

## **CHAPTER – II**

### ***THE MASK OF DIMITRIOS (1939)***

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*The Mask of Dimitrios* is one of the famous novels of Eric Ambler, who is an eminent author of Thriller Fiction. It is his fifth novel originally published under the title of '*A Coffin for Dimitrios*'. It is considered as the masterpiece of him. It remains his best thriller novel, which was published in 1939. Later, it was made into the remarkable film in 1944. It is the story of an ordinary man who is caught in the extraordinary world. It emerges not only as an adventurous story, but as an imaginative history of the decisive years between the World War I, and the rise of Hitler, making World War II. Here, the novelists depict imaginative story, but it reflects the whole life style of contemporary people in the Europe.

The story of the novel focuses on the suspenseful, adventurous, espionage, historical, and political events that horrify to the readers. It creates terrible atmosphere because it is a tale of drug-smuggling, assassination, and political intrigue. Robert D. Kaplan, the author of "*Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*", wrote in The New York Times Book Review in 1993 about the novel:

...and not a title insight into the chaos and anarchy now being unleashed in the Balkans readers should "turn to *Coffin for Dimitrios*". He added: Here is a tale of drug smuggling, assassination and political intrigue, set in the early part of the century, that perfectly captures the atmosphere at the end of the century, as political crime networks make their return not just to Bucharest, but even more so to Belgrade and other former Communist capitals. (9)

The novel depicts chronological story of the life of Dimitrios who is the murderer of Sholem and of Visser, the drug peddler, the pimp, the thief, the spy, the white slaver, the bully, and the financier. Latimer is an adventurous man who visits different states in Europe to gain the true information about Dimitrios. He reveals the real mask of Dimitrios through his journey. His act is a courageous which creates curiosity in the mind of readers.

It is an excellent story contains unexpected twists and very good action. The plot of it is episodic. It moves to the different exotic locations and in the times of Dimitrios' career. It moves from Istanbul to Athens, to Sofia, to Geneva, to Bucharest, and finally to Paris. The novel takes place in the cheap hotels and sleazy bars where Latimer meets the people names like Grodek, Marukakis, Madame Preveza and the sinister Mr. Peters.

The novel is divided into fifteen parts. Each and every part of the novel contains suspense, excitement, adventure, violence, assassination, murder, violence, horror, and terror. The whole journey of Latimer reveals the real picture of different cities in the Europe through the life of Dimitrios. It discusses the entire world is overwhelming with the problems of violence including assassination, ethnic cleansing, military coups, and war. These problems are not ultimate problems but they arise because of money and what men will do for it. Like Dimitrios other characters like Sholem, Grodok, Visser, and Mr. Peters also greedy for money, they do anything for it. They support Dimitrios in his bad activities for money. Only the lust of money is responsible for their tragic life.

The first part of this novel is Origins of an Obsession. It starts from introducing the main character Charles Latimer who is the hero of the novel. The whole story moves around him. He is a former lecturer at some minor

university. He is very much interested in the writing the old-fashioned detective stories. It becomes a profession and earning source of his living. When he visits Istanbul, he meets Colonel Haki in the four days party at the villa on the Bosphorus, arranged by a very handsome Turkish woman, Madame Chavez. Colonel Haki is the world-weary Kemalist Turkish Police Officer who is very much fan of Latimer's detective stories. He promises Latimer to provide much information for his next book, because his ambition is to write a good detective story. He always meets the people who want to write detective stories if they have time. Then, he promises to Latimer he will provide a good plot for his new book which he already prepared. He says:

Your books have given me so much pleasure, Mr. Latimer. I am glad to make you a present of an idea for a new one. I have not the time to use it myself, and, in any case', he added magnanimously, 'you would make better use of it than I should (7).

Colonel Haki tells him the plot of the story in short, which is full of horror and creates curiosity in mind of Latimer, as well as readers. The story belongs to the rich Lord Robinson who is discovered in the library sitting at the desk - shot through the temple. There is a pool of blood which soaked into the paper. The paper is a new and about the Lord Robinson and his sign. He has divided his money equally between six persons of his relations. They present at the party for English week-end. He is prevented from signing by the murderer's bullet, leaves all to one of those relations. Haki tells him the trick that is the Lord is murdered by none of the suspects, but by the butler whose wife had been seduced by the Lord.

He tells him another plot which he has worked out in detail. It is about the *flic* is a High Commissioner of Scotland Yard. He seduces a pretty woman. It is quite artistic. It is written in the French. Both stories are full of horror and terror. Latimer is interested to read his notes. He is interested to see the Colonel Haki's office which is situated at the top of a cheap hotel. Colonel Haki takes him to his office and shows what he has done. Then, Colonel Haki discusses with him about the title of the story:

*The Clue of the Bloodstained Will*, I have called it, but I am not convinced that that is the best title. All the best titles have been used, I find. But I will think of some alternatives. Read it, and do not be afraid to say frankly what you think of it. If there are any details which you think should be altered, I will alter them (9).

Latimer gives grateful thanks to Colonel Haki for his generosity. Colonel Haki requests him to send a free copy of the book when it appears. He takes the file which is put on the table and turns the pages inside of the folder. Then, he tells him the current incident related with a murder. He requests to Latimer if he is interested in the story of real murderers, so it should be better for his plot of the new book.

The current incident is about a man whose dead body just found on the Bosphorous River. All come to know that the body is of Dimitrios Makropoulos who is the notorious criminal. The police have not a photo of Dimitrios, but they identify him because there was a French identity card lining of his coat. Nobody knows who, why and how killed him. Here the question is remained who done it, why done it and how done it. Now, Colonel Haki tries to investigate the real murder of Dimitrios. He reads for

him the dossier of Dimitrios including a robbery, blackmail, smuggling, false pretense, murder and even political assassination. He says:

I find the murderer in a roman policier much more sympathetic than a real murderer. In a roman policier there is a corpse, a number of suspects, a detective and a gallows. That is artistic. The real murderer is not artistic. I, who am a sort of policeman, tell you that squarely." He tapped the folder on his desk. "Here is a real murderer. We have known of his existence for nearly twenty years. This is his dossier. We know of one murder he may have committed. There are doubtless others of which we, at any rate, know nothing. This man is typical. A dirty type, common, cowardly, scum, murder, espionage, drugs- that is the history. There were also two affairs of assassination. (11)

Dimitrios is a murderer, a thief, a scoundrel, a spy, a turncoat, a double-crosser, a predator, and a manipulator who uses people for his own benefits. He always takes advantage of the others weaknesses and blackmails them. The novelist wants to show the criminal is not as a man but as a unit in a disintegrating social system through the character Dimitrios who is horrible man and antihero of the novel.

Latimer is so much fascinated by what Haki tells him about dead criminal, Dimitrios. So, he determines to learn more about him. He seeks out Dimitrios' associates all over Europe. He takes interest in the story of Dimitrios' past life and decides to conduct an investigation about his life and death with intents to write a book about it. In order to do that he begins a journey through Europe. He wants to know his horrible activities. So, he meets several people in different areas who know much more about the mysterious Dimitrios.

Latimer has no official connection with the intelligence agencies, but he travels in the case from Istanbul, through Eastern Europe to Paris to draw the world of the criminal. He faces a lot of obstacles to complete his mission. In one of the best discussions of Ambler, Michael Denning points out that, “the narrator of this novel constantly ridicules Latimer’s ambition of bringing together all of the facts about Dimitrios into a single coherent ‘biography’ (Priestman 122).

His journey of all over the Europe begins in Istanbul and ends in Paris. Through his journey, Latimer discovers the reality which is hidden and perhaps never be disclosed. He finds the lurk background of Dimitrios and there is no stability in his identity. The question is who Dimitrios really was Greek, Muslim or Jew? Colonel Haki tells:

Dimitrios was a little cleverer than some of them, I’ll grant you that. As far as I know, no government has ever caught him and there is no photograph in his dossier. But we knew him all right, and so did Sofia and Belgrade and Paris and Athens. He was a great traveller, was Dimitrios. (12)

Haki provides him further information about Dimitrios whose body has pulled out of Bosphorus last night by the fisherman. It believes that he has been knifed and thrown overboard from a ship. Like a scum he was floating on that beach. The police are unable to find whether the surname is the family that adopted him or an alias. Usually, he is known by his first name Dimitrios. He turns the dossier again and reads:

Dimitrios Makropoulos. Born 1889 in Larissa, Greece. Found abandoned. Parents unknown. Mother believed Roumanian. Registered as Greek subject and adopted by Greek family.

Criminal record with Greek authorities. Details unobtainable.  
(12)

The police heard about him for the first time at Izmir in 1922. When their troops occupied the town, Sholem, a Jew was found in his room with his throat cut. Sholem was a rich money lender in the town. He always kept his money under the floorboards. There was much violence in Izmir at that time. In this case a Negro fig-packer named Dhris Mohammed was arrested. He tried to prove himself saying that he and Dimitrios made a plan of robbery. They entered Sholem's room at night and Dimitrios killed the Jew. The authorities did not believe him and his story. He faced the hard punishment. He was hanged. After, this incident Dimitrios found in another case that attempts of assassination of Stambulisky in Bulgaria. The Sofia police knew very little about a woman who was associated in Sofia. They asked her about the address of Dimitrios but she states that she received a letter short time before but it was without address.

Two years later Colonel Haki heard his name again in the case of espionage on behalf of France. After the inquiry he found Dimitrios used the Turkish surname of Talat on his passport and no such passport was issued. The passport was forged. Colonel Haki states:

Nothing happened about Talat. It is just a name. We never heard it again. If he used the passport we don't know. It does not matter. We have Dimitrios. A corpse, it is true, but we have him. We shall probably never know who killed him. The ordinary police will doubtless make their inquiries and report to us that they have no hope of discovering the murderer. This dossier will go into the archives. It is just one of many similar cases. (15)



Three years later Dimitrios organized a gang of drug peddlers in Paris. The Bulgarian government revealed that they had found a clandestine heroin laboratory at Radomir and had seized two hundred and thirty kilos of heroin ready for delivery. Dimitrios was the consignee. They arrested six men in all in connection with it and Dimitrios was head of that peddling organization. At the end of the year 1930, a number of smugglers and a few insignificant peddlers were arrested. Dimitrios himself had become a heroin addict. Some of them were released from the prison and threatened to kill Dimitrios. They informed the police about him. However, he was never catch up by the police. Moreover, at last colonel Haki heard him one year later that he attempted to assassinate a Yugoslav politician in Zagreb. Here the Colonel Haki reminds the past incidents to tell him about Dimitrios, in shortly.

Latimer becomes obsessed of the man, Dimitrios. After enough fascination, Latimer begins researching the past life of Dimitrios. Before he starts, his strange request to Colonel Haki that to see the body of the man because he never saw the body of a dead man. According to him every detective story writer should see all those things. However, they enter in the room where the body of the man is put on the wooden trestle tables, wrap into mackintosh sheet. There are no windows and lights, only a single high-powered electric lamp in an enamel reflector. Latimer forces himself to look the body of Dimitrios with Colonel Haki:

The body lying on the trestle was that of a short, broad-shouldered man of about fifty. From where he stood near the foot of the table, Latimer could see very little of the face, only a section of putty-coloured flesh and a fringe of tousled grey hair. The body was wrapped in a mackintosh sheet. By the feet was a neat pile of crumpled clothing: some underwear, a shirt, socks, a flowered tie and a blue serge suit stained nearly grey by sea

water. Beside this pile was a pair of narrow, pointed shoes, the soles of which had warped as they had dried. (19)

They guess that he is killed by a knife wound in his stomach and thrown into the water. He is already dead when he got into the water. His suit and shoes are Greek. So, all think that he is a Greek man. He is a violent man who is dead by the violence.

Indeed, Dimitrios is a dangerous man. He is an unscrupulous, ruthless and treacherous. The way of his life is consistently busy in unfanciful business of crime. He is a very notorious in the different cities in Europe. He knows his friends, his enemies, people in Smyrna, Sofia, Belgrade, Adrianople, Paris, Lyons, and all over Europe. Colonel Haki hears about him almost twenty years, but he meets him the first time:

Ugly devil ...Life is very strange. I've known about him for nearly twenty years and this is the first time I've met him face to face. Those eyes have seen some things I should like to see. It is a pity that the mouth can never speak about them. He added: "The sooner he's in a coffin the better". (21)

The novel depicts some historical events which create thriller. It shows a death, bloodshed, and massacre. The third part of the novel named *1922* is about the conflict between Turkish Nationalist Army and Greek Army. Through the history, the novelist describes the social, political, and economical atmosphere of Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1922, the Turkish Army attacked the centre of the Greek Army at Dumlu Pinar on the plateau two hundred miles west of Smyrna. Greeks were unable to destroy the Turkish army. They destroyed the Turkish population in the path of their flight. Greek army was trapped in the Turkish army and then holocaust begun. The officers of Turkish troops encourage them to destroy the non-

Turkish quarters of the city and began systematically to kill. The novel describes it horribly:

Dragged from their houses and hiding places, men, women and children were butchered in the streets ...The wooden walls of the churches, packed with refugees, were drenched with benzene and fired. The occupants who were not burnt alive were bayoneted as they tried to escape. (23)

The narrow gutters of the streets were choked up with the corpses. Some of them were shot and drowned, so their bodies were floated on the water. A few houses were burnt and many refugees try to reach ships in the inner harbour. On the fifteen of September, over one hundred and twenty thousand persons had perished. Some people were in the middle of the horror and Dimitrios who was alive in that situation.

Latimer visits different cities and people in Europe to reveal the past history Dimitrios. He starts his journey from Smyrna where Latimer meets Fedor Muishkin, a Russian about sixty. Latimer requests him to show the record in police archive of a Greek named Dimitrios who left Smyrna in September, 1922. Following day Muishkin gives him a bundle of papers of translation which is made by handwriting and covered twelve large sheets of paper. He reads them carefully. There is one incident which is about the Jew, Zakari complains of the murder of his cousin, Sholem. The body of Sholem finds in his room an unnamed street near the Old Mosque. His throat has been cut. Zakari informs the Commandant of Police that he sees the man Dhris showing handfuls of Greek money in the café. The evidence is that the owner of the Bar Cristal, Abdul Hakk had shows this Greek money to Dhris.

The second evidence is that Ismail, a dock-worker who also hears from Dhريس has boasted that Sholem has lent him money without interest. Dhريس proves himself saying he is a true believer, Abdul Hakk and Ismail have spoken a lie. He tells the real story of what happened at that night which is Sholem has much money, Greek pieces, and some gold hidden below the floor of his room. They both go to his house for robbing. They divide money equally. Dimitrios killed him with drove the knife into his neck and pulled it across his throat. He tries to convince that:

I did not kill Sholem. It was Dimitrios the Greek who killed him....There is no doubt in what I say. As God is God and as Mohammed is His Prophet, I swear that I swear that I have said the truth. For the love of God, have mercy. (32)

However, no one can believe and mercy on him. At last the Deputy-President of the Tribunal gives order to hang him. When Dimitrios escape from Smyrna, he makes his way to Sofia and involves in a plot to assassinate the Bulgarian Prime Minister. Two days later Latimer leaves Smyrna and goes to Sofia for his further information. He never sees Muishkin again.

Turkish occupied Smyrna, so more than eight hundred thousand Greeks returned to their country. They came packed on the decks and in the holds. Many of them were naked and starving. Some of them carried their dead children on their arms because they had no time to bury. All this and more Latimer hears from his friend, Siantos in Athens.

Latimer goes to Siantos who knows the man holds Government post of some importance in Athens. Siantos tells him a register which is in the custody of the municipal authorities and not open to inspection by unauthorized persons. After taking permission, he enters in the inquiry office. Their register is compiled alphabetically by a surname. However, the

surname Makropoulos is not finding in the record, because drawer number sixteen is drawn blank. Then, Laimer tells him to search under the name of Talat. At last it found in the drawer no twenty-seven under the name Dimitrios Taladis. It is Turkish surname Dimitrios used it before 1926 that Colonel Haki doesn't know about it. Latimer notes down the card on his notebook and translated into English:

NUMBER T.53462

NATIONAL RELIEF ORGANIZATION

Refugee Section: ATHINAI

Sex: Male Name: Dimitrios Taladis. Born: 1889. Occupation: Fig-packer. Parents: believed dead. Identity Papers or Passport: Identity card lost. Said to have been issued at Smyrna. Nationality: Greek. Arrived: 1 October 1922. Coming from: Smyrna. On examination: Able-bodied. No disease. Without money. Assigned to camp at Tabouria. Temporary identity paper issued. Note: Left Tabouria on own initiative, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1922. Warrant for arrest on charge of robbery and attempted murder, issued in Athinai, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1922. Believed to have escaped by sea. (42)

Here, in Smyrna Dimitrios change his identity using surname as Taladis. Latimer thinks that the date of Dimitrios birth is true which is supplied by Colonel Haki. But the place of birth is different. According to the Turkish dossier it has been Larissa. He doesn't understand why Dimitrios has changed it.

At the time of dinner, Siantos mentions the name of man Marukakis. Marukakis is the Sofia correspondent of a French news agency. Latimer tells

him his intention behind the collecting the information. When he saw the dead body of Dimitrios, he becomes curious to know much more about him. He is detective stories writer and tries to do some detecting himself instead of merely writing about other people doing it. He tries to fill in some of the gaps in the dossier. He sees now his curiosity about Dimitrios is that of the biographer rather than of the detective. There is an emotional element in it. He wants to understand his mind. He has seen him not as a corpse in a mortuary but as a man, not as an isolate, a phenomenon, but as a unit in a disintegrating social system.

There are some political events which create thriller. Marukakis is a dark man who reminds his past and provides him information about the Stambulisky affair of 1923. He says Monsieur Stambulisky was a leader of the Bulgarian Peasant Agrarian Party, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. On 5<sup>th</sup> February, during a performance celebrating the foundation of the National Theatre in Sofia where the King and Princesses were present. A bomb was thrown into the box in which several government ministers sat. The bomb exploded and several persons were injured. The attempt was made to assassinate Stambulisky and his Minister of Railways, Atanassoff, at Haskovo on the Thracian frontier. But it was failed because several police officials responsible for suppressing these activities. On 4<sup>th</sup> June, the Sofia police discovered a plot to assassinate not only Stambulisky but also Muravieff, the War Minister, and Stoyanoff, the Minister of the Interior. At last Stambulisky was shot when he tried to rally of his peasants to their defense.

On his third day in Sofia, Latimer receives a letter from Marukakis. After reading it, Latimer gets information about a woman named Irana Preveza who was associated with Dimitrios on June 1923, in Sofia. She is his ex-girlfriend. He uses her only for his own selfish purpose. At one

evening, Murukakis and Latimer decided to meet her. Now she is the proprietress of a nightclub. The club is situated in a street of houses behind the church. The streets were narrow, sloping and poorly lit. In the outside area, there is an unnatural silence, but inside the voice of whispers of music and laughter. It has labelled: “BAR-DANCING-CABARET” (68). After sometime Irana Preveza enters in the room and sits down beside them. She asks them, “Are you going to write about me in the Paris newspapers, Monsieur? If so, you must see the rest of my entertainment – you and your friend” (71).

They declined her offer and invitation saying that they have come for some important information about the man Dimitrios Makropoulos. She knew him over fifteen years ago. At first she does not give the response to talk anything about him. Latimer took her into confidence saying, “He is a writer of books and he seeks information....He is curious. He saw the dead body of Dimitrios Makropoulos in Stambul a month or two ago, and he is curious about him” (72).

He confesses that he is naturally interested in human nature. He writes detective stories. At last, she unfolds the story how she comes in the contact with Dimitrios:

I have known many men, but I’ve only been afraid of two men in my life. One of them was the man I married and the other was Dimitrios....Dimitrios was different. Dimitrios understood me better than I understood myself, but he did not love me....He owed me more than a thousand francs. He had always cheated me over the money. It was because I feared him and could not understand him as he understood me that I hated him.  
(75)

Dimitrios takes from her more than a thousand francs. He always cheats her over the money. He borrows money from her but never returns. She trusts him because there is nothing else for her to do. He frightens her for money. He tells the reason of choosing her because there are thousand like her but she looks soft and sentimental. When he came on that day, he guesses that she has money hidden in the curtain. He knows that she is sensible but has no imagination, does not understand money, buy anything of her fancy, and in restaurants they look at her. He states her that, "It is only those without imagination who stay poor. When you are rich people do not mind what you do. You have the power and that is what is important to a man" (77). Then he tells about rich men he has seen in Smyrna who own ships and grow figs and has great houses on the hills outside the town. After that meeting, he meets her three times again.

They come to know that Dimitrios is employed by Vazoff acting on behalf of the Eurasian Credit Trust to do work in connection with getting rid of Stambulisky. He worked in Adrianople where he probably used the name Talat. The Turkish police are unknown about it. Here the novelist uses flashback technique to unfold the past incident of Dimitrios' life.

The meeting is over and Latimer goes towards the room in the hotel 'The Grand Palace'. He expects the darkness and the lights in the room are switched on. So, he startles a little. Something is chaotic. There are a suitcase, a few English books, and a pistol in the room. Mr. Peters presents there with a sweet smile on his face. Latimer meets him first time on his travels.

Mr. Peters asks him doubtfully why he is interested in Dimitrios and what is game behind it. He thinks Latimer is doing it only for money. He promises him if he tells him the real reason, he will help him his further



process because he too has dealings with Dimitrios. Then, Latimer explains the reason:

The reason is certainly nothing to do with money. I write detective stories for a living. In Stambul I heard from a Colonel Haki, who is something to do with the police there, about a criminal named Dimitrios, who had been found dead in the Bosphorus. Partly for amusement – the sort of amusement that one derives from crossword puzzles – partly from a desire to try my hand at practical detection, I set out to trace the man's history. That is all. (93)

Mr. Peters tells him the name of man Wladyslaw Grodek who was at one time the most successful professional agent in Europe. More secret naval and military information had passed through his hands than through those of any other one man. He deals with quite a number of governments. His headquarters are in Brussels. Now he is retired person. Incidentally, he employed Dimitrios in 1926.

On his second evening in Geneva, Latimer receives a letter from Wladyslaw Grodek who gives positive response to meet him. Latimer meets him in his house in Geneva. At first Grodek is suspicious to provide such information. So he asks him his relation with Mr. Peters because he has enemies in the world. Then, Latimer explains how he met Mr. Peters. While doing the investigation of the history of the man Dimitrios, he met him. He does not know the reason why Mr. Peters is interested in Dimitrios. Mr. Peters follows him to Sofia and approaches him there. He says that if he would meet him in Paris and collaborate with him in some scheme he has in mind that they should earn profit to the extent of half, million francs each. He told that information possessed by Latimer is valuable for them. At first

Latimer does not believe him but after his goodwill he admits that he come to Belgrade for collect more information.

Latimer spends the afternoon at the Villa Acacias, to listen Wladylaw Grodok. Then, he begins to write a letter to the Greek, Murukakis at the evening. In the letter, the novelist uses flashback technique to reveal Grodek's strange life. Grodek was a professional spy, who employed Dimitrios in Belgrade. He was employed by Italy in 1926. According to him job of spy must be an extraordinarily difficult one. He failed in the last part of his task in Belgrade and the reason for his failure was Dimitrios who had spied for France. Dimitrios used the man Bulic as a tool. He harassed Bulic when he hesitated to give the chart. The chart stored much information about the Yugoslave government. So Bulic did not give the chart immediately, because he heard about the exact information stored on the chart. He became frightened and angry. When he called him as a 'dirty spy':

Bulic was kicked in the abdomen and then, as he bent forward retching, in the face. Gasping for breath and with pain and bleeding from the mouth, he was flung into a chair while Dimitrios explained coldly that the only risk he ran was in not doing as he was told. (126)

It shows that how Dimitrios is cruel man who never thinks about others life.

Bulic unwillingly follows the instructions of Dimitrios. He gives the copy of the chart. Dimitrios promises him to give money after bringing the chart, but he is a deceitful man who deceives Bulic on his plan. His instructions have very simple. Bulic gets a copy of the chart and bring it to the hotel when he left the Ministry the following evening. An hour later the chart would be return to him to replace in the morning. He would be paid

when he will bring the chart. He warns of the consequences if he should decide to go to the authorities with his story, reminded of the fifty thousand that has awaited him and dismissed.

Grodok blackmails him to bring the chart but he realizes that the information is already in the possession of the French. Unfortunately, he has to render the chart worthless. It is really very foolish of Dimitrios to let him go, but he is inexperienced. He probably thinks that he should blackmail Bulic into bringing the chart out again. But he realizes that he should not be paid much for bringing in information already in the possession of the French. His reputation would have maligned. He is very bitter about the whole affair. The only amusing thing is that the French has paid over to Dimitrios half the agreed price for the chart before they discover that the information on it has rendered obsolete by his littler demarche. Bulic is victim in the plan of Dimitrios. He is sent to a prison because he uses Ministry copies and brings them out of the Ministry. He unwillingly faces an additional charge of lending two hundred and fifty dinar from Grodek. Here, the novelist uses the flashback technique and highlights the spy events spied by some of the characters in their past life.

In the month of November Latimer leaves Athens and arrives in Paris. One morning he decides to spend with newspaper files. He goes to the newspaper office and selects the paper for detailed reading. There are a number of references relate with drug-peddling business. The first is dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1931. It is about:

#### “DRUG TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED”

“A man and a woman engaged in the distribution of drugs to addicts were arrested yesterday in the Alesia quarter. They are

said to be members of a notorious foreign gang. The police expect to make further arrests within a few days.” (131)

The second news is appeared on 4<sup>th</sup> December under the heading: “DRUG GANG, THREE MORE ARRESTS” (131). Then, on 11<sup>th</sup> December the newspaper reported: “DRUG GANG SMASHED NEW ARRESTS” (132). The man Manus Visser, a Dutchman has arrested with the women, Lydia Prokofievna, a Russian. The names of the other five men are arrested: Luis Galindo, a naturalized Frenchman of Mexican origin, Jean-Baptiste Lenotre, a Frenchman from Bordeaux, Jacob Werner, a Belgian and Frederik Petersen, a Dane. Finally, he comes across to the special article on the page three which reveals that there are illicit factories in every country in Europe and millions of addicts. Here the novelist focuses on the illicit business of people which is harmful for the society.

Drug smuggling is a vast well-organized business. There is a list of recent seizures of illicit drugs, “sixteen kilos of heroin found in each of six cases of machinery consigned from Amsterdam to Paris, twenty-five kilos of cocaine found between the false sides of a drum of oil consigned from New York to Cherbourg, ten kilos of morphine found in the false bottom of a cabin trunk landed at Marseilles, two hundred kilos of heroin found in an illicit factory in a garage near Lyons” (134). Dimitrios was the leader of the gang but the fact was that the police failed to find him. Indeed the act of Dimitrios is opposite to humanity. He wants power and money. He is ready to do anything for them. Through the career of Dimitrios, the novelist shows a corrupt capitalist society in Europe at the time of 1930s. One of Latimer’s sources tells him:

With money and power a vain man can do so much to give himself pleasure. His vanity was one of the first things that I

noticed about Dimitrios. It was that quiet, profound vanity that makes the man who has it so much more dangerous than ordinary people with their peacock antics. Come now, Mr. Latimer, be reasonable! Type of successful business man is only a difference of method – legal method or illegal method. Both are in their respective ways equally ruthless. (149)

Making other arrangements Latimer leaves the newspaper office. Mr. Peters would call him at six o' clock the evening. When Mr. Peters arrives, Latimer behaves rudely with him, because he reads his name in the newspaper in the list of drug peddlers. He knows that his name is not Peters but Frederik Petersen. He is shocked because Peters was a member of the drug peddling gang organized by Dimitrios and arrested in December 1931. He has fined two thousand francs and sentence for one month's imprisonment. He does not want to see the bad host like Peters. Latimer is now waiting for the reply of Peters. Then, Mr. Peters tells him the truth which is hidden from him that he met him in Paris during 1928:

... most of us go through life without knowing what we want of it. But Dimitrios, you know, was not like that. Dimitrios knew exactly what he wanted. He wanted money and he wanted power. Just those two things; as much of them as he could get. The curious thing is that I helped him to get them. (145)

Further, Mr. Peters gives him shocking news that Dimitrios is alive and now he is living in Paris. It is a big surprise for both Latimer and the readers. The man buried in Istanbul is not Dimitrios but a Dutchman, Manus Visser who was one of the members of his gang. He was killed by Dimitrios. The Turkish Police identify him as Dimitrios and buried him. Now, Dimitrios is a member of the Board of Direction who is working in the

Eurasian Credit Trust in Monaco. Latimer feels surprised, resentful, curious and a little frightened when he heard it. He does not believe it.

The whole novel is full of suspense because at first all know that Dimitrios is dead. The ordinary police investigated the case and reported that they have no hope of discovering the murderer. They would not know who killed him. They confuse about the case. Do they not understand how he is dead? And his death is natural or he is murdered? The dossier will go into the archives just like many similar cases. At the end of the novel, all are surprised that Dimitrios is still alive. The fact is told to Latimer by Mr. Peters who met him on his tours. It creates excitement in the mind of Latimer and readers. They are waiting for what would happen next.

Mr. Peters make the plan to blackmail Dimitrios for keeping his secret. Only Mr. Peters knows that Visser is killed by Dimitrios. He wants Latimer to share in his plan, but he is interested only in learning the truth. Nonetheless, he decides to go with him. Paters tells him his further planning is to blackmail Dimitrios financially because Mr. Paters knows that Visser is killed by Dimitrios. Mr. Paters wants to blackmail him to keeping his secret away from the police. Dimitrios will not discover their identities because Mr. Paters real name was Paterson which is known to Dimitrios, but his present name he does not know. So he wants to approach him as the name of Mr. Paterson. In the case of Latimer, Dimitrios knows nothing about him. They invent his new name which is Mr. Smith. They decide to meet him outside Paris at a place of their own choice to receive the amount of million francs.

Latimer is afraid after listening Peters planning because he heard that Dimitrios is very dangerous man. Visser blackmailed him but Dimitrios killed him. He never hesitates to kill others. He thinks that if he would

commit his blackmailing scheme. He also thinks that something dangerous thing would happen in his life.

Latimer returns to his room, at that time his mind is haunted by the past, by the confession of Dhri, the Negro, by the memories of Irana Preveza, by the tragedy of Bulic and by a tale of white crystals travelling west to Paris, bringing money to the fig-packer of Izmir. Three human beings have died horribly. These are really evil things. He implies good and evil things for Dimitrios:

But it was useless to try to explain him in terms of Good and Evil. ...Good Business and Bad Business were the elements of the new theology. Dimitrios was not evil. He was logical and consistent; as logical and consistent in the European jungle as the poison gas called Lewisite and the shattered bodies of children killed in the bombardment of an open town. (187)

They send a letter for Dimitrios which he has received on the Thursday morning. They arrive at half past eight in the hotel of their choice where they wait for the arrival of Dimitrios. They receive instruction that the payment of the million francs would be on the following morning. On the same evening the second letter post to Dimitrios telling him to send a messenger with the million francs on the road outside the cemetery of Neuilly at eleven o'clock on the Friday night. There is one condition that the messenger must be a woman, because there is no problem to recognize whether the man is Dimitrios or not. But according to Latimer it is absurd thing, there would be any danger from Dimitrios. He has heard so much about him. So it is dangerous to meet him face to face. He thinks that it is a waxwork in the chamber of horrors which come to life.

The hotel chosen by Mr. Peters for the meeting with Dimitrios is in a street just off the Avenue Ledru. The setting of it is exotic which is small and dirty type. The man looks at them up and down floor of the room. It is a large room. The charge of the room is fifteen francs for one and twenty francs for two. The room is on the second floor of the hotel:

It was a long, narrow room with an old hair carpet, an iron bedstead, a wardrobe, two bentwood chairs, a small table, a screen and an enameled iron bidet. The carpet was re, but by the washbasin was a threadbare patch, black and shiny with use. The wallpaper depicted a trellis supporting a creeping plant, a number of purple discs and some shapeless pink objects of a vaguely clinical character. The curtains were thick and blue and hung on brass rings. (197)

When Mr. Peters and Latimer enter in the room, they aware themselves because they know that Dimitrios is very cautious man who thinks very carefully before he act. Latimer surprises because he sees at first time to Dimitrios in the room. He wears French clothes and there is a hat in his hand. His hairs are grey and skin is a creamy. Mr. Peters introduces Latimer to Dimitrios. Then, he turns to his main topic. He says:

You have not changed at all, Dimitrios. Always impetuous, always a little unkind. After all these years no word of greeting, no word of greeting, no word of regret for all the unhappiness you caused me. You know, it was most unkind of you to hand us all over to the police like that. We were your friends. Why did you do it? (201, 202)

He wants money for his keeping silence which is very valuable for Dimitrios. He demands at least a million francs to keep silence. He promises



them to give money tomorrow morning. Before leaving he threatens to Latimer that:

You have been very silent, Monsieur. I wonder if you have been understanding that your life is in your friend Petersen's hands. If, for example, he decided to tell me your real name and where you might be found, I should very likely have you killed. (206)

They arrive at half-past ten of second morning in the same hotel. When they enter in the room a million francs are there. Mr. Peter is very happy because he never sees such huge amount. He excitingly says that:

There, Mr. Latimer! A million francs! Have you ever seen so much money at once before? Nearly six thousand English pounds!' He stood up. 'But we must have our little celebration. Take off your coat and I will get the champagne. I hope that you will like it. I have no ice, but I put it in a bowl of water. It will be quite cool. (216)

There is a violence at the end of the novel. Dimitrios is ready to pay him one million francs for keeping silence. Mr. Peters over confidently says that:

Poor Dimitrios! He is very simple. He will think that I, clever Petersen, will come back for more, like any other blackmailer. He will not guess that I may be bluffing him. But, just to make sure that he does not guess, I will do what no other blackmailer ever did. I will tell him that I shall come back for more. Poor Dimitrios is such a fool that he will believe me. Poor Dimitrios has no intelligence. (217)

Dimitrios raises the revolver and fires. He shoots a bullet on Mr. Peter's body. His sudden attack on Mr. Peters threatens to all. Dimitrios turns to Latimer, but he jumps in the direction of the revolver and saves himself. They fall down together with their hands at each other's throats, but immediately Dimitrios bring his knee up into Latimer's stomach and rolls clear on him. He drops his revolver and tries to pick it up. The next moment Latimer has the revolver and his finger on the trigger. When Dimitrios tries to come towards him, he raises the revolver. He warns to Dimitrios if he moves he will shoot him. At that moment Dimitrios frightens and says:

He saw the brown eyes flicker towards the notes on the floor and then back to him. What are you going to do?" ...“If the police come we shall both have something to explain. If you shoot me you will get only that million. If you will release me I will give you another million as well. That would be good for you. (219)

Here, Mr. Peters demands his pistol. Latimer finds his pistol and hands it to Mr. Peters. Mr. Peters requests Latimer to go to call the police, but he hesitates due to Mr. Peters is a badly wounded. The blood is still pouring from his neck. It is necessary to attend him to the doctor as possible as early. Peters convinces him to leave. He opens the door and goes to halfway down the stairs when he hears the shots. Dimitrios is now dead. The police arrive and do not arrest him. They satisfy with what he has accomplished. They try to find Dimitrios since long years but they are unable to catch up him. Now, he is taken away. Before he goes, he requests Latimer to write a book about the affair and to send him a copy of it.

The last incident of the novel creates fearful excitement among the readers. The plot of it is complex and complicated. It contains excitement,

mystery, suspense, surprise, tension, violence, and horror. Using these elements the novelist has created a great kind of thriller which make us realize that the people are really live and how they live. It also describes the humanity which is now disappearing because of civilization and something dangerous entered in the world. It gives readers more pleasure while reading. In *The Listener* (7 September, 1939), Edwin Muir describes:

Ambler as an intelligent witty and honest writer ...*The Mask of Dimitrios* was 'a very unusual kind of thriller. It deals with the sum of mankind as most thrillers do...but it does not deal with them romantically, it makes us realize that such people really live and how they live; it is a description of the waste humanity produced by civilization. (5)

Thus the story of the novel is really adventurous. The protagonist Latimer has mission to search for true information about the life of the man Dimitrios whose body is found on the Turkish beach. While completing his mission, he goes through the life and death situations. Actually, he is ordinary man who never thinks that such bad things are happen in his life. The journey of his mission is very long and he faces a lot of obstacles. It is full of suspense and gives him surprise, tension, shocking things. He meets different types of people and visits locations to complete the plot of his story. At last he wins and the story ends happily.