

# Survival in Climate Fiction: A Study of Omar El Akkad's *American War*

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**Abstract:** Omar El Akkad's dystopian novel *American War* unfolds in a future America decimated by a second Civil War and climate catastrophe. The narrative centres on Sarat Chestnut, an adolescent Louisiana girl who gets entangled in the fight. El Akkad is a moving reflection on the long-lasting effects of war and the unwavering spirit of survival in the face of extreme adversity via Sarat's experiences. Sarat's Journey examines themes of survival, resiliency, and the human cost of conflict as the country struggles with natural disaster, political unrest, and widespread violence. Her transition from a helpless youngster to a vindictive rebel highlights the intricate relationship between individual trauma and group strife. This research paper explores the hard reality of surviving in a broken society, looking at how people and groups adjust to difficult situations and the moral quandaries that crop up when trying to hold on

**Keywords:** Dystopia, sacrifice, survival and war resilience.

## INTRODUCTION

*The American War* follows Sarat Chestnut and her family as they battle for their independence and economic possibilities while navigating the United States in the late 21st century. Sarat, who was born in Louisiana, is six years old when the conflict begins. After her father being murdered in a bombing, the Chestnut family moves to Camp Patience, a camp for displaced persons at the border of Mississippi and Tennessee. In Patience, Sarat becomes friends with a charming elderly guy from the era of gas power and his Middle Eastern buddy from the burgeoning Bouazizi Empire, both of whom have hidden agendas for the devastated United States. They provide Sarat with the tools and instruction. She wanted to exact revenge on the United States as she grew more and more radicalised. The experiences of Sarat and her family are discussed in this novel. The only really common language in the world, according to the novel's protagonist Sarat, is battle. She thinks that once people lose their base beliefs due to battle, they

become kin. Though those who go to extremes, may still cling to their identities and beliefs, the point is debatable. These qualities cannot be taken from Sarat, a contraption, since she is never really endowed with them. The book conveys the message of the American conflict, but it shouldn't be a model for fiction as conflict may dehumanise people who are participating.

The untold characteristic of people in war-torn nations, is explored in the novel *The American War*. Sarat's identity is formed by her experiences with loss and the war. The premise of the book is that, as individuals become "kin" when battle robs them of their base beliefs, the suffering caused by conflict serves as the only really global language in the world. The argument is debatable, though, because extremists frequently hold onto their identities and beliefs long after hostilities have ended. These things cannot be taken from Sarat since she is a contrivance and never really has them. The book conveys the importance of the American War, but it shouldn't dehumanise those who are involved. *The American War*, Omar El Akkad's debut book, examines how the conflict changed the United States. In the story, the repercussions of globalisation and climate change are shown, with significant parts of the US being submerged by increasing sea levels by 2075. Americans in the seceding Free Southern State discover that they are less rulers of the world order and more subjects in the middle of a second Civil War. Because the narrator, a historian, reconstructs Sarat Chestnut's life in her own words from the journals she left for him, the tale is essentially about destruction rather than combat. After accepting his aunt's conduct and his own complicity, he learns of a side to the battle that no one else is aware of.

Sarat Chestnut is just six years old when the American Civil War breaks out. Before the start of the conflict, Sarat led a tranquil existence in Mississippi, as seen from her point of view. She didn't know much about the political situation in the

nation there. Sarat's father is murdered in an explosion at work shortly after the narrative opens, but Sarat holds onto the belief that he continues to be alive. Alongside with other northerners, Sarat and her family make their way to a camp for refugees. Sarat's family members are killed in a mass shooting at the camp after episodes of violence. Sarat's heart hardens as she prepares to become a lethal assassin once her innocence is shattered. She murders several rivals from the South as an adult. Yet she sacrifices her life at the end, for her nation's welfare.

The fight for fossil fuels is what triggers the Second American Civil War. The conflict begins when a few Southern states separate from the Union in defiance of federal rules that forbid the use of these fuels. The United States of America does not exist anymore. There is now a "us versus them" mindset when there used to be collaboration among areas. For those in the North, the Red zone is home to violent, narrow-minded, and thuggish people who can't get with the times. The Blue area is perceived by Southerners as being inhabited by a violent and malevolent opposition that wants to destroy their existing way of life.

The writer Omar El Akkad depicts the devastation that results from rejecting the truth of climate change in his book. America's landscape has changed dramatically as a result of widespread floods, following decades of denial about the environmental disaster. Millions of people have been forced to relocate to interior regions as a result of the massive areas of coastal land being under water. This kind of displacement leads to civil unrest since the homeless migrants are perceived as aliens by the people living in the inner states. The civil war finally results from these tensions. This is reminiscent of how poorly immigrants are treated in our contemporary culture, even though many of them are escaping danger in their own countries.

#### CONCLUSION

Omar El Akkad has meticulously crafted story *American War* skilfully, thereby combining the elements of our historical narrative, official documents, and journalistic narratives with aspects of modern life. After learning about Sarat's participation in many devastating wartime incidents, the narrator finds it difficult to reconcile strands of love, betrayal, commitment, and disillusionment. Sarat is driven less by political beliefs and more by a thirst for vengeance. Though the narrator forgoes atonement and exacts his own form of retribution,

the book offers a critical eye to the consequences of power in a globalised society. Instead of focusing on idealism, this book forces us to confront the fallout from living in such shattered and turbulent times.

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