

# Image Analysis

**Image:** *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid* (Francisco de Goya)

The main figure (the man in white) is clearly separated from the background through light, position, dominant lines, and visual weight. The lines directed toward the protagonist are especially significant, as are the bright areas contrasting with the dark ones. All elements are arranged at different spatial distances, creating three-dimensional depth while broadly respecting the rule of thirds. This visually constructs an opposition between: **suffering / emotion** versus **mechanical violence / anonymity**.

**“The illuminated figures stand out against a dark, threatening, violent background.”**

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## 1. ORGANIZATION OF DOMINANT LINES

### Real Lines

#### A. Lower horizontal line

Formed by the ground and the corpses in the foreground.

It acts as a stable compositional base and visual support.

#### B. Large right → left diagonal

The row of soldiers enters from the right and aims their rifles toward the central figure, confronting the line of his gaze. This is the principal dominant line.

#### C. Secondary central vertical

The figure of the man dressed in white with open arms.

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### Imaginary Lines

#### A. Direction and trajectory of the rifles

They function as aggressive vectors converging on the protagonist.

#### B. Natural reading vector

The Western eye usually reads left → right, but here tension is reversed: the threat comes from the right.

#### C. Gazes

Some figures look at the firing squad, while others hide their faces, reinforcing emotional focus, since the gaze carries high visual weight.

#### D. Perspective

The repeated row of soldiers creates lateral depth.

#### E. Contours

Certain lines help define the boundaries of the figures.

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### Subjective Synthesis

The opposing lines generate tension, violence, and confrontation between masses.

The verticality of the central character interrupts this aggression and turns him into the main figure.

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## 2. ORGANIZATION OF LIGHT / CHIAROSCURO

### A. Low tonal key

Large dark background, dominant night scene, abundance of shadows.

### B. Tonal contrast

Very strong contrast between:

- illuminated white figure in the center,
- dark area of soldiers, black background.

### C. Light source

Harsh light from the lantern placed on the ground, illuminating from below / sideways.

### D. Modeling

The light creates volume and falls especially on:

- the illuminated man in white at the left-center,
- nearby faces, blood, and corpses,
- rifles and soldiers, darker zone directed leftward.

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### Subjective Synthesis

The strong tonal contrast radically separates figure and background.

The low-key lighting conveys drama and oppressive nocturnal atmosphere.

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## 3. ORGANIZATION OF COLOR

### A. Dominant colors

- browns,
- muted ochres,
- blood reds in the foreground.

### B. Chromatic harmony

Colors are desaturated and belong to an earthy, subdued range, unifying the scene.

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### Subjective Synthesis

The dark chromatic harmony creates dramatic unity.

Red introduces violence and death.

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## 4. ORGANIZATION OF SHOT SCALE

### A. Type of shot

General shot / group shot.

We see multiple characters and both immediate and distant surroundings, positioned in a semi-lateral three-quarter arrangement.

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### Emotional effect

Allows:

- contemplation of the collective scene,
- description of the action,
- recognition of individual gestures.

It is not intimate like a close-up, but not distant either. It combines human emotion with narrative context.

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## 5. ORGANIZATION OF VIEWPOINT HEIGHT

### A. Normal viewpoint

The observer is placed at human height facing the scene.

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### Interpretation

Generates:

- direct participation,
- physical presence,
- visual testimony.

It places us as nearby witnesses.

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## 6. ORGANIZATION OF ELEMENTS IN TWO-DIMENSIONAL SPACE

### A. Horizontal format favors:

- lateral narrative development,
- opposition between two blocks,
- visual movement from left to right.

### B. Centers of interest / visual weights

**Left:** disordered group of victims.

**Right:** compact, dark, rigid block of soldiers, plus corpses and blood.

### Rule of thirds:

**Main focal point:** white figure with open arms located near the lower-left intersection.

High visual attraction zone.

**Secondary focal point:** rifles aiming and anonymous row of soldiers located near the lower-right intersection. High visual attraction zone.

### C. Symmetry axes

The image may be divided into left and right zones corresponding to opposing visual weights.

### D. Three-dimensionality

There are masses placed at different planes and distances:

- blurred building in background,
- mountain slope,
- row of prisoners advancing toward execution,
- raised-arms figure,
- dead bodies,
- soldiers.

All these elements form a progressive movement toward the viewer.

### E. Visual rhythm

Mechanical repetition among soldiers (backs, hats, rifles), contrasted with the organic chaos of the victims.

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### Interpretation

The eye usually moves back and forth between the principal zones and figures.

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