CHAPTER–III

D. C. CHAMBIAL AS A POET

His Life and Works

D. C. Chambial, a prolific poet of English, Hindi and Pahari was born in a remote place, Bajrol, Kangra Now in Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh on September 29, 1950 in a semi-educated family of heroes of World War-I and II. His father was Shri Hardial Singh and mother Smt. Banto Devi. He belongs to a lower middle class family that has army background right from his great grandfather. He too opted out army. Even his son is serving in army as a Major. He got his primary education in a village school of Bajrol and thereafter in an ordinary government school at Jangal-Beri. He gained education treading on the rough mountain roads. He did B.Sc. from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1970 and B.Ed. from H.P. University in 1971. He achieved two Master Degrees in English first in 1975 from Punjab University and second from H. P. University in 1987. He obtained M.Phil. in English in 1978 and Ph.D. in 1994 from H.P. University.

He worked as trained graduate Science teacher from 1972 to 1987 and as English lecturer in school cadre from 1988 to 1989. He has been continuing as English lecturer in Government Degree College Palampur, Himachal Pradesh since 1989.

D. C. Chambial has emerged as a great literary artist and critic. As the editor of journal ‘Poetcrit’. He is imparting literary sensibility to his rising readership. He has been honoured by several national and international awards such as “Lachian Art Letter Bronze Medal 1987,
Transworld Poetry Exposition, Campbell California (USA),” “7th Peotry Day Australia, Australia Bicentenary, Gold Medal, 26 August 1988”, “Michael Madhusudan Academy Award, 1995, Michael Madhusudan Academy, Calcutta”, “Poetry Day Australia, Dove in Peach Award, Gold Medal 2000”, “Hon, Member of Governing Board of Directors ABI Raleigh USA”. He was declared “Second Best Fixed Poet of the year 2003 in a competition organized by Metverse Muse”. D. C. Chambial also participated in “6th World Poetry Day” organized under aegis of Sikkim Academy, Gangtok (March 21-24, 2006).

His research articles have been translated into other languages such as Portuguese, Spanish, Danish, German, French, Greek and Bengali. A reviewer of about hundred books, D. C. Chambial is one of the most creative literary geniuses of the day.

D. C. Chambial has great passion for literature. A poet and short story writer as well as an academician and literary critic, Chambial discovered in himself a hidden poetic talent through the college magazine. Since then he has contributed immensely to the rise of literary culture. Widely acclaimed by scholars national and international both, he has carved a niche in the vast terrain of contemporary Indian English literature. As he told about his literary journey:

I continued writing diligently sending poems to various editors and magazines. In 1979, my first poem ‘Echo’ was published in international magazine *Skylark* published from Aligarh and edited by Baldev Mirza, himself a poet of great standing since then, there is no looking back.1
His poems also have been relayed from A.I.R. Shimla and Dharmshala and almost regularly published in the poetry corner of ‘The Tribune’ and ‘Indian Express’. His translations of the classics are published in several national and international publications. Besides poems and short stories, he has the credit of writing a short play which was relayed by A.I.R. Shimla.

He has penned three books on prominent literary figures Death and Suffering in the poetry of Krishna Srinivas (1996), O.P.Bhatnagar (1998) and Shiv K.Kumar (2006). His collected poems (1979-2004) published by Poetcrit publication Maranda, is a collection of six anthologies of the poet dedicated to the suffering humanity, peace and fraternity. The collection is highly commended by the contemporary literary giants for its imagery and portrayal of Indian ethos in verse that come alive with message of universality in unambiguous mannerism. In prefatorial note he says:

I also maintain that work of art is like a diamond. It shows different lights when seen from varied angles and herein lies its beauty and worth.²

D. C. Chambial reflects life in varied forms from different angles through his six poetic mirrors viz., Broken Images (1983), The Cargoes of the Bleeding Hearts and other poems (1984), Perception (1986), Gyrating Hawks and Sinking Roads (1996), Before the Patel Unfolds (2002), and this Promising Age and other poems (2004). He demonstrates how men wear the masks to disguise the real feelings and motives. Very boldly, the poet un_masks them and reveals the original faces in his poetic creations.
First anthology *Broken Images*, his debut, consists of thirty two short thoughtful poems. They reveal poet’s uneasiness at the fast life of present world and the realities of life. The poems express the complex and varied thoughts of the poet. As he personally experienced the awesome vale of sorrow and its attendant suffering, he has adequately conveyed such poignancy through metaphysical imagery with convincing sensitivity. *Broken Images* is replete with an intense element of grief at the loss of loved one following the non-materialization of earlier romances.

The second collection *The Cargoes of the Bleeding Heart* contains thirty seven short poems. The poet observed life from his own poetic insight. Many of these pieces are heightened by masterly development of colour, light and shade. He intensified his imagery with personification of the inanimated elements. Characteristically the poems though mainly in free verse format, have ornate style and cadence ascribed to abstract instances and the simplicity of common place descriptions. In this collection there is a touch of anguish mellowed by perception of beauty.

The third collection *Perception* consists of forty one poems mostly short ones. A close reading of the poems classifies a number of titles into compact homogenous category. This category includes the poet’s indignation towards the destructive streak among the might, leading to the plight of helpless common folks, his belief, sometimes firm, in the inherent goodness of human beings and sometimes hopeful to lead towards a better world of peace and love and harmony, occasionally pointing at the invocation by protagonist of God, Buddha and Krishna.
and of the redemption of man. In this collection, the poems of protest display poet’s vitality and firmness of expression in sympathy with suffering humanity yet he is capable of pouring forth verses with a philosophical touch.

The fourth collection *Gyrating Hawks and Sinking Roads* has forty nine poems. This collection unmistakably bears the stamp of his maturity. Not only his thematic spectrum is rich but his language and style is also well-knit, so much so that most of his poems are highly imagistic. The poems have a dense texture of social awareness. The collection carries poems of different shades ranging from pining for love to helpless, from exploitation to bloodshed and from a song of alacrity to broken strings. The title of the collection is symbolic. The first part of the title suggests that ‘hawk’ always gyrates over the valley where helpless human beings in the forms of doves and pigeons wait for the impending doom. ‘sinking roads’ is symbolic of hillside valleys which facing vagaries of weather and anger of nature crack and sink from time to time and drop life to a level lower than before. He, with his sympathetic social outlook, paints the miseries of the poor who are the dwellers of the black world and on whose blood and sweat the privileged class raise their guarded abode only to toll the knell for a holocaust. The poet believes that equilibrium can be restored to this existing social disparity only if the whole system is decimated. His premonition resounds through his poems. Degradation of values in life, suffering and death are the thoughts mainly the poet is communicating to his readers. He observes twisting of concepts
and rape of morality for momentary gains which cause permanent loss. He has dedicated this collection to the suffering mankind.

The fifth collection *Before the Petals Unfold* carries forty eight poems. The poems in this collection depict optimism, enchantment and exuberance conveying the message of love for humanity and accessibility in life. The poems enormously reveal the truth of life through researches in philosophy emanating from his beaming thought. His finds an irony in life. The meaning of living in the New World is difficult to make out. This collection speaks largely of the poet’s anguish of living in the current world. His themes are lofty showing deep concerns for human good. He articulates his inner feelings with simplicity, a characteristic feature of his own. This collection creates the interest of those who concern themselves with pathos and predicament of modern human kind. Life and death, creation and immortality are among the themes negotiated in *Before the Petals Unfold*.

The sixth collection *This Promising Age and Other Poems* consists of twenty three poems. From first to last of the poems in the collection there runs the recurrent theme of human predicament against the rise of science and industry. The poet wonders at human credulity at different stages. This collection focuses upon the disillusionment in the contemporary era of automation, scientific advancement and economic considerations. The modern man has ventured to explore new spheres. His confrontation with nature has resulted in self-destruction, devastation and death. The discovery of atomic energy and many other sophisticated weapons have created panic in the
world and man finds himself helplessly entrapped in his own inventions. As a critic and censor of modern life, the poet mourns at the depravity of human existence today more so when he realises how life has changed due to the thoughtless scientific advancement and technological rides. Several of his poems depict the egoistic, selfish and materialistic world of today.

The Themes of his Poetry

As a versatile genius-poet academician, poet philosopher and poet visionary, D. C. Chambial is basically a poet of suffering humanity. The poet is profoundly concerned with human life under the impact of mechanisation and scientific advancement. In the mad pursuit of technology, man has become a slave of machines and does not care for humanity. The poet has received a rude shock at the loss of human feelings. Man has become robot. The increasing materialism, economic prosperity and mamonism are the chief causes of man’s tragedy.

The poetic voyage that began with Broken Images (1983) has reached a remarkable height in The Promising Age (2004). He presents his experience from childhood to the matured phase of life. It is a spectrum of cherished adolescent–youthful memorabilia of longings, struggles and suffocations all mixed together in the human journey streaked with victorious strides. D. C. Chambial is well aware of the rampant corruption and injustice and how degeneration of moral values, denigration of ideals and dehumanisation of relations lead the
modern man to material success. Under the impact of westernisation, he looks smart but as a man he dies. The poet unmasks corruption, the victory of vice over virtue, the death of morals and ethics in the guise of politicians.

The contemporary life is infected with garbage of the west that has entered the mind of the people because of its alluring wrapper of globalisation. Moral is butchered in the western slaughter house. Politics is the means in the hands of the powerful to exploit the powerless. Women are oppressed and raped and none hears their painful cries. Children are forced to work, elders are not respected. The conscience is dead and it fails to react against the mask. The poet sketches the present scene in the true colour.

D. C. Chambial’s greatest achievement lies in his ability to articulate human experiences and emotions. He can clearly decipher the experience, substantiate abstract ideas and strike an image which justly converts the emotion. His concern for spiritual as well as for human values in mechanised society, an intimate philosophical design and the ease with which thought and feelings are skillfully blended by concrete imagery, make poems intense. The entire collection, thematically coherent, is read like a single poem. It is a work of art to be enjoyed and admired. He investigates values, sex, morality, politics, violence, corruption, poverty, pain, myths, religion, life and death with a human concern sometimes with the wastelandish echoes.

The poet, known for his flights of fancy, deft editorial skill and critical acumen, embodies in his poetry the search for the self that imparts an underlying unity and pattern to his diverse poetic pieces. A
dweller of dale, he is intimately related to the thorn, the bush and the flower that convey in their virginal wildness the message of strangeness and wonder that envelop human consciousness. The storm and the snow, the cloud-burst and the deluge, nature’s beauty and terror, lend a note of sublimity to his poetry and rightly makes him a poet of cosmic consciousness.

As the critic Atma Ram rightly says in the foreword that it is the poetry of intense ideas and deeply experienced emotions.

**Longings and Yearnings**

D. C. Chambial is chiefly a poet of social consciousness. His poetry carries a sense of dissatisfaction, despair, frustration and anguish. His tone is satirical and ironical. D. C. Chambial slaps hard at these people who follow hypocrisy, dishonesty, corruption, selfishness, exploitation, oppression, futility and anarchy prevailing in the society. He satirizes socio-political chaos in modern Indian society. His poetry is an outpour of his longings and yearnings. His greatest achievement lies in his ability to articulate human experiences and emotions. Life is the chief focus of his works as he tells in the interview:

> Human life is an amalgam of joy and sorrow, pleasure and plight, happiness and sorrow. And both these aspects of life cannot be severed from each other as two sides of a coin or day from night. However, in life it plays saw-saw. There are some who are fortunate and happy. There are some who are unfortunate and do not get even the bare minimum of food, cloth and shelter to sustain life, yet life goes on for them.
The poetry of D. C. Chambial is not however personal of subjective kind. It presents enlarged views of life. For him life is an enigma which cannot be understood by perceptive eyes. The circumstances in life may make one feel like a trapped fish longing to be free. It is the sensitivity to human suffering and human tragic predicament that makes a cry for love and compassion. The poet broods over the formation of his tragic vision of life. It is quite natural for a poet like D. C. Chambial to weep over the condition of the innocent and honest men who are suffering from the social and political machinery operated by the people of satanic mind. In a melancholic tone, he describes in the poem “A Blind Race”.

The world is a pool:
Honest and innocent
Sink like stone,
Light and lingering foul
Rise to surface,
Spread like the waves.

His poems have a dense texture of social awareness. The decadent society is at the center stage of his poetic art. “Longing in Void” gives the spectacle of young lady raped and bundled and thrown into a pool of stagnant water. “Vulture in the Sky” aptly depicts the spirit of the modern age of anxiety in which vultures are out to destroy the very fabric of human life. The man feels entangled in the net of anarched system. He wants to be free. He wants to break the ‘chakarvyuha’. In “A Captive”, the poet states:
How desperately
I’ve tried and tried
to break *chakravyuha*
of cobweb
around my transparent self
by fencing with shields and sabres
of words and figures
borrowed from fanciful fantasies.⁵

In “Man is Lost”, the poet moans the loss of the pristine values in the sorry state of affairs prevailing in the country. The poem dwells on the marked contrast between life and ways of the people in ancient and in the modern India. The land of Ram Krishna and Buddha has degenerated into the land of scam, corruption and hawala. The poet is pained to witness the overall socio-cultural anarchy and moral and spiritual degradation. His vision of social justice is wounded. The ideals Ram, Krishana, Buddha etc. are violated by the new political lords and in this pandemonium ‘man is lost’ to the devils who thrive like wasps on hives.

India-the land of Lords:
Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha.
They preached their philosophies
To make a heaven of this earth …
New lords now tread on this land;
They teach an ultra-philosophy
Of corruption, scams and hawalas…
Men have learnt, now, to murder and live,
To loot and ravage money and morals;
Ethics and virtues silently sob in cells.
They are true heirs of satan.⁶
“Fangs” and “Longing in Void” are loaded with deep irony and strong satire against exploitation, hypocrisy, terrorism and massacre. The tree “In Full Bloom” studded with jewels drawn from human hearts is now ‘turned to ashes’ to quench the thirst of blind demon who has pierced his fangs deep into its arteries. “Longing in Void” strikes harshly against exploitation, hypocrisy, atrocity and rape in a very touching manner. This world is a jungle full of wolves and cacti where none can long for sweet music and soothing balm.

In this jungle
full of wolves and cacti
how can we long for
sweet music and soothing balm
to truss up
the severed, bleeding heart?7

Greatly perturbed by all pervasive corruption, exploitation and injustice, D. C. Chaibial turns mystic at times. The intensity is evinced in his poems. He mourns the pathetic affairs of downtrodden. He paints the miseries of the poor on whose blood and sweat the privileged class raise their guarded abode. He says:

Living ghosts
they walk drained
of every drop of blood.
They fall dead, dead they fall,
Life heavy as lead.8

The image of Rajsthani women, who plough the sand and change mirage into reality is torn out of his experience. ‘Pagodas of water poised on the head’ make us imaginative and also transport us to the real world. It makes ‘the colonial sun’ feel defeated before the
natives, the colonised. They keep the tradition and custom on their steady heads. The poem “Sand Smell Spread”, with its description of Rajasthani women traveling on foot long distances in the sun burnt desert in the search of water shows the yearning of the poet. It becomes clear when he says in the poem.

Ploughing the sands
Mirage metamorphoses into reality.
Pagodas of water
Poised on steady heads;
The fiery sun feels defeated.³

Poems like “Death on Road”, “Rubble of Thick Night”, “Vulture in Sky”, “Dark Dawn”, “Dance of Death”, “Wounded Soul”, “A Cry of Heart”, “Bone Debris”, “Ticking Scorpion” etc. have pessimistic notes. The volume The Cargoes of Bleeding Hearts depicts the poet’s feelings that there is no ray of hope left in the lives of poor workers. “A Blade of Grass” presents the deep sorrow of a woman ‘trembling like a blade of grass’, ‘quagmire’ is a saga of exploitation of man. His heart bleeds for the helpless victims of exploitative. The modern society is a ‘jungle of automation’ where sympathy is the least expected one. In “Stampede”, the poet shows the result of delayed efforts to awake humanity.

Race through the crowd in mazes,
Watch: headless, cactus-faced swarms
Engaged in stampede;
The milk of mankind
Dried in dreary human heart.
Crabs dance, doves huddled,
Stems steal into soil,
Roots rise into light.⁴
Besides suffering, corruption and exploitation, the poet visualises death in varied forms. The poet is a philosopher. His life is like that of flaming candle bright, giving light, slowly getting away to the unfathomed deep. The poet is transcribing and transforming his personal vision into universal one. In “Life Truth”, he says:

I looked at my self,
A sun at the horizon-
Weary wait for knock at the door.\textsuperscript{11}

In the poem “Balia”, the sensitive poet sees the tears of the parents of a sailor who perished in the sea in the 1965 war with Pakistan. He voices their feelings. In a very poignant manner he presents the pain and agony of the mother who believes and father who hopes for the coming backs of his son:

“O my Balia! O my son!
Where are you?
When will you come?...
My son’ll come back!
My Balia will come back!
to light the pyre
of his old father,
of his old mother.
B-a-b-u
Is our Balia dead?\textsuperscript{12}

Death is the profoundest and most awe inspiring certainty of man’s existence. The unexpected and often premature end of youth and beauty shows the sharp sting of death and its triumph over frail mortals. The dark jungle symbolises mirage and approaching death in the poem “In Desert”.

\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{12}
The Jackal howl
as the dark jungle moves in
and shadows
lengthen to infinity,
dissolve in dark.\textsuperscript{13}

“Green Memories” is written on the death of a three years old child. Death presents itself in many guises. Cyclone which took many precious lives in Orissa is one such form in “I Wonder at His Judgement”. Earthquake causes large scale destruction in the Gujrat quake. The poet presents a real life but shocking picture of devastation of human life in “Yugoslavia”. The poem “Death by Fire” personifies fire as demon snatching away the lives of hundred of students and parents celebrating D.A.V centenary in 1995. The incident which killed hundred of people assembled for Nigomando convention at Baripada in Orissa and hundred of devotees at Mecca in the tent hall of pilgrimage illustrate the mortality of life. Death has many faces. In modern days it has adopted technical forms more than traditional ones. New image of death is found in the poem “Dust to Dust”.

Death, these days
never knocks at door,
rides the machines racing fast
(must have forsaken his buffalo).\textsuperscript{14}

The poem “Life and Death” demands visualization of climate conditions of the poet’s native Himalayan terrain because in this land cold is not merely phase of nature but a synonym of death. In this region heat is life but coldness is death.
Heat is life,
Coldness, death.
My crawling fingers crave
To feel the peaks of moon
In this frost with a hope to flow
From stasis to flux,
From coldness to heat.\textsuperscript{15}

“Death on the Road” is full of pathos at the strange quirks of fate.
“Dance of Death” expresses poet’s lacerated sensibility at the sight of the poor, the down-trodden who fall prey to vulturous designs of those who enjoy power and position in society. They don’t care for humanity. The poet is anguished to see the spectacle of dead body lying on the road, he says:

A battered body lay
on the black road after
a head-on collision
of a scooter and a truck…
How will they ‘brace this bolt’?
How will they face this cold?
How they, young and old.\textsuperscript{16}

In the poem “I Wonder at His Judgement”, the poet thinks that there is no meaning of life and death. All is rotten and decayed.

Dead bodies begin to rot and decay,
Feed on them marooned wolves and dogs,
As I hear crackers fired, see fireworks play!
Life and Death lose meaning, all turn to clay,
An awful spectacle the eyes befogs,
I wonder at His judgement in dismay!\textsuperscript{17}

In spite of voicing the darkness prevailing around D. C. Chambial cannot be called a pessimistic poet. He has his own conviction of
optimism. His poetry gives a message of love and peace and faith in God. He is not afraid of his death. He knows that death is an inevitable truth of life. The poet visualises his own mortality and the way people will respond it in the poem “On My Death”.

On my death
people will say:
the old man is dead,
and pass their judgement-
free, frank and fair
that the whole of life
could not buy.  

**Loss of Values**

D. C. Chambial’s poetry reveals a linear development of various moods suggestive of his growing indignation over the deterioration of social, moral and ethical values in the contemporary society. A large part of his poetry embodies a sense of dissatisfaction, despair, frustration and anguish at the erosion of values of life. His tone is satirical and he never lets the things go unnoticed with his intense knowledge of people ranging from working class to the ruling one. He presents hypocrisy, dishonesty, corruption, selfishness, exploitation, oppression futility and anarchy prevalent in modern society.

D. C. Chambial portrays the present political scenario which is swayed by greed and exploitation. The politicians, who are so-called protector of the masses, twist the values and morals. They feel no hesitation in raping the nation to serve their ends. The poet feels the
need of their ethical orientation so that they may realise their responsibility. He asks the Lord in the poem “On This Day”.

On this day
I pray:
Lord! come
and entice our politicians
(like your Gopikas
or the pied-piper of Hamlin)
and teach them
a lesson in ethics-
when they
get to rape the nation next time
in the name of serving people.\(^{19}\)

They are the incarnation of opportunism and corruption. In the interview he made it clear that our politicians are the best examples of corruption.

They join politics merely for the sake of making money without caring for the weal of the common man. The voter remains in their view only till canvassing for the election does not end thereafter money overrides all their values, ideals and ideas.\(^{20}\)

Codes of Conduct are thrown in to dustbin. There are many poems in which he exposes the follies of modern man with an intention to banish them from the society. He is concerned with ameliorating the lot of the poor and the exploited. In “The Bleeding Hearts”, the poet is infuriated at the oppression of the weaker lot. He girds up his lion to combat the evil which has clouded man’s conscience and to protect those poor and oppressed who live in a world of exploitation, suffering and despair.
The sun’s gone,
the moon wails…
I write to voice myself,
my tongue’s cut; It’s how dumb
fight and try to unload
cargoes of bleeding hearts
in the dark sea of wild oppression.  

The poem “Mask” presents new idiom. This idiom recommends two faces. The perfumes and creams hide the rotten smell of corruption. Hence to live successfully in the world man is forced to have a mask otherwise he will be thrown out.

To live successfully
at the present hour
one must have two faces-
one of the angle’s,
other of devil
bedecked with
synthetic perfumes and creams
to hide the rotten smell
of blood bedaubed nail and teeth.  

The poet laments at the irrevocable loss of values and religious faith. Man has closed himself within individual status culminating into acute isolation. Family bonds are becoming less and less abiding. Even parental bliss is searching for new definition and logics of interpretation. Bearing a child is becoming a business, a discreet solution to the want of money and of child. He says in “The Promising Age”.

A business-minded mother
decides to be pregnant
for those who do not want
to lose their shape.
D. C. Chambial presents an entirely different stance of mother-child relationship in which woman wants to be ‘mother’ but without conceiving and giving birth to a child. These lines can be analysed best by dividing them into two parts. The woman in the first two lines, who wants to be pregnant, is needy. She wants to earn money by nourishing the foetus of another couple. It is fertilised in the test-tube and placed in the womb for post-fertilisation growth and gestation period of nine months. She knows that the child growing in her womb is not her child and she has no affection for it. What she values most is the money she receives for doing this job for needy couple. It is nothing more than a business for her. The woman, in the next two lines, is sophisticated, modern beauty-conscious woman who does not want to take the risk of pregnancy that will make her shape lose. She wants to get it done for payment like any other menial job. The primordial virtue of maternity seems to have gone down the drain with the modern materialistic approach. In both the cases, we find a hollow mother-child relationship with no bond of emotional attachment.

In his interview D. C. Chambial explicitly told:

Loss of contentment and mammon worship is the root cause of the loss of values in human life. There is a blind race for money. Every thing is interpreted in terms of money that a man possess. Money has the power even to earn respect in society. Howsoever a sound man may be, if he has no money, he is looked down upon in the society.\textsuperscript{24}
He is dejected to witness the moral decline in the society. The poem “Man is Lost” highlights the theme of the cancer of corruption in post-Independence India, especially the year after 1960.

New lords now tread on this land;
They teach an ultra-philosophy
Of corruption, scams and hawalas…
Men have learnt, now, to murder and live,
To loot and ravage money and morals.²⁵

The idea of corruption is highlighted in the poem “Without Qualms of Conscience”. It symbolises selfish gains at the cost of morals and ethics.

… and our
polity devoid of
morals and ethics:
horses traded; women
burnt, raped; children sold;
elders neglected,
abused. We feel safe
with whisky in pegs,
legs in plates and become
blind to everything else.²⁶

It is insatiable thirst for money which is rampant every where; he says in interview that modernity is the cause of corruption.

Hardly there is one who is not bitten by this bug of modernity, craving for money through fair (very rare) or foul (mostly) means. All moral values are considered, these days the possessions of cowards. Daily we hear and read about people being caught red-handed while taking bribe, being punished, yet the craze does not end the game goes on.²⁷
People are like foxes who rule the roost. Instead of practising and establishing the just ethical order, they breed and feed corruption. In the poem “The Tempest”, he says:

The land, once the cradle
of virtue and ethics
weeps and bleeds
like cancerous sore.28

Faith and Religion

D. C. Chambial has firm faith in God. He wants succour from Him. His poetry motivates to tread the higher path of consciousness and prostrate before Brahma, Vishnu or Mahesh and learn to stand serene and etched amidst pain and pleasure. He wishes to lead a life full of divinity, ecstasy and eternal euphoria. The poems like “Life and Enigma”, “The Jungle of Hyenas”, “Boughs of Heaven”, “Death by Fire”, “Journey’s End”, “I Wonder at His Judgement”, “The Same Marigold” and “A Day in Rain” deal with theology. In all these poems poet’s quest is for the unknown, for values, for deeper meaning of life and universe. He invokes God in the poem “On This Day”.

On this day
I pray:
Lord! Come…
Men and women born white as pearls,
innocent as lambs,
the lust for power
(political and religious)
makes them blood-thirsty;
turn into wolves and hyenas.
Save them! Save their souls!...
_Paritramaaya Saadhoonaam_
_Vinaashaaya cha dushkitaam_
O Lord, Come!\(^{29}\)

The poet believes in the basic purpose of the religion in life. Its relevance and formative role is in directing the people as individual and general entity. He says:

Religion was discovered by the seers in the very ancient times to regulate life in a nice way, so that none suffers in the society. A healthy religion helps the needy, generates satisfaction, peace and tension-free atmosphere while today’s religions are water-tight compartments. No trespassing out of the bounds of one religion is recommended and tolerated.\(^{30}\)

But at times he doubts the existence of God because he feels that no God can allow his children to be unjustly oppressed. He asks, “Is there any God? If there is one; He is discriminating God. He gives sorrow to some and joy to others. If He is the common father how can He do that?” The poet wonders at His judgement. The poem is a complaint against God’s injustice, He says:

As I hear crackers fired, see fireworks play
My heart goes to people scattered like logs,
I wonder at His judgement in dismay!...
Dead bodies begin to rot and decay…
Life and death lose meaning, all turn to clay.\(^{31}\)

But he also realises that God is not partial. He is always fair. It is man who makes barriers, disobeys and undoes the discipline of God. The poet wants people should go in the shelter of God. The man of today
is leading astray. There is no discrimination on the door of God. In
the poem “Dance in Harmony”, he asserts.

People with round caps,
Sacred threads and Crosses
Sit together
In mosques, temples, churches
Sans any walls and fences,
In raptures enjoy
the words of God.\(^{32}\)

The man in D. C. Chambial always looks towards God. His poetry
gives a message of love and peace. Sometimes he appears a saint poet
who sings for a life full of holiness, perfection and purity. He prays
God to fill the earth with ‘Satyam Shivam Sundram’. He knows very
well that it is the discrimination of caste and creed that causes
discords. There are still some people who live an ideal life and adhere
to human values. The man in the poem “The Ripe Time” is such man
as believes in his work and for whom fruit is not important. What is
important for him is the ‘karam’. He never thinks of fruits in the
manner of utilitarian. The pleasure and peace that he gets out of
sowing the seeds of ‘karma’ is inexpressible. He says in the poem
“The Ripe Time”.

I am an honest peasant, believe
In sowing the seeds, not reaping the harvest:
I think : it is time to sow the seeds.\(^{33}\)

In the poem “A Prayer”, D. C. Chambial prays to God to strengthen
him to fight against the worldly wrongs. The world is gloomy, untrue
and indolent.
Give me strength
to fight the toil of the day,
to find the kernel out of hay.
Give me light to discern
satyam, shivam, sundram
in this life full of gloom…
Lead me, Lord!
on the righteous path
full of fragrant flowers.  

His fight is against injustice, falsehood and all that is inhuman. He exposes the false religious heads who blackmail the emotions of people. He does not believe in the crop of new religions.

   All present religions have become hoax and most of the religious heads are parasites thriving on people’s faith. In the recent past many such heads have got involved in sex scandals and murders to enjoy life and protect their thrones.

In the poem “The Cracking Earth”, the poet is grieved to see that man is perishing man. Starvation and hunger are perpetrated. He begs to God to show the right path to the man of today.

   O Lord, show us the light-
Why man bent upon perishing the MAN?
Why perpetrating hunger and starvation?
O Lord, show us the light!
The young dies. Earth cracks day and night.
Why the heart hardened, unable to scan?
O Lord, show us the light-
Why the man bent upon perishing the MAN?

The poet dreams of bringing harmony, happiness and prosperity in the life and eliminating hatred and violence from the earth. In the
poem “Brahmoasmi”, he says every individual is a part of the great soul, the Brahma.

I’m you; you are me,
the eternal source : the basic truth.
Sing the song of eternity-
*Brahmoasmi! Brahmoasmi!*\[^{37}\]

D. C. Chambial believes in one religion; that is Humanism and says:

I believe that all men are born alike. None is born with any religion in his/her blood. It is the society and the family in which one is born converts him/her to a particular creed. My religion is Humanism—a religion that treats all human beings equal and that, too, is my Faith.\[^{38}\]

**Individualism**

Individualism is a social theory favouring action for individual over collective or social control. D. C. Chambial defined individualism in terms of creativity, he says:

Individualism is where thought or an activity centres round an individual alone. In literature it is maintained that every individual creative writer is different from every other creative artist. No two persons/writers/artists are alike. What differentiates one from another constitutes that being’s individuality. The differentiation lies in ideology and philosophy. Whenever two writers appears to propound analogues philosophy their techniques are quite apart from each other and which sets apart and imparts them individualism. It also connotes individuality, uniqueness, distinctness or/and eccentricity.\[^{39}\]
D. C. Chambial may be termed individualist. His poems speak of his conviction of individualism. He believes that society is for individuals not individuals for society. If society does not work for the welfare of people, its existence is futile. Contradiction is a sign of individual freedom therefore the contradictory ideas are prevailing in the society. But people have become very astute and unsympathetic. The poet writes in the favour of individuals and says in his very first poem “The Promising Age”.

In this antagonistic society
contradictions
tend to become acute
with unsympathetic attitude.\footnote{40}

Another threat to individualism is from the side of scientific advancement. According to the poet the society has been transformed into the jungle of automation. He is shocked to see how people have become the slaves of machines. There is no freedom for individuals. The place of individual is secondary and machines are getting priority day by day. The humanity is losing its significance because of mechanisation. The poet firmly believes in the theory of ‘Laissez faire’. The man is voluntarily captive, only machines guide the individual. He says:

What, then, do we expect
in this jungle
of automation?
Vats-man is captive,
machine instructs,
calculates and infers
achievements
of Homo sapiens.\footnote{41}
In the same context the poet affirms that man has become a robot being entangled in the cogs of capitalism. Man is rushing only after money. Capitalism creates imperialism. The voice of soul is being suppressed. There is no value of individual; only machines are required. They help, interpret and amuse the humans. He says:

What other role awaits
insignificant cog
in this robot culture
where soul defies
the principle of metempsychosis
and enter into
wires, screws, transistors
magnets and diaphragms
to help, interpret and amuse?\textsuperscript{42}

The principle of individualism aims at the development of individual. Man should he free. There should be no suppression for the growth of individual. The state, society and other institutions are only resources for the happiness of man. But poet finds that man is not moving according to his conscience and his individuality is steadily disappearing. Inspite of getting freedom, he is being entangled in the mesh of modernism as well as mechanism. Only physical appearance is valued. The relations are losing their importance. The poet says in the same poem “The Promising Age”.

The unique individual
steadily disappears
at the hapless fate of RNA
and the soil is ready
for a bumper crop of deformities.
A business-minded mother
decides to be pregnant for those who do not want to lose their shape.\textsuperscript{43}

There is no value of emotions, passions and thoughts. Only machines are preceding the individuals. Computer is taking the place of man. Therefore unemployment is spreading in the society; the poet ponders over it and says gravely:

Where has gone logic of inventive thought? Fissures of cerebrum dive deep into the waves of computer and genetic code in a venture to unriddle the skein.\textsuperscript{44}

In the same vein he says that individual is losing his identity. Passion are losing their hold: Man is reeling under pressure. He is taking the help of medicines to remove his tensions and hypertensions because of overburden. His smiles are artificial. Mechanisation is dominating the human mind and soil. Though the time has been shortened, the age is lessened, the individual is weeping, he says:

Years contracted to seconds. Passions degenerated into mechanised smiles while coming and going lips frigid to flowery kisses inside the tube.\textsuperscript{45}

The poet talks about mental disorders of various types that are prevalent in modern life.
Neuromycin frees the brain
From habitual reflexes
and switches off reaction
and drops blank
unconscious schizoid problems
of unreal schizoid individuals
of this promising age.\textsuperscript{46}

Individual is not free. He has reached on the edge of starvation, he is
deprived of moral identity. His feelings, emotions and passions are
being suppressed. The poet says that he is feeling helpless.

Individual bound
to lose moral identity
on the verge of catastrophe.
Ordinary time flows into
\textit{Bhrigu} time.
Unknowingly know centuries
yet feel not so.\textsuperscript{47}

The man is displaced from his place, faith and culture.

In the poem “Man is Lost”, the poet cites Miltonic reference when
after touching the forbidden fruit paradise was lost. Now individuality
is lost because of politicians and money-minded people. The poet
calls them new lords and says:

New lords now tread on this land;
They teach an ultra-philosophy
Of corruption, scams and hawalas,
They mind not action, but fruit:
No fruit is forbidden for them,
No action low or base.\textsuperscript{48}

The poet entreats in the poem “Manacles” to set man free; he does not
like to be pet in the cage. He wants to be free. He aspires to break his
He wants to live his own life with no bounds, no limitations but a free individual. He says:

Do not make me a pet
like a bird in a cage
or puppy in the lap
nor enthrall
in the manacles
of your hands.\textsuperscript{49}

\section*{Regional Colour}

D. C. Chambial is a perspective writer. His poetry explicitly unfolds the truth of human existence around him. For coming from the land of scenic splendour and glistening grandeur viz. Himachal Pradesh, he deals with nature forces pertaining to the region. But D. C. Chambial cannot be termed as a regional poet in strict sense of term. His poetry reflects the life in general scenario. It is truly Indian in face and colour. Sporadic shades of his region are perceptible here and there in his poetry. Scenic strokes of Kangra velley, people and culture are frequently visible. He has vividly dealt with the human life in constrains and threats. Going through his poems is like making a tour of life where man feels, weeps and sympathises as he searches his own image reflected in them. The poet himself confesses that he is not absolutely a regional poet but he has a great stamp of his area on him. He says:

So far as my poetry is concerned certainly there is rural ambience. If that can be interpreted as regionalism, it is alright. It is always the critic who assigns this or that label, tag to a particular type of writing.\textsuperscript{50}
There is a touch of Himachal Pradesh in his poetry. It is natural to have stamp of his region in which he has been brought up from childhood to maturity. He has grown up in the mountains, glaciers and valleys.

It is therefore not surprising that he weaves his verse on a note of native ecology but takes care to provide enough space for readers to recreate them and see their own meaning hidden in his poems. The poet expresses his experiences which he has so far gathered from the air blowing around him. The poet also notices human bodies around him and portrays an authentic picture with aptness. His eyes catch instantly certain interesting phenomena of plains and hills. He touches upon the tough and most challenging climatic situation of Siachin in the poem “Beautiful Beyond”.

No sun fires down on plain or hill;
No rains, nor any drought therein;
Nor any foggy freezeing chill
Like frozen air in Siachin.  

D. C. Chambial’s realism does not indulge in the descriptions of idyllic life of Himachal. He is the singer of human predicament of sorrow and pain. According to Dr. Atam Ram:

Mr. Chambial is a natural singer, an impressive bard of Himachal. He chooses day to day phenomena, natural objects ideas for his writing poetry. It is the poetry of intense ideas and deeply experienced emotions. He shows sure signs of maturity, consistent development of his art and craft and enlargement of his visions.
Being a dweller of the dale, he is intimately related to the thorn, the bush and flower that convey in their wilderness the message of strangeness and wonder that envelop human consciousness. The storm and the snow, the cloud-burst and the deluge lend a note of certain darkness to his poetry. As we see in the poem “A Wish”.

I see two yonder hills
Endeavour to embrace
In winter. The river grows
Jealous: thunders, roars
In rains, even bruises.
Man builds bridges
to solemnize
the marriage.\textsuperscript{53}

The people of Himachal are submissive, sympathetic, helping, good and kind. Their hearts are innocent full of pure delight. The poem “My Song” is dedicated to his land, to his people who are so good.

My people ! My Land!
Salute you all. Love you all.
Know you to be good and kind,
Sympathetic and helping.
Light of heart and full of laughter.\textsuperscript{54}

The poem “Dawn” exhibits the regional touch. In the early morning the group of divine singers go to worship ‘Dhaulagiri Mountain’. They are getting victory over the gloom of night. There is a gleeful smile on their faces. Their music is honeyed. This is the culture of submissive people of Himachal Pradesh. Before starting their day they worship their God father as Dhaularigi. The poet says:
Honey’d music
of divine singers,
prayers of innocent hands
burn frosty incense
in the censor of virgin pool
and blush
as open palms join
for Dhaulagiri.\textsuperscript{55}

He turns frequently to hills and valleys, the clouds and the birds. It is quite natural that he is deeply concerned for the world in which he lives, and the issues that are related to his fellow beings. He is very sensitive to every change that occurs in the valley. At the same time he gives their universal appeal. His personal experiences and regional predicaments no longer remain confined to one place or person. He says in the poem “Down the Drain”.

\begin{quote}
All effort goes down the drain
to straighten
the weak back bent in Spring
under Himalayan
weight of care and concern:
a stump sprouts from
the dry, desert dunes.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

He goes beyond the mists and mountains, valleys and glaciers. His outlook is broad and carries him not only to national but international themes. As Dr. Atma Ram says:

\begin{quote}
He is as established poet from Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh. He renders the experience of observation into creative piece that lilts and lilts. He tries to discover the reality of life concentrating on mystic themes.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}
Nature is part and parcel of Himachal Pradesh. The touch of nature is prevailing throughout his poems. The entire nature poems though few show his concern for the hills. He does not spare himself to indulge in their romantic appreciation. Most of the time it is submerged by his preoccupation with the themes of corruption, terrorism and agonies. In the poem “Steadfast”, he writes about the endurance of the hills around where he has elapsed his life.

Sixty winters and summer sixty
I have seen;
bald hills and white mountains
from the yard of my thatch-
not flinch even an inch.
Spring comes with a ring
to deck a valley
at the foot of the hill.  

Nature is the subject to the heart of the poet as he delineates both aspect of nature the calm, serene side which offers constant solace and revitalisation to dissipated, impoverished man whereas the turbulent vociferous side captivates his attention in poems pertaining to manifold natural catastrophes. Both the aspects have been portrayed by the poet in the poem “Manacles”.

Let me roam
far, far away
on the bank of a placid river,
on the hills clothed with snow,
sleep and dream
on the flossy moss
by the brook.  

In the poem “Bleeding Clouds”, he says:
The sun pours down fire
on the gasping earth,
a falcon perches
beside a sinking river
on a rock; files gyres
and lands again…
The land laughs,
blood congeals,
flood receded,
my feet on quicksand,
blazing sun takes a dip,
the falcon squeaks on rock.\textsuperscript{60}

The poet has successfully painted various aspects of nature that is abundant in Himachal Pradesh. In his poems there is the description of beauty of nature as well as disasters in the forms of fire, accidents, storms, cyclones, floods and earthquakes causing massacre. The poet contributes the beautiful description of the valleys and hills. He enjoys the village green, the streams, the flowers and the energising and refreshing breeze which with one stroke drives out the boredom and fatigue of a city dweller. He deals with common subject also turning it into significant one and says in the poem “Quest of Cheerfulness”.

\begin{quote}
Let us leave behind
This world full of icy chill
And mount up a higher hill
Where sun shines
Warm and bright
Against mundane gall and fright.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

D. C. Chambial is a poet of not only of Kangra Valley but of India as well as of the whole world. He justly may not be called a regional
poet. He seems to have voyaged successfully through his poetic journey to a still higher level of perception and verbal felicity. His poetry embodies universal themes and motives. His regionalism melts into universalism. He says in interview:

In my poetry, necessarily, I derive material from my vicinity but if the characters suffer it is not only the character or so to say inhabitant, of that particular area or region who undergo suffering under such conditions but the people all over the globe suffer equally under parallel situation. So my region melts and transcends physical boundaries to reach the farthest locals on this earth. Robert Frost too has been regional poet under these observations.62

Dr. Shiv Kumar holds the similar view:

He is essentially a poet of hills of valleys, clouds and birds. But he does not limit his vision to mere description of nature, but also charges his verse with a refreshing moral fervour.63

**Poetic techniques**

D. C. Chambial is endowed with great poetic talent which is used to express his feelings of pain and suffering in social milieu. His way of expression is not ambiguous but clear, simple, emphatic and dignified; even when he dwells on sensuous topic, he is not frivolous. Simplicity of his poetic diction and poignancy of his ideas and thoughts are two prominent features of his poetry. It has a viable synthesis of thoughts and expression. His language is free from those
rhetorical embellishments with which the many of his contemporaries are rather heavy. His poetry is quite realistic in mood. Characteristically, his poems, though mainly framed in free verse format, have an appeal and cadence of their own and alternate between ornate language ascribed to abstract instances and the simplicity of effective common place description. What is remarkable about D. C. Chambial is his immaculate poetic technique. It is crisp and condensed. According to Dr. Atma Ram:

Dr. Chambial is indeed, a very perceptive writer, a creative literacy artist of immense promise and potential, free from literary jargons, rugged phrases, unnecessary allusions and burdensome and jejune images. He builds elements of irony, observation and clear description into an organic whole. Poems are simple, short yet often characterized by pace passion and clarity.64

D. C. Chambial has made a firm contribution to Indian English poetry. As a master craftsman, he knows his material well and turns it into a beautiful object of art endowed with shine, shape and spirit. It is a mosaic of pain, anger, violence, faith, spirituality, to contemporary Indian society and international events. These themes have deftly been conveyed with the help of images, symbols and myths. Therefore it will be proper to take these devices one by one.
Images

Imagery, that is, images taken collectively is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion or in the analogues (the vehicles) used in its similes and metaphors.  

The images, used by, D. C. Chambial are natural and common place yet concrete and serious. He employs them as an apt medium for expressing his ideas or mood. He talks about the surge of images in creative man. In the poem “In a Trance” in the volume *Broken Images*, he says:

Image after image
appear on the blank canvas
pregnant with
sun and snow
and prismatic glow.  

Dr. Shiv Kumar says in this context:

Here is indeed a true unification of sensibility, ideas and images merging into poetic synthesis.  

Animal imagery has mostly been employed to show the decadence and the negative forces working in the contemporary world and hence scavenger birds and animal figures are found frequently in his poems. In the poem “Vultures and Crows”, the vulture and crow stand for our hypocritical and power hungry politicians. Their hypocrisy and crookedness have been sharply suggested in the “Swans”.  

119
Vultures and crows
Stimulate swans,
Peck at carcass
At the cross.
Deft in intrigue,
Dream to behead.
Who dare show light,
Lead out of darkness?

A desolate picture of lost battle field shudders the reader. The poem “Rising Images” is an extreme example of the application of animal images particularly focusing upon the degenerated world.

Vultures,
Crows,
Jackals,
Dogs:
Blood and carcass.
Frost,
Fog and mist.
Grenades,
Guns,
Bombs:
Explosions and fire
Cancerous head on polio legs.
Blood,
Bones:
Tears.
Water, water, water...  

In the poem “A Worm”, the poet presents the picture of a man who is pressed under the burden of cares and concerns; his back bends down. He wriggles and tries hard to carry his cargo in vain but crows and hawks are gazing to snatch.
Crows and hawks fly above
in the hope of a treat.
A feeble worm,
thin and lean, wriggles.
Would there were some
to balm the wounds
and scare hawks away!70

The poet depicts a dance bound to sexual exploitation through the image of barking dogs. He says:

    Dogs bark;
she upbraids skirt
to show bottle-legs,
sighs deep.71

The poet has titled his second volume *Broken images* consciously to depict the disintegrated picture of society. The volume is brimming with heart touching details. He candidly exposes the prevalent corruption through animal world. He does not articulate this illusionment through abstraction but through concrete embodiments. Man of today has been transformed into animal. In the poem “Human Faith”, he says:

    Lizard and serpents
    hiss is an island,
    eye at the sky.
    Desert has no bounds.72

The poet pays homage to Jai Prakash Narayan. He was the person of mountain courage. He was pillar supporting the mansion of faith. He very grievously says in the lat stanza of the poem “A Tribute to a Hero”.

121
Bird is dead!
Flame is out! Light has gone!
Flutter in my mind,
gleam, through my heart
Halo is around my soul!73

Animal imagery is abundant in his poems. He has posed it in a very impressive way. The delineation becomes quite clear and image starts to evolve in the mind the moment one reads the poem “Sciamachy”.

Jackals, wolves, cats and rats
agog to see
rising betaals
to pin stemming rays
from the sun.74

Besides animal imagery, sound imagery is also effectively used in the poems. In the poem “The Lapicide”, the poet expresses his emotions towards a mother whose small child is wailing to reach into the lap of mother. Helpless mother is bound to work. She is breaking stones as well as she is breaking the heart of her son. She serves the humanity by helping in making the road. Sound of breaking stones seethes the child. The poet says:

Thah! Thah!
Her hammer rises and falls
on the stones breaking
Monotony of the hot air…
She serves unto Him
and unto Humanity.
Now and then
the baby cries hunger…
Kisses on the forehead
to frighten the fatigue away.
Rises she again
With her Thah! Thah!75
The poem “Pendulum” has also the vivacity of sound imagery. It shows the genius of the poet in employing of image.

  Knocking at the door
  the echoing-beats of
  *Khabardar! Khabardar!*
  drag on from the domain of dream.
  Stone, stubble, tree,
  mountain and men melt
  into a homogeneous mass.76

‘Colour Imagery’ is also beautifully used in the poem. “Yellow Fate”, illustrates the colourful journey of life. The poet wants to tread on the paths of Buddha and Socrates. There are many significant colours in the universe but the poet thinks that he has only yellow. The colour yellow stands for decadence and dullness. Red and green denote prosperity. He says:

  I pack my sack of songs
  and tread along
  The foot-path
  in search of a Buddha,
  a Socrates
  among red, blue, and green
  but
  yellow is my fate.77

The poem “Green Memories” was written on the death of a three years old child. The wretched parents and others are very sad. The life ended before it was begun. With the help of colour imagery. The poet has given a heart touching description of anguished hearts. The colours signify the situation of bereaved persons.
Red pain slithers to yellow
As the waves in sea scale the shores;
Stocks gaze and gaze at the crimson skies,
Void nestled in cork eyes.\(^78\)

The poet has defined life in a beautiful way. The colours play significant roles in the life of human beings. In life all the deeds of humans are amalgamated with fears. The meaning of colours is being imparted by the poet in the poem “Life”.

Fears
amalgamated with deeds;
heaven, hell and hell-fire,
a carnival of colours:
yellow, pink, red and green,
white, blue, and black.\(^79\)

“A Captive Sun” is also an example of colour imagery. The poet shows the union of the earth and the sun in the poem.

Sun unioned with earth,
Heat flowed down the bridge
A lush green tree is born.
Tree is pink with hope
Love, lust and rain bow;
Saw the bright sun around.\(^80\)

The poet surprises by the originality of images associated with the thought and the way they are woven in the texture. Being a sensitive poet, he has used it very deftly. The poem “Fog” is a marvelous example of sense imagery. The poet says:

The wretched fog
Slowly and steadily lingers on
Over the river, stream,
Vale and dale
To the mountain top…
The sun
Paragon of truth, beauty and goodness
Also veiled up.\textsuperscript{81}

In the poem “Darkness”, he has the sense perception of ignorance without cognizance there will be only darkness in the form of night. Sun stands for knowledge, vigour and strength and moon stands for light, peace and courage. The poet is gloomy to see their absence.

Without-the sun, the moon and the stars try to fight the darkness of the night… I see more gloom in the light of these shades than the darkness where shadows melt to emerge homogeneous.\textsuperscript{82}

Symbols

According to Jacob Abraham:

A symbol, generally speaking is anything which denotes something else. In literature the term is used to refer to a word or a group of words that suggest a range of reference objects or events or state of mind-beyond itself.\textsuperscript{83}

D. C. Chambial has applied symbols to express his perception in artistic precision. The title of the collection \textit{Gyrating Hawks and}
Sinking Roads is profoundly symbolic and metaphysical in tone. Hawks gyrate in the azure sky. To them sparrows are not mere heralders of spring but food to appease their hunger. These birds of prey are ever ready to swoop upon their prey hopping on newly bloomed trees, singing the chorus of life knowing little that there is not much gap between life and death. Hawk is the symbol of murder as well as loot.

Hawk gyrates and gyrates
and squeaks with a snake in claws.
Cats, leopards and wolves stretch legs,
walk into the pool of blood.
The Hawk settles down on a rock.84

Animals like vulture, snake, eagle, scorpion etc. in symbolic form depict egoistic, selfish, materialistic world of today. In the poem “Tickling Scorpions”, scorpion signifies new emerging fear of corruption but it is lurking in the grass it has no eyes but it is tickling.

Bulbs in soil, look ahead
To the spring warmth
For new tickling scorpions.85

In the poem “Vulture in Sky”, vultures are symbol of hungry politicians and corrupt people hovering in the world scouring their prey. The poet’s eyes catch the sight of them.

Vultures
hover in the sky
to catch the glance of cadavers
scattered on sands of time…
Rape
men and morals
for momentary gains.
Eat the fruit : rise or fall.86
“A Blade of Grass” is a poem about the wailing humanity. The cargoes of thoughts have been scattered; the dreams have been lost in the sand-dunes. The description of whirlpool, filmsy window screen, starry jewels, blade of grass is symbolic. The poet shows:

A gush of sobs and sighs
lifted the filmsy window screen
and amidst whirlpool
of warm tearful pearls
spread forth her apron to gather
starry jewels…
greenery leered to see her tremble
like a blade of grass.\(^87\)

‘Wheel’, in the poem “The Tireless Wheel”, is the symbol of time. It moves on and on. The poet hears the sound of moving wheel from his thatch. The humanity is rushing with the speed of wheel. The delineation of wheel is in traditional frame. The poem, rich in poetic embellishment, casts a moving impact upon the mind.

Astounded to see
men and women,
young and old
in sun and shower
vie with speed of the wheel…
The wheel moves on tirelessly
creaking and preaching:
respect, tolerance and love
eternity to eternity.\(^88\)

“Search For a Berth” is also a symbolic poem. Bird is an innocent component of humanity. It is not getting proper place to perch upon. The whole poem signifies the wandering humanity. The pious,
innocent people are itinerant and migratory. They are losing their roots but crooked, unethical, fraudulent and unprincipled persons are enjoying life and moving very fast. A bird means, spotless, uninvolved, chaste and righteous person. He says:

The bird flutters wings and looks for berth to perch upon.
Unknown galaxies hidden in the womb of infinity.
The land is all aflame:
wolves, rats and cats enjoy cake and ale, hens and lambs sob in a dark corner.
The bird has no place to perch on keeps on flying then falls down effete on the flames.  

The poet reveals two opposite faces of modern man – the best and the worst. He/she is wearing mask to hide their real identity. The society demands variegated attitude of people. Externally they are faultless internally they are corrupt. The poet says in the poem “Masks”.

To live successfully at the present hour one must have two faces – one of angel’s, other of devils…
Always walk masks on to keep up appearances.  

“At the Cross” is also a candid comment upon the cruelties of world inflicted upon pure souls.
Once I stood at a cross  
In the hot month of May  
Happy and gay;  
She came to me  
Ogling and goggling.  
Now in December  
Detached and dismayed.  
The road is barren.  
At the cross  
A stalk without arms  
Awaits an ablution.91

The poem “Crimson to Crimson” symbolically depicts man’s journey of life beginning with hopes, desires, longings and ending with nothing. In the poem bridge is symbol. It means life.

Crimson to crimson:  
through white blaze a bridge  
to bridge here and above.92

Figures of Speech

P. C. Wren defines figure of speech:

A figure of speech is a departure from the ordinary form of expression, or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect.93

Figures are the ornaments of literal language not only of poetry but all the modes of fluid discourse. The beauty emerges and interest is increased. D. C. Chambial has mastered the art of figural speech. He deftly employs it to express his vision of the world. His poetry is decked with similes, metaphors, personifications and onomatopoeias. He is the master of similes as we see in the poem “On This Day”.
Men and women born white as pearls,
innocent as lambs,
the lust for power
(political and religious)
makes them blood-thirsty.\textsuperscript{94}

Dr. Shiv Kumar appreciates the skill of D. C. Chambial in using the figures.

He does not articulate this disillusionment through abstraction but only through images, metaphors and similes which are truly striking.\textsuperscript{95}

There is an abundant use of similes in the poem “Misty Reality” he says:

Willy – nilly flow like water
From this to that
Forgetting about
The colour and creed
And be one there.\textsuperscript{96}

The poem “In a Trance” is another good example of simile:

Words
gyrate like falcons
in the skeletal sky.\textsuperscript{97}

The poem “Manacles” displays the skillful use of comparison.

Do not make me a pet
like a bird in a cage
or puppy in the lap.\textsuperscript{98}

The poet is dejected to feel that atrocious ghosts make human soul a Kurukshetra for Mahabharat to be fought. He painfully says in the poem “Memorial Hearts”.

130
Human heads fall
like autumnal leaves.
I have seen storms
come and go
over wasteland.\textsuperscript{99}

The poem “Rainbow” also proves his handling of juxtapositions. This analogy is truly striking.

Like a dream borne on breeze
walks on toes from dark corridors,
spreads before eyes a gala
of colors to feast dun nerves
after the drab day’s weariness.\textsuperscript{100}

In the verse “Vultures in Sky”, the poet refers the flow of time like a pregnant river that is full of specified qualities.

Time
flows like a gravid river
unobstreperous
down to the shores of ocean.\textsuperscript{101}

The poet met a woman of different attitudes. He tells her qualities. First time she looks like a little tulip bud and second time she turns into a nut. He says in the poem “Transformation”.

… When I met her, she
was hard as nut and full of
life as mango ripe
hanging from the branches.\textsuperscript{102}

“A Cry of Heart” also shows the ease of expression.

Like the heart, water flows so unquiet
Full of passion and full of might.
Down there where the sun sinks
I can see the earth blinks.\textsuperscript{103}
‘Metaphor’ is an implied simile. D. C. Chambial adequately conveys the poignancy of thoughts through metaphors. With convincing sensitivity, he has introspected the life deeply. He says in the poem “Life”.

Life :
an endless tale of
vales, dales and hills
from the black holes
of eternity;
a dance set to tune
by Master Divine.  

The poem “She’d Come to This World Form Beyond the Stars” is a tribute to Kalpna Chawla, an astronaut, who prematurely completed her life journey. The poet compares her in metaphorical way:

She was an angel, bravely fought her wars
True, very rare are persons of her kind
She’d come to this world from beyond the stars!

The poem “Life and Death” is also an example of implied simile. He directly compares the life with heat and death with coldness.

Heat is life
Coldness, death.

The poem “Jungle of Hyenas” implies anger as death. The victim dies many times a day.

Anger is death.
Each day I die
a hundred deaths
unlike Phoenix.
“A Blind Race” in second stanza illustrates the thoughtless hurry in life. People are running and running without definitiveness in a blind race. There are many hurdles and stones in the way.

The world is a pool:
Honest and innocent
Sink like the stone,
Light and lingering foul
Rise to the surface,
Spread like the waves.\(^{108}\)

The non-living things weep, cry and take active part in the emotions of the poet. They laugh and sob as human beings. In the poem “Dark Deep”, the poet personifies the exquisiteness of sea mingling with other object of nature.

Sky kissing mountains
begin to thaw and melt
into molten matter in sea.\(^{109}\)

The poem “Cruel Hour” presents the mercilessness of time. The human beings cherish dreams but time devastates them in a moment. The pitiless time as human has been characterised in the poem.

The hour is cruel,
long cherished dreams,
meticulously planned, foiled.\(^{110}\)

The hills and valleys seem emotional in the poem “In a Trance”. They have a great impact on the life of man.

Past emotional hills
and sentimental valleys,
clouds gathers overhead
to give myriad shapes
to colliding thoughts.\(^{111}\)
“Ocean of Despair” presents the mighty phenomenon resonating the melancholy:

Hills tremble, weeps sky...

a stream of pensive smoke
flows into an ocean of despair.\textsuperscript{112}

The land has been personified in the poem “Bleeding Clouds”. A boat dances like a girl.

The land laughs,

blood congeals…

A boat dances on waves,

river sobs, clouds bleed

hills turn blue.\textsuperscript{113}

D. C. Chambial has sensitive ears to catch the sound. Some beautiful examples of onomatopoeia are worthy to be mentioned here.

Hawk gyrates and gyrates

and squeaks with a snake in claws.\textsuperscript{114}

In the poem “The Tireless Wheel”, the poet describes the sound of moving time like a wheel

The wheel moves on tirelessly
creaking and preaching:
respect, tolerance and love
eternity to eternity.\textsuperscript{115}

In the poem “The Lapicide”, the sound of ‘Thah’ is very apt.

\textit{Thah! Thah!}

Her hammer rises and falls

on the stones breaking

monotony of the hot air.\textsuperscript{116}

The poem “Pendulum” also presents the sound effect.
Knocking at the door
the echoing-beats of
*Khabardar! Khabardar!*
drag one from the domain of dream.\textsuperscript{117}

**Myths**

D.C.Chambial’s poetry is rich in allusions signifying his deep knowledge of world literature. He picks up from varied sources- Greek myths, Biblical lore, Indian mythology and even from fairy tales and correlates them to present day life. Cyclones, Helen, Mammon, Sodam, Gomorrah, Christable and many other figures swirl around in reference. ‘The Man is Lost’ dwells on the marked contrast between life and ways of people in ancient India and the life of modern age. This is an example of Indian mythology.

Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha.
They preached their philosophies
To make a heaven of this earth.\textsuperscript{118}

In the poem “Helpless Victim”, the poets picks references from Christian mythology.

Satan pulls strings
like a puppet player;
makes them dance to his tunes.\textsuperscript{119}

The reference of ‘Vikram and Betaal’ is seen in the poem “Sciamachy” when he compares the animals with ‘betaals’ and says:

Jackals, wolves, cats and rats
agog to see
rising *betaals*
of pin stemming rays
from the sun.\textsuperscript{120}
The poem “Let us March” is replete with mythological references. The poet wants to eradicate the distinction of caste, creed and colour. He wants to seek a land where there is no discrimination on the name of religion. There is also the description of Adam and Eve he says:

…I know not
what Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism,
Sufism, Shikhism, Taoism, Zoroasterianism,
Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, or…
where Satan and devil
play no havoc; no Eve enticed into
eternal sin; where the air reverberates
with Buddha’s sermons, Krishan’s Gita;
Moses’ band defies all the forces of Pharoah.¹²¹

There is reference of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology. The worldly creature forgets having bathed in it. In the poem “A Poem”, the poet mentions it.

Story quite unbelievable!
World sinks into mud
of Lethe.¹²²

In the poem “Adieu”, the myth of Trojan war is used. This war is also fought for a lady only. He speaks in sarcasm, he does not disclose the name, he only calls her a ‘beautiful bud’ and describes two wars:

I know her to be fairer
than one for whom
the Trojan war was fought-
left the city a carcass.
Even the one for whom
Pururva fought the demons
In the battlefield of welkin
And made his love.¹²³
Pururva fought with the demons in the battle of ‘Welkin’ for a lady in vain. In the poem “Boughs of Heavens”, the poet mentions about Helen, Cleopatra, Proserpine etc.

Sans care for Cleopatras
And hells bounds,
On stygian wings
To farthest heaven.
Mind in blackholes,
Not on Helen’s face. 124

In the poem “Shivalingam”, the poet strives to wake the humanity up, to redeem the modern sons from the curse of ignorance and deprivation. The myth of Shiv enriches the theme.

Fill the earth
With satyam, shivam, sundram
O, the Eternal Father!
Execute who dare defy
And vitiate the flow of Bhagirathi.
Let none be deaf
to the sound of your Damroo
And fear the Tandava. 125

His Language

D. C. Chambial is a master of poetic languages his poems are remarkable for chase diction, vivid images and spontaneity of expression. He takes his readers into his complete confidence. He talks about the relationship of the poet and the reader.
A poet is one who has the capacity to take his readers in the embrace of his imagination and make them feel and experience the same exultation of joy and sorrow that he has left and experienced at the time of composition. I think poetry must leave enough space for the reader to contemplate to reach the height of poet’s imagination.

Simplicity and clarity are two hallmarks of his poetic style. He never falls short of it. His thoughts howsoever be difficult to understand are expressed in the simplest words. There is a precision and economy in the use of diction. He is in full possession of a powerful voice and has command of an elegant and passionate poetic style. In his poetic diction there is no extra-burden of metrical pattern and structure. He has composed his poems in free verse but there is a great lyrical concentration in it. He has great command over the language which he has used in his poems. Being an Indian, he has applied some Indian words in his poems without translating them. In brief, D. C. Chambial is a poet of serious tone, cautious, restrained and conscious through musical absorption and visual imagination which roots in the hills and valley of Himachal Pradesh. He is a poet of vision-dreaming to make earth livable. He said:

My cherished dream is a polity-less and corruption free society where all living beings be happy in their environs.
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