4-**The play within play scene**

This scene has great dramatic significance. So, it has been called the very pivot of the dramatic action in Hamlet. The “play” is called ***The Murder of Gonzaga***. It beings with a dumb shows which Hamlet calls the Mouse Trap. The vital significance of the “play” is that he ensures Hamlet that Claudius is really the murder of his father. The dramatic relevance of the “play” can be explained as follows.

Hamlet has been told by the ghost how his father killed by Claudius by pouring posing into his ears. However, Hamlet thinks too much. He doubts that the ghost might be a devil tempting him to commit an evil deed. He pretends madness in order to learn the truth. He feels depressed but the news of the arrival of the strolling players cheers him. He suggests ***The Murder of Gonzaga*** the story of which resembles the story of the murder of Hamlet’s father. Hamlets motive behind the play is to judge the reaction of his uncle to the events of the play and know whether he is guilty or not. Hamlet says.

“The play’s the thing wherein he catch

The conscience of the king”.

Hamlet advises the actors properly and then asks Horatio to observe the king critically while the show is going on. The king, the queen, Polonius and other courtiers are invited to watch the play. Starts the dumb-show called The Mouse Trap. It is nothing but the silent enactment of the main argument of the play. In the dumb-show, the king and the queen enter, embrace and expresses their love. The king then falls asleep and the queen leaves. A man comes and pours poison into the ears of the king. The queen enters and weeps to see the king dead. Soon the poisoner returns and consulate the queen. He woos her and she accepts her love. This relude dose not affects Claudius. According to some critics, this is because he does not see the show at all, as he is busy in conversation with Gertrude. Other critics are of the view that Claudius thinks that it is an unfortunate coincidence that the story of Gonzaga resembles his own. Another view is that Claudius doubts that Hamlet has deliberately arranged the play and now is watching his reactions.

Whatever the reason may be but it is a fact that Claudius pretends that he is not concerned with the story of the show.

Then stars the actual play. Here, the king shows that he loves the queen very much. He advises her to get remarried, of he dies. The queen says that she loves him deeply and is horrified event at the thought of a remarriage. The king sleep and the queen goes away. The murderer enters and pour poison into the ears of the king Hamlet comments that the murderer is the nephew of the king. He further comments You shall see how the murderer gets the love of Gonzaga’s wife. At this, Claudius rises and leaves. Polonius asks the actors to stop the play. All leaves except Hamlet and Horatio.

Thus, through the play, Hamlet confirms the ghost story. In a soliloquy, he furiously resolves to take revenge.

“Now could I drink hot blood?

And do such bitter business as the day

Would quake to look on”.

However, Hamlet dose nothing in the direction of taking revenge. He even misses the excellent opportunity when his uncle is praying. Thus, the purpose of the mousetrap fails.

The significance of the play within play is mani-foldedمطوية.

Firstly, It helps Hamlet to know that his uncle is really guilty

Secondly, as Hamlet does not take any action.

Thirdly, through the play within play, Shakespeare reveals his own theories of play-acting. Hamlet function as a mouth-piece of Shakespeare.

Finally, the play-scene serves as the climax and crises of the whole drama. This is the dramatic relevance of the play within play.