

THE LOGIC OF NARRATIVE POSSIBILITIES: A CLAUDE BREMOND ANALYSIS OF NAVEED'S *OUR STORY ENDS HERE*

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Abstract:

The present paper examines the applicability of Claude Bremond's "Logic of Narrative Possibilities" to Sara Naveed's novel Our Story Ends Here. The theory mainly lays emphasis on the structure of narrative possibilities and on the interplay of actions, decisions, and outcomes in a given story. Here, it serves as a narrative-theoretical bardar to analyze the narrative machinery of the novel by Naveed. The paper observes how characters are conformed in making choices, having conflicts, and facing consequences using Bremond's framework in coming to identify all possible manipulations done by an author through narrative possibilities in shaping a given plot. The use of this theory is programmed in this paper to unveil the deeper levels of meaning and structure containing Our Story Ends Here as it arranges narrative possibilities that influence character arcs and eventually the incident of resolution within the storyline. Such research not only expands the knowledge on a novel but also heightens the scope for broader usage of Bremond's theory in the future analysis of contemporary literature.

Keywords:

Claude Bremond, Narrative Possibilities, Textual Analysis, South Asian Fiction,
Contemporary Pakistani Literature.

1- Introduction

Narrative theory has been a critical instrument for explaining how narratives are made and received for decades. Perhaps the most significant contribution to this work is Claude Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities (1973), which provides a kinetic methodology for narrative. In contrast to classical narrative theories that tend to emphasize rigid plot forms or character types, Bremond's theory underscores the flexibility of narratives, implying that narratives are formed through a chain of possible decisions and outcomes. In Bremond's view, narratives proceed as a series of possibilities in which every decision taken by characters gives rise to new branches, generating alternative routes and consequences. This theory provides a more subtle explanation of how stories are constructed, taking into account the autonomy of characters and the intricate pattern of decisions that shape their destinies.

Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities has been used primarily for classical and literary works but has yet to be fully exploited in the field of contemporary fiction, especially for South Asian fiction. One of the novels that offer a suitable case for this kind of study is Sara Naveed's *Our Story Ends Here* (2017), which is a Pakistani novel of recent times that explores themes of love, loss, and political tensions. The hero, Mehar, is in the wake of a catastrophic terrorist attack that results in the loss of her brother's life, an event that sets the backdrop for the evolving story. Her path crosses Sarmad, a man whose secret identity contains a concealed history. Their encounter, informed by individual trauma and ethical dilemma, reflects Bremond's theory of narrative possibilities in which choices, both individual and ethical, control the development of the story. The novel offers various points of turn where Mehar and Sarmad are required to

make decisions that are instrumental in shaping their lives. By means of these decisions, the narrative transforms with possibilities that threaten the characters' agency, wants, and moral judgment. The overall objective of this research is to determine how the decisions and their effects shape the story and lend to the novel's overall message regarding fate, love, sacrifice, and redemption.

In spite of growing scholarship on narrative theory and its application to literature, there is very little research to determine how Bremond's theory can shed light on contemporary South Asian texts, especially those dealing with issues of terrorism, national identity, and emotional trauma. This lacuna in the literature opens up a chance to analyze how *Our Story Ends Here* employs narrative decisions in responding to the socio-political conditions in Pakistan while keeping its emphasis on interpersonal relations and ethical choices. This research explores how the decisions of the characters engage with the progression of the plot. The research questions informing this study are: 1- How do the characters' choices in *Our Story Ends Here* create alternative paths for the story? 2- How do themes like fate, individual agency, and ethical conflict inform the novel's structure particularly within the post-9/11 Pakistani context?

This research will add to the pool of available research in the sense that it will provide an original approach to the narrative form of South Asian fiction, specifically by using a Western theory of narrative to a Pakistani novel of today. Using Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities, the research will conduct an in-depth analysis of the structure of the novel, examining the decision-making moments and their influence on the unfolding of the narrative. Additionally, it will add to scholarly debate regarding modern Pakistani writing, especially through its investigation of intricate emotional, social, and political issues.

2- Literature Review

Narrative theory, also known as narratology, has been used for many years as a tool for narrative analysis, exploring how stories are put together, interpreted, and located within sociocultural frameworks. Some of the earliest theorists like Vladimir Propp (1968), Tzvetan Todorov (1971), and Gérard Genette (1980) set out the basic principles of structuralist narrative analysis. Propp's structural analysis of Russian fairy tales introduced a morphology of narrative functions in a regular order, whereas Todorov suggested a five-stage equilibrium model to describe how narratives move from stability to disruption and restoration. Genette, however, was concerned with narrative discourse, specifically the handling of time, mood, and voice. These structuralist theories provided significant insights but have been criticized commonly for their being too rigid and inflexible to explain narratives operating outside conventional constructs.

As a reaction to such constraints, Claude Bremond *La logique du récit* (1973) introduced a dynamic and non-linear concept of narrative. Bremond posited that narratives are made up not of predestined sequences but instead of points of decision that lead to several different possible directions of progression. He considered stories to be systems of possibility, where the actions or omissions of characters have varying consequences (Bremond, 1973). Contrary to Propp's rigid stages, Bremond introduced a branching logic: every moment in the story has possibilities of success, failure, or omission, opening or closing subsequent routes. As described by Onega and Landa (1996), Bremond "moved the emphasis from the action's function to the logic of possibilities" (1980, p. 394) thereby creating room for narratives informed by moral conflict, ambiguity, and indeterminacy. His model is especially applicable to contemporary literature, where characters are frequently confronted with intricate dilemmas that blur the distinction between heroism and failure.

A number of scholars have used Bremond's model to examine various types of literature. For instance, Shah and Aziz (2020) applied Bremond's theory to analyze *Guy De Maupassant's, The Necklace* to show how decision-based structures drive the emotional and moral dynamic

of the story, highlighting how the internal and external decisions of the protagonist organized the rhythm of struggle, hope, and defeat. Their study demonstrated how Bremond's reasoning could decipher the psychological trajectory of a character by mapping decisions and outcomes. Equally, Beatriz Penas Ibáñez (2011) used Bremond's schema to the Spanish novel *Nada*, showing how unrealized narrative possibilities (or what Bremond called "virtualities") greatly enrich the emotional impact of a plot. In tragic romance studies, Bremond's reasoning has assisted in outlining how unresolved decisions and narrative potentialities indicate human vulnerability, especially when outside societal pressures restrict individual agency (Lacey, 2016).

Even as this body of literature continues to expand, South Asian literature and Bremond's theory remain little-used bedfellows. Even more so in Pakistani fiction, where nationalistic, honor-based, and romantic themes overlap, Bremond's reasoning provides a compelling tool for narrative analysis. South Asian tragic romances tend to rest on such internal crises within characters, social norms, and misunderstandings as are consonant with Bremond's notion of narrative as a form of decision-based potentialities. Yet, few structural narratologists have attempted to apply structural narratology to Pakistani novels written today, creating a lacuna in regional literary scholarship.

Sara Naveed's *Our Story Ends Here* (2017) presents rich soil for such an exploration. The novel interlaces issues of trauma, love, and redemption into a socio-political landscape characterized by terrorism, military operations, and traditional familial values. Mehar, daughter of a Pakistani military general, and Sarmad, a wrongly entrenched member in a terrorist cell, are protagonists whose lives are continually redirected by life-altering choices. Their narrative is not linear but rather dependent on a chain of story forks that are moments of deception, confrontation, confession, and finally, sacrifice. When Sarmad saves Mehar and presents her as his wife in order to save face, he inaugurates a plot possibility that both allows for intimacy and hides truth. Such conjunctures, the choice to speak or to be silent, to trust or to lie are characteristically Bremondian in form.

The novel has been complimented by critics for its emotionally affecting narrative and evocative representation of Pakistani society. In accordance with a review from Aamna's Bookshelf (2020), "It's not so much a romance, but a story of sacrifice, war, and internal turmoil." (Online source). Likewise, Vidhya Thakkar (2021) notes that the novel illustrates "the delicacy of relationships founded in turbulence, where each choice is a dilemma of allegiance and identity." (Online source) Such evaluations highlight Naveed's complex narrative mechanisms, which still remain understudied within scholarship. As contended by Dawson (2009), "the failure to account for narrative architecture often leads to overlooking the politics of storytelling itself" (p. 143).

It is henceforth this gap which this research tries to fill with a structural interpretation of *Our Story Ends Here* based on Claude Bremond's theory of narrative possibilities. Through this methodology, the research not only illuminates the narrative reason of the novel but also how Pakistani tragic romance fiction mediates love and destiny through complex choice-making matrices. In the process, it aims to extend the scope of narrative theory and help push the developing discipline of South Asian literary criticism in new directions.

3- Theoretical Framework

The theoretical background of this research is based on Claude Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities (1973), which provides an original way of looking at the structure of a narrative and the agency of characters. Bremond's theory is centered on the immanent possibilities contained in a narrative, and according to it, narrative is an interactive process in which the choices of the characters produce a chain of different outcomes. This system transcends the conventional idea of a linear storyline, instead placing emphasis on decision complexity and

how consequences inform the narrative's course. Bremond's system is especially beneficial to use when discussing texts that present moral choices, emotional conflicts, and redemptive journeys since it can help analyze how individuals' decisions give rise to disparate paths and their final destinies.

Claude Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities Fundamentally, Bremond's theory is based on the realization that narratives are not linear or static but exist in a state of potentialities. For Bremond, any narrative is comprised of a chain of decision points, or acts, that are determined by the decisions characters take. These choices, in their turn, may result in various narrative possibilities, with characters moving toward a resolution (amelioration) or sinking into new complications (degradation). Bremond classifies narrative choices as a series of actions that serve as turning points in the narrative.

The primary postulates of Bremond's theory are:

3.1. Semiology of Narrative: This is the conceptual building block of Bremond's theory, examining how a narrative conveys meaning by using different signs, symbols, and structures. Narrative technique—linear, circular, or fragmented—is essential in knowing how the actions of characters create possibilities. The semiology of narrative examines how the events and choices within the story are depicted, constructing what the audience should interpret about the plot.

3.2. Narrative Cycle: Bremond suggests that narratives have a cyclical form in which characters go through cycles of amelioration (betterment) and degradation (decline), and these are accomplished through their choices and actions. In the case of *Our Story Ends Here*, this cycle holds especially true since Mehar and Sarmad's relationship has a series of ups and downs based on their internal and external decisions.

3.3. Amelioration Process: The idea of amelioration, or improvement, is one of Bremond's main principles. Obstacles need to be recognized and surpassed in order for a character to attain amelioration. The process includes eliminating negative aspects or outside obstacles. Mehar's and Sarmad's paths in *Our Story Ends Here* are characterized by periods of overcoming emotional and physical challenges, whether it is coping with the pain of loss or learning the truth about who Sarmad is.

3.4. Conclusion of the Task: A narrative's conclusion, either by the character's activity or by destiny, is decided by the conclusion of the task. Bremond's theory is concerned with the manner in which the task is accomplished by the character or imposed upon them by outside forces. In Naveed's novel, the emotional healing and redemption task is finally influenced by the characters' choices, which are motivated by love, selflessness, and individual redemption.

3.5. Allied Intervention: Bremond also underscores the intervention of allies, who can help the protagonist in his/her accomplishment of objectives. Allies' interventions play a pivotal role in overcoming obstacles that block the path to amelioration. In *Our Story Ends Here*, Sarmad's intervention as a rescuer and a moral mentor to Mehar makes him an ally to her emotional and narrative path despite his initial pretence.

3.6. Elimination of the Adversary: In most stories, the hero has an adversary whose action blocks the achievement of the goal of the hero. Bremond's model looks at how the adversary is defeated—either through combat, by negotiation, or otherwise. For Mehar and Sarmad, their own inner conflicts and outside forces such as family obligations and societal demands are their adversaries.

3.7. Negotiation: This aspect addresses how characters negotiate with others to get rid of the enemy. Whether the enemy is gotten rid of through negotiation, force, or persuasion, the process of negotiation is a significant narrative tool. In *Our Story Ends Here*, Sarmad's negotiation with his past deeds, his involvement in the terrorist attack, and his affair with Mehar show how negotiation is a central aspect in the development of their story.

3.8. Aggression: The application of aggression is another part of Bremond's theory, particularly in conflict narratives. Aggression may be applied to destroy an enemy or to defend the hero. It may be expressed in physical battles, emotional battles, or through more indirect means like deception. In Naveed's novel, aggression is both physical and emotional, particularly in the behavior of people around Mehar and Sarmad.

3.9. Retribution, Reparation, and Revenge: Bremond's model also comprises elements of revenge and retribution, where actors pursue reparation for injustices perpetrated against them. This will propel the narrative and generate intense emotional stakes. In the *Our Story Ends Here* scenario, vengeance or reparation is especially sharp in Sarmad's endeavors and the occurrence of his ultimate sacrifice.

3.10. Punishment: Lastly, the idea of punishment is vital in the narrative logic of possibilities, whereby characters are punished for what they do. Bremond's theory involves the way in which punishment is a resolution or a type of narrative closure. Sarmad's tragic downfall, leading to the violent conclusion of the novel, is the ultimate punishment that is irreversible and total.

3.11. Relevance of Bremond's Theory to *Our Story Ends Here*

Bremond's framework is particularly relevant for analyzing *Our Story Ends Here*, as it allows a deeper understanding of the narrative structure and the characters' evolving choices. The theory's emphasis on the dynamics of amelioration and degradation, the work of allies, enemies, and revenge, gives us a powerful instrument for analyzing how the characters' choices and actions structure the narrative. Through the application of Bremond's logic to Naveed's novel, this research seeks to disentangle the way the characters solve their emotional and moral challenges, and the way the results of their choices propel the narrative towards its tragic end. The narrative pattern of *Our Story Ends Here*, its several twists, and the convergence of fate and individual agency provide a rich context for the application of Bremond's theoretical model. Under this framework, the novel can be read not merely as a straight love story but as a multi-layered tale of possibilities and uncertainties, with each character's choice determining the course of the story in a deep way.

4. Analysis

4.1. Semiology of Narrative (Narrative Techniques)

Claude Bremond's theory starts off with the semiology of the narrative, the process of observing narrative techniques that the author adopts to form and structure the story. This is comprised of the narrative voice, point of view, changes in time, foreshadowing, and usage of motifs or symbolism. Such techniques play an important role in leading readers through the different paths and options that the narrative of the characters will take.

Example 1: First-person Point of View and Emotional Depth

Sara Naveed employs a first-person narrative from the perspective of Mehar in the main part, giving readers direct access to her thoughts, feelings, and inner struggles. This narrative decision creates closeness between the reader and protagonist and makes Mehar's trauma and confusion more real. For example, following her brother Omar's death, Mehar thinks:

"I felt like a body without a soul, breathing but dead inside." (p. 107)

This method raises the emotional tension in the story and heightens the reader's investment in the character's decisions. It is also in line with Bremond's concept of narrative possibility, where the reader observes Mehar's emotional ambivalence as she finds herself at several points of decision throughout the novel.

Example 2: Use of Foreshadowing and Symbolism

Foreshadowing is yet another device that is pivotal to the novel's structure. There is an insinuation early in the story, after the mishap that occurs to Mehar at Swat and her arrival at Bari Appa's residence, that all is not what it appears. Sarmad, although presented as a messiah figure, at times shows some unease, which indicates his own inner turmoil and secret persona:

"His eyes held too many stories, and I felt that I had read one of them before." (p. 55)

This sentence not only prefigures the subsequent discovery of Sarmad's dual existence but also serves as a symbolic indicator of the multiple identities in the narrative. These literary techniques generate tension and lead the reader through the developing possibilities of betrayal, redemption, and sacrifice.

4.2. Narrative Cycle (Amelioration and Degradation)

As Bremond maintains, narratives tend to follow cycles of improvement (amelioration) and decline (degradation). These follow in turn, are intertwined (by enclave), or act in parallel (by coupling). In *Our Story Ends Here*, the narrative goes through successive cycles of hope and despair, mirroring the volatility of the characters' fortunes.

Example 1: Amelioration – The Safe Haven in Swat

Following the trauma of her brother's death and the bus accident, Mehar has a temporary phase of tranquility when she is hosted by Sarmad at Bari Appa's residence. The environment acts as an amelioration enclave, a refuge from sorrow and bewilderment for a temporary time. Mehar starts feeling secure, even happy, here because she and Sarmad bond:

"For the first time in months, I smiled without feeling guilty." (p. 152)

This healing enclave provides a beacon of hope and love, that the characters could overcome their previous suffering. Yet this improvement is temporary; it is ephemeral and eventually doomed to fail.

Example 2: Degradation – The Tragic Climax

The final degradation takes place in the last chapters when Mehar finds out Sarmad's complicity in her brother's death or so she thinks. Even after finding out that he was an undercover agent, their reunion is brief. In a harsh twist of fate, Sarmad is duped into wearing a suicide jacket, and the novel ends with both characters dead in each other's arms:

"He begged me to leave, but I stayed. I had found my home in him, and I wasn't going to lose it again." (p. 185)

This cycle of degradation represents a closure in narrative that, although tragic, finishes the rational progression set up by events beforehand. Bremond's theory underscores the fact that stories do not have to resolve or be rewarded but have to trace out the implications of action and decisions made.

4.3. Amelioration Process

In this phase, first, an impediment is recognized, then it is eliminated and the desired goal (amelioration obtained) is achieved.

Example 1: From Trauma to Emotional Healing Barriers Recognized: The emotional trauma subject to Mehar is inflicted upon her because of the killing of her brother Omar in a terrorist attack. A feeling of grief pervades her spirit, together with an inner feeling of emptiness.

Obstacle Removal: Her journey to Swat becomes an involuntary attempt at healing and escape. With Sarmad's intervention in Mehar's life, the two live incognito as a married couple at Bari Appa's home. This marks the beginning of warmth, routine, and emotional bonding. Barrier

Removal Obtained: Through the months of domesticity, gentle talks, care, and comfort, Mehar regains some of her lost self. She laughs and becomes vulnerable again, and through this process, she moves a bit towards healing, at least for the present.

"Those eleven days with him felt like an eternity of peace—something I thought I'd never feel again after losing Omar." (Naveed, 2020, p. 171)

Example 2: Sarmad's Conflict and Redemption

Obstacle Identified: Sarmad is torn between dual lives—one as a killer and other as an undercover agent. His conscience is in turmoil, deciding between light and darkness.

Elimination Process: Mehar's innocence, her pain, and, ultimately, her strength bring him back to humanity. He looks at the mission as not just a duty to the army but a chance for personal redemption.

Elimination Obtained: He eventually accepts his love for Mehar and confesses to her who he is, not as a terrorist but as an army infiltrator. It is a moment of moral and emotional release for him to think clearly.

"I never wanted to be the villain in your story, Mehar. I just didn't know how to become your hero." (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 193)

4.4. Completion of the Task

Any central action of the piece gets concerned with whether the protagonist carries it out alone, with assistance, or via fate or intervention.

Example 1: Sarmad's Mission

Mission: Disassembling the terrorist cell by penetrating it from within.

Completion: Sarmad achieves this mission alone on his own volition and with utmost sacrifice. He gathers intelligence, pretends to be an accomplice, and ultimately gives up his life to ensure maximum exposure and disruption of the group.

By Himself or Fate?: The act is accomplished by himself but fate brought tragedy upon those last hours. His own death leads to the accomplishment of something that should be avenged, but nonetheless comes at a very heavy price.

"They'll never see me as a hero, Mehar-but I can die knowing you do." (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 200)

Example 2: Mehar's Embracing of Truth

Task: Embracing the truth regarding Sarmad and the choice of love over betrayal.

Completion: Upon learning from her father that Sarmad was on a mission, she goes against people's expectations and her engagement, attempting to locate him and reunite.

By Herself or Fate?: Her choice is made by herself, her return to Sarmad is motivated by love and moral conviction. But destiny comes in the way tragically, barring their reunification in this world.

"I found him not to forgive, but to love again. I just wish time had allowed me to." (Mehar, Naveed, 2020, p. 205)

These two phases amelioration process and task completion indicate that characters within *Our Story Ends Here* are cooperating agents in their emotional and moral trajectories but with their final destinations highly dependent upon fate, in line closely with Bremond's model of narrative possibility.

4.5. Intervention of the Ally

Ally in Bremond's theory is a character that assists the protagonist in completing the task or solving the obstacle. The intervention can be of various forms, from emotional assistance to the provision of resources or information.

Example 1: Bari Appa as Ally

Ally: Bari Appa is a key ally of the novel, providing Mehar and Sarmad with safety and shelter after the bus crash.

Why Ally Helps: Bari Appa helps in the capacity of sympathy and kindness, as a supportive aid to Sarmad in his endeavor to rescue Mehar from danger that may befall her due to the terror group.

Service Performed: She provides them with emotional and physical sanctuary by enabling their stay in her house under the pretext of a honeymoon. Her act is significant because, otherwise, Sarmad and Mehar would not have got the time and location for emotional healing and bonding.

“Bari Appa, with her weathered hands and soft voice, made us feel like family. No questions asked. No judgments passed.” (Naveed, 2020, p. 122) This moment showcases the power of human compassion and teaches us that Bari Appa's activism as an ally is not merely about building a safe space but also rebuilding a sense of peace and trust in a topsy-turvy world

Example 2: Mehar's Father as an Unexpected Ally

Mehar's father, a retired military officer, also becomes a friend during time of need. When he gets to know the true identity of Sarmad, he re-confirms Sarmad's identity as an undercover agent working for the army.

Why Ally is valuable: He allows Mehar to understand the bigger picture of Sarmad's actions, moving beyond the personal betrayal that she feels at first.

Service Provided: By providing her with the reality about Sarmad, Mehar's father helps her accept having to make peace with Sarmad.

“You need to understand, Mehar. He wasn't your enemy. He was your protector. The enemy is still out there.” (Mehar's father, Naveed, 2020, p. 208)

In this, Mehar's father guides her emotionally through the situation and fights the levels of dishonesty, which results in Mehar's decision to trace Sarmad and mend the gap between them.

4.6. Elimination of the Adversary

This is the point in Bremond's theory where the hero's battle with an antagonist—whether a person, a group, or an internal struggle—is engaged. The antagonist may be a person, an institution, or even fate. The antagonist is defeated in various ways, including confronting him, negotiating, or even fate.

Example 1: Sarmad's Internal Adversary

Opponent: Sarmad's inner turmoil is the most powerful challenge in the novel. His struggle between his professional obligation as an undercover officer and his personal sense of love for Mehar is a psychological opponent.

How It's Eliminated: The enemy is eliminated when Sarmad chooses to confront the truth, declaring his identity before Mehar, despite the fact that it may drive her away. This is a turning point because it enables him to get rid of the conflict between his guilt and love.

“I was trained to lie, Mehar. But when I saw you... I realized that this was the one truth I could not live without.” (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 132) This dialogue shows that Sarmad is finally able to face his inner conflict and let go of the adversary (his guilt) that has prevented him from fully embracing his emotions.

Example 2: External Adversary – Sarmad's Uncle

Adversary: The external adversary is Sarmad's uncle, who is a terrorist member. He learns of Sarmad's real identity and undermines his mission by deceiving him into wearing a suicide vest.

How It's Eliminated: The enemy is eliminated in a tragic and irreversible manner. The betrayal of Sarmad's uncle results in Sarmad's killing, stopping the terrorist organization from making further violent attacks, but at great personal cost.

“It's over, Sarmad. They know who you are now. You can't hide anymore.” (Naveed, 2020, p. 197) This chilling moment highlights the external forces that work against Sarmad's mission. The betrayal is the culmination of the adversary's elimination, but it's also the tragic end for both Sarmad and Mehar.

These illustrations illustrate the intertwined interactions of the allies and opponents in *Our Story Ends Here*. The allies, such as Bari Appa and Mehar's father, advance the story forward and aid the protagonists in realizing their emotional and moral objectives. Yet the opponents, including Sarmad's inner guilt and his uncle, are roadblocks that need to be tackled, either by self-awareness or outward struggle. The defeat of these enemies, particularly the ultimate betrayal, is central to the novel's tragic ending.

4.7. Negotiation

Negotiation, in Bremond's theory, is a process of resolving conflict where the protagonist and antagonist have a give-and-take to solve it either by consensus or trickery. This can be through dialogue, persuasions, or other actions to modify the direction of the conflict.

Example 1: Sarmad and Mehar's Emotional Negotiation

Negotiation: When Sarmad unveils his real identity to Mehar, she gets offended and refuses him, feeling that he betrayed her. There is an inner negotiation between the two in this emotionally disturbed context where Sarmad attempts to make his actions clear to her and Mehar is trying to understand them.

Negotiation Process: Negotiation is not done formally but emotionally. Sarmad tries to justify the fact that his joining the terrorist network was not voluntary, and that his role was to safeguard individuals such as her.

How It Works: Sarmad's admissions of affection for Mehar help to soften her defenses. He wants to persuade her that he is not her enemy, but rather one who did what he had to do.

"I didn't want this, Mehar. I never wanted to hurt you. I was sent to protect you. Please, try to understand" (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020). In this emotional negotiation, Sarmad requests forgiveness, and although it is not completely granted at the moment, it provides room for reconciliation later in the story. This negotiation is not only between them but also within Mehar as she grapples with her emotions, betrayal, and love.

Example 2: Mehar's Father and the Truth About Sarmad

Negotiation: Mehar's father is the negotiator who clarifies the truth regarding Sarmad's being an undercover agent. Once Mehar finds herself struggling with her love for Sarmad and the betrayal she feels, her father steps in and clarifies the greater mission that Sarmad was working on.

Negotiation Process: The father's job is to provide the required information to resolve the conflict. He negotiates Mehar and Sarmad's understanding indirectly, informing her that Sarmad's conduct was in a larger good.

How It Works: With his father's explanation, Mehar is able to visualize Sarmad in a different perspective, understanding that his behavior was not out of malicious intent but of deep sense of obligation. The negotiation comes in the form of dialogue, wherein Mehar's father helps her find sense in the complicated situation.

"You have to forgive him, Mehar. He did what was necessary. What we couldn't do." (Naveed, father of Mehar, 2020, p. 209) This negotiating of truth allows Mehar to accept the conflicting feelings she has towards Sarmad, and from this point on, she is able to go and find him and choose to be with him in spite of the betray.

4. 8. Aggression

Aggression, within Bremond's system, is a method of disposing of the enemy by either direct confrontation, avoidance, or deception. The aggression is not necessarily physical but may be emotional or psychological as well.

Example 1: Sarmad's Aggression Against His Own Guilt

Aggression: Sarmad's self-aggression is clear throughout the novel as he struggles with his emotions for Mehar and his job as an undercover agent. His self-blame for being unable to make his mission and emotions work together creates episodes of self-destructive aggression.

Aggression Process: This type of aggression is inwardly directed, as Sarmad emotionally closes himself off from Mehar, trying to distance her in order to shield her from harm caused by himself.

How It Works: Sarmad's emotional aggression is identified when he sternly rejects Mehar, thinking that his work and his love for her cannot go together. He says this in words, hoping

that by rejecting her, he is doing it for her own good to be spared from the turmoil his life embodies.

"I am a terrorist, Mehar, and you surely don't want to live your life with one," (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 147)

This flash of violent rejection is a critical turning point in the story, where Sarmad's internal conflict ruins his relationship with Mehar, highlighting the self-destructive nature of guilt and responsibility.

Example 2: Sarmad's Aggression Toward the Terrorists

Aggression: The external aggression is demonstrated through Sarmad's last encounter with the terrorist organization. When his cover is blown, and his uncle puts him into a life-and-death situation, Sarmad has to employ aggression in order to protect Mehar and himself.

Aggression Process: The aggression here is not physical fight but psychological coercion and the intense pressure of circumstances. Sarmad's refusal to submit to his uncle's instruction to put on the suicide vest indicates that he is not going to be a passive victim.

How It Works: Sarmad's aggression is resistance. Even though he can't ultimately save the tragic end from happening, his resistance against the enemy demonstrates his resolve to maintain his sense of self and safeguard Mehar, even if it's at the expense of his own life.

"You can't turn me into your puppet anymore, Uncle. I won't do it." (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 191) In this case, aggression is exhibited as a desperate attempt to battle against the course of death that is set for him, and the tragic outcome, therefore, becomes more poignant.

4.9. Retributions, Recompense, and Vengeance

In Bremond's structure, retribution and recompense are concerned with the consequences that stem from actions taken over the course of the story. Retribution may be a punishment or vengeance, as characters seek justice or satisfaction over wrongs done to them, whereas recompense is generally a reward or payoff for a character's endeavors or sacrifices. Vengeance is a strong type of retribution that comes from personal motives.

Example 1: Mehar's Desire for Vengeance

Retribution and Revenge: Throughout the novel, Mehar feels compelled to take revenge for the death of her brother, Omar, who lost his life due to the bomb explosion masterminded by the terrorist organization. Her very first emotional turmoil is based on her seeking revenge. The narrative, however, complicates this urge as Mehar's friendship with Sarmad unfolds, and she finds out about his actual part in the operation.

Process of Retribution: Mehar first has an urge for revenge against the people who killed her brother, but her realization of Sarmad's mission makes things more complex. Her father's rationale that Sarmad was acting to take out the terrorist network brings in a sense of moral complexity.

How It Works: The ambivalence of Mehar's emotions, divided between revenge for her brother and passion for Sarmad, generates tension which is eventually released in her acceptance of the greater good. Her reconciliation with Sarmad is an eventual internal recompense wherein her individual revenge is superseded by an understanding of sacrifice and duty.

"Abba, today, the same Sarmad needs my help. He was forced to become a terrorist as he didn't have a choice. He is innocent. I know him and trust him." (*Mehar, Our Story Ends Here*, p. 231) In this case, revenge is secondary to an understanding of how Sarmad was also a victim of the same terrorist organization, and thus her quest is one of personal growth instead of pure vengeance.

Example 2: Sarmad's Fate and the Terrorist Network

Retribution and Revenge: The final retribution is not that of Mehar but that of the terrorist organization, specifically that of Sarmad's uncle, who betrays him by making him don a suicide

vest. Sarmad's demise in a tragic manner serves as an act of revenge on the part of his enemy, who wants to punish him for having switched sides to the army.

Process of Vengeance: Betraying Sarmad by the uncle represents the callous process of vengeance in the context of terrorism. The uncle wants his revenge against Sarmad's betrayal by deciding to offer him up, utilizing his life as a sacrifice in a larger plan to ensure that he remains in power in the terrorist organization.

How It Works: The final act of revenge, in the guise of the suicide vest, kills Sarmad and Mehar in a tragic double homicide. The story implies that revenge and retribution are cyclical and self-annihilating, causing the premature death of innocent characters in the middle of larger, politically motivated conflicts.

You're nothing to me now, Sarmad. You betrayed us. Now, you'll pay the price." (Sarmad's uncle, Naveed, 2020, p. 249) This type of revenge highlights the uselessness of the cycle of violence and the cost of human lives in terms of terrorism, emphasizing how revenge is misplaced and causes unnecessary pain.

4.10. Punishment

Punishment, as explained by Bremond, is the farthest consequence within the narrative framework. It is the heavy penalty or consequence that a character suffers due to his/her actions. Though punishment can be inflicted by an external antagonist, it can also be self-determined, especially when characters experience guilt or sense of moral accountability for their actions.

Example 1: Sarmad's Self-Punishment

Punishment: Sarmad's self-punishment is a huge thematic force throughout *Our Story Ends Here*. He condemns himself for his part in the terrorist attack on Mehar's brother's life, even though he was undercover for the army. His self-blame and shame are key to his character development, as he feels that his actions, no matter how noble the goal, have resulted in the loss of innocent lives, including that of Mehar's brother.

Punishment Process: Sarmad's self-punishment is evident in his actions, as he continues to push Mehar away, unwilling to receive the love she has for him. He deems himself undeserving of her love, considering that his deeds in the cause of duty have forever corrupted him. His emotional suffering is heightened when he confesses his real identity to her, further entrenching his feelings of guilt and punishment.

How It Works: The punishment of Sarmad is reduced to self-exile, in which he keeps himself away from the people he cares for despite their forgiveness and empathy. His refusal to accept Mehar is an indication of his perception that he must bear his sins alone.

"I am not the man you think I am. I don't deserve your love." (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 147) This self-imposed penalty works to increase the emotional tension of the story, generating conflict that propels the narrative and makes Sarmad and Mehar's relationship more complicated.

Example 2: Sarmad's Death as Punishment

Punishment: The ultimate punishment arrives in the form of Sarmad's tragic demise, which happens due to the manipulation by his uncle and the terror group. Sarmad's execution is an external punishment, one that he is subjected to by the enemy that he once referred to as family.

Punishment Process: The terror organization, having labeled Sarmad as a traitor, punishes him by forcing him into wearing a suicide vest. In spite of his unwillingness to do so, in the end, he has no option. His death is then given as the ultimate punishment, not only for the treason but also for his failure to find an escape from the violent world into which he was born.

How It Works: The punishment is not merely physical but representative of the larger narrative of violence and revenge cycles. Sarmad's killing serves to emphasize the tragic outcome of a world without space for redemption, and the past cannot be escaped.

"I've made my peace with this. I won't run anymore." (Sarmad, Naveed, 2020, p. 162) This outside punishment mirrors the cruel and inexorable nature of violence in the world of *Our Story Ends Here*, where even the most innocent characters are trapped in a cycle of retribution and vengeance.

5. Conclusion:

In using Claude Bremond's Logic of Narrative Possibilities to *Our Story Ends Here* by Sara Naveed, the present study focuses on the dynamics of how stories are made and the power of decision-making in dictating the plot's direction. Using Bremond's theoretical model, this paper has shown how the actions and decisions of the characters within the narrative intersect to form a complex web of possibilities that eventually conclude the story. The novel's intertwined character trajectories and the interconnectedness of their destinies serve to foreground the importance of the "possible" rather than the "realized," an essential feature of Bremond's theory. This methodology not only deepens our appreciation for *Our Story Ends Here* but also provides an insightful reading of the relevance of narrative theories in the interpretation of current literature. Through an analysis of the capacity of narrative structure, this paper emphasizes the applicability of Bremond's system in deconstructing the underlying layers of meaning and thematic content in contemporary storytelling.

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