in a fictional world in relation to the liar. Every lie thereafter builds further the fictional world which only collapses if the victim finds out the truth. At worst, the manipulator can facilitate his or her future lying by the lies he or she tells before. Once the lying begins, it is increasingly difficult to stop so the collapse, when it happens to the victim, is complete and always painful.

Overall, lying is an effective tool for its potential for application. Its function to deceive, however, is reliant on others believing what the manipulator says, usually even more so among people the manipulator personally knows. For example, Reddington maintains an image of an honest man even within the criminal underground, so his lies are not typically hindered by expectation of him lying. His penchant for honesty affords him trust by his friends and employees as well as his adversaries.

However, Reddington's more common way of lying is by omission, although he does not personally consider lies by omission as lying. This allows him to lie to Elizabeth by omission and still stay true to his moral code. He also regularly omits details from the FBI regarding the criminals he brings them. Omitting his own angles and motives often helps him in steering the FBI towards specific ends that might not be possible should they know the whole truth. This is the tactic he uses the most with Elizabeth as everything about why he came to her life is a mystery that is found out at the slowest possible pace. Lying by omission is also a trickery-based tactic as it generates ignorance, speculation, or misdirection. In Reddington's repertoire, however, lying by omission is the only way of keeping all the strings in one's own hands and leaving almost nothing to chance. For him, this is the only way of being a successful businessman. Reddington is even honest about being withholding, although he does not consider it dishonesty as can be seen from the following example.

(12) Reddington: "...admit it you're a little hungry."
Elizabeth: "I am.. for the truth. Any chance that's on the menu?"
Reddington: "Specialty of the house. I'm never dishonest, only withholding."
(Season 7, Episode 19: *The Kazanjian Brothers (No. 156/157)*)

In this example Reddington helpfully explains his view into dishonesty. According to him lying by omission, or in his words withholding information is not to be considered lying or in any way dishonest. However, when Dembe lies to him by omission when covering for Elizabeth, his reaction shows the shock of betrayal. Consequently, his moral code seems flawed regarding his own judgement of what counts as dishonesty and betrayal. This is another example of Reddington's erroneous thinking patterns at work.

One of the most seminal defining moments in the relationship between Reddington and Elizabeth comes with the death of Sam, Elizabeth's adoptive father. From the beginning of episode *General Ludd (No. 109)* it is made clear that Elizabeth's father is very sick and, in the hospital, getting tests. Throughout the episode the severity of his illness grows more and more evident and Elisabeth is told to go see her father multiple times by both Reddington and Tom. Whilst advising her, Reddington leaves out the fact that he is at the

hospital visiting Sam and later fails to mention that he also euthanises him, which would have been ideal especially after he met Tom at a café close to the hospital. He thereby lies by omission multiple times in a row. Naturally, the truth eventually outs, and Elizabeth takes it harshly. The excuses of Reddington putting Sam out of his misery, or his testimony of how he was in pain and suffering, mean nothing to her. Lies feel even more of a betrayal when the truth is found out some other way, from someone else's mouth. Even as it is clearly painful for Elizabeth to discover that Reddington killed her father, it is even more so for the fact that she had begun to get emotionally closer to him. This can be seen when dealing with his betrayal puts her first into grief and then into fury. Finding out the truth from Tom makes her detest Reddington so much that she even plans to leave the task force.

The more complex part of Reddington's art of lying both by commission and by omission is that he lets the victim do most of the work. He understands that the best way to lie is interactively. Whenever he tells a lie, he tells it halfway so that the victim's mind fills in the blanks. Naturally, this works even better with lying by omission. Whilst not every lie by commission or omission is created or used in this way, it is the far superior way of lying when the manipulator knows what he is doing. It is possible to paint a very specific picture of a situation in someone's mind just by letting them themselves colour certain parts of the story. For example, in the previous example, Reddington not telling Elizabeth of his whereabouts whilst pushing her to go see her father at the hospital creates a concerned and caring picture of him in Elizabeth's mind. He seems like someone who genuinely wants to help her to reach her father, even offering his plane for use as other planes are grounded due to a bomb threat. Aware of the view created by these lies of omission, Reddington further reinforces it by inviting Elizabeth to share stories about Sam at the end of the episode.

Contrary to reality, in movies and tv series the truth always outs. It does not necessarily come out in the same episode or even in the same season, but it will. The lies are built in a way that they create anything between small twists and tension to major turnarounds when they do come out. For example, many of Reddington's lies have turned Elizabeth's

allegiance after she has softened to him again. This is how lying is portrayed always leading to trouble.

4.3   Weaponised Attention

George Simon (2010: 118 – 121) gives a narrow description of attention calling it selective attention or inattention and describing it as something the manipulators use to ignore or listen to others when it suits them. Attention is an important facet of Reddington's arsenal. His attention functions as a defence-mechanism, a diversion tactic and method of seduction. When used selectively, it often leads him to ignore unwelcome comments and advice that would thwart him from his goal as is congruent with Simon's (2010: 118 – 121) theory. For example, when a nemesis of his kidnaps his ex-wife, he relentlessly pursues clues leaving others to clean up after him. He is advised to let it go and deal with things in another way, but he refuses to listen to anyone. Sometimes he also uses selective attention or inattention deliberately to misdirect others about his own priorities or plans.

The most obvious scene for this kind of manipulation comes in the episode *Nicholas T. Moore (No. 110)* as Reddington appears to be reading the paper and then apparently seeks to hide the section he was reading when Elizabeth enters the room. She barely catches a glimpse of the article and due to the tension between her and Reddington, she assumes he did not want her to see it. By the end of the episode it becomes clear that Reddington wanted Elizabeth to see the article in order to distract her and the taskforce as she points it out to him. He had purposefully made it appear as though he was hiding the article in effort to draw Elizabeth's attention to it. Thus, he effectively directed her attention with his own inattention. Trickery is involved with this tactic as well, but in this specific instance the tension in the relationship between Elizabeth and himself also lends to direct her behaviour through her stubborn determination and suspicion. This all functions as a weakness for anger and tension between the manipulator and the victim typically lead to erratic behaviour and increased suspicion over the manipulator's actions.

In the previous situation, the tension in the air between Elizabeth and Reddington is pronounced and further increased in their discourse. The music is somehow pressing as well,

although quiet. Both seem to be talking casually but there is visible strain on their faces for suppressing feeling, most likely anger. Reddington tosses the newspaper on the foot-stool and decidedly places his foot on the article whilst looking elsewhere. The movement is ingenious as it looks as though he tried to do it casually but could not and hence the abruptness in placing his foot. Reddington also keeps talking through the movement as if to disguise hiding the paper. However, were it not for the tension between the two, the whole situation would have gone unnoticed.

Another kind of manipulation by attention that should be included here is how in combination with charm, attention functions as an addictive form of seduction. For example, Reddington always gives Elizabeth his undivided attention whenever she is around. When she enters the room, it appears the world ceases to exist around them. People around them become unfocused and somehow insignificant. Due to its intoxicating and overwhelming force, it creates an inexplicable need for his attention within her. This effect is well expressed in Reddington's ex-wife's assessment of the relationship between Elizabeth and Reddington visible in the following quotation.

(13) He wants something from you. It's a game. It's a manipulation. He's made you feel a connection that makes you feel like you matter somehow. And there is no one on Earth that can make a woman feel like the centre of his universe like Raymond Reddington.
(Season 2, Episode 4: *Dr. Linus Creel (No. 82)*)

This is how Reddington's ex-wife speculates Reddington's relationship with Elizabeth when Elizabeth asks him why she thinks he entered her life. This way of showering someone with attention and making them feel important and cared for builds either the feeling of attraction or safety in the victim who grows to like receiving attention. As a weaponized manipulation tactic, it has the potential to generate a relationship of unequal power. The victim becomes dependent on the constant and focused attention. Consequently, in this kind of relationship, the manipulator has power over the victim as they are in control of the supply of attention when it is not sought from elsewhere. The same intoxicating attention giving is described in the movie *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) in the following quotation.

(14) The thing with Dickie... it's like the sun shines on you, and it's glorious. And then he forgets you and it's very, very cold... When you have his attention, you feel like you're the only person in the world, that's why everybody loves him so much. (*Talented Mr. Ripley*, 1999)

Comparably to Mr. Ripley suddenly losing Dickie's attention, Elizabeth loses Reddington's overwhelming and continuous attention momentarily as he is focused on finding the daughter of his nemesis, whom everybody thinks is his own daughter. This sudden loss of attention causes irrational feelings in the victim. Although the loss part of this kind of manipulation is not strictly a part of the manipulation strategy itself, it is the consequence of successful use of attention in a manipulative way. Used in this manner, attention functions through trickery but also pressure to certain extent. However, in this case the pressure is not applied by the manipulation tactic itself but its consequences in the feelings of dependency in the victim.

Even though the diversion tactic is separated into subchapter 4.4, it is strongly linked to weaponised attention. This can be seen from the way diversion is generally constructed as the manipulator seeks another place to direct the victim's attention to make him or her forget what they were initially asking. The only clear difference is that diversion is usually done with words, whereas attention or inattention are weaponised and visible in the manipulator's eyes or gestures, movements, or from what he or she leaves unsaid. It also functions side by side with diversion when the manipulator focuses his attention to a certain problem or his efforts to acquiring something when he is after something completely different. Reddington frequently uses this tactic together with diversion as a distraction.

4.4   Diversion

In George Simon's (2010: 122 – 123) descriptions of the manipulation tactics, diversion is deliberately steering the conversation or attention of the victim away from the original subject or event. Diversion covers everything from slight misdirection to vague answers

and greater distractions. Reddington's favourite way of using diversion is answering invasive questions by random compliment or comment so as to distract the victim from the subject at hand. Sometimes he even implicates someone else about a closely related subject. The closer the subject is to the original question, the easier it is for the manipulator to distract the victim.

> (15) Malik: "How did you get here?"
> Reddington: "That's a pretty blouse."
> (Season 1, Episode 4: *The Stewmaker (No. 161)*)

In this example Reddington is asked about how he got to the cottage where Elizabeth was being held as he did not arrive with the FBI. Instead of answering the question, saying that he arrived before the FBI to save Elizabeth and collect a picture from the Stewmaker's ledger, he compliments agent Malik on her blouse, distracting her from the question. Reddington also visibly ignores the question as he adjusts his hat and turns on his heel to leave. This is heavily a trickery-based tactic as it serves to wilfully distract others from one thing by confusing their mind with another, often a simpler thing to process. This tactic is also aided by external distractions around the victim, in this case the police officers talking to agent Malik, requiring her attention.

From the beginning of the series Reddington seeks to involve Elizabeth thoroughly in every case he brings to the FBI and he even resorts to killing in order to protect her. He shows her how special and important she is to him even as he remains evasive about the why. However, when asked directly, he either deliberately answers the wrong question or intentionally steers the conversation away which is congruent with the manipulation tactic of diversion or he uses evasion answering the question vaguely (Simon 2012: 122 – 123).

Diversion is also used by Reddington often through people as a part of a bigger plan. Unlike the diversion examples shown by Simon, this kind of diversion is on a much larger scale as it might include a complete event elsewhere to divert attention from something else done by the manipulator, therefore it is also often inclusive of attention tactics. In the light of Reddington's usually far reaching plans, this kind of diversion is his habitual way

of acquiring things. He often creates a diversion by using the FBI, by lying or by creating an elaborate plan to do or get something when he is really after something else.

In the episode *Abraham Stern (No.100)* Reddington risks all his financial assets for a treasure hunt in order to infiltrate the Denver Mint and rob them of a treasure they do not even know they have. He makes plans with Abraham Stern as his partner in crime, carefully considering every aspect of the heist as though he were completely in on it. However, he anticipates getting betrayed by Stern, and thus he lays plans of his own. Counting on being locked out of the initial plans with Stern, he escapes to his own underlings waiting for him with a vacuum tanker that sucks the money through the vent whilst he calls the FBI on Stern. Stern did not count on Reddington having another plan as he seemed so willing to risk millions in assets to see their plan to succeed. Him going along with Stern and his men was simply a diversion, for he planned to get the treasure all to himself from the beginning. In this situation, Reddington's willingness to risk his assets signifies his commitment to the initial plan and lulls Stern to false sense of security. Consequently, in betraying Reddington, he simply locks him in the back of the van, thinking him harmless.

4.5   Evasion

George Simon (2010: 123 – 124) describes evasion as rambling, irrelevant and vague language typically used to avoid committing to the situation at hand. Evasion functions as Reddington's tool to avoid uncomfortable conversations as well as those in which he would be found complicit of a crime. He also uses evasion to circle the truth or to avoid giving direct answers to direct questions. It allows him to be honest in his own mind even as he does not exactly tell the truth, especially with Elizabeth. With evasion he can also choose when to correct erroneous views regarding him and what he is doing, and when to allow people to keep them.

Evasion is an important part of Reddington's manipulation repertoire because of its various uses. Reddington often gives vague answers to questions and seeks to allow people to come to their own conclusions even when these conclusions are erroneous. When confronted with something that he could answer, he does not deny or confirm insomuch as

the potentially erroneous conclusion this person could come to is in any way favourable to him or at least neutral. He maintains mystery about himself and in his dealings and seems comfortable like this. The next quotation is an example of an erroneous belief held by Elizabeth, which Reddington opts not to correct.

> (16) ...I found the DNA profile. You lied to me. You told me my father was dead, that I killed him.
> (Season 4, Episode 5: *The Lindquist Concern (No. 105)*)

In this exchange Reddington simply listens to Elizabeth expressionless and does not say anything. He knows the DNA report is fabricated and still he does not attempt to argue with it. Furthermore, he willingly takes the mean comments and accusations from Elizabeth following this discovery. For Reddington it serves no purpose to fight her on the matter as he knows from experience that she is a stubborn person and will not change her beliefs without solid proof. Consequently, Reddington opts for silence, thus evading the argument. Sometimes he uses seduction tactics in evasive ways like evading a question or the significance of a comment by telling a quasi-related story to distract the person talking to him. He also always chooses his words with care irrespective of which tactic of manipulation he is using. However, when Reddington assesses a situation likely unwinnable, as shown by example 16, he mostly opts for technical truths or silence, evading as much of it as he can. Example 17 shows how he chooses his words to evade Elizabeth's questions.

> (17) Elizabeth: "I want to know who she is and why the hell she's inserted herself into our lives."
> Reddington: "I can't answer that."
> Elizabeth: "You can't or you won't?"
> Reddington: "Well that's a matter of interpretation."
> (Season 1, Episode 17: *Ivan (No. 88)*)

As usually, Reddington gives honest but vague answers, allowing Elizabeth to get frustrated and even angry. Her accusations do not rattle him too much as he calmly waits for her to finish and leave, simply carrying on repairing the gears of a music box. In this case

Reddington combines carefully chosen words and silence as he refuses to talk about the matter. He cannot answer the question because it is clear that she would not accept the answer. She would not accept that Jolene Parker has inserted herself in her life because of Tom. Therefore, Reddington's only choices were either to tell the truth and suffer the consequences or deftly evade it by forming his response in this way. It could also be argued that Reddington actually did bring the case of Jolene Parker to Elizabeth as nobody would have sought for her had he not called in a tip, making Jolene Parker a missing person to be investigated by the police. In the following example 18, Reddington explains the way he deals with revealing truth to others, by showing it rather than arguing it.

(18) I can only lead you to the truth, I can't make you believe it.
      (Season 1, Episode 17: *Ivan (No. 88)*).

As Elizabeth realises the truth, she gets a flashback taking her back to when Reddington said this. He certainly did lead her all the way to the husband with the Zamani case, the Gina Zanetakos case as well as the Cyprus Agency case and even by calling in the disappearance of Jolene Parker after having had her followed for some time and after having found her and his own private eye dead, both killed by Tom. This is Reddington's way of guiding Elizabeth instead of imposing the truth on her as a claim. The evasion demonstrated in example 17 not only allows Reddington to diffuse a situation that is bound to explode but also to build up Elizabeth's trust in him. He rather proves his word with patience than lies or argues to save his skin in the moment.

Reddington could have easily pressed the matter with the husband much sooner, but instead he remained patient and waited. Eventually as Elizabeth finds out the truth for herself, he is there to pick up the pieces. He even fixes and gifts her a music box with a familiar tune from her childhood. He stays silent and simply listens to her until she surrenders to being consoled. These are yet more ways for Reddington to make himself visible and important in her life, to make her depend on him. However, Reddington does appear to genuinely care for Elizabeth despite his manipulations.

Moreover, when Elizabeth discovers that Raymond is his father, he again opts not to con-firm or deny therefore allowing Elizabeth to draw her own conclusions regardless of the truth of the matter. This is how by evasion Reddington controls the narrative in a way that is manageable for him. Evasion is one of Reddington's favourite ways of manipulation for all the breathing room it gives without directly lying about anything.

4.6   Covert Intimidation

George Simon (2010: 124 – 125) explains covert intimidation as veiled threats, subtly implying they could do something detrimental to the victim. Covert intimidation is also a common tactic of Reddington's and as a manipulation tactic it is represented in diverse ingenious ways throughout the series. He often makes people question if he is threatening them or not as his threats come veiled, congruent with Simon's description. Sometimes, however, the intimidation is obvious in spite of its disguise. Even the way Reddington presents himself, enunciating his name with great care, is meant to intimidate as his rep-utation as an international criminal tends to precede him. At other times, Reddington does not present himself so that when he is eventually recognised, his name becomes a hushed whisper that brings fear in its wake. In this way his notoriety is an asset to him. It makes people quick to comply and opens doors to information and favours. When his name and reputation are known, the entirety of his presence becomes intimidating. Similarly to the way potentiality of an outcome congruent with one's hope or fear makes lying work so well, Reddington's mere reputation affords him more respect with the fear of what he might do to one and the hope of what he might do for one. This tactic is always heavily pressure based as whatever the veiled threat is or even when it is the manipulator's name and notoriety, it creates pressure to behave in the way the manipulator wishes one to behave.

Furthermore, covert intimidation does not require words spoken or even one's notoriety in one's name. Sometimes it comes in form of a simple change of tone, a glance, or an expression. For Reddington it is occasionally enough to simply place a gun on the table and his hat on top of it. These gestures have the sole purpose of intimidation, applying

pressure to the conversation that follows. Reddington does this in numerous occasions when confronting people about their actions or hoping they will help him to find someone else. Even with the gun, the threat is not direct as the gun is not pointed at anyone nor held or hovered over. Nonetheless, its presence is felt.

Reddington has a way of getting things to go his way. Covert intimidation is one of the more simple and easy ways of doing this. For example, occasionally there are certain government officials with whom Reddington knows he must threaten them with something serious enough to get what he wants. Rafael, an aid to the Venezuelan foreign minister is one such individual. He made a deal with Reddington to arrange a meeting with the minister. As anticipated by Reddington, he seeks to go back on his word when Reddington comes to collect on the promise. Consequently, Reddington brings a gift to his surprise meeting with Rafael as well as an agent, Samar Navabi, with a camera taking pictures of the two. He makes a show of giving him the gift, embracing him, and posing for the pictures with the nervously smiling, confused Rafael. He then invites Rafael to the backseat of his car for a more private conversation, or rather a monologue seen in the following quotation.

> (19) You see that lovely woman there? The one with the camera? She's a stringer for UPI. Dear, dear friend. Shoots my Christmas card every year. She has a wonderful eye for composition and detail. An intuitive sense of timing to capture the moment. A warm embrace between old friends. The exchange of a gift. The intimacy of a quiet conversation in the backseat of a car. But the curious thing is pictures never tell the whole story. For instance, the only story here will be your friendly meeting with an international criminal... wanted by the FBI, Interpol. I wonder how long you'll survive once that story hits the Venezuelan press?
> (Season 3, Episode 9: *The Director (No. 24)*)

This monologue by Reddington begins with his charming manner slowly building up the covert intimidation, the subtle and yet at the same time rather obvious threat of his words reaching the minister's aide. Reddington effectively shows Rafael how representation is a constitutive part of an event as shown by Stuart Hall (2009/1997) and uses it to intimidate him. Throughout the monologue, Reddington's voice stays calm, casual, and almost

playful. He uses his voice to exaggerate the compliments he directs to agent Navabi as the photographer. He even chuckles at one point. This addition of his overall charm and good humour lends his words a menacing edge to drive them home. Although the threat is not direct, there is no room for misunderstanding his message. One can visibly see Rafael's expression change from confusion into concern and defeat into reluctant acquiescence. Initially his mouth is slightly open and his brow drawn to a frown which are both typically associated with mild confusion. Then in quick succession, while listening to Reddington speak, he first looks away, closes his eyes and mouth, and then grits his teeth as he opens his eyes again. All of these are associated with increasing annoyance and apprehension. In the end his eyes seem to relax as although the line of his mouth remains as he stays quiet and acquiesces. Reddington attached meaning to the box by making it a gift and within the discourse of the situation as he described it, between friends, it signifies a bond between the two to any outsider. The gift and the words serve as an irresistible incentive with attached pressure for Rafael to save his own skin for the hasty favour he had already promised Reddington. He is left with no choice but to comply.

4.7   Guilt Tripping

Guilt tripping is described by George Simon (2010: 125 – 126) as using the victim's conscience and especially guilt and shame as weaknesses to exploit when wanting something from the victim. Whilst guilt tripping is not necessarily the most common tactic for Reddington, he uses it a lot with Elizabeth when directing her actions. Despite lacking conscience, himself, Reddington understands the depth of conscience others have and uses it. Overall, it seems as though guilt tripping has been saved as tactic for only those closest to Reddington seeing as he also uses it with Glenn whom he would reluctantly call a friend. Glenn is part of DMV[3] staff and serves Reddington as a private eye for his knack for finding things. He often tests Reddington's patience and for this Reddington does not have any problem manipulating him, suggesting that he does not care enough for Red-

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[3] Department of Motor Vehicles

dington's request and therefore cannot deliver. Sometimes he even threatens to find someone else to do the job, because clearly Glenn is not able. This tactic is pressure-based and mostly only applicable to people who care for the manipulator's opinion.

At the end of season three Reddington discovers that Mr. Kaplan has betrayed him, at least in his own opinion. The hurt of this betrayal is a conflicting factor to Reddington as his trust is broken by someone he trusted with the entirety of his life. Consequently, as they go about trying to find Elizabeth and her daughter, Agnes, Reddington continuously reminds Mr. Kaplan of her betrayal in what seems like an attempt to guilt trip her into both admitting she was wrong in doing what she did and to doing things she maybe otherwise would not. At the same time he is building up the courage and determination for executing her. It is difficult to say with certainty whether in Mr. Kaplan's case the guilt tripping stays on the level of an attempt of manipulation for Mr. Kaplan says to be doing said things for Agnes' sake and she refuses to consider her betrayal a betrayal. In the next quotation she explains another perspective for why Reddington keeps trying to guilt trip her.

> (20) In my desire to make life easier for your baby, I betrayed Raymond and now he doesn't know what to do with me. Well, he knows what he has to do, and he wants me to make it easier for him. But I won't. I'm not here to make him feel better. (Season 4, Episode 2: *Mato (No. 66)*)

Mr. Kaplan provides an additional plausible interpretation to Reddington's attempts at guilt tripping her when Tom expresses her his regret for having tortured her friend. Mr. Kaplan's way of looking at the situation suggests that Reddington is not thoroughly confident as to whether she is guilty of betrayal or not. Therefore, his attempts to guilt trip her can be interpreted as an attempt at purging his doubts about the act. He needs Mr. Kaplan to admit to betraying him in order to feel completely justified in killing her when the time comes.

Throughout the series, Reddington involves himself in Elizabeth's life in every possible way. Even her decision of adopting a child becomes a case for Reddington. *The Cyprus*

Agency (No. 64), as an episode and a case for the FBI, does not seem to serve any other purpose to Reddington than to make Elizabeth have deep enough doubts about her relationship with Tom that she calls off the adoption. Whilst Reddington involves direct guilt tripping in his speech against the adoption, he also gives the FBI this case of a corrupt adoption agency which effectively drives in his point and works to guilt trip Elizabeth from within. She even acknowledges the attempt at manipulation and still falls for it as it also appeals to her reason. It is also possible that Reddington and the case together appeal to Elizabeth's rationality and therefore prompt her to change her mind about the adoption. In the following example 21, Reddington guilt trips Elizabeth for a different purpose entirely for something she has done to hurt him.

(21)   Elizabeth: "If I knew what was going to happen…"
        Reddington: "That they'd put me on trial? Sentence me to death? That surprised you?"
        Elizabeth: "No. The only thing I knew is that you aren't who you say you are."
        (Season 6, Episode 18: *The Brockton College Killer (No. 92)*)

Another way Reddington uses guilt tripping is simply to affect the feelings of the victim. In this caption, Reddington has just found out that Elizabeth was the one to betray him to the police. This prompts him to react with the same erratic and spiteful behaviour as whenever he feels betrayed by someone close to him. He immediately proceeds to guilt trip Elizabeth through reasoning. She explains that she only wanted to know the truth which she in her opinion deserved. The only true aim to this specific case of guilt tripping is to hurt Elizabeth as she has hurt him.

4.8   Manipulative Giving

Manipulative giving is based on the reciprocity principle (Paese & Gilin 2000) that compels people to answer a kindness in kind. The manipulative part comes with the manipulator directing the reciprocated favour. Naturally, a great deal of Reddington's power in the criminal world is based on the reciprocity principle as he gives out favours and people

owe him. He not only gives them something tangible but also makes an impression that lasts. Reddington's use of manipulative giving is made frequent and imaginative. He often opts to create a problem for someone so that he can step in with a solution that leaves them in his debt. This kind of giving allows him either influence with powerful people, favours, or lucrative business relationships. Reddington even helpfully explains his favourite kind of manipulative giving in the following example.

> (22) Reddington: "If you want to know what Ivan is up to, you have to get him to share that. Not because he has to but because he wants to."
> Elizabeth: "How do I do that?"
> Reddington: "We create a problem for him and then solve it."
> (Season 1, Episode 17: *Ivan (No. 88)*)

In this scene Reddington explains how to manipulate people into revealing things or taking your side by using the tactic of manipulative giving. Throughout the series he has a tendency of using the FBI to create problems for the criminals and as the FBI are working with him, it is an easy problem for him to solve. In this episode, his aim is to find out the plans of a hacker regarding a digitised skeleton key. Reddington uses this tactic also to gain favour with the members within the secretive cabal that is running the government. This is how manipulative giving works: one gives something to get something else right away or at a later time.

Manipulative giving tends to be a tactic that only functions as a one-time deal. However, Reddington demonstrates that this can also be used to cultivate a relationship when the process of it is initiated and the favour is carried out without obvious strings or with the honest preface of gaining favour or friendship. The nature of the problem is irrelevant, as is the way in which it surfaced or the person behind it. All that matters is that the manipulator is the one to solve the problem so that the victim will become indebted to him in one way or another.

Reddington uses the same tactic of creating a problem only to solve it with Robert Hobbs, a billionaire intent on discovering a way to live forever. Reddington finds out about Hobbs' business dealings and discovers a weakness. He then exploits the weakness by

setting the FBI on Hobbs' trail. However, as the FBI close in on Hobbs, Reddington deftly solves the problem for Hobbs to his satisfaction. Naturally, because Hobbs is loyal to people that help and befriend him, he immediately sets himself on Reddington's side against the rest of the Cabal. As he lobbies for him, Reddington says he appreciates it, but Hobbs quickly corrects him to say he rather expects it.

Furthermore, because of Reddington's commanding persona, people remember him and so they also remember what they owe him. The episode *Luther Braxton (No. 21)* serves as a great example for this as when Reddington infiltrates the secret CIA prison, he quickly gathers assistance from within the prison. These prisoners all have a debt of one kind or another for Reddington, so they help him to fight Braxton's men and even device him a plan to interrupt their internet connection by exploding a machine downstairs. As is typical to manipulative giving, whilst the favour lasts until it is repaid, once it is repaid, it is gone. Therefore, once the convicts at the CIA prison feel they have done enough to repay Reddington, they back away and leave him to his own devices.

Manipulative giving is exceptional as a manipulation tactic for the way in which it is negotiable and sometimes requires patience, planning and determination. One of the most devious ways to use this tactic is by using the desires and pleasures of others as their weaknesses. In the episode *Sir Crispin Crandall (No. 88)*, Reddington requires uninter-rupted work for the apartment over a bank because he intends to steal something from the vault. He runs into problems as an inspector checks the apartment and does not approve for the work continuing due to numerous code violations. At first Reddington attempts to bribe him. When that fails, he tells his attorney, Marvin Gerard, to find out whatever he can about the inspector. Marvin does as he is told and reports back to Reddington as seen in the following example.

> (23) There's not much. Ex loves him, taxes paid, church on Sunday. But he does have one weakness: Lisa Thomopoulos. Aspirations of becoming a pastry chef. Flunked out of Cordon Bleu. Seems she can't tell a baklava from a balaclava.
> (Season 3, Episode 6: *Sir Crispin Crandall (No. 88)*)

As shown in this quotation, Marvin finds out the weakness and Reddington develops a plan based on it. He goes straight to the restaurant Lisa works at, mentions the inspector by name and a personal detail and flattery to imply they have met. He then proceeds to show Lisa a colour palette and talks about options while she listens without comprehension. He then explains how the inspector, Max, has worked on this new restaurant for her day and night. Just as Reddington enters the apartment space with the happy woman in tow, the inspector is about to shut down the construction. Lisa is ecstatic as Reddington flatters Max and tells about all the great things he has apparently told him about her. Reddington maintains his tone reverent and admiring throughout the act and his gestures are wide and open, even flamboyant, emphasising the grandeur of the plans for the new restaurant. On the side he whispers to Max that if he allows just one day of around the clock work with no interruptions, he can keep the place.

This is an especially cunning tactic as the inspector really wants to make Lisa happy, and therefore his choices are either to give Reddington the undisrupted worktime for one day and keep his girlfriend happy, or to shut it down and disappoint her. Reddington made a promise to Lisa and convinced her that Max was the mastermind of this surprise, effectively transferring the promise to him. Having already attempted to bribe the inspector, Reddington considers this just another kind of bribe as he can afford to lose the apartment after he has gotten what he needed from the bank. Regarding weaknesses, this manipulation counts on the inspector's love for his girlfriend momentarily beating his integrity in his work, thus Reddington trusts the inspector's sense of duty as a boyfriend, love over profession. Reddington efficiently manipulated the whole situation by a clever combination of seduction, lying, manipulative giving and manipulation through others. The resistible incentive of a bribe was made irresistible by involving the positively primed overjoyed girlfriend in the situation.

4.9   Manipulation Through Others

Manipulation through others in Reddington's arsenal works as both a way of manipulating people and events with long term goals in mind and a way of abusing societal constructs such as sense of duty, positions and roles combined with people's ambitions, conscience and loyalties. Depending on the intricacy of the plan, this kind of manipulation tends to involve the other tactics in various combinations across the board. As Reddington is capable of complex planning and immensely dislikes revealing his plans to others, this tactic is well suited for him. He mostly uses it to extend his criminal empire, his wealth, and his connections.

In the episode *Dr. James Covington (No. 89)* Reddington provides the FBI with a case of a surgeon who provides organs for criminals, although instead of selling them, he is renting them out and also has them repossessed if the payments do not come through. It turns out that Dr. Covington does this in order to finance giving adult organs to children that would not otherwise get them as it is dangerous to plant, for example, adult lungs into a young boy. The FBI arrest the doctor and his accomplishes, thus also removing an organ transplant provider from the criminals, effectively allowing those in desperate need to die if they are not far enough on the public list or have some other option. In the following example, Reddington explains the effect this arrest had on his plans.

> (24)   Reddington: "Ah, I buried the lede. Turns out the Indonesian government has chosen to contract our company to run the port of Tankulu. The deputy minister of transportation was not a fan. Fortunately, he was also gravely ill, in a desperate need of a heart transplant. He died this morning. Apparently, the arrangements he'd made to secure a donor heart didn't pan out. The new deputy minister sees things our way. Lucky, I guess."
> Niko: "I don't believe luck had anything to do with it."
> Reddington: "You're right, luck rarely has anything to do with it."
> (Season 2, Episode 3: *Dr. James Covington (No. 89)*)

In this scene Reddington admits to Niko, an associate he is about to kill, that he somehow mysteriously worked things in his favour with the Indonesian government as the Deputy Minister of Transportation that had disagreed with him got replaced. Whilst the events

are masterfully manipulated to his own ends, this is not an overly complicated plan. As soon as Reddington learns the weakness of his obstacle, in this scenario the Deputy Minister of Transportation, he knows where to strike. The Deputy Minister needs a heart transplant and has even made plans for securing one, so taking out the criminal in charge of his heart would result in his death, thus solving Reddington's problem. This is a great example of how Reddington uses the FBI whilst providing them value at the same time. Basically, Reddington looks to profitable business in a way in which there are no actual obstacles, only solutions. Oftentimes his solutions include the FBI doing something valuable for themselves and at the same time something else goes right for Reddington. In a way this is a situational manipulation through others. Reddington is using the FBI as the unknowing helpful party that is being manipulated to doing a favour for him simply as they are doing their jobs much like the officer in Rudinow's (1972) example given in the theory section.

This specific manipulation is represented in discourse between Reddington and Niko. It is dependent on their relationship and the relationship of the previously shown events to the dialogue. His tone does not need to be indicative of meaning in this scene because the meaning is conveyed in the words and their relationship to the past events. The two characters know what was at stake and Reddington communicates how he did not actually do anything but that he was the orchestrator and the one who benefited from what happened. Niko's relationship to and personal knowledge of Reddington is what allows him to correctly interpret the manipulation tactic used. Same applies for the audience and the knowledge of the audience developed throughout the series. In effect, after Reddington's speech the audience and Niko both share the same conceptual map, language, and codes to correctly interpret what is being said (Hall 2009/1997: 18 – 23).

Naturally, there are many potential examples of this kind of manipulation in *The Blacklist* as being a criminal mastermind calls for using people. Sometimes Reddington does this in more direct ways, but sometimes the manipulation chains are so intricate that it is only episodes later that one discovers the reach of these chains. This is all testament to Reddington's ability to play the long game. This kind of manipulation calls for patience as well as careful far-sighted planning.

Another good example of this kind of manipulation of events through the manipulation of others comes in the episode *Ruslan Denisov (N. 67)*. Reddington brings the case of a leader of an Uzbekistan separatist movement kidnapping people for ransom. This quickly escalates into a case of a leaking pipeline making people sick and further into genocide as the story unfolds. The leaking pipeline is contaminating the drinking water of the area with benzine. Surprisingly, the radical leader seems to be more concerned as to the well-being of his country and the health of his people than getting money for his kidnap victims. Whilst this does not change Reddington's original plan of getting a deal for a new pipeline to his French business partners, it does change his relationship prospects with Ruslan.

Reddington initially brought the case to the FBI because beforehand he found an opportunity for making money. As Reddington discovers where Ruslan's true allegiances lie, he immediately sees the potential in the man. Consequently, he proceeds with care and shows Ruslan the possible endgame: he could lead the entire country one day. Reddington thinks of the long game even in the way in which he manipulates events in his favour. In setting Ruslan on the path of becoming a future Uzbek leader, he guarantees himself a powerful ally in the future.

4.10   The Benjamin Franklin Effect

Benjamin Franklin (2009/1793: 164 – 165) discovered an effect that maintains that people are more likely to do you a favour once they have already done you one. As previously established in the subchapter 4.1, it is part of Reddington's charm to be willing to talk to people to establish a liking. The Benjamin Franklin Effect is one way of doing that. The effect promises a positive turnout of an approach by request. Even as the effect of this approach may last for a lifetime, as a manipulation tactic it best used at the beginning of a potential relationship. However, this does not exclude people who have an initially negative view of the manipulator for it is extremely useful also in repairing relations.

A lot of the people around Reddington like him because they have done something for him that he has asked of them and then been grateful for receiving. However, for cognitive dissonance to properly work, the favour needs to be either personal and significant in some way or something that requires effort. The difficult part is to make it appealing enough a request that the victim agrees to help. This is when Reddington's curiosity about the mundane everyday lives of people becomes useful. He often takes interest in gossip and what makes people tick. He then recalls the important details unique to the people and creates a functional and even warm relationship based on his knowledge about their lives. Although in Benjamin Franklin's (2009/1793: 164) described situation with the relatively hostile person included a request, it is doubtful as to whether the request alone would have functioned had it been about a subject that was not dear to the man.

The Benjamin Franklin Effect is a nefarious tool when used by someone like Reddington as most people are susceptible to it for their willingness to help. It is common that people judge others by first impressions that are usually provided by one's appearances. Reddington, for example, does not look like a nice, friendly, or trustworthy guy. Therefore, the first impression he creates by marching into places like he owns them with his big black bodyguard Dembe by his side is not a positive one. With the help of the Benjamin Franklin Effect and his overall charm, he tricks people into changing this first impression. After a while, many are quick to please him. Reddington also uses the priming factor of the request when visiting older acquaintances as shown by the following example.

> (25) I've been dreaming of paczki. I've tried to curb my cravings in this little shop in the West Village in New York, but they fill them with prune jelly. Can you imagine?
> (Season 2, Episode 2: *Monarch Douglas Bank (No. 112)*)

Reddington goes into Apolonia's pastry shop to find out some of her customers' names. Instead of jumping straight into business, he takes time to admire Apolonia's paczki and with this quote he implies he would like one. Once Apolonia complies with the implied request, he shows his appreciation in the visible pleasure on his face as well as his comment about how it tastes "just like Patty Sutton". Apolonia smiles wide as she watches

him enjoy her creation. Having primed Apolonia to be helpful with the small personal favour, he proceeds to business.

Despite there not being many examples of the active part of the Benjamin Franklin Effect at work in *The Blacklist*, its influence can be witnessed in many of Reddington's acquaintances and friends. The way he talks to these people is through some interest of theirs, inquiring about it or talking about it. He often does this accompanied by a request which is usually complied with. The atmosphere visibly lightens and warms around him and the person of whom he requires something.

4.11   Provocation

Despite being named differently, provocation as a tactic encompasses shaming and vilifying the victim tactics congruent with George Simon's (2010: 126 – 129) theories. Following his reasoning of the two tactics, provocation could be described as a way of putting down, shaming, or accusing the victim to put them on the defensive or to render them submissive. Although the previous tactics have been based on either pressure or trickery, provocation is a tactic that is sheer pressure applied to the victim by the manipulator. Direct provocation is usually done either to get the victim to trip over his or her words in order to have them reveal something or to get the person agitated enough to make mistakes. Reddington always provokes people intentionally for he rarely loses his temper, and his general demeanour is calm and controlled regardless of the situation. The immediate results of his provocation to reveal information can be seen in the following example 26.

> (26)   Reddington: "Who's lying Floriana?"
>   Floriana: "Shut up, Raymond!"
>   Reddington: "Oh, that was a mistake."
>   Elizabeth: "You know him?"
>   (Season 1, Episode 2: *The Freelancer (No. 145)*)

Reddington throws accusation after another at Floriana Campo, vilifying her, as Elizabeth moves to save her life from the poison administered by an assassin. Floriana accuses him

of lying and this caption is what follows. Raymond stays calm and composed throughout the scene as he casually explains Floriana's criminal business enterprise to Elizabeth, revealing her as the "two-faced dog" she is, celebrated by people as a saviour of girls whilst she herself traffics them. Even the way in which he moves seems relaxed especially in comparison to Floriana's clear discomfort and her futile attempts at rattling him. The difference here also signifies as one of them grows agitated and the other stays calm (Hall 2009/1997: 229 – 230). In calling Reddington by his name, Floriana reveals that she knows him. Elizabeth immediately reacts to hearing his name and Reddington gets into a one-up position.

Another way to use provocation is revealed in the episode *General Ludd (No. 109)* as Reddington and Elizabeth trying to find out a new alias of a terrorist by visiting the plastic surgeon who changed his face. When things do not seem to progress as the man refers to the confidentiality of his patients' operations, Elizabeth reveals herself an FBI agent and tells him that she works with Reddington and then proceeds to threaten him. Pressured by this revelation, he tells them the patient's new name and Reddington instantly moves to chastise him for his breach of confidentiality as can be seen in the following example 27.

> (27) Abraham. I refer important clients to you, people who are vital to my busi-
>   ness. People whose livelihood depends on your confidentiality and you roll
>   over like a cockapoo wanting his belly scratched? … Some woman who
>   claims to be FBI makes a few ham-fisted threats and you hand over one of
>   your own clients… (Season 1, Episode 8: *General Ludd (No. 109)*)

In this quotation, Reddington shows how he uses provocation to rectify situations protecting his reputation when the FBI reveal his relationship with them either out of spite or of felt necessity. As Abraham, reveals the name of his client, Reddington acts shocked, even outraged as he proceeds to shame him for his breach of confidentiality. Apparently with increasing exasperation, he also speeds up his speech during the chastisement monologue. Abraham goes on the defensive, and having forgotten his previously held high ground, he starts defending his business and position in Reddington's operation. He continues to ramble on even as Elizabeth and Reddington leave his office.

5   CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to show how Raymond Reddington's manipulation is represented in *The Blacklist*. This was done by analysing various manipulative situations for their constitutive elements drawing on the manipulation theories of George Simon (2010). Each representation was analysed separately noting the ways in which meaning is conveyed within different 'languages', of actions, speech, gestures, words spoken and even one's appearance, as the manipulative situations came together. Usually the manipulations were in the moment and in human interaction between the manipulator and the victim, but sometimes they could be found in the explanation of previous events by the manipulator. In these situations Reddington himself built the existence of the manipulation by referring to events in retrospect and revealing the parts the audience cannot see as they are happening whilst another, more innocent, part of the same plan is being shown. Therefore, the approach to creating a manipulative situation is complex, multidimensional, and dependent on the purpose and limitations of the manipulation.

Manipulation was found to be constructed in *The Blacklist* through diverse channels and these typically culminated in between Reddington and his victim in the moment. In direct human interaction, manipulation was visible in Reddington's expressions, gestures and in everything he uses to assist the manipulation outside of himself from people like a photographer or an FBI agent to props like a gift, a gun, or even a hat. Manipulation could also be heard in the words Reddington speaks, his voice, his tonality, pace, pauses and cracks in his speech. Emotion and message are conveyed not only through the meaning of the words themselves, but the way they are performed by Reddington.

Other building blocks of the manipulative situation are the manipulator's habitual behaviour within the previous episodes as well as the world around him as the series attempts to parallel it to "the real world". These set the limitations and create structure to Reddington's world and his manipulations. Also, the relationship between Reddington and his victim, in some instances developed throughout the series, has its own bearing in the victims' reactions and the way they fall prey to manipulation. Manipulation was also signified through differences and within discourse.

Furthermore, the victims' reactions in the manipulative situations were also of importance as they implicate the manipulation's success or failure and indicate the victim's impending response which is typically anticipated by the manipulator. Additionally, when observing the victim, the manipulation and its effects could be seen on their face as expressions change aligning with the manipulation's progression. Taking a manipulative situation apart in this way can help writers to learn how to effectively create this kind of manipulative characters and manipulation in general.

The limitations of this thesis came in length and therefore scope as well. The manipulative characters studied were limited to one and the manipulative situations and their analysis had to stay reasonably short and therefore the deeper levels of meaning like why this representation was created could not be considered. The negative connotation to the word "manipulation" might have also slightly misconstrued the complexity of Reddington's character within the thesis. However, this did not have a significant impact on the manipulative situations or the analysis.

For a future study, the scope of this thesis could be broadened to cover more layers of meaning or other characters' manipulation, or it could be further narrowed to examine only one manipulation tactic in depth. Also, different kind of characters should be studied in a comparative analysis drawing on manipulation theories to draw a clear picture of the similarities and differences of different representations and to analyse their purpose. *Game of Thrones* especially has many manipulative characters to study and compare for example in their manipulation styles to further research the subject.

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