

# Image Analysis

## Witches' Sabbath or The Great He-Goat (*Francisco de Goya*)

The principal figure is concentrated in the large dark he-goat, positioned in the left-central area, surrounded by a clustered group of human figures immersed in shadow. The main figure stands out through size, compact dark negative mass, verticality, and its dominant position before the group. The composition separates figures and background mainly through strong lighting contrasts, dominant dark masses, and the visual concentration of illuminated faces. All elements cooperate to convey a disturbing, nocturnal, ritualistic, and irrational scene in which the monstrous presides over a deformed and submissive human community. The image visually represents superstition, collective fear, irrationality, and human degradation.

**“What is clear and illuminated—the submissive figures—moves in a circular reading path against a dark, threatening, violent background.”**

---

## 1. ORGANIZATION OF DOMINANT LINES

### Real Lines

#### A. Dominant vertical line

The black silhouette of the he-goat rises in the left-central sector and functions as the principal axis.

#### B. Curved horizontal line of the group

The crowd forms a large semicircular band occupying the middle zone of the composition.

#### C. Descending diagonals

The seated, leaning, or crouching bodies create multiple irregular diagonals.

#### D. Diffuse contours

Many figures appear loosely defined, with blurred and gestural outlines.

### Imaginary Lines

#### A. Natural reading vector

The eye enters through the dominant black figure and then moves rightward across the faces of the group.

#### B. Gazes

Many heads seem directed toward the he-goat or toward the center of the ritual.

#### C. Circular tension

The human grouping works as an enclosing movement around the principal nucleus.

#### D. Perspective

Depth is limited; compressed masses dominate the foreground.

### Subjective Synthesis

The lines organize a closed and oppressive scene. The black vertical figure of the goat dominates over a bent and subordinate human mass. Irregular linearity conveys agitation and moral disorder.

---

## 2. ORGANIZATION OF LIGHT / CHIAROSCURO

### A. Tonal key

Predominantly low-key:

- abundance of blacks and browns,
- very dark background,
- scarce general light.

## **B. Tonal contrast**

Selective contrast between:

- illuminated faces and pale garments,
- the large black silhouette,
- shadowed background.

## **C. Light source**

Uncertain, weak frontal/lateral light, not naturalistic.

## **D. Modeling**

Light emerges on faces and cloaks while large zones are absorbed by shadow.

## **Subjective Synthesis**

Dark predominance generates fear, mystery, and nocturnal atmosphere. Partial light seems to reveal grotesque faces from darkness, intensifying the irrational nature of the scene.

---

# **3. ORGANIZATION OF COLOR**

## **A. Dominant colors**

- blacks,
- browns,
- ochres,
- muted grays,
- occasional dirty whites.

## **B. Chromatic harmony**

An earthy, closely related, desaturated palette unifies the work.

## **C. Chromatic contrast**

There is little pure color contrast; the main contrast is tonal. Whites stand out against the dark whole.

## **D. Saturation**

Very low overall saturation.

## **Subjective Synthesis**

Chromatic poverty reinforces decay, dirtiness, and a somber environment. The absence of vivid color removes any festive or pleasant sensation.

---

# **4. ORGANIZATION OF SHOT SCALE**

## **A. Type of shot**

Group shot / ensemble composition.

A broad group of characters is shown with little exterior spatial context.

## **Emotional Effect**

Allows:

- observation of collective behavior,
- reading relationships among figures,
- feeling the human mass as a psychological phenomenon.

The scene matters more as a group than as isolated individuals.

---

## 5. ORGANIZATION OF VIEWPOINT HEIGHT

### A. Viewpoint

Normal height, slightly low relative to some central figures.

### Interpretation

Creates:

- close presence,
- spectator participation,
- slight magnification of the negative figure (the he-goat).

We do not observe from a safe distance, but from within the ritual sphere.

---

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

### A. Horizontal panoramic format

Favors:

- choral deployment of the group,
- lateral reading of faces and gestures,
- sensation of a collective scene.

### B. Rule of thirds

**Left third:** dominant goat figure.

**Central-right zone:** crowd and illuminated faces concentrated.

### C. Centers of interest / Visual weights

- **Primary:** black silhouette of the goat.
- **Secondary:** pale frontal figure below and illuminated faces of the group.

### D. Balance

Asymmetrical balance: large dark mass on the left compensated by the human concentration on the right.

### E. Three-dimensionality (moderate but limited)

- overlapping figures,
- staggered heads,
- foreground and background bodies.

The background offers little depth and compresses the scene toward the picture plane.

### F. Visual rhythm

Repetition of heads, cloaks, and faces creates obsessive cadence in a circular reading of the group, almost transformed into one collective figure. Distortions break any classical harmony.

### Interpretation

The eye usually fixes first on the large black silhouette, then on the pale lower figure, and later moves across the lateral faces. The reading is dense, slow, and disturbing.

---

## Critical Compositional Note

The composition is intentionally oppressive and visually congested. Classical clarity is sacrificed in favor of psychological intensity. Ambiguous contours and compressed spacing may hinder immediate legibility, but this serves the expressive objective of unease and collective delirium.