CHAPTER IV

Symbolism and Irony

"It's a symbol," Bill said.

"Sure," said Nick, "but it isn't practical." 1

The reply of Nick is in character with presumptuous adolescence. But it is important because Nick happens to be Hemingway's protagonist. Practical or not, we find symbolism in Hemingway's works.

A symbol, says The Concise Oxford Dictionary, is a "thing regarded by general consent as naturally tyrifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought". Symbolism points out the kinship between what we actually see and the real something behind the actual. Sri Aurobindo says that an image to the seers is "a revelative symbol of the unrevealed". 2 It makes the mysterious less mysterious. A symbol helps the intuition to grasp what the intellect, with its preciseness, is incapable of grasping. When the world was young, natural as well as supernatural phenomena were conceived in terms of human activity.

Symbolism is an integral part of our life, but as unobtrusive and as all-pervading as the air we breathe. The words we use are symbolic. All language is symbolic. Santayana says man's "simian chatter becomes noble as it becomes symbolic". There is no reason why a rose should be called a "rose". A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But the word "rose" has come to be accepted as a name for a particular flower. The word is indicative as well as expressive. The rose has been used as a symbol for love. Symbols play a significant part in our daily life. Flags are symbolic. The Cross, or the Crescent Moon or idols are all symbolic of something behind and beyond them.

Simile, metaphor and allegory are related to symbolism. A simile points out what is common between two otherwise dissimilar things. A metaphor identifies two distinct things on the basis of what is common between them. An allegory is "a trope in which a second meaning is to be read beneath and concurrent with the surface story." A symbol identifies objects which are on two different planes and does not compare them. The thing symbolised is much vaster than the symbol. Allegory and symbolism are often confused. Allegory may be called a poor relative of

4. Ibid., p.13, col.1.
symbolism. W.B. Yeats tells of a German painter who insisted that "symbolism said things which could not be said so perfectly in any other way, and needed but a right instinct for its understanding; while allegory said things which could be said as well, or better, in another way, and needed a right knowledge for its understanding". An allegory is more mechanical and artificial and, therefore, less suggestive and aesthetically less satisfactory than symbolism. An allegory appeals to the fancy, a symbol to the imagination. The first is for amusement, the second for enlightenment. The former is a matter of the intellect, the latter of the soul. Allegory requires an intellectual detachment, while symbolism presupposes imaginative identification. Simile, metaphor and allegory are commonly accepted as poetic graces, but symbolism is respected rather from a distance. There is supposed to be something mysterious, if not mystifying, about symbolism. But like all mysterious things it is alluring. Symbols have exerted an irresistible fascination over the human mind through the ages. A symbol is an appeal to the aesthetic sense as well as to emotion. An idea is simplified as well as made more luminous by an association of the known with the unknown, the concrete with the abstract, and the intellectual with the emotional. It enlightens the reader and illuminates

5. Essays and Introductions by W.B. Yeats, pp.146-47.
his consciousness. "In a symbol there is concealment and yet revelation". 6 Symbolism, above all, satisfies too the deepest yearning of the human heart that each one of us, however insignificant or humble, is an inseparable part of the Infinite and the Universal. "He (man) everywhere finds himself encompassed with Symbols, recognised as such or not recognised: The Universe is but one vast symbol of God: nay if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God...?" 7

Symbolism presumes that there is an underlying kinship linking all things in the Universe. Symbols come into existence, not through rational thinking or intentional equating of things but through a flash of imagination, as metaphors and poetic images do. When the primitive mind was naturally more receptive to revelations, man's intuitive feelings showed the path from actuality to true reality, from the particular to the general, from the limited to the unlimited, and from the local to the universal.

A symbol must partly be the same as that which it symbolises even when the two are on different planes. Human love may symbolise Divine love. Thus in Persian

7. Ibid., p. 207.
poetry Cod is referred to as the Lover. Bubbles or decaying leaves may symbolise human mortality. Symbolism by itself is not literature, but it enriches, enlarges and vivifies an idea. Every symbol is a reservoir of significance. A symbol may be capable of numerous interpretations, every critic finding in it what he brings to it. "A hundred generations might write out what seemed the meaning of the one, and they would write different meanings, for no symbol tells all its meaning to any generation".

Symbols may be emotional or intellectual. Emotional symbols evoke emotions alone through powerful suggestion as do the symbols of Shakespeare. Intellectual symbols, on the other hand, evoke ideas alone, a good example of which would be mathematical symbols. Or they may again be traditional or entirely personal. Light symbolising knowledge, the white colour symbolising purity, and the flow of a river symbolising the flow of time are all traditional symbols. They are universal and need no explanation. But a writer sometimes creates his own set of symbols. This results in obscurity until a repeated use makes them common currency.

Symbolism is the language of mysticism and not materialism. Mysticism recognises the oneness of the universe; materialism does not recognise anything beyond the material. Symbolism is the intuitive language of the religious feeling of oneness. Not that there is any law, aesthetic, ethical, or logical, which excludes symbolism from a realistic or naturalistic work of art. But by their very nature, symbolism and naturalism are apparently inharmonious. While the aim and end of naturalism is to tell everything, and heap detail upon detail of the materialistic aspect of things, symbolism depends for its effect on suggestiveness. By describing the 'actual' it implies the 'not-actual' which is behind it. The visible object represents to the mind the semblance of something which is to be realised by association.

Hemingway himself derided this idea of symbolism in his work: "No good book has ever been written that has in it symbols arrived at beforehand and stuck in. That kind of symbol sticks out like raisins in raisin bread. Raisin bread is all right, but plain bread is better. I tried to make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and a real fish and real sharks. But if I made them good and true enough they would mean many things." Later, at an interview...

given in 1958 to Mr. George Plimpton, he said that there might be symbols in his books, although he did not like to talk about them. He did not deny that a good work of art may be symbolic: "I suppose there are symbols since critics keep finding them... If five or six or more good explainers can keep going why should I interfere with them? Read anything I write for the pleasure of reading it. Whatever else you find will be the measure of what you brought to the reading".  

Hemingway uses various objects as symbols. They may be grouped as follows:

(i) Natural elements,
(ii) Animals,
(iii) Man-made things,
(iv) Parts of the human body, and
(v) Human beings themselves.

(i) Natural elements: Some of them are simple and obvious symbols. The barrenness of land symbolises the barrenness of genuine maternal feelings. In "Hills like White Elephants", on one side of the station "there was no shade and no trees." "Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees". These two contrasting

11. Vide The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p.971.
12. Ibid., p.374.
landscapes represent the two prospects before the girl who has agreed to undergo an abortion. She has to choose between a barren, joyless, and fruitless life on the one hand and joyous motherhood, (but) accompanied by social scandal, on the other. She wishes to be a mother but her lover wills otherwise. "And we could have all this, she said. "And we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible". The shadow of a cloud moves across the field of grain. She declares that everything is all right, but we know, as well as she, that everything is not all right. The shadow of regret will ever abide by her. "And once they take it away, you never get it back".

In "Big Two-Hearted River" the burned-over country and the hills of burnt timber stand for the sickness of the mind of Nick, something dark and terrifying from which he is trying to escape. Nick has suffered as the earth has. The earth will recover with the help of nature; so will Nick, though in both cases nature will take her own time. Nature will not be hastened or pushed. Meanwhile Nick will have to hold himself steady as the trout do, "keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins". The river provides the escape and recovery —

13. Ibid., p.374.
15. Ibid., p.307.
the water for the parched soil and fishing for the man with nightmares. The burnt grass and the slow recuperation of Nick are a symbol of the principle of the whole universe — the rise of life out of death.

The river is an important symbol in Hemingway. To the hungry, it provides a means of sustenance, and to the sick in mind, a haven free of terrors. Conversely, it is only the "good" in the Hemingway-ian sense that can enjoy fishing. In *The Sun Also Rises* it is only Jake, Bill, and the Englishman, Harris, who enjoy the health-restoring and soul-recovering sport of fishing. Brett, Cohn, and Mike cannot and do not. Crossing the river has its own significance. When Lt. Henry dives into the river and escapes, it is almost equivalent to baptism and the beginning of a new life. "Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation". 16 Crossing the river is an act as final and irrevocable as the crossing of the Rubicon or entering Charon's boat.

If the flowing water of a river signifies life-restoring qualities, it is only natural that a swamp should stand for the stagnancy of the mind and the spirit. And for evil too. In "Big Two-Hearted River" Nick is afraid of the swamp. In "The Rattler" the swamp signifies the

mental derangement of the boxer and everything that is
dark, unhealthy, and evil.

Rain is another of Hemingway's symbols. It brings
with it sorrow, suffering and tears. This symbol is to be
found in "A Very Short Story", "Cat in the Rain", "Out of
Season", "Che Ti", "Banal Story", "After the Storm", "No
Reader Writes", and "Old Man". But it is used most
significantly in *A Farewell to Arms*. It is not mere
pathetic fallacy. It is a conscious symbol and develops
into an important one. He first introduces rain as a fact
of nature, then connects it with another aspect of nature
which has always symbolised for poets decay and death,
namely the falling of leaves. To make the point clearer
still, he connects it with another evil, namely cholera:
"...when the rains came the leaves all fall from the
chestnut trees... The vineyards were thin and bare-branched
too and all the country wet and brown and dead with the
autumn... At the start of the winter came the permanent
rain and with the rain came the cholera".17

Rain always brings disaster. Catherine sees herself
dead in the rain and sometime later she does die. Like
rain, snow too stands for disaster and Hemingway has used
this symbol in a number of stories.

17 *A Farewell to Arms*, pp.7-8.
The mountain and the plain have been used as two important symbols in *A Farewell*. Dr. Carlos Baker is the first of the major critics of Hemingway to stress the importance of symbolism in Hemingway. He goes great lengths in pointing out the symbolism of the mountain and the plain in the novel: "The Home-concept, for example, is associated with the mountains; with dry-cold weather; with peace and quiet; with love, dignity, health, happiness, and the good life; and with worship or at least the consciousness of God. The Hot-Home concept is associated with low-lying plains; with rain and fog; with obscenity, indignity, disease, suffering, nervousness, war and death; and with irreligion." 18

This contrast of mountain and plain is a piece of symbolism which Hemingway uses elsewhere. The heights of Kilimanjaro with the frozen carcass of a leopard symbolise immortality as well as health and happiness, as contrasted with the sickly pain and guilty feelings of the writer who is on the hot plains. The action of *The Sun* is on a higher plane than the action of *A Farewell*, both literally and figuratively. The action of the latter takes place mostly on the plains of Italy, while the action of the former is concentrated on the high hills of Spain. The difference

denotes the difference in the attitudes of Lt. Henry and Jordan towards duty and democracy. The very ideal of democracy, for which Jordan has endangered his life, lifts the whole action to a higher plane. The hills of The Bell symbolise the noble thoughts of Jordan, the marshes, the sick thoughts of Col. Cantwell, and the ocean, the breadth of Santiago's mind.

(ii) Animals: The bull is a very important symbol in Hemingway. Quite a few stories of his — "The Capital of the World", "The Undefeated" and chapters IX, V, XI, XII, XIII and XIV of In Our Time — deal with bullfighting.

The bull had had great symbolic significance in many religions and mythologies of the world. In Babylonia figures of bulls guarded the approach to a temple, house, or garden. They were believed to protect the building from the entrance of evil spirits. "The guardian-bulls were also known as kirubi, and corresponded with the cherubim which stood at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, protecting 'the way of the tree of life'."19 Bulls were considered to be divine. In a list of Babylonian deities one finds two bulls. In Greek mythology we find that "Zeus was carried away from Phoenicia by Zeus in the form of a bull.

In Teutonic mythology the cow Audhumbla exists before either gods or men and plays an important part in their origin. In Egyptian mythology we find the bull-headed God Mont. Bull Apis is the best known of the sacred animals. Mnevis, Buchis, Onuphis are some of the other important bulls.

But in India more than anywhere else, we find the bull playing a very prominent role. In the Hindu idea of cosmology there are three important symbols — the Male symbol (Shiva, the chief of the Trinity), the Female symbol (Shakti, the chief Goddess), and the Vehicular symbol (Nandi, the Bull). The word nandi (bull) in Sanskrit is related to Ananda (Bliss). There is a story in the Puranas which points out the significance of the relationship between the two words. 20 Nandi, the Bull, challenged Shiva, the Destroyer, and in the fight that ensued the great Destroyer could not destroy Nandi. The significance appears to be that the “Bliss” principle is at the back of the Creative impulse. Even at the lowest level, it will be seen, pleasure, to some extent, accompanies the sex act which is the means of procreation in the animal world. Each body carries the creative minimum for recreation, and the bull may be taken as the acme of physical perfection, nobility and virility. Among the Babylonians, 20 In “Kashi Khandas” which is a section of Skanda Purana. Puranas are a class of ancient epic poetry. Some of theme deal with cosmoogy, while the others are narrative in method and didactic in purpose.
the bull symbolised strength. It is the symbol, under certain conditions, of the Vital Lower. The Vital Lower, as Sri Aurobindo would say, is "concerned with the pettier movements of action and desire", or in other words, egoism and its concomitants. That God Shiva rides the bull makes it clear that the bull occupies a lower position. It represents the subordinate sphere of animal instinct. In Assyro-Babylonian mythology, Adad, the god of Thunder, rides a bull, which is his emblem.

In ancient times when physical prowess usually outweighed everything else, a combat with a bull, or a man in bull's disguise, was one of the ritual tasks imposed upon a candidate for kingship, as in Greek mythology. Hercules' fight with the Cretan bull, Theseus's with the Minotaur and Jason's with the fire-breathing bulls of Acetes belong to this tradition. In "lithraic mysteries, the cult-hero had to fight a bull. A bull is the perfection of physical strength and it was but proper for any candidate, who aspired to kingship, to prove himself superior even to the bull. "Until Christians thought up the sickly idea of worshipping a lamb, this noble creature symbolized the beauty of divine power in a good half of

The bullfight, therefore, is a symbol, firstly, of combat with the brute forces of Nature, a struggle with life itself. From the death of the bull came all fruitfulness. "This is most beautifully portrayed in the Mithraic relief at Hedemheim. On one side of a large (formerly rotating) stone slab there is a stereo-typed representation of the overthrow and sacrifice of the bull, while on the other side stand Sol with a bunch of grapes in his hand, Mithras with the cornucopia, and the dadophors bearing fruits, in accordance with the legend that from the dead bull comes all fruitfulness: fruits from his horns, wine from his blood, corn from his tail, cattle from his semen, garlic from his nostrils and so forth."23

Secondly, the bull was a symbol of egoism and the baser elements in man. "Animals represent instinct and also the prohibition of instinct, so that man becomes human through conquering his animal instinctuality."24 So, a bullfight was a ritual of the highest importance in ancient times.

22. "Bull in the Afternoon" by Max Lastman, vide Ernest Hemingway: The Man and His Work, ed. by McCaffery, p. 56.
24. Ibid., p. 262.
Thirdly, the sacrifice was a method of propitiating the gods for the sake of longevity, property and other goodly things of life. Even of greater significance is the fact that the killing of a bull also represented the killing of a god, and the assimilation of his great power. Sacrificing a god may now appear strange, but was once upon a time not uncommon. "With regard to the ancient Egyptians we have it on the authority of Manetho that they used to burn red-haired men and scatter their ashes with winnowing fans, and it is highly significant that this barbarous sacrifice was offered by the kings at the grave of Osiris. We may conjecture that the victims represented Osiris himself (the Corn-god), who was annually slain, dismembered and buried in their persons that he might quicken the seed in the earth".25 Dionysus - Zagreus was sacrificed and the sacrificial meat was eaten. "Through eating the raw flesh the initiates assimilated the essence of the god".26 We find the same idea in the Christian mystery: "Christ is a divinity who is eaten in the Lord’s Supper".27 If the power of the animal or person sacrificed is going to be assimilated, then no fitter

27. Ibid., p.338.
animal can be thought of as a sacrifice than the bull.

Bullfighting for Hemingway is not only a sport which involves physical activity. It is not just something which gives sadistic pleasure because some blood is shed and either the bull or the bullfighter is killed. Nor is it merely an art which gives aesthetic pleasure. It is all these and something more. It is a symbol of the rejuvenation of the Hemingway hero who has been unmanned by his experiences of the war. The true bullfighter is a dedicated killer. Describing one matador's slow and admirable action of killing, Hemingway says that Zurito killed "like a priest at benediction." 28

The bullfighting in *The Sun Also Rises* may be interpreted as a form of taking vengeance against the symbol of virility. Jake has been incapacitated in a most unfortunate manner. Brett loves him and he loves Brett, but it is a love which can never be consummated. For him killing a bull can be an act of revenge. Besides, it is interesting to note that the final act of the bullfighter resembles the sex act to some extent. The bullfighter in the final act dominates the bull, attacks him from the front with a sword thrust between the arch of its shoulder blades and for one moment with the sword

28. *Death in the Afternoon*, p. 244.
inside the body of the bull, the bull and the bullfighter are one. 29

In The Old Man and the Sea the symbolism is on a cosmic scale. The background is the immense sea and the limitless sky with only the Gods on high to witness and no petty human beings to watch and defile it. A little bird came to give the old man company. A bird is symbolic of angels, as can be seen from the familiar phrase, "a little bird told me". "The language of birds" is a reference to "angelic communication". 30 "Often the soul is conceived as a bird ready to take flight". 31

Santiago's epic struggle with the fish and the fight later with the sharks is a sight for the Gods. Nature is impartial and detached enough not to take sides. The old man is left single-handed and without proper weapons to fight it out with the sharks. He kills a few of them and wounds a few more but they are too many and too strong for him. He fights with the sharks with "complete malignancy". 32 Santiago has the upper hand as long as the sun is shining. The sun is a source of light and power. "But by midnight he fought and this time he knew the fight

32. The Old Man and the Sea, p. 102.
was useless. The powers of darkness finally overwhelm him. All flesh is cruelly torn away from the marlin but the huge skeleton with its "great long white spine" (with its literal and symbolic meanings) is intact. Man has been worsted again but he has retained the back-bone.

(iii) Man-made things: Bridges have their own significance. The old man in "Old Man at the Bridge" would be safe if he only crosses the bridge and goes away. But, he cannot. Blowing up the bridge in For Whom the Bell Tolls has achieved a significance out of all proportion to its tactical importance from the military point of view. The bridge has achieved cataclysmic importance.

The bridge sometimes serves as a line of demarcation between what is good and what is not good. Jake and Jill go to a village by the name of Burguete. There is a bridge outside the village. It separates the lost world of expatriates from the healthy atmosphere which marks the life in that village. Cohn, Mike and Brett do not enter this world of simple and innocent pleasures. They cannot cast off the shackles which are of their own making. Jake has to cross the bridge and come out of this place when he wants to meet them.

33. Ibid., p.118.
34. Ibid., p.127.
(iv) Parts of the human body: With women, in Hemingway, the length of the hair they have is symbolic of the state of their mind. Hair of normal length is a sign of their normalcy. Maria, in The Bell, has been raped and her hair has been cut very short. In Jordan's company she is recovering from the wound which is both physical and psychological, and her hair is growing again to normal length. Brett, on the other hand, deliberately wears her hair like a boy's and Brett is not normal. She refuses to allow it to grow long.

Long hair also signifies domestic happiness, as for example, in "Cat in the Rain":

"Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?" she asked, looking at her profile again.

"I like it the way it is", she said. "I get so tired of looking like a boy.....

"I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel", she said. "I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her".

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35. The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 267.
(v) Human beings: Some of the characters also are symbols. Dorothy stands for Nostalgia: "There is a girl in it (The Fifth Column) named Dorothy but her name might also have been Nostalgia". Maria of The Bell represents culture which is destroyed by war, and Senata of Across, all that is beautiful in life. It is probably because they are symbols that they are not completely convincing as human beings. Santiago stands for the highest stage man can reach according to Humanism. He has felt the unity of all Nature. Even the marlin he kills is his "brother". "...the essence of true symbolism rests on the belief that all things in Nature have something in common, something in which they are really alike".

In the early stage of Nihilism there are only a few elements of symbolism. For example, in Farwell there is the symbolism of rain, the Mountain and the Plain; in The Sun Also Rises there is the symbolism of the bull-fight, and in many of the short stories, of natural elements like the burned country or a river.

In the second stage of the intellectual approach to life, we find the dominance of the symbolism of man-made

36. Preface to The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, by Hemingway, p. vi.
37. The Old Man and the Sea, p. 62.
things, like bridges. The role played by Nature in human life cannot be over-estimated, but progress in life is measured by the conquest of Nature by Man. Bridges are some of the most beautiful things ever constructed by men. From the simple culvert to the most magnificent of modern bridges, which have sometimes been described as poems in steel or concrete, a bridge is not merely a matter of convenience but a symbol of the progress of humanity and the brotherhood of men. When a bridge is blown up, it is a proper symbol, too, since war is always a retrograde step in the march of progress, technical and human. In the last stage of sympathy and understanding, an individual becomes a symbol for some of the things most valued by mankind or for mankind itself. Symbolism, it is seen, is incidental in the first stage of Hemingway's development, the centre of the main action in the second stage, and all-pervading in the third stage. Symbolism becomes more profound as the humanism of the protagonist widens.

A realist though Hemingway apparently is, there is, as has been pointed out, an unmistakable and profound under-current of symbolism in his work. It is essential to go below the surface to appreciate the true art and values of Hemingway. Otherwise, it is like keeping the husk and discarding the grain.
Symbolism and irony serve the purpose of indicating the real behind the actual. The first does it by representing the invisible with the assistance of the visible, the second by pointing out the discrepancy between what a thing appears to be and what it is. In Hemingway they are not merely literary devices, but an organic part of his philosophy and art.

Irony is the opposite of symbolism. "... symbolisms does depend essentially on likeness, and irony on difference; and as artistic tools both are means of interpreting imaginatively, and with the flexibility of implication, a complex reality. Symbolism signifies through a harmony, irony through a discord; symbolism consolidates, irony complicates; symbolism synthesizes, irony analyzes." 39

There are different types of irony. In Socratic irony one finds an attitude of modesty and ignorance, the characteristic method of Socrates's self-effacement to make his opponents finally accept his point of view. There is the Dramatic or Tragic irony where the words or actions of a character have one meaning for that character and another for the other characters, or one meaning for

the characters on the stage and another for the audience. In Cosmic irony or irony of Fate, God or Destiny is shown to be manipulating events as though deliberately to frustrate and mock the protagonist. In Verbal irony we find a mode of speech in which words, intentionally or unintentionally, belie the real meaning.

In Hemingway we mostly find Cosmic and Verbal irony. Cosmic irony is a result of, and denotes, a particular outlook on life.

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods:
They kill us for their sport," 40

is a postulate of which Hemingway's novels could be taken as an illustration. Thomas Hardy is, perhaps, the best master of the structural device where the workings of blind chance determine the outcome of human effort. The 'resident of the Immortals did not see any better than to play with Tess. To Hemingway, too, life is a tragedy. Tan finds himself in a predicament for which there is no ready-made solution. Out of his own experience he has to evolve a code of conduct for him to follow. It is a code of life and not of death, but the end, he knows, is death. Though it is not a life ruled by the cast of the dice, we do find that chance, with a sense of irony, plays an

important role in the Hemingway Universe. In “Indian Camp,” the father, unable to bear the pain of the sight of the Caesarean operation on his wife, cuts his throat and puts an end to his life at the very moment a new life is born.

Macomber behaves like a craven when he flees from the charging lion. His wife brazenly goes to the bed of ilson, the hunter. Next day, Macomber recovers his courage and acts like a ruddy fire-eater while hunting the buffalo. Mrs. Macomber, under the pretence of shooting at the buffalo, shoots at her husband and kills him. If Macomber had not lost his courage earlier, or not regained it later, or if Mrs. Macomber had not behaved like a bitch, there would have been no tragedy. He has to be shot because he has regained his courage! Lt. Henry escapes death on the battle-field, then, again, at the hands of the Military Police during the Caporetto retreat, and escapes arrest at the hotel at Stresa, only to lose Catherine. Is Jordan met Maria only to get killed within a matter of days? Has Col. Cantwell to meet the girl of his dreams so late in his life? The height of Cosmic irony is reached when Santiago, without a catch for eighty-five days, hooks a dream fish only to lose it to the sharks.

While Cosmic irony is an intrinsic part of Hemingway’s philosophy of life, his use of Dramatic and Verbal irony throws much light on the evolution of the personality of
his hero and his outlook on life. Symbolism becomes more and more important, while irony slowly disappears.

The nihilistic period is marked by a dominance of dramatic irony. In *Farewell*, Catherine tries all medicines to effect an abortion but does not succeed. On the contrary, at the time of delivery she dies of a Caesarean. Ironically enough, the child she has tried to kill, kills her. The ambulance unit, which is primarily intended to save lives, receives a direct hit. The St-Anthony in a white metal capsule, which Catherine had given to Brett as an amulet, gets stolen at one of the dressing-stations in *The Sun Also Rises*. Brett learns from Romero a sense of self-respect, but the way she treated the symbol of honour he gave her, is the height of irony: "The bull who killed Vicente Girónes was named Pocanegra, was number 118 of the bull-breeding establishment of Sancho Taberno, and was killed by Pedro Romero as the third bull of that same afternoon. His ear was cut by popular acclamation and given to Pedro Romero, who, in turn gave it to Brett, who wrapped it in a handkerchief belonging to myself, and left both ear and handkerchief, along with a number of 'cattie cigarette-stubs, shoved far back in the drawer of the bed-table that stood beside her bed in the Hotel Montoya, in Pamplona". 41 The starry-eyed young man in

41. Fiestas, p.151.
"The Revolutionist" is too confident of Italy: 'You have everything here. It is the one country that everyone is sure of. It will be the starting point of everything.'

The story ends: "The last I heard of him the Swiss had him in jail near Sion." In "The Undefeated," Manuel Garcia gives a great performance considered from the point of view of sheer courage and grit. But it is not spectacular, because, he is still a sick man. He gets from the spectators, not kudos which he richly deserves, but cushions thrown down at him.

The Hemingway world is full of life's little ironies. It is all the more effective since Hemingway, with his habit of understatement, does not pinpoint it. A good example is "The Doctor and the Doctor's Life". The doctor engages Dick Boulton from the Indian camp to chop wood as payment for pulling his squaw through pneumonia. The logs had been lost from the big log booms that were towed down the lake to the mill by a steamer. The doctor always assumed that nobody would come to collect the logs. Dick Boulton, who wants to avoid work, insists on repeating that the logs did not legally belong to the doctor. He wants to pick a quarrel and quit working. The doctor

42. The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, p. 255.
43. Ibid., p. 256.
merely turns away and goes back to his cottage. The doctor's wife knows more of religious books than human nature. She refuses to believe that a man can be as bad as Dick. She wants her husband to avoid a fight with Dick, because it is un-Christian-like. The irony lies in the fact that the doctor has already avoided a fight, not on Christian principles, but because he is no match physically for Dick.

Some of Hemingway's stories end with an ironic twist typical of O-Henry. In "Cat in the Rain" the wife wants to save a cat from the cold rain outside. By the time she goes out to fetch it, it has disappeared. To her it is a symbol of domestic happiness. She returns disappointed. The padrone sends her a big tortoise-shell cat as a present. In "A Canary for One", an old American lady is firmly convinced that only an American can make an American girl happy, and she has not permitted her daughter to marry a Swiss. She says all this innocently to an American couple. The couple was "returning to Paris to set up separate residences".44

But in the later stages, Dramatic irony rarely predominates. This becomes even clearer if one scrutinises Hemingway's use of Verbal irony. As the use of his symbolism increases, the use of irony lends to decrease.

44. Vide Ibid., p.440.
Sympathy and Verbal irony do not go together. Verbal irony betrays a sense of ridicule, mockery and contempt. It is associated with a lack of sympathy and understanding. It is natural that Lt. Henry evinces an ironic attitude towards the bungling Italian Military: "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army". When the Military Police are checking and questioning the deserters, Lt. Henry caustically remarks: "The questioners had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men dealing in death without being in any danger of it". But he does not remember that he himself had acted exactly in the same manner earlier when he had shot one of the sergeants who had tried to desert. Blanck in a parallel situation in The Bell, we find that Jordan does not waste his energy in eloquent irony against the blunders of the Loyalist generals. Hemingway is ironic at the cost of the politicians in The Fifth Column and the English army in Across the River. His irony becomes satire against the rich in To Have. But the noticeable lack of Dramatic and Verbal irony in The Bell and The Old Man and the Sea

45. *A Farewell to Arms*, p.8.
46. Ibid., pp.175-76.
is significant. Sympathy has slowly taken the place of irony. Verbal irony which had been claiming a place in Hemingway's art finally gives way to beautiful Christian symbolism.