**Example of a Simple Fantasy Theme Analysis (FTA)**

The example below uses a single image and not images collected from multiple sources to illustrate the FTA method. Usually, when we use SCT and the method of FTA, we’re looking for evidence that fantasy themes have chained out among publics and created rhetorical communities. It is unknown if this public service ad produced by the American Cancer Society was widely viewed, shared, and perhaps even modified by users. This image was selected for its skill and artistry in conveying an emotional message. For your Visual Analysis this week, you may choose to analyze a single image, or a group of images. All images are provided. See Visual Analysis Instructions, Choice #1 and Choice #2.

***Step 1. Give a brief introduction.***

The image below is a public service announcement (PSA) warning of the dangers of secondhand smoke to children.



***Step 2. Analyze the characters, action, and setting.***

The ***characters*** are the teddy bear representing a child and, though not shown, the adult who is off screen but is endangering the child. The teddy bear character is inert, passive, helpless, sad, and alone. The metaphor of the bear as child allows the viewer to empathize with the helplessness of the child.

The ***action*** involves not only smoking on the part of the unseen adult, but the cruel behavior of crushing cigarettes into the helpless body of the child’s stand in, symbolically using it like an ashtray. For any effective drama, a tension between opposing forces is necessary. In this case, the unseen adult is threatening a child’s health and the child is a victim. For many people, the image of the abused teddy bear arouses anger on the part of observers or perhaps guilt on the part of smokers. This may create emotional engagement, almost always an important step in persuasion. The image also invites us, the viewers, into the action as a protector of those who cannot protect themselves. In this way, the viewers can see themselves as potential heroes and the kind of person who cares about children.

The ***setting*** is neutral and could be in any room, suggesting that smoking anywhere near a child is dangerous. The lack of specificity in the setting permits the viewer to imagine her or his home or workplace or to imagine parents/others he or she may know in their smoking environments.

***Step 3. Determine the fantasy themes and overall rhetorical vision.***

The ***fantasy themes,*** “adults who smoke around children are abusers” and “adults who smoke around children are cruel and careless,” contribute to a ***rhetorical vision*** that “irresponsible and careless adults hurt kids.”

***Step 4. Discussion.***

Without an image of the teddy bear, the headline “When you smoke near children, they smoke too” would not present the emotional strength that the visual provides. Rather, with the image the ad’s engaging message is that adults have the primary responsibility to care for children and to disregard that responsibility is unacceptable and harmful. The metaphor of the teddy bear as a victim of torture communicates the horror of such acts in ways that graphic images of actual children could not do in any acceptable manner. This ad calls on people to change their behavior and attempts to shape the attitudes and values of other people (non-smokers).