

**Intertextual Narrative and the Construction of Heroism:  
A Study of News, Documentary Film, Series, and Feature Film  
on the Wild Boars Academy Football Team Incident**

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**Abstract**

This research analyzed what multiple forms of media construct heroism through transmedia storytelling. It employed intertextuality, the narrative paradigm, and the social construction of reality as analytical frameworks. The findings revealed that news, documentary films, series, and feature films share seven core narrative elements: plot, theme, conflict, characters, setting, symbol, and point of view. These media forms utilize four intertextual strategies—convention, extension, reduction, and modification—each adapted to the affordances of their respective mediums.

The construction of heroism did not arise solely from the event itself, but from its repeated retelling across media platforms. Through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, the story became a globally accepted social reality. The 13 Wild Boars were portrayed not merely as survivors, but as moral heroes symbolizing courage, selflessness, solidarity, and hope.

Furthermore, this study proposed ethical guidelines for transmedia storytelling that emphasized responsibility and truthfulness. It underscored the influential role of media in shaping collective values and transforming real-life events into powerful and inspirational narratives.

**Keywords:** 1) Intertextual 2) Narrative 3) the Construction 4) Heroism 5) the Wild Boars Football Team

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## Introduction

In the digital era, entertainment media such as documentaries, television dramas, series, and films play a crucial role in communicating and shaping societal understanding. The rise of digital platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video, and YouTube has significantly enhanced the accessibility and diversity of content, leading to intense competition—particularly in the areas of original and adapted content. One prominent trend is the production of remake content, both in its original form and cross-media remakes. (Roche, 2022, p. 152)

The 2018 incident involving the Wild Boars football team trapped in Tham Luang

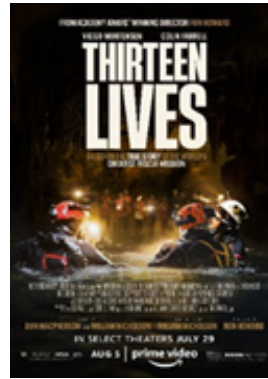
Nang Non cave became one of the most significant events to be repeatedly reproduced in various formats. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, it was not until 2022 that these media adaptations began to be released. The story has been told through three major works: the documentary film “The Trapped 13: How We Survived the Thai Cave” (Netflix, 2022b) which presents the event from the perspective of the team members themselves; the Netflix series “Thai Cave Rescue” (Netflix, 2022a), which emphasizes relational and emotional dimensions; and the Hollywood feature film “Watching Thirteen Lives” Movie All HD (2022), which follows a classical heroic structure.



**Figure 1** Documentary film “The Trapped 13: How We Survived the Thai Cave” (Netflix, 2022b)  
source: Yuyen, 2022



**Figure 2** Series “Thai Cave Rescue” (2022)  
source: Wikipedia (2022)



**Figure 3** Feature film “Thirteen Lives” (2022)

source: IMDB (2022)

Though all three works are based on the same incident, their narrative approaches differ in structure, content, tone, and perspective, reflecting distinct interpretations and the construction of new meanings across media. These representations are not confined to factual recounting; rather, they illustrate the concept of “intertextuality”—the referencing, adaptation, and meaningful linking of texts across different media. This concept allows for an analysis of narrative structures such as sequencing, turning points, conflict, climax, and resolution to understand how producers select and organize the same incidents differently, and how they evoke emotional engagement tailored to their respective platforms.

Another critical dimension is the construction of heroism as portrayed through each media narrative, which depicts the Wild Boars team both as survivors and as moral heroes. These representations are the result of selective storytelling, production choices, and meaning-making by media creators—aimed at shaping the audience’s perspective and understanding of the event.

This study adopts the constructionist approach proposed by Stuart Hall (1977, p. 44),

which posits that “truth” in media is not an objective or fixed entity, but rather something that is constructed through cultural structures and communicative interactions between media producers and audiences.

Drawing upon the origins and significance of the communication phenomenon surrounding the event of the Wild Boars football team trapped in Tham Luang Nang Non cave, this research aims to examine “Intertextual Narrative and the Construction of Heroism: A Study of the Wild Boars Football Team Incident in News, Documentary Film, Series, and Feature Film” The research problems of this study are twofold. First, it seeks to examine how intertextual storytelling is constructed across multiple media forms—namely news, documentary films, television series, and feature films—through the case of the Wild Boars football team. Second, it aims to investigate how heroism is constructed within these media platforms in relation to the incident involving the Wild Boars football team. Therefore, this study aims to examine the transformation of a news incident as the “source text” into three “adapted texts” across distinct media platforms. It focuses on analyzing the transmedia



narrative differences and strategies employed by each medium in representing the same core incident —by analyzing their respective narrative structures. Furthermore, the research seeks to investigate the communicative dimension involved in the construction of heroism, focusing on how the identities and meanings surrounding the thirteen members of the Wild Boars Academy are shaped across different media platforms, including news, documentary film, series, and feature film.

### **Literature Review**

This study draws upon a range of concepts, theories, and related research to explain the communication phenomena

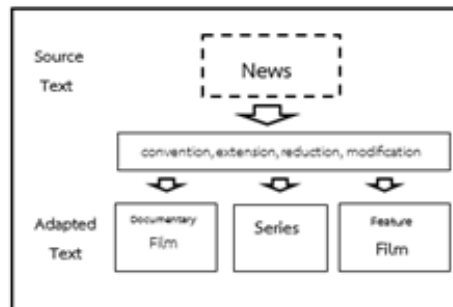
#### **1. Narrative Structure**

The concept of narrative structure emphasizes the organization of events from composition to story and plot development, with the goal of creating coherence and emotional engagement for the audience. According to Sotanasathien (2017), a narrative is a fictional construct that reflects social reality. Singlumpong (2014, p. 48) similarly defines narrative as a meaningful sequence of events. He identifies three core components of storytelling: composition, story, and plot, which are structured in a rational and universal order. Gustav Freytag (1869, as cited in Giannetti, 2014, p. 337) proposed the “pyramid model” of narrative, comprising exposition, rising action, climax, resolution, and ending. Narrative analysis involves seven elements: plot, theme, conflict, characters, setting, symbol, and point of view. These elements provide a framework for analyzing the narrative structure in documentary film, television series, and feature film productions

in this study, particularly in terms of how content is interlinked across media platforms.

#### **2. Intertextuality**

Intertextuality refers to the practice of referencing, adapting, or borrowing from existing texts to create new ones. The term was introduced by Julia Kristeva (1980, p. 22), and later translated in Thai as “intertextual transmission,” “co-text,” or “intertextuality.” John Fiske (1992, as cited in Kaewthep, 2009, pp. 1-29) categorized intertextuality into two dimensions: horizontal, referring to relationships between primary texts (e.g., news reports and dramatized series or films), and vertical, referring to relationships between a primary text and secondary texts such as audience interpretations or critical reviews. Prachakul (2009, pp. 149-170) proposed a comparative approach for analyzing source and adapted texts by examining additions, omissions, or transformations. He identified four types of intertextuality: convention (maintaining the original), extension (for narrative expansion), reduction (storyline omission) and modification (storyline adaptation) in Figure 4 Below



**Figure 4** Chain of Intertextuality

For instance, the series “Thai Cave Rescue” (Netflix, 2022a) expands the storyline of Navy SEAL Sergeant Sam (Saman Gunan) to heighten emotional impact, and introduces a fictional female water engineer, Kelly, to intensify dramatic tension. In contrast, the film “Watching Thirteen Lives” (Movie All HD, 2022) reduces the presence of the Wild Boars team to emphasize the rescue operations and the portrayal of heroism.

### 3. Social Construction of Reality

Social reality is not a naturally occurring phenomenon but rather a product of human cognition, interpretation, and shared meaning-making through language, a symbolic system used to communicate and organize everyday experiences. Berger and Luckmann (1967, as cited in Rattayanon, 2004, p. 17) argue that individuals perceive the world through social frameworks that gradually lead them to accept what they see as “reality,” despite this “reality” being socially constructed and collectively endorsed. Alfred Schuetz (1943, p. 137) further asserted that our world is an intersubjective reality, perceived collectively through a socially constructed “stock of knowledge” accumulated from routine experiences. As mass media assumes a more prominent role in society, our understanding of the world

increasingly relies on mediated experiences rather than direct encounters. Consequently, the media not only reflect but actively construct social reality. Meaning is thus produced through communicative processes shaped by linguistics, phenomenology, and media, particularly in the cultural realm, for example, the notion of heroism is socially constructed through repeated narratives, representations, and public acceptance.

Berger and Luckmann (1967, pp. 183-193) describe this process in three stages: “externalization” (society is a human product), “objectivation” (society becomes reality), and “internalization” (humans are a product of society). Drawing from this framework, the researcher analyzes how the heroic image of the Wild Boars is not an inherent truth but a constructed representation shaped by narrative, mediated images, and intertextual reproduction across various forms of media until it becomes a socially accepted reality.

In addition, the researcher incorporates relevant concepts from media studies to support the analysis of source texts:

- News is analyzed as a genre that delivers timely, relevant reports of recent events, holding significance in terms of public perception and newsworthiness.



- Documentary film is examined “Creative treatment of actuality”, a genre that adheres to factual representation while utilizing narrative structure to sustain audience engagement.

- Series are considered in terms of their film-like storytelling style, emphasizing visual communication and serialized narrative continuity. They are also studied for their cultural and moral functions, including their roles in personal reflection, cultural expression, and ethical reinforcement.

- Feature Film is approached as a fictional medium with a clearly defined narrative structure, including exposition, rising tension, climax, and resolution. Film is recognized for its communicative power, sociocultural perspective, and ability to transmit cultural values.

Based on the synthesis of relevant concepts and theories, a conceptual framework was subsequently developed to guide the study in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 Conceptual Framework

## Methods

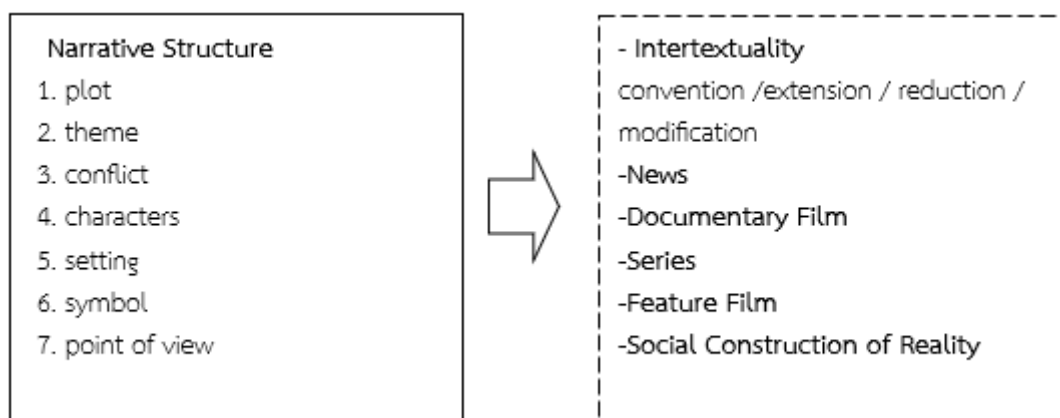
1. This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on the in-depth interpretation and analysis of narrative and symbolic elements across various media texts.

2. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, based on specific criteria. The selected texts include news coverage of the Wild Boars football team trapped in Tham Luang Nang Non cave, the documentary film “The Trapped 13: How We Survived the Thai Cave” (Netflix, 2022b), the Netflix series “Thai Cave Rescue” (Netflix, 2022a), and the feature film “Watching Thirteen Lives” (Movie All HD, 2022).

3. Data was collected from digital platforms and social media sources, including BBC News (2018), PPTV Online (2018), and Netflix.

4. The analysis was conducted using the concept of narrative structure as a tool to deconstruct and map out key components of

storytelling within each medium. This allowed for the identification of narrative elements such as plot progression, characters development, conflict, and resolution. Subsequently, the concept of intertextuality was applied to examine the connections between source texts (e.g., news reports) and adapted texts (e.g., documentary film, series, film), identifying processes of quotation, adaptation, or modification. Additionally, the theory of social construction of reality was employed to analyze how meanings are constructed and communicated through media narratives. Relevant research was also reviewed to support a cross-media analysis of the selected texts—news, documentary film, television series, and feature film—and to investigate the process through which heroism is constructed in representations of the Wild Boars football team trapped in Tham Luang Nang Non cave. This analytical framework is illustrated in Figure 6.



**Figure 6** Data Analysis Process

## Results

This research employs news coverage of the 13 Wild Boars football team to analyze intertextual narrative and the construction of heroism, drawing on the documentary film

“The Trapped 13: How We Survived the Thai Cave” (Netflix, 2022b), the Netflix series “Thai Cave Rescue” (Netflix, 2022a), and the feature film “Watching Thirteen Lives” (Movie All HD, 2022). The research findings are presented ac-



cording to the study's objectives as follows:

**Objective 1:** To analyze the intertextual narrative across media—news, documentary film, series, and feature film regarding the Wild Boars Academy football team incident.

Through an intertextual analysis of cross-media storytelling in news, documentary film, series, and feature film, the researcher examined four types of intertextual connections: convention, extension, reduction, and modification. The findings reveal that all three media formats, adapted texts, engaged in reproduction of the core narrative using a consistent narrative structure, reflecting coherence across seven key elements: plot, theme, conflict, characters, setting, symbolism, and point of view. The summary of findings is as follows:

**1. Plot:** The adapted texts, documentary film and feature film—preserved the original plot most faithfully to the source text as news. The documentary film, by nature, emphasizes factual representation and was based on direct testimony and real events. The feature film, likewise, opens with a textual statement clarifying that it is based on true story, adhering closely to real-life occurrences. Given the persuasive power of cinematic storytelling and its potential to influence public perception, there is an ethical imperative to portray events accurately while adding elements of dramatization to enhance viewer engagement. The series, while retaining the main story, expanded the story both horizontally (to reveal broader contextual connections) and vertically (to deepen emotional engagement with characters). Reduction of story was equally applied across all three media formats for

narrative conciseness and clarity. Notably, no major plot modifications were observed due to the sensitive nature and global prominence of the original incident involving the 13 Wild Boars.

**2. Theme:** All three media types preserved the core theme: “Heroic courage is a universal human virtue.” This theme was consistently conveyed, especially regarding acts of bravery during crises—whether personal, familial, communal, national, or global. Nearly every character across the various media was framed as heroic in some way, each demonstrating courage in line with their social roles. No extension, reduction, or modification of the core theme from the original news incident was observed in any of the three media formats.

**3. Conflict:** The series and feature film exhibited both convention and extension of the conflict dimensions, portraying all four classic types: inner conflict (internal conflict), personal conflict (human-human conflict), extra personal conflict (human–society conflict), and environmental conflict (human-nature conflict). These forms of conflict were developed to generate empathy and emotional investment from audiences. In contrast, the documentary film presented conflict more directly, grounded in factual reportage, and did not explore extra personal conflict in a dramatized manner.

**4. Characters:** The series and feature film significantly expanded character development compared to the original news reports, to enhance narrative plausibility and emotional depth. This expansion facilitated audience



understanding and attachment. Conversely, the documentary film employed the greatest reduction, focusing primarily on key real-life individuals and allowing them to narrate their personal experiences. Modification of characters appeared only in the series, most notably in the inclusion of heroine-type characters, such as Kelly (a hydrology engineer played by Urassaya Sperbund) and Pim (a national park officer played by Manatsanun Phanlerdwong-sakul). These characters served both marketing and representational purposes—amplifying female visibility in the rescue effort and promoting gender equality by showing that heroic action is not limited to men; women, too, can embody heroism in society through acts of courage and service.

**5. Setting:** In terms of setting, which includes temporal factors, geographical factors, social structure and economic factors, and custom, moral attitude and code of behaviors factors, all three media formats (documentary film, series, and feature film) demonstrated varying degrees of convention, extension, and reduction relative to the original news event.

- **Convention:** For instance, all formats maintained the original location where the event occurred, Tham Luang–Khun Nam Nang Non cave.

- **Extension:** Examples include the elaboration on the legend of Nang Non Mountain in the documentary film, narrated by Coach Ek (the football team’s assistant coach) at the cave’s entrance. This segment provides cultural context by explaining the origin of the mountain’s name and its geographical resemblance to a reclining woman. Another example

is the added backstory depicting the journey taken by Coach Ek and Titan (one of the football team members) along the Thai–Myanmar border, which offers additional socio-political and geographical context. Notably, no modifications were made to the setting in any of the media formats, to preserve the realism and atmosphere of the original event.

**6. Symbol:** Symbolic elements are crucial for constructing meaning across all formats. Documentary film, series, and feature film employed symbolic components as tools for conveying deeper interpretations through semiotic processes.

- The series demonstrated the greatest extension of symbolism due to its length (six episodes), which allowed for a broader interpretative space.

- Both the series and feature film showed similar levels of convention and reduction in symbolic elements.

- No modification of symbols was observed in any format.

**7. Point of View:** The documentary film employed the highest level of convention and extension in terms of narrative point of view (narration from a first-person point of view), offering rich perspectives from real individuals involved in the event.

- None of the three formats exhibited reduction or modification of narrative perspective, prioritizing authenticity and honoring the factual basis of the event.

From the analysis of the seven narrative components, it is evident that the documentary film, series, and feature film adopted a shared narrative framework to present the



Tham Luang cave rescue incident in a coherent and interconnected manner. This unified approach spanned across content, theme, and emotional tone, reflecting not only the shared moral values of Thai society but also the universal humanistic values recognized globally. Moreover, the findings emphasize the role of cultural reproduction in the multi-platform media era, underscoring how various media formats can align to shape collective memory and social meaning through consistent narrative strategies.

**Objective 2:** To analyze the construction of heroism in news, documentary film, series, and feature film about the Wild Boars Academy football team incident.

The 2018 incident of the Wild Boars football team trapped in Tham Luang Nang Non cave not only became global news but also evolved into a “heroic narrative” reproduced in documentary film, series, and feature film. The construction of the “hero” image is a result of the social construction of reality and the use of narrative structures, which reveal the processes through which the meaning of “heroism” is created. The researcher employed two primary analytical approaches:

**1. Content analysis** – focusing on cross-media storytelling in news, documentary film, series, and feature film that share consistent themes such as Coach Ek’s calm leadership, the boys’ discipline and unity, and the reflection of physical and mental courage.

**2. Discourse analysis** – examining the process where actions become stories (externalization), which then become collectively accepted truths (objectivation), and are finally

internalized by audiences as personal values (internalization). This process transforms the “heroic narrative” into a socially accepted reality.

#### **Narrative rationality:**

- **Narrative probability:** All media types narrate with similar structures, there is a crisis, collaboration, and a successful resolution—highlighting courage and the power of hope.

- **Narrative fidelity:** The stories reinforce moral values such as the sacrifice of Sergeant Sam, the discipline of the Wild Boars, and global cooperation, demonstrating that the team “deserves to be rescued.”

The actions of all 13 members of the Wild Boars team reflect “universal moral values” grounded in globally recognized ethics, which can be categorized into two main levels:

- **Level 1:** Avoiding wrongdoing and choosing right actions with consideration for the collective good or humanity.

- **Level 2:** Avoiding wrongdoing and doing right out of respect for the inherent humanity and equality of oneself and others.

These moral values can be summarized under the following themes:

1. Resilience and perseverance
2. Selflessness and leadership
3. Solidarity and mutual support
4. Mindfulness and self-control
5. Representation of the “good child” and “innocent hero” archetype
6. The inception of global moral unity

#### **Process of social construction of reality:**

- **Externalization:** The meaning of heroism is produced as media start telling the story of the Wild Boars as “strong survivors,” using

words, images, and actions.

- **Objectivation:** The hero meaning becomes “real” as mass media, government bodies, and entertainment media reinforce and solidify this narrative into a shared image.

- **Internalization:** People accept and believe in this heroic identity; Thai society and the global community recognize the Wild Boars Team as symbols of hope and morality.

The heroism of the Wild Boars team did not emerge solely from the incident itself but was shaped by repeated storytelling across media and societal acceptance through discourse and moral values. This made them “moral heroes,” symbols of hope, courage, and humanitarian power on a global scale.

## Discussion

To analyze the intertextual narrative across news, documentary film, series, and feature film concerning the Wild Boars football team incident, from the documentary film “The Trapped 13: How We Survived the Thai Cave” (Netflix, 2022b), the Netflix series “Thai Cave Rescue” (Netflix, 2022a), and the feature film “Watching Thirteen Lives” (Movie All HD, 2022). The research found that cross-media storytelling of a real event from news to various entertainment media reveals both shared and distinct characteristics specific to each medium. To contribute new knowledge in the field of intertextual narrative across media, the researcher summarized ten key principles regarding the intertextual storytelling of real events from news to documentaries, series, and films as follows:

- 1. Preserve the essence of the story** — maintain the main plot, theme, and essen-

tial facts drawn from the real event, especially when dealing with sensitive issues that impact emotions, thoughts, and beliefs at national and international levels, such as the Wild Boars cave incident.

- 2. Select intertextual strategies appropriate to the media type** — including convention, extension, reduction, and modification, based on each medium’s objectives. News and documentaries emphasize factual accuracy and non-fictional representation, whereas fictional entertainment media such as series and feature films prioritize entertainment.

- 3. Maintain factual accuracy and realism in documentary films**, which should adhere strictly to actual events by featuring real participants to narrate the story, and avoid modifying content from the original news sources. Unlike fictional series or feature films, documentaries share a non-fictional nature with news media.

- 4. Expand character and event dimensions in fictional entertainment media** — series and films can elaborate emotionally, explore conflicts, and deepen character backstories to enhance viewer engagement, understanding, and emotional connection.

- 5. Emphasize social diversity and context** — adding new storylines and character roles in series helps broaden perspectives and reflects embedded societal ideologies such as equality and gender diversity.

- 6. Design scenes and contexts without distorting facts** — maintain accuracy in time, geography, culture, and social context while expanding content beyond the news report to preserve narrative atmosphere and



authenticity essential for audience immersion.

**7. Use symbols and representational imagery strategically** — especially in series with multiple episodes, allowing richer semiotic interpretation and facilitating communication of layered meanings from producers and viewers.

**8. Preserve a respectful narrative point of view** — adopt the perspective of real characters, participants, or related people to enhance credibility and audience involvement.

**9. Reduce content concisely without losing theme** — documentary film, series, and feature film may reduce unnecessary story to improve accessibility and clarity without altering the source texts (original narrative's meaning).

**10. Consider ethical responsibility** — given the real-life nature of events, storytelling must carefully handle moral considerations, respect involved parties' and public sentiments and avoid causing social division at any level.

Applying these ten principles in cross-media storytelling can provide non-fiction and fiction producers with a structured framework to maximize the effectiveness and integrity of intertextual communication.

Analysis of the Social Construction of Heroism in News, Documentary film, Series, and feature Film about the Wild Boars Football Team Incident findings: The research identified three key aspects of heroism construction related to the Wild Boars incident:

1. Construction of the Wild Boars team narrative.

2. Construction of hero images through the narrative paradigm.

3. Construction of hero images through media perception.

### **1. Construction of the Wild Boars team Narrative**

The story of the 13 Wild Boars trapped in Tham Luang cave has been expanded, refined, and repeatedly retold across various media formats including news, documentary film, series, and feature film. This process constructs the characters as representations of "heroes" imbued with deep moral significance. This aligns with narratology theory, Prachakul (2009, pp. 149-170), who emphasizes that narratives are constructed rather than merely reflecting external reality. The process corresponds to the narrative paradigm and social construction of reality frameworks, which allow the "goodness" and "moral courage" of the characters to be culturally accepted both in Thailand and internationally. This finding is consistent with Wiriyasiriwattana (2015, p. 33) study on the film *Les Misérables*, which highlights storytelling that blends themes of love and moral values across spatial and temporal boundaries.

### **2. Construction of Hero Images through the Narrative Paradigm**

Based on Walter Fisher's (1987, pp. 105-120) narrative rationality, credible stories at the cultural level require both narrative probability and narrative fidelity. The Wild Boars story is told through a clear structure: crisis – effort – rescue – survival. Characters action such as Coach Ek, who is self-sacrificing, and the boys, who remain calm, united, strong, patient, and disciplined, are portrayed in a way consistent with "moral values" that audiences collectively believe in. This aligns with Suksamai's (2008, pp. 370-371) research

on the redefinition of heroes in Thai cinema, showing heroes who sacrifice for others, refuse to surrender to obstacles, and exhibit complexity with both positive and negative traits. The Wild Boars team reflects this humanized heroism, not merely survivors but exemplars of morality in extreme situations.

### **3. The Construction of Heroic Images through Media Reception Processes**

Within the theoretical framework of Berger and Luckmann's (1967, pp. 183-193) social construction of reality, it can be systematically analyzed that the image of the Wild Boars football team did not emerge naturally. Rather, it is the result of a social process that gradually transforms their actions into a widely accepted "social reality" at both national and global levels through various types of mass media.

#### **3.1 Externalization: The Production of Heroic Meaning**

In the initial phase, the personal expressions of the team members, such as meditation, sharing food, and patiently awaiting rescue, were narrated by the media with meaningful interpretation. These actions were framed within moral contexts, for example, as "calmness in darkness" or "mindfulness that saves lives." The actions of Coach Ek, such as sacrificing his food for the boys or using Buddhist principles to cultivate mindfulness, were emphasized as commendable moral deeds and were repeatedly conveyed through news reports, documentary film, series, and feature film.

#### **3.2 Objectivation: Narratives Becoming Shared Reality**

These narratives were continuously reproduced across multiple media formats, including national and international news outlets such as BBC News (2018), CNN, and Thailand broadcasters as PPTV Online (2018), and TPBS; documentary film like 13 Wild Boars: The Story from the Cave; limited series such as The Cave: Mission of Hope; and the feature film as Watching Thirteen Lives. These stories transformed into a "reality" no longer based solely on individual perception but collectively accepted by society. For instance, the boys were perceived as "mindful," "brave," and "disciplined," not merely because they inherently possessed these qualities, but because society chose to affirm these images through repeated narrative production and symbolic representations, such as images of the boys smiling inside the cave or a key role in the Tham Luang Thailand cave rescue, John Volanthen's remark upon first reaching them, "You are very strong," along with the depiction of Coach Ek and the boys meditating inside Tham Luang cave.

#### **3.3 Internalization: Audience Incorporation of the Image as Personal Value**

The process of absorbing the heroic image into the audience's consciousness began as many people developed faith in these narratives. They not only admired but believed that the thirteen boys embodied the qualities of "moral heroes," becoming exemplars of strength tempered with gentleness and representing universal values such as self-sacrifice, unity, and hope. In some cases, viewers internalized these values as personal inspiration, evidenced by remarks like, "If they



could make it through, so can I,” or “This is a lesson in mindfulness amidst despair.” Audiences developed faith in goodness, hope, and solidarity, with society venerating the team as a model of “gentle strength.” The media’s construction of the Wild Boars as heroes exemplifies the social construction of reality process, beginning from immediate actions in a crisis, through interpretation, transmission, and reproduction, ultimately becoming a broadly accepted “shared reality” and subsequently a “moral exemplar” influencing beliefs, values, and inspirations within societies both domestically and internationally.

Based on the research findings regarding the construction of heroism as exemplified by the Wild Boars team, the researcher has identified the essential qualities of a “contemporary hero” that an individual aspiring to serve as a role model and leader in the global society should possess, as follows:

**1. Calmness in Crisis:** The ability to control fear and panic through meditation and mental composure, thereby aiding others’ survival. This exemplifies mindfulness and rational decision-making in emergency situations, as well as effective crisis management to minimize or prevent negative impacts.

**2. Selflessness:** Not a hero defined by “strong leadership,” but rather a “caretaker” leader—one who leads through love and sacrifice rather than exertion of power. Such a leader harbors a profound desire to share in both hardship and joy with others.

**3. Moral Courage:** The bravery to act rightly even when it contradicts societal norms or authority, standing firm for virtue, justice,

and truth.

**4. Unity and Discipline:** Fostering co-existence without division, maintaining order, and promoting cooperation. This reflects that heroism is not solely an individual trait but emerges from the collective strength of a unified and disciplined group.

**5. Hope and Faith:** Having belief in humanity, recognizing that a hero is not fearless but one who maintains hope even in the darkest times.

**6. Responsible Leadership:** Leadership that goes beyond issuing orders to becoming a “listening leader” who values those around them, makes judicious decisions grounded in the common good, dares to admit mistakes, and learns from them.

**7. Empathy and Compassion:** Showing understanding toward the vulnerable, listening to others’ suffering, and exercising kindness toward all humans regardless of class, religion, ethnicity, or gender.

**8. Empathetic communication:** Conveying one’s message with accuracy and positivity while understanding the audience’s readiness and communication skills, demonstrating sincerity. A hero is not merely a victor but one who inspires others.

Heroes are not only victors but also transmitters of inspiration. The heroes of the Wild Boars 13 are not “conquerors of enemies” as depicted in Western archetypes but are “valuable survivors” who serve as moral inspirations worldwide. They demonstrate that courage, sacrifice, calmness, unity, and hope are the foundations of an “inner greatness” that contemporary society recognizes in the

Wild Boars team as “true heroes”.

### General Recommendations

1. The case of the Wild Boars Academy Football Team of 13 can be effectively utilized as a media and global citizenship case study. This incident serves well in educational contexts for teaching media literacy and the moral analysis of storytelling, emphasizing encouraging learners to critically question the reproduction of narratives and the influence of cross-platform media on societal emotions and values.

2. Promotion of ethical storytelling practices in presenting real-life events should be encouraged. Journalists and media producers need to be aware of their responsibility in narrating events, especially those impacting directly involved parties such as children, victims, or individuals featured in the news. This would contribute to elevating Thai mass media to a higher ethical standard.

3. The development of collaborative communication policies involving government, private sector, and media during crises is recommended. The Wild Boars case, which successfully produced a globally positive narrative, could serve as a model for crisis communication management. The government should partner with media to establish ethical

frameworks and foster narratives that promote cooperation, hope, and shared humanity at the international level.

### Recommendations for Future Research

1. Expansion of studies on intertextuality and relational narratives in other forms is needed. Future research should include comparative studies of narratives from different national perspectives or analyze how narratives are transformed when retold in Western versus Eastern cultural media contexts, to reveal the dynamics of narrative reproduction across diverse cultural settings.

2. Incorporation of transformational storytelling theory into future studies is suggested. Although the current research indicates narrative stability, subsequent studies should explore how narratives of “moral heroes” evolve or are reinterpreted over time, especially as social contexts and discourses change.

3. Investigate the impact of cross-media narrative consumption through reception studies. Continued research is proposed to examine how audiences interpret the story of the 13 Wild Boars across different media platforms and how transmedia storytelling affects long-term memory and emotional responses toward the team.

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