

LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

THE CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR “WAR IS A WOUND” IN WANDERING SOULS BY WAYNE KARLIN

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the conceptual metaphor “WAR IS A WOUND” in Wayne Karlin’s *Wandering Souls*, highlighting the profound and lasting impact of war beyond the battlefield. Through a combination of textual analysis and linguistic theory, the research demonstrates how Karlin depicts war as a deep, unhealed wound—one that extends beyond soldiers to affect families and entire societies. Key passages reveal how physical wounds serve as metaphors for psychological trauma, loss, and irreversible damage, reinforcing the idea that war leaves enduring scars on both individuals and nations.

This paper contributes to linguistic research by illuminating the role of conceptual metaphor in shaping perceptions and discourse on war. From a literary perspective, it examines Karlin’s artistic strategies in portraying the aftermath of war through figurative language. Additionally, the study has practical significance in raising awareness of collective memory and psychological trauma, ultimately fostering processes of personal and societal healing.

KEY WORDS: conceptual metaphor; war; wound; war literature; *Wandering Souls*.

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1. Introduction

War is not merely an armed conflict but also a deep wound in collective memory, leaving an indelible mark on history, culture, and human psychology. In literature, war is often depicted through various metaphors, among which “WAR IS A WOUND” plays a crucial role in conveying the profound damage war inflicts. Wayne Karlin’s *Wandering Souls* serves as a compelling example of how this metaphor is employed, reflecting not only the suffering of those who directly experience war but also the prolonged losses endured by families and society.

Conceptual metaphor is a key notion in cognitive linguistics, allowing people to comprehend abstract phenomena through concrete experiences. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device but a cognitive mechanism that shapes how we think and talk about the world. In *Wandering Souls*, war is not only portrayed as a political or military event but also as a wound—one that requires time and effort to heal. Through this imagery, Karlin highlights not just the physical consequences of war but also the psychological trauma, painful memories, and historical scars it leaves behind.

This study examines how Karlin employs the metaphor “WAR IS A WOUND” in *Wandering Souls* to depict war’s impact on multiple levels: individual, familial, and societal. Through textual analysis, the paper explores how this metaphor is realized in the novel and its role in shaping collective memory. Additionally, the study discusses the broader contributions of this metaphor to linguistics, war literature, and the understanding of war’s consequences in real life.

2. Fundamental concepts

2.1. Metaphor

Metaphor is a crucial linguistic and cognitive mechanism that allows people to understand one concept in terms of another. According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device but a fundamental part of human thought and experience. They emphasize that:

“The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.” [9;5]

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This perspective suggests that metaphor is not just an artistic tool but also a means of organizing and interpreting reality. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. (1994) further expands on this view, arguing that metaphor is not confined to language but is deeply connected to cognition and reasoning: *“Metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. It is a fundamental mechanism of mind that allows us to use what we know about our physical and social experience to provide understanding of countless other subjects.”* [p.123].

Thus, metaphor serves as a bridge that transfers knowledge and experience from familiar domains to more abstract ones. Zoltán Kövecses (2002) builds on this idea by emphasizing the systematic nature of metaphor in human thought: *Metaphor is a process of understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another, and this understanding is based on a set of systematic correspondences, or mappings, between the two domains.*” [p.4].

According to Kövecses, metaphor relies on structured mappings between conceptual domains, creating meaningful connections that enhance both thinking and communication. Similarly, Andrew Goatly (1997) highlights the role of metaphor in expanding perception and imagination: *“Metaphor enables us to conceptualize the world in new ways by transferring meaning from one domain to another, thereby extending our knowledge and imagination.”*[p.8].

From this perspective, metaphor not only facilitates expression but also broadens human understanding of the world. In literature, particularly in war literature, metaphor plays a vital role in capturing the intensity of wartime experiences through vivid and emotionally charged language. Conceptual metaphors do not merely depict war in realistic terms but also convey profound meanings about loss, suffering, and the enduring consequences of war.

2.2. Conceptual metaphor and its role in cognition

2.2.1. Definition of conceptual metaphor

Conceptual metaphor is more than just a linguistic phenomenon—it is a cognitive mechanism that enables people to understand abstract concepts through more concrete experiences. This process works by mapping attributes from a familiar conceptual domain (source domain) onto a more abstract domain (target domain), making complex ideas more intuitive and accessible.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduced the concept of conceptual metaphor in *Metaphors We Live By*, arguing that metaphor is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental aspect of human thought and perception: *“Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.”* [p.3].

This perspective suggests that conceptual metaphors are not just tools for enhancing language but essential frameworks through which people process and interpret reality. By linking abstract ideas to concrete experiences, conceptual metaphors shape the way individuals think, reason, and communicate.

2.2.2. The role of conceptual metaphor in thought and perception

Conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in conceptualization, helping individuals construct and expand their understanding of the world. As Trần Văn Cơ (2009) points out: *“Cognitive metaphor (conceptual metaphor) is a form of conceptualization, a cognitive process that expresses and shapes new concepts. Without it, acquiring new knowledge would be impossible.”* [p.39].

This highlights the significance of metaphor not just as a linguistic tool but as a fundamental means of generating and structuring knowledge. By identifying connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, conceptual metaphors provide deeper insights into abstract concepts and complex ideas.

For instance, the metaphor “TIME IS MONEY” is not just a figure of speech but a cognitive framework that influences how people perceive and manage time. By equating time with a valuable resource that can be spent, saved, or wasted, this metaphor shapes attitudes and behaviors, reinforcing the notion that time, like money, should be used efficiently.

In sum, conceptual metaphor is a powerful cognitive tool that extends beyond language, influencing thought, perception, and decision-making in both everyday life and academic discourse.

2.4. Conceptual metaphor in war literature

2.4.1. War is a complex and painful experience

War is one of humanity's most harrowing experiences, leaving deep and lasting scars—both physical and psychological. Beyond the immediate loss of lives and destruction of resources, war imprints itself on collective memory, with its trauma resonating across generations. War literature plays a crucial role in capturing and preserving these experiences, offering insight into the human cost of conflict. Among the most powerful tools for representing war's impact is conceptual metaphor, which employs symbolic imagery to convey suffering that is often beyond direct expression.

One of the most prevalent conceptual metaphors in war literature is “WAR IS A WOUND” This metaphor encapsulates not only the physical injuries inflicted by war but also its enduring psychological and emotional trauma. The wounds of war extend beyond the battlefield, seeping into the minds of individuals and the fabric of society. By framing war as a wound—one that festers, scars, and refuses to heal—this metaphor emphasizes war's lasting and inescapable consequences.

2.4.2. Conceptual metaphors in Western and Vietnamese war literature

Metaphor is a powerful tool in war literature, used to depict the profound loss, suffering, and irreversible impact of war. Works such as *Wandering Souls* by Wayne Karlin, *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh, *Begging for the Past* and *Red Rain* by Chu Lai, *Quang Tri 1972* by Nguyen Quang Vinh, *Scattered Ashes* by Pham Ngoc Tien, and *A Woman Without a Husband* by Duong Huong all employ conceptual metaphors to explore war's devastating aftermath.

Common metaphors such as “WAR IS A WOUND,” “WAR IS A GHOST,” “WAR IS A RIVER,” and “WAR IS A SHORE” not only serve as artistic expressions but also shape the way war is perceived and remembered. These images highlight war as a lingering presence—an unhealed scar, an omnipresent specter, or a force that continuously reshapes the course of history and human lives. Through these metaphors, war is not merely a historical event but a pervasive and haunting reality.

2.4.3. The significance of conceptual metaphor in war literature

Conceptual metaphor is more than a literary device; it is a crucial means of preserving and interpreting collective memory. By associating war with familiar and tangible images, literature enables readers to engage with its profound emotional and psychological toll. These metaphors do not just depict the realities of war—they help shape how war is understood, remembered, and processed by individuals and societies.

Studying conceptual metaphor in war literature provides insight into how language frames historical memory, revealing deeper layers of meaning beyond the surface narrative. The wounds of war are not confined to the past; they continue to shape the present, serving as stark reminders of the cost of conflict and the necessity of peace.

3. Content

“WAR IS A WOUND”: Conceptual metaphor in *Wandering Souls*

War and *wounds* share a profound conceptual connection, extending beyond physical harm to encompass psychological, social, and historical dimensions. Through conceptual metaphor, war is perceived as a wound—an injury that does not merely afflict the human body but also scars an entire nation, a landscape, and the collective memory of a people.

The table below summarizes five key metaphorical expressions in *Wandering Souls* by Wayne Karlin, illustrating how the imagery of wounds is employed to depict the enduring consequences of war.

Table. Summary of “War is a wound” metaphors

Metaphorical Expression	Meaning	Quote from <i>Wandering Souls</i>
A wound is the destruction of flesh → War is the devastation of a nation	War not only injures individuals but also ravages the land, environment, and infrastructure.	“Fifty-foot craters pock the still-smoking ground. The stink of burnt foliage and flesh permeates everything. Most of the trees have been splintered or knocked over.”
A wound takes time to heal → War takes generations to mend	The scars of war cannot fade instantly; healing—both physical and emotional—requires time.	“The war ended more than 30 years ago, but I don’t know when its consequences will end,” Pham Thi Minh had said. “The war still lingers, like blood trickling in our hearts.”
A wound is a loss to the body → War is a loss to the nation’s people	The lives lost in war are not just individual tragedies but collective wounds on the nation.	“The war ended more than 30 years ago, but I don’t know when its consequences will end,” Pham Thi Minh had said. “The war still lingers, like blood trickling in our hearts.”
A wound becomes chronic pain → The memory of war becomes a lifelong haunting	The horrors of war do not fade with time; they become haunting memories that endure for a lifetime.	“The deaths and injuries [that we] incurred under my leadership still haunt my memories. I expect they will be among the memories that flash before my eyes when I lie on my deathbed. Somehow I feel guilty for having come back alive.”
A wound is the bleeding of the body → War is the pain of a nation	War inflicts not only personal pain but also a deep, lasting wound on an entire country.	“Thousands, unlike Minh, did not ever have the chance to remarry. Many of the girls who had gone as teenage volunteers to serve on the Ho Chi Minh Trails spent their womanhood in the war and came back old before their time, often wounded or wracked by illnesses.”

The summary table illustrates how each metaphorical expression captures a different dimension of war through the imagery of wounds—from physical devastation (to the environment and human lives) to emotional loss (grief, memory) and its lasting impact on an entire nation. Quotes from *Wandering Souls* vividly depict how war leaves behind scars that persist long after the fighting has ended.

Examining these metaphors not only deepens our understanding of war's consequences but also highlights the significance of memory and the ongoing process of healing in shaping historical narratives.

3.1. *A wound is the destruction of flesh → War is the devastation of a nation*

In *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin portrays war as a force of destruction that extends beyond human suffering to the homeland, nature, and the environment. The parallel between physical wounds and the devastation of war is vividly illustrated through descriptions of the scarred landscapes left behind. The metaphor War is the destruction of the homeland is constructed through imagery that equates the land's ruin with wounds on the human body:

Fifty-foot craters pock the still-smoking ground. The stink of burnt foliage and flesh permeates everything. Most of the trees have been splintered or knocked over. [7;76]

Karlin draws a direct analogy between the land and a wounded body: bomb craters pockmarking the ground like smallpox scars transform the earth into diseased flesh, marked by the trauma of war, just as human skin bears the scars of injury. The acrid smell of burning leaves and flesh merges the destruction of nature with that of human life, emphasizing war's indiscriminate devastation. The imagery of "*Most of the trees have been splintered or knocked over*" reinforces the extent of destruction—not only does war inflict harm on individuals, but it also annihilates the very elements that sustain life.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that conceptual metaphors shape human perception and understanding. In this case, war is not merely a military conflict but a deep wound inflicted upon the body of a nation. Bomb craters on the land mirror wounds on human skin, and just as a person carries scars after trauma, a homeland bears the lasting marks of war.

Furthermore, the imagery of "*Most of the trees have been splintered*" suggests more than physical destruction—it symbolizes the rupture of an ecosystem, a culture, and a community. Trees, often representing life and resilience, are broken and fragmented, much like the people who endure war's aftermath. This highlights war's enduring impact, not only in immediate loss but in the irreversible transformations it imposes on landscapes, histories, and collective memory.

Ultimately, Karlin constructs a compelling metaphor for the aftermath of war, portraying the homeland as a wounded entity. The scars left by bombs are not just remnants of battle but lasting imprints on the very fabric of the land, making war's legacy one of both human and geographical trauma.

3.2. *A wound takes time to heal → War takes generations to mend*

In *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin portrays war as a wound that extends beyond the physical realm, embedding itself in history and requiring generations to heal. This metaphor underscores the reality that the consequences of war do not simply vanish when the fighting stops; rather, they persist in memory, psychology, and daily life. Through the imagery of wounds, Karlin emphasizes that while time moves forward, the pain remains, demanding a long and difficult process of recovery. One character in the novel reflects: "*The war ended more than 30 years ago, but I don't know when its consequences will end,*" Pham Thi Minh had said. "*The war still lingers, like blood trickling in our hearts.*" [p.170]

The phrase "*the war ended more than thirty years ago, but...*" highlights the lingering nature of war's impact, suggesting that even as history moves on, its wounds remain unhealed. The striking image "blood still trickling inside us" transforms emotional suffering into a physical wound that continues to bleed, symbolizing ongoing trauma. This aligns with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory, which suggests that abstract experiences (such as war memories) are understood through concrete bodily imagery (such as wounds and blood).

Beyond the individual, the wounds of war extend to an entire nation—scars that society must collectively reckon with. According to Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) theory of collective memory,

historical trauma is not confined to individual minds but is preserved and passed down through generations. War, even when it becomes a distant past, continues to shape national identity, influencing the lives of those who did not directly experience it. Healing, therefore, is not simply a matter of time but of collective effort, acknowledgment, and remembrance.

Karlin further illustrates how, even after war has ended, survivors continue to fight a different kind of battle within themselves: *Over the last thirty years, each day is a different war. Of course, I feel badly about losing my friends. They died young, they died bravely, and they never had the chance to experience happiness.* [p.196].

The metaphor “*each day is a different war*” conveys the relentless internal struggle of those who carry war’s scars, emphasizing that the psychological wounds of survivors do not fade with time. The statement “*They died young, they died bravely, and they never had the chance to experience happiness*” expresses deep sorrow, while also reinforcing the idea that war does not only take lives—it robs people of futures, compounding the grief of those left behind.

By framing war as a wound that has yet to heal, Karlin does more than recount the pain of the past; he raises a critical question: Will this wound ever truly heal? Or will it remain an indelible part of national memory? This question compels readers to reflect on the enduring impact of war, emphasizing that healing is not simply about moving on—it is about remembering, understanding, and actively working toward reconciliation.

3.3. *A wound is the loss of a body part* → *War is the loss of a nation’s people*

War does not only leave visible wounds on the human body; it also engraves profound and irreparable losses into a nation’s collective memory. In *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin explores this pain beyond individual suffering, portraying war as a tragedy that scars an entire country. The conceptual metaphor “WAR IS A WOUND” in Karlin’s work extends beyond the fallen soldiers—it also encompasses the enduring grief of those left behind, who live with the uncertainty of their loved ones’ fates, and a nation that carries the weight of countless sacrifices. Karlin writes: “*It is hard to imagine 300,000 missing in action, the emotional toll of knowing not only that the sons and daughters, husbands and wives who went to the war would never return, but also that one would also never know how they died, nor get back their remains.*” [p.184].

The figure “300,000 missing” is not just a statistic—it symbolizes a collective wound too vast to measure. The phrase “*never returned*” underscores the permanence of this loss—not only in death but in the absence of closure, leaving behind a lingering wound that refuses to heal. More strikingly, the imagery of “*never knowing how they died*” and “*nor get back their remains*” amplifies both personal and national trauma—a historical wound that deepens as a nation struggles to honor its fallen without tangible traces of their existence.

According to Maurice Halbwachs’ (1992) theory of collective memory, the wounds of war extend beyond individuals, becoming an indelible part of a community’s shared history. The loss of a single life is a family’s grief, but the disappearance of hundreds of thousands becomes a nation’s wound—an enduring trauma that reshapes identity and historical consciousness. This idea aligns with Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor, which suggests that large-scale suffering is often understood through bodily imagery: just as an individual feels incomplete after losing a limb, a nation feels permanently diminished when war takes away so many of its people.

While physical wounds may heal, the wounds of war—marked by the loss of human lives, cultural heritage, and historical continuity—persist across generations. This raises an unsettling question: Can a nation ever fully recover from the devastations of war, or do these wounds become an inescapable part of its identity? Through *Wandering Souls*, Karlin not only recounts the tragedies of war but also compels readers to acknowledge its lasting scars—wounds that continue to shape history, memory, and the future.

3.4. *A wound becomes chronic pain → The memory of war becomes a lifelong haunting*

War does not end when the last gunshot is fired. The wounds it inflicts—whether on the body or in the mind—can persist for a lifetime, turning into an unrelenting pain that never fully heals. In *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin goes beyond depicting the physical toll of war; he explores its lasting psychological scars, which continue to haunt those who lived through it. The conceptual metaphor “War is a wound” is powerfully conveyed through Karlin’s portrayal of war memories as deep, unhealed wounds that soldiers carry long after the battlefield has faded into the past. Karlin writes: “*The deaths and injuries [that we] incurred under my leadership still haunt my memories. I expect they will be among the memories that flash before my eyes when I lie on my deathbed. Somehow I feel guilty for having come back alive.*” [p.74].

The phrase “*haunt my memories*” reveals that war memories are not simply recollections of the past but persistent, inescapable burdens. The expression “*when I lie on my deathbed*” underscores the permanence of this trauma—it does not diminish with time but follows a person until their last breath. Meanwhile, “*I feel guilty for having come back alive*” points to survivor’s guilt, a psychological condition in which veterans struggle with the anguish of having lived while their comrades perished.

Karlin also illustrates the lingering effects of war trauma through another story: *A friend describes her brother, a veteran, who for years after the war compulsively surrounded his house with trenches and booby traps, yet insists that his behavior did not stem from his combat experiences.* [p.137].

The act of “*surrounded his house with trenches and booby traps*” suggests that this former soldier remains psychologically entrenched in a wartime mindset, unable to transition back to peace. This behavior is a classic symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in which individuals continue to reenact survival strategies long after the threat has passed. The phrase “*years after the war*” highlights the enduring nature of this trauma—war does not merely linger in memory; it shapes perception, behavior, and identity long after the fighting has stopped.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that abstract experiences, such as memory and trauma, are often conceptualized through bodily metaphors. In this case, war memories are not just mental recollections but wounds—persistent, painful, and slow to heal. Similarly, Cathy Caruth’s (1996) trauma theory suggests that deeply traumatic events do not remain confined to the past but continuously resurface over time, manifesting in dreams, behaviors, and even shaping an individual’s worldview.

While physical wounds may eventually close, psychological wounds often remain raw. Once war has left its imprint on the human mind, its scars become an inseparable part of a person’s identity, shaping their existence long after the conflict ends. Through *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin reveals that war does not simply take lives on the battlefield—it leaves behind enduring psychological scars, transforming memory into a source of lifelong suffering.

3.5. *A wound is the bleeding of the body → War is the pain of a nation*

War does not merely inflict physical wounds; it leaves behind an enduring pain that permeates an entire nation. Like a wound that continues to bleed, the consequences of war extend far beyond the battlefield, shaping the lives of those who survive and the generations that follow. In *Wandering Souls*, Wayne Karlin powerfully illustrates the lasting devastation of war—where personal suffering becomes intertwined with collective grief.

Karlin writes: “*Thousands, unlike Minh, did not ever have the chance to remarry. Many of the girls who had gone as teenage volunteers to serve on the Ho Chi Minh Trails spent their womanhood in the war and came back old before their time, often wounded or wracked by illnesses.*” [p.160].

The metaphor “*volunteers to serve*” to the war evokes an image of irreversible sacrifice—like a body steadily losing blood with no chance of recovery. War does not only claim lives on the battlefield; it drains the vitality of those who live through it. These women did not simply give up their youth—they were left permanently scarred, “*old before their time, wounded or wracked by*

illnesses.” Here, “*old before their time*” is not just a biological condition but a reflection of war’s psychological and emotional toll, stripping them of the possibility of a normal, fulfilling life.

Beyond individual suffering, war carves deep collective wounds—losses that are not limited to families of the fallen but are felt by an entire nation. The image of a bleeding wound becomes particularly poignant when seen through the lens of unresolved grief. Karlin writes: “*Dam had become one of the 300,000 wandering souls—the missing in action from the war—that still haunt Viet Nam.*” [p.183]

The phrase “*300,000 wandering souls*” is more than a statistic; it embodies a profound and unresolved loss. Karlin does not merely describe them as missing soldiers but as “*wandering souls*”—emphasizing their restless, unfulfilled existence. This choice of words reflects not only the anguish of the families who continue searching for their loved ones but also “the conscience of Vietnam.” The inability to recover and honor the remains of so many has become a deep, unhealed wound in the nation’s collective memory—one that continues to bleed, both figuratively and historically.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), abstract experiences such as loss and suffering are often understood through bodily metaphors. Here, the pain of war is conceptualized as a bleeding wound—a form of suffering that is ongoing, uncontrollable, and deeply embedded in the national psyche. From a trauma studies perspective, Cathy Caruth (1996) argues that the impact of traumatic events is not limited to those who experience them firsthand; trauma reverberates through communities, creating a lasting legacy of pain that must be acknowledged and addressed.

Ultimately, Karlin does not merely depict war as an event of the past but as an unhealed wound on the body of a nation—one that continues to shape its present and future. Figures like Minh and the wandering souls like Dam embody this enduring loss—not only casualties of war but also victims of its long shadow. *Wandering Souls* suggests that, just as a physical wound requires care to heal, the pain of a post-war nation demands recognition, reconciliation, and remembrance. Without this, the wound remains open, continuing to bleed through generations.

4. Conclusion

The conceptual metaphor “War is a wound” in Wayne Karlin’s *Wandering Souls* is not merely a literary device but a cognitive framework that reveals the deep and lasting trauma of war. By analyzing Karlin’s use of wound imagery to convey pain and loss, this study demonstrates that war does not end with the cessation of gunfire—its impact lingers in the form of unhealed scars in both individual and collective memory.

Through the metaphor of war as a wound, Karlin creates a powerful narrative that enables readers to grasp the full extent of war’s destruction—not only on the physical body but also on the psyche, history, and culture. The wounds borne by his characters are more than physical remnants of war; they symbolize psychological trauma, irreversible loss, and the far-reaching consequences that span generations. This perspective underscores that war is not merely a military or political event but a profound force of human and societal devastation.

From a linguistic standpoint, this study highlights the role of conceptual metaphors in shaping thought and discourse about war, offering insight into how language captures and communicates traumatic experiences. In the realm of literature, it illuminates Karlin’s artistic strategies in portraying war as an unhealed wound, contributing to broader discussions in war literature and collective memory. On a practical level, framing war as a wound reinforces the importance of healing—not only at the personal level but also within national and global contexts.

Ultimately, the metaphor “War is a wound” in *Wandering Souls* is more than a rhetorical expression; it serves as a poignant reminder of war’s enduring scars. Understanding this metaphor not only deepens our reflection on the past but also informs how individuals and societies confront the ongoing legacies of war in the present and future.

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**Ấn dụ “Chiến tranh là vết thương” trong *Wandering souls*
của Wayne Karlin**

Tóm tắt: Bài viết này nghiên cứu ấn dụ ý niệm “Chiến tranh là vết thương” trong *Wandering Souls* của Wayne Karlin, nhấn mạnh tác động sâu rộng của chiến tranh vượt ra khỏi phạm vi chiến trường. Thông qua phân tích văn bản kết hợp với các lý thuyết ngôn ngữ học, nghiên cứu làm rõ cách Karlin khắc họa chiến tranh như một vết thương sâu chưa lành-không chỉ ảnh hưởng đến người lính mà còn tác động đến gia đình và toàn xã hội. Phân tích các trích đoạn quan trọng cho thấy vết thương thể xác trở thành biểu tượng của chấn thương tinh thần, mất mát và tổn hại không thể đảo ngược, qua đó khẳng định rằng chiến tranh để lại những vết sẹo lâu dài trên cả con người lẫn quốc gia.

Bài viết đóng góp vào nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ học bằng cách làm sáng tỏ vai trò của ấn dụ ý niệm trong việc định hình tư duy và diễn ngôn về chiến tranh. Đồng thời, về mặt văn học, nghiên cứu giúp nhận diện các chiến lược nghệ thuật mà Karlin sử dụng để khắc họa hậu quả chiến tranh thông qua ngôn ngữ hình tượng. Ngoài ra, bài viết còn mang giá trị thực tiễn trong việc nâng cao nhận thức về tác động của ký ức tập thể và chấn thương tâm lý, góp phần thúc đẩy quá trình hàn gắn cá nhân và xã hội.

Từ khóa: ấn dụ ý niệm; chiến tranh; vết thương; văn học chiến tranh; *Wandering Souls*.