

Questions

In this passage nothing is said about the protagonist's personality. Characterization is indirect.

- **Question 1.** In the light of the introductory discussion to this chapter, consider the different elements that usually contribute to the indirect presentation of a character's traits (name, physical appearance, speech, actions, setting). Are they all present in this passage? Is there a predominance of one of those elements?
- **Question 2.** Make up a list of the different words describing or suggesting the character's physical appearance. Group together elements belonging to the same semantic field (clothing, colouring...).
- **Question 3.** What can one infer from such lists concerning the character's personality?
- **Question 4.** How does the ordering of the different elements contribute to the construction of meaning?

TEXT 2

Dashiell Hammett

1 Mr Joel Cairo was a small-boned, dark man of medium height. His hair was black and smooth and very glossy. His features were Levantine. A square-cut ruby, its sides paralleled by four baguette diamonds, gleamed against the deep green of his cravat. His black coat, cut tight to narrow shoulders, flared a little over slightly plump hips. His trousers fitted his round legs more snugly than was the current fashion. The uppers of his patent-leather shoes were hidden by fawn spats. He held a black derby hat in a chamois-gloved hand and came towards Spade with short, mincing, bobbing steps. The fragrance of chypre came with him.

The Maltese Falcon, from *The Four Great Novels*, London, Picador, 1982.

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