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A Map of Painterly Forces:
A Study of the Diagram
in Deleuze’s Francis Bacon

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Abstract

A Map of Painterly Forces: A Study of the Diagram in Deleuze’s Francis Bacon

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This study analyzes the “diagram” in Deleuze’s work Francis Bacon: Logique de la Sensation. I explain how the concept can overcome the dichotomy between the pictorial elements of the manual and the optical, which reveals a new perspective on modernist paintings.

This study views that the concept of the diagram plays three roles in Deleuze's philosophy. First, the diagram is redefined as a "map of relations between forces," indicating the most fundamental foundation of experienced social reality. Second, the diagram refers to the dimension 'before' the signifier-signified relations which are inherent to the way we think about the world. Third, the diagram serves as a common cause of the discursive formation and the non-
discursive formation, shedding light on the irreducibility between the two while raising the importance of the non-discursive formation to the surface. This has its root in Deleuze’s active rereading of Foucault's *Surveiller et Punir* as a philosophical work with universal applicability, rather than as an analysis of confining facilities of the 18th century. The notion of a diagram is applied to the social field, thereby asserting the existence of the non-discursive formation and enabling the mutual interaction between the discursive and non-discursive formations. Similarly, the diagram in paintings highlights the importance of the manual elements, previously neglected in paintings and art theory. At the same time, the diagram helps us to go beyond the antagonistic relationship between the optical and the manual in art history. To overcome these limitations, Deleuze suggests a concept of “Figure,” a third way that reconciles the manual and the optical. Figure is distinguished from the tactile referent of conventional representational painting or figurative painting, and has a sensible resemblance with the original object. In figurative paintings, abstract paintings or abstract expressionist paintings, the manual and the optical remain separate with the optical gaining precedence. The Figure in Bacon’s paintings merges the optical and the manual, and it is the diagram that enables the interaction between both.

The diagram applied to the painting plays several roles. First, the diagram in painting is created by the physical actions of the painter that directly distribute forces on the canvas, thus providing a basis for sensation to be attained by the painting. The diagram indicates the random marks created by sweeping the canvas
with a tool such as a brush, or by throwing the paint without the intervention of the eye. These manual marks, understood as the diagram, are created through forces which are facilitated by the painter's action, and defined as an ensemble of lines and zones that operate in a particular way.

Secondly, the diagram helps to break from the signifier-signified relation inherent to the process of painting, and lets the asignifying domain intervene. According to Deleuze, abstract paintings, which minimize the involvement of the hands in order to avoid figuration, create a kind of symbolic code. On the other hand, abstract expressionist paintings exemplified by Jackson Pollock's painting make the involvement of eyes almost impossible in the process of painting by merely leaving the manual on the canvas. Thus, under the frame of representation and abstraction, these Modernist paintings are confined to the signifier-signified relation by simply negating the tactile referent. However, in the case of Bacon's paintings, the asignifying diagram enables the role of painting to attain sensation by dismantling the signifier-signified relation on the canvas. The diagram serves to remove figurative givens or images in the painter’s mind when she is facing the white canvas. Figurative givens are images of photographs or illustrations that the artist has encountered in everyday life. Even though an artist is facing a white canvas, he or she can be influenced or caught by these images. The diagram, which is an accidental mark, serves to remove these images by creating an unpredictable shape on the white canvas, and this allows the diagram to escape from figuration.
Third, the diagram enables both the manual and the optical to be compatible. As we have seen, the creation of the diagram involves accidental manual marks, which have no intended representative purpose. Based on the diagram, a secondary figuration by the painter takes place. This final process enables the mutual interaction of the manual and the optical. From this last step, the diagram, which was a mere "possibility of fact," develops into what Deleuze calls a "pictorial fact." The expression ‘pictorial fact’ indicates that a painting exists in the present by capturing and containing forces, and further, exists as a 'fact.' This pictorial fact is not engendered by abstract paintings which only value the optical, or representational paintings that have narrative, illustrative and figurative features. Pictorial fact is created in paintings that contain invisible forces contributed by the operation of the diagram.

This study clarifies that the role of the diagram in painting is more lucidly revealed by applying to paintings the functional aspects of the diagram as described in Deleuze 's previous works, *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*. The diagram in *Francis Bacon* distributes forces on the canvas, and serves as a basis of mutual interaction between different forms while not performing any signifying function. Although the concept of the diagram originated in the social field, it is applied to paintings and serves to overcome the obstacles of 'opticality' which the paintings and theories of the past established. Furthermore, the diagram plays a critical role in terms of the purpose of painting, the embodiment of sensation, by creating a pictorial fact. In conclusion, this study aims to clarify that Deleuze proposed a way to overcome
the dichotomy between the pictorial elements, and to look at modernist paintings in a new way through the concept of the diagram in *Francis Bacon*.

**Keywords:** Diagram, Sensation, Modernist Painting, Deleuze, Francis Bacon, Foucault, Representation

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Introduction

This study analyzes the concept ‘diagram (diagramme)’ in Francis Bacon: *Logique de la sensation*¹ and aims to clarify its function in Deleuze’s theory of painting. In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze analyzes Francis Bacon’s paintings according to his ontology of painting. This ontology clearly deviates from our ordinary understanding of paintings as representation. Instead, Deleuze declares that a painting should be about sensation. Here too, Deleuze deviates from our normal concept of sensation. Normally, sensation is about what a subject perceives with his or her sensory organs – to hear, to taste, to smell, etc. However, as we will see in chapter 2, Deleuze leads us to think of sensation differently, to understand sensation not merely from the perspective of a subject. Deleuze views sensation as an operation of forces on the body: an event that happens to the body. Based on this re-formulation of sensation, he suggests that a painting does not exist to reproduce an object in the world. In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze investigates how a painting can contain sensation through his analysis of Francis Bacon’s work.

While elucidating his view on paintings, Deleuze shows a critical attitude

¹ Deleuze, Gilles. *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, Paris : Seuil, 2002
toward two regimes in art history. Firstly, Deleuze critiques the formalist approach toward Modernist paintings, in particular, that of the representative American critic Clement Greenberg. Greenberg’s approach takes a critical attitude toward representational painting, just as Deleuze does. However, for Deleuze, Greenberg’s formalism restricts paintings to the boundary of their form. Secondly, Deleuze critiques semiotic approaches to art. The semiotic approach is limited in that it presumes signifier-signified relations when assessing a painting and does not go beyond the frame of signification. For Deleuze, this perspective cannot give an account of the ontology of painting that pertains to sensation. Deleuze’s critical approach to paintings clearly deviates from these two approaches. By focusing on the diagram in painting and the sensation captured through the diagram, Deleuze sets up his theory of painting that overcomes the limits of these two existing theories.

What is the diagram for Deleuze, as a central factor of painting? The diagram in *Francis Bacon* is unique in that it has nothing to do with visual entities.

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2 Hal Foster pieces together the artworks and the theories of 1970s, when the “textual turn” occurred, and clarifies their common focus. The textual turn refers to the general tendency of that time when language became more important, and the matter of subject and object became less important for both the practices and theories of art. Foster traces this tendency back to Barthes and Derrida’s works, *S/Z* (1970) and *La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines* (1966) in that they suggested a way to associate ‘sign’ as a tool to interpret a society and its change. In line with these, for example, Rosalind Krauss’s *Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America* (1977) adopts the semiotic principle to understand art, reading Duchamp’s popular artwork as an indexical operation. See “The Passion of the Sign”, *The Return of the Real*, 1996
or representation. Rather, the diagram helps the painting to avoid representation and figuration. This is clearly different from our normal understanding of a diagram. A diagram, by its dictionary definition, means a simplified drawing showing the appearance, structure, or workings of something: a schematic representation. Therefore, a diagram is a simplified representation of something and has visual and representative features. On the other hand, in Francis Bacon, the diagram is defined as the result of making random marks, scrubbing, sweeping or wiping the canvas or throwing the paint onto the canvas.3 In this context, a diagram interrupts the normal shape of a body, a head or any object, and distorts their original shapes. This new definition of diagram is clearly distinguished from its original definition. Thus, considering the difference between the original meaning of diagram and Deleuze’s redefinition, the reader faces a certain confusion and limit to understanding Francis Bacon properly.

As we will see in chapter 1, Francis Bacon is not Deleuze’s first work that mentions the diagram; indeed, he mentions it for the first time in “Ecrivain non: un nouveau cartographe” (A new cartographer). “Un nouveau cartographe” is a response to Foucault’s work Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison4 which was released in the same year. It is from Surveiller et punir that Deleuze borrows the term ‘diagram.’ In “Un nouveau cartographe,” the diagram is newly defined

3 Ibid., p.93 (Eng. p.100)
and ruptured from its original meaning. Based on this conversion, the conception of the diagram is further developed in his later work *Mille Plateaux*. *Mille Plateaux* contrasts the diagram with ‘signification.’ The concept diagram has been accepted dualistically: the diagram in *Francis Bacon* and the diagram in other works tend to be regarded as separate.⁵ Also, there are a few preceding studies that focuses on the concept of the diagram in Deleuze, but they do not draw a clear lineage from the diagram in *Francis Bacon* to the diagram in *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*.⁶ However, I think that the diagram in these earlier works and the diagram in *Francis Bacon* are situated in an analogous relation. Moreover, the diagram in *Francis Bacon* gets a more specific meaning based on the diagram’s implication suggested in former works. Therefore, this study aims to complement the understanding of the diagram and Deleuze’s ontology of painting by investigating the diagram in *Francis Bacon* as associated with that of *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*.

There are some preceding studies that examine Deleuze’s theory on painting and set up the problem of the diagram. Among them, much of the research follows the given definition of the diagram suggested in *Francis Bacon*, and investigates the association of the diagram with other pictorial elements only

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within the context of Francis Bacon. However, if we merely follow the given definition of the diagram in Francis Bacon, it is still difficult to understand why a specific element of painting, which is different from the ordinary meaning of diagram, is called ‘diagram’. Considering that Francis Bacon is not the only work in which Deleuze develops his idea of the diagram, we should examine the background of Deleuze’s decision to use this term in the context of painting. Therefore, my research aims to draw a connection between the diagram in other works and Francis Bacon, investigating the further implications of the diagram beyond the context of Francis Bacon.

Other studies specifically focus on the diagram in paintings and art in Deleuze’s theory. Among these, Kamini Vellodi investigates the diagram’s art historical implications. In her research, she clarifies that the diagram functions to overcome the given pictorial regimes of the time. This study is significant in that it situates the diagram in art history and investigates one of the significant aspects


8 Vellodi, Kamini. Tintoretto’s difference. Deleuze, diagrammatics, and the problem of art history, Middlesex University, 2012. Her research mainly focuses on the implication of diagram drawn from Peirce, Kant and Maimon. In another research, she focuses on the comparison between Deleuze’s diagram and Peirce’s diagram. “Diagrammatic Thought: Two forms of Constructivism in C.S. Peirce and Gilles Deleuze”, Parrhesia, 2014, pp.79-95,
of the diagram. However, her research does not put enough emphasis on Deleuze’s reading of Foucault. Therefore, there remain some aspects of the diagram that are not yet fully examined. Reading the diagram of painting through *Foucault*, we can grasp that Deleuze problematizes the paradigm of opticality represented by Greenberg, and redeems the manual and bodily action itself, which produces the marks on the canvas, as a significant factor of painting.

Also, there are a number of preceding studies, such as Vellodi’s, that investigate Deleuze’s diagram in relation to Peirce’s diagram. For Peirce, the diagram functions as an icon that has a similarity to the original object. One of the studies examines the difference between the two: Deleuze’s diagram does not bear similarity to the original object, but gives it a kind of agency.9 However, I maintain that the term diagram is originally drawn from Foucault, considering that it’s mentioned first in “Un nouveau cartographe” and the consistency drawn from it. That said, it is clear that Deleuze referred to several theorists and synthesized their ideas to develop his own concept of the diagram, especially considering its multifaceted implications.

For Éric Alliez’s, a work of art can function politically by experimenting with signs, and this experimentation is the diagrammatic aspect of art. From the

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9 See 사공일 (Sa Kong-il), 『들뢰즈와 창조성의 정치학』 (Deleuze and the politics of creativity), 동문신, 2008.
viewpoint of transdisciplinarity, Alliez focuses on the political function of art.\(^{10}\) Here, the diagram is situated at the level of art in general and the role of art in society. However, this approach does not facilitate an examination of the diagram’s significance in painting, which is Deleuze’s primary interest in Francis Bacon. My study moves beyond the general social interpretation, and focuses specifically on the diagram’s function within painting. It aims to examine the role of the diagram in the process of producing a painting, as we will see in chapter 3.

I will supplement the understanding of the diagram in Francis Bacon by analyzing the diagram in Foucault and Mille Plateaux. In Francis Bacon, Deleuze uses his idea of the diagram to redeem ‘the manual’ in painting, which was previously overlooked in favour of visual elements, an approach which prioritized sensation as the primary purpose of paintings. The diagram concept allows the artist herself to move beyond the restrictions of the visual per se, and embrace a combined approach that values both the visual and the manual in the production of art.

This study will mainly focus on Bacon’s paintings, which comprise the core of Deleuze’s text, although the idea of the diagram is not restricted only to Bacon. Deleuze also briefly refers to Van Gogh, and adds that some painters have their own diagram. The diagram’s applicability is open to various paintings;

however, I limit the range of the discussion to Bacon’s paintings here since they are the main focus for Deleuze. Nevertheless, I argue that the diagram can be applied not only to Bacon’s paintings, but to other artists or even to art in general.

In chapter 1, we will examine the implications of the diagram concept in *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*, and extract its functional aspects. Deleuze first introduces the diagram through his active rereading of Foucault’s *Surveiller et punir*, and redefines it as a map of forces. Based on this definition, it is suggested as a common cause of the visible and the articulable, which are the two axes of knowledge in Foucault, and it enables the mutual influence between the two. Through his redefinition of the diagram, Deleuze removes its representative and visual nature in favor of his own knowledge-based interpretation. Later in *Mille Plateaux*, the asignifying role of the diagram is clarified further.

In chapter 2, we will review how Deleuze’s perspective on art lays stress on sensation, and how this relates to Deleuze’s emphasis on what he calls the manual, which was largely ignored in previous art criticism, in favor of the optical factor in painting. For Deleuze, the aim of a work of art is to attain sensation in itself. Rejecting traditional accounts of sensation, Deleuze describes it as an ‘event’ that occurs when invisible forces traverse the body. The painting should capture those forces and reserve them.

Deleuze then goes further, moving beyond mere sensation into what he describes as ‘the manual’. Unlike previous formalist viewpoints, such as
Greenberg’s, which were restricted to the optical aspect of painting, Deleuze looks to the productive process that results in the painting as experienced. He refers to the manual marks produced by those actions which are not guided by a painters’ eyes and intelligence. Stating that these bodily actions are the true ‘act of painting,’ he recognizes the manual for its significant role in painting. Deleuze goes beyond Greenberg’s analysis and arrives at a different assessment of Modernist abstract paintings, one that accounts for both production and form.

In chapter 3, we shall describe the pictorial application of the diagram in the case of Bacon’s paintings, and how it collapses the signifier-signified relation in painting. The diagram works as a foundation of ‘pictorial fact’ that emerges from the combination of the manual and the optical. This occurs through the interaction of the manual marks of the diagram with figurative givens, which are images that are socially or conventionally preconceived by a painter before she begins to draw, which result in a painting’s figurative nature. However, figurative paintings inevitably entail illustrative and narrative characteristics which do not pertain to sensation. The diagram, realized as manual marks, intervenes in the canvas, where figurative givens are predominating, and destroys their impact. The unintended manual marks of the painter, by revealing the productive process that underlies the painting’s final optical form, can rescue the image from banal figuration. After the intervention of the diagram, the canvas gives birth to the ‘Figure’ which results from a fusion of the manual and the optical. Deleuze gives the name ‘Figure’ to the deformed images appearing in Bacon’s paintings. According to Deleuze, Figure is
distinguished from figurative images in that it delivers sensation directly to our nervous system, whereas figurative images are recognized through our intelligence. Thereby, the painting can stand as a ‘pictorial fact,’ which reserves ‘what happened at a place’ by means of the diagram on the canvas, manifesting the invisible forces that are traversing our body and whole world. The diagram performs a crucial role for the pictorial fact, in that it prevents the painter from becoming limited by mere optical figuration or abstraction, and renders the ground on which the optical and the manual can coexist together as a Figure, constituting sensation as a whole.

In conclusion, the pictorial application of the diagram manifests the process by which a painting can fulfill its aim to attain sensation and avoid becoming representational and figurative. This is made possible by the diagram’s association with the painter’s bodily action and its asignifying aspect.
1. Background: Deleuze’s concept of diagram

1.1. Foucault’s diagram and power

As I mentioned briefly in the introduction, Deleuze borrows the term diagram from Foucault’s *Surveiller et punir*. Nonetheless, the term undergoes a significant change in Deleuze while still being related to Foucault’s notion of power. First issued in 1975, “Un nouveau cartographe” became a part of *Foucault* published in 1986 with some minor revisions.\(^\text{11}\) It is the first of Deleuze’s works that investigates the concept of diagram here, in the context of rereading *Surveiller et punir* which was published in the same year. It should be noted that “Un nouveau cartographe” was published earlier than other works of Deleuze where the concept diagram is mentioned. In *Foucault*, Deleuze follows the trajectory of Foucault’s work and tracks some of the changes in Foucault’s thought. Here, the diagram stands as a noteworthy aspect of the transition between Foucault’s earlier works and *Surveiller et punir*.

Before I move on to Deleuze’s conception of the diagram, I will briefly introduce the original context of the diagram in *Surveiller et punir*. By looking into Foucault’s idea, which works as a seed of Deleuze’s conception of diagram, and comparing the difference between the two, we can examine the extent to which Deleuze’s conception derives from that of Foucault. Generally, *Surveiller et punir*

\(^{11}\) This article was included in the journal *Critique no. 343.*
is an examination of disciplinary society and the specific surveillance system which emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries. Foucault tracks the change from punitive society, which used punishment as a way of controlling people, to disciplinary society, revealing the mechanisms with which disciplinary society controls people through surveillance.

Unlike punitive society, which uses punishment and its display as the primary means of control, disciplinary society utilizes elaborative observation of the people through a particular system of architecture or structure to regulate them: “the exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible.”¹² In other words, disciplinary society embodies ‘observatories’ inside the society that control people by watching them.

Foucault’s explanation of disciplinary society draws on the Panopticon as a representative mode of surveillance. As originally conceived by Bentham, the Panopticon is a prison which situates the guards in the core and the prisoners around them, meaning the guards can watch the prisoners, but the prisoners cannot see the guards.¹³ (Figure 1) The fact that the prisoners cannot see the guards is

¹² *Surveiller et punir*, p.173 (Eng. pp.170-171)

¹³ To see the detailed description on the structure of the Panopticon, see *Surveiller et punir*,
important because this makes the prisoners act under the belief that they are under constant surveillance by the guards.

According to Foucault, this mode of surveillance is not confined to the prison. For example, a particular type of military camp is “an almost ideal model” of the observatories for the exercise of discipline.\textsuperscript{14} (Figure 2) Foucault refers to a few cases of military camps and abstracts their common features: “The geometry of the paths, the number and distribution of the tents, the orientation of their entrances, the disposition of files and ranks were exactly defined; the network of gazes that supervised one another was laid down.”\textsuperscript{15} In a military camp, the soldiers’ tents are elaborately arranged to face one another based on their hierarchy, so that the higher rank can watch the people of lower rank effectively. Just as the Panopticon disciplines the prisoners through surveillance, a military camp does the same to soldiers in the camp. Foucault states that the military camp should be more discreet

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p.201 (Eng. p.200). “We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible.”

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p.173 (Eng. p.171)

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.173 (Eng. p.171)
and effective as it aims to regulate armed people.\textsuperscript{16} Interestingly, this model of the military camp was adopted in many areas of urban development, including working-class housing estates, asylums, hospitals, prisons and schools.\textsuperscript{17}

Foucault first uses the term diagram when explaining the Panopticon and the military camp, although it is in fact only mentioned twice in \textit{Surveiller et punir}. Describing the structure of the military camp, Foucault writes that “the camp is the diagram of a power that acts by means of general visibility.”\textsuperscript{18} Here, visibility refers to how the camp makes the people inside visible and regulated. In another part, when discussing the Panopticon, he describes it as “the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system.”\textsuperscript{19} As we can assume from the fact that it is mentioned only twice, the diagram does not appear to be a significant notion for Foucault.

However, it is notable that Foucault’s expression “diagram of a power” is unique in that it relates power to a visual and representative entity. This is where Deleuze catches the diagram’s unique position in \textit{Surveiller et punir}. Both the military camp and the Panopticon are observatories that allow power to be exerted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., p.173 (Eng. p.171)
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p.174 (Eng. p.171)
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p.174 (Eng. p.171)
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.207 (Eng. p.205)
\end{itemize}
in a certain way. Conventionally, we think that power is something exerted by a subject or an authority. However, Foucault sees power as effected through an architectural structure. A certain type of architecture makes a certain group of people ‘visible’ who were not within the boundary of regulation in the past. Power operates on people through their visibility. Foucault raises the common theme that lies behind all models that adopt surveillance as their way of controlling people:

A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control - to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them.20

From this, we can see these models are used to regulate people inside a certain architecture or structure. Along with this description, Foucault provides actual images of the Panopticon (Figure 1) and the military camp (Figure 2). They appear to be diagrams in the ordinary sense of the word. Also, Foucault neither emphasizes the diagram as a significant concept nor gives a precise and unique meaning to it. However, while these illustrations appear to be diagrams in the

20 Ibid., p.174 (Eng. p.172)
normal sense of the word, Foucault’s approach implies that they already go beyond the ordinary sense of the word. Here, Foucault’s interest is the type of architecture that allows power to operate in a certain way. In the context of Foucault, it is the diagram that implies these power relations. Although it is not explicit, the relation between the diagram and power that Deleuze radicalizes has its seed in Foucault’s thought.

1.2. Diagram: A map of relations between forces

Foucault’s thought on power provides a strong impetus for Deleuze to develop the diagram’s association with force. Deleuze analyzes how Foucault’s conception departs from the traditional notion of power. Firstly, his analysis posits that power is not possessed by a subject or an authority like a property. Traditionally, power is understood as a privilege held exclusively by some class or individual. However, Deleuze describes how Foucault views power as a strategy which is effected by various techniques and dispositions. This can be supported with the example of the Panopticon. The Panopticon controls people inside it by making them feel that they are under ceaseless surveillance. This is made possible by its peculiar architectural structure which is a result of technique and disposition. Secondly, power is not localizable. This means that power is not located in the geographical or social centre of a nation, but is dispersed around a society.
According to Deleuze, Foucault’s power is omnipresent and permeates into the finest grains of the society, not restricted to a central state. Rather, even a state or a central authority is a consequence of dispersed power. Thirdly, power doesn’t have any attribute or essence, but exists through its relations. “As the postulate of essence or of attribute, power would have an essence and be an attribute, which would qualify those who possess it (dominators) as opposed to those on whom it is practiced (dominated).”\(^{21}\) However, power is operational, and only has relations as its constituents. Power is the set of relations between forces that traverse not only the dominated people but also the dominator.

In this analysis, we can discover that Deleuze draws force into his analysis of power and specifies the relation between force and power. According to Deleuze, power is defined as “a relation between forces,”\(^ {22}\) namely, power indicates the relation which exists between multiple forces. Then what is this force facilitates power? For Deleuze, force is not a substance but exists within relations with other forces, exerting itself only to other forces. It does not have any other object or subject.\(^ {23}\) What’s more, “force defines itself by its very capacity to affect other forces (to which it is related) and to be affected by other forces.”\(^ {24}\) Deleuze

\(^{21}\) *Foucault*, p.35 (Eng. p.27)

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p.77 (Eng. p.70)

\(^{23}\) Ibid., p.77 (Eng. p.70)

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p.78 (Eng. p.71)
states that relations between forces or power relations can be expressed in various
ways: “to incite, to induce, to seduce, to make easy or difficult, to enlarge or limit,
to make more or less probable, and so on.”\textsuperscript{25} This means that the operations of
forces are expressed as various actions and effects that we face every day, rather
than coercion or violence. Thereby, force can be understood as “any capacity to
produce a change… whether this capacity and its products are physical,
psychological, mystical, artistic, philosophical, conceptual, social, economic, legal
or whatever.”\textsuperscript{26} Force can either actively affect other forces or passively be
affected by other forces, and these active or passive relations between forces is
power.

Foucault explains how power is in effect; however, he does not mention
what power is composed of. However, we can understand that Deleuze’s
conceiving of power as a relation between forces implies that power should be
understood at a microscopic level. We can avoid the possible misunderstandings
about power which result from its conventional formulation Also, power exists as
‘relation,’ not as substance. These relations between forces, or power relations are
“microphysical, strategic, multipunctual and diffuse.”\textsuperscript{27} Viewing that power is
composed of microphysical elements and that it is also microphysical, Deleuze

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p.77 (Eng. p.70)

\textsuperscript{26} Parr, Adrian, editor. \textit{The Deleuze Dictionary}, Edinburgh University Press, 2010. p.111

\textsuperscript{27} Foucault, p.44 (Eng. p.36)
draws a clear boundary between the traditional concept of power and Foucault’s power.

Interestingly, based on the redirection of power to the frame of force, Deleuze defines the diagram as “the map of relations between forces.” The diagram is a map that encompasses these microphysical relations between forces, “which proceeds by primary non-localizable relations and at every moment passes through every point.” Deleuze suggests the Panopticon as an example of the diagram. However, this does not imply that the diagram corresponds to a single architecture – a prison or a military camp. Here, we can find that Deleuze radicalizes the definition of the Panopticon and the diagram. Deleuze focuses on the fact that the Panoptic mechanism traversed across the society, applied and became prevalent in the 18th century. Following from this, Deleuze abstracts the disciplinary function of the Panopticon, and defines the Panopticon as follows: “the pure function of imposing a particular taste or conduct on a multiplicity of particular individuals, provided simply that the multiplicity is small in number and the space limited and confined.” Therefore, for Deleuze, the function of the Panopticon is not “to see without being seen” anymore. Deleuze names this pure

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28 Ibid., p.44 (Eng. p.36)

29 Ibid., p.44 (Eng. p.36)

30 Ibid., p.79 (Eng. p.72)
function diagram, and states that the diagram is “detached from any specific use.” The diagram does not indicate a single architecture or structure anymore. Rather, the diagram is “a map, a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field” which indicates the microphysical relations between forces.

Let’s briefly summarize what has been described so far. Deleuze derived his idea of the diagram from Foucault; however, Deleuze goes further by viewing the diagram as the map of relations between forces or pure function. Whereas Foucault’s focus is on the mechanism of how power is effected through visibility, Deleuze is interested in how the mechanisms of control permeate social life in its entirety.

1.2.1. The common cause of the visible and the articulable

In line with this formulation of the diagram, Deleuze points out that the diagram operates as a common cause of the visible and the articulable. The visible and the articulable are derived from Foucault’s non-discursive formation and discursive formation. The visible, or non-discursive formation and the articulable, or discursive formation are the two axes of knowledge for Foucault. According to Deleuze’s analysis, Foucault assumes the priority of the discursive formation over the non-discursive formation before writing *Surveiller et punir*. However, Deleuze

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31 Ibid., p.42 (Eng. p.34)
points out that *Surveiller et punir* emphasizes the importance of the visible or non-discursive formation. Deleuze thinks that the significance of *Surveiller et punir* lies in the discovery of the visible, and the operation of power through visibility. Through this discovery, the visible is elevated as having an equivalent position with the articulable. Here, Deleuze raises a question: if the visible and the articulable are set as two axes of knowledge, how is the mutual intersection between these two irreducible forms made possible? This is where the diagram is called for as a common cause of the visible and the articulable.

The discursive formation is an “ensemble of statements that belong to the same system of formation.” On the other hand, the non-discursive formation refers to what “surround them [discursive formations] and serve as a general element for them”, such as “institutions, political events, economic practices and processes.” Deleuze analyzes how in *L'archéologie du savoir*, Foucault emphasizes the significance of the discursive formation while treating the visible as something negative and minor, the ‘non-discursive formation.’ In his earlier work *L'archéologie du savoir*, Foucault suggests the concept of discursive formation for his archaeological analysis. His archaeological analysis is distinguished from archaeology in the normal sense. Foucault states its aim as

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32 *L'archéologie du savoir*, p.141

33 Ibid., p.205 (Eng. p.157)

34 *Foucault*, p.40 (Eng. p.31)
follows: “archaeological analysis individualizes and describes discursive formations. That is, it must compare them, oppose them to one another in the simultaneity in which they are presented, distinguish them from those that do not belong to the same time-scale, relate them, on the basis of their specificity, to the non-discursive practices that surround them and serve as a general element for them.”35 As we can see, discursive formation is the primary subject of the archaeological analysis that Foucault was interested in, and non-discursive formation is meaningful to the extent that it contributes to the analysis of discursive formations.

However, the non-discursive formation gets its own positive status through Deleuze’s rereading of *Surveiller et punir* and the idea of the diagram which is inspired by Foucault’s work. Deleuze uses a few synonyms that are essentially indicating the same thing: the visible corresponds to non-discursive formation, and the articulable corresponds to discursive formation.36 However, the visible receives a more elaborate role as one of the axes of knowledge, whereas non-discursive formation is roughly defined in terms of the discursive formation. I argue that Deleuze uses the visible instead of the non-discursive formation in most

36 See the following excerpt: “It is *Archaeology of Knowledge* which will draw out the methodological conclusions and present the generalized theory of the two elements of stratification: the articulable and the visible, the discursive formations and the non-discursive formations…” *Foucault*, p.57 (Eng. p.49)
cases in order to highlight the positivity and independence of the visible, to avoid its diminution as subordinate to discursive formation: “This book [L’archéologie du savoir], however, seems to grant the statement a radical primacy. The bands of visibility are now designated only in a negative way, as ‘non-discursive formations’ situated in a space which is complementary only to a field of statements.” As we will see in what follows, I argue that it is Deleuze who makes this more lucid through his active rereading.

We can discover the origins of Deleuze’s interpretation which elevates the visible as a critical element of knowledge in Surveiller et punir, where Foucault explains the early stage of the development of observatories:

Side by side with the major technology of the telescope, the lens and the light beam, which were an integral part of the new physics and cosmology, there were the minor techniques of multiple and intersecting observations, of eyes that must see without being seen; using techniques of subjection and methods of exploitation, an obscure art of light and the visible was secretly preparing a new knowledge of man.38

While the technologies adopted to the observatories were documented in the history of science, a “new knowledge,” which was not documented so far, slowly

37 Foucault, p.57 (Eng. p.49)

38 Surveiller et punir, p.173 (Eng. p.171)
began to appear due to the concurrent scientific development. In this section, Foucault focused on the “new knowledge” that differs from articulated knowledge: not only what we can read or say, but also ‘what we can see’ can be a part of knowledge. In *L’archéologie du savoir*, the visible, or the non-discursive formation has its significance in so far as it is associated with the discursive formation. However, Foucault seems to suggest in *Surveiller et punir* that the visible which is not completely subsumed by the field of science has its own process of development and grounds another axis of knowledge. This is where Deleuze focuses on the non-discursive formation or the visible, and renders it an equivalent status with the discursive formation or the articulable.

The main focus of *Surveiller et punir* is penal law and prison around the 18th and 19th centuries, which exemplifies the relation between the articulable and the visible. Penal law “is a system of language that classifies and translates offences and calculates sentences; a family of statements” which is involved in the domain of the articulable.39 On the other hand, prison is associated with visibility as its role is to detain criminals and make them visible. Against the common belief that the penal law gave birth to the prison which presumes the priority of the articulable, however, Foucault asserts that the two developed separately according to their own logic; prison emerged from the mechanism of disciplinary power

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39 *Foucault*, p.39 (Eng. p.32)
whereas penal law developed from “the theme of a punitive society.” Not only did penal law and prison take different forms, they also underwent different processes of development. In fact, according to Foucault, ‘the delinquent’, which was believed to be produced by penal law, was the object of the penal law that the prison provided. Before this, the penal law aimed to punish people rather than to confine people. However, by providing the people to whom the penal law can be applied, the prison became linked to penal law, bringing the two into mutual codependence. The penal law – the articulable – did not unilaterally determine the emergence of the prison and the delinquent, but the prison – the visible – had its own separate process so that it could also influence the penal law by providing the delinquent to whom the penal law could be applied.

Here, Deleuze raises the question of how the two different forms – the articulable and the visible – can mutually intersect and modify each other. For Deleuze, the existence of the delinquent was not sufficient cause for the mutual contact between the visible and the articulable, as the visible and the articulable have completely different forms and different processes of formation. If the irreducible forms of penal law and the prison had a separate logic of development, how did the intersection between the two become probable, with the resulting

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40 *Surveiller et punir*, p.260 (Eng. pp.255-256)

41 Ibid., p.260 (Eng. p.256)

42 *Foucault*, p.41 (Eng. p.33)
intersection so common in society? In *Foucault*, Deleuze is interested in unearthing more fundamental and general principles to explain this, and departs from the specific case of the penal law and the prison.

This is where Deleuze comes up with the diagram as a key to solve this problem of irreducibility between two kinds of formation. We have seen that the diagram is defined as a “map of relations between forces.” Adding to this, the diagram, or the abstract machine\(^43\) is also “defined by its informal functions and matter and in terms of form makes no distinction between content and expression, a discursive formation and a non-discursive formation.”\(^44\) On the one hand, the prison as an architecture is a tangible object which is formed in a certain way with physical matter so that we can recognize and designate it as it is. On the other hand, punishment, which is articulated in the penal law and imposed to people, is not a visible object but incorporeal function. The prison can be understood as formed matter, and punishment can be understood as formalized function. However, the diagram is a dimension that ignores all kind of formations, both physical and discursive, and where the articulable and the visible can be formalized.

\(^43\) In some cases, Deleuze uses the expression ‘abstract machine’ instead of ‘the diagram.’ Abstract machine and the diagram are equivalent but each expression reveals distinct aspects. The expression ‘abstract machine’ puts more emphasis on its abstract feature, in other words, non-concrete or unformed features. However, as a ‘machine,’ it enables the formalization of matter and functions at the same time. On the other hand, the diagram emphasizes its features as a ‘map,’ that overlaps with concrete reality.

\(^44\) Ibid., p.42 (Eng. p.34)
Then how does the diagram operate as the common cause of the visible and the articulable? We have seen that the diagram is defined as the map of relations between forces. Whereas the visible and the articulable together hold a stable status, “the microphysics of power, on the contrary, exposes the relations between forces in an informal and non-stratified element.”\textsuperscript{45} Deleuze states that the diagram is neither knowable nor sensible, but is an “\textit{a priori} element” which is presupposed by the visible and the articulable.\textsuperscript{46} Having “mobile, faint and diffuse” features, the diagram agitates the fixed and stable status and modifies the visible and the articulable.\textsuperscript{47} Power “does not itself speak and see, it makes us see and speak.” In other words, as the map of relations between forces, the diagram grounds the knowledge – the visible and the articulable – and works as a cause of the two.

Deleuze clarifies that the visible should be considered of equal importance as the articulable and develops the concept of the diagram to ground this, referring to Foucault’s work as a primary source. Deleuze argues that, like the articulable, the visible can be positively defined in its own terms, and is not conceptually subservient to or determined by the articulable. This analysis demands a common principle that can explain their mutual impact. The diagram, as the common cause

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.90 (Eng. p.84)

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p.90 (Eng. p.84)

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p.90 (Eng. p.84)
of the visible and the articulable, explains how the two irreducible forms can mutually intersect and influence each other.

So far, we have examined how the diagram acts as a cause of the visible and the articulable, enabling the mutual intersection between the two. This is opposed to the view that the articulable has superiority over the visible and unidirectionally determines the visible. As a map of relations between forces, the diagram works as a common ground of the visible and the articulable of a society. The concept of the diagram is significant in that it supports the visible as an equivalent of the articulable, while elucidating the mechanisms by which forces are in effect and a society is formed.

### 1.2.2. Asignifying: the deviation from signifier–signified relation

The diagram in *Foucault* essentially pivots on Foucault’s thought, although Deleuze builds on this foundation with his own interpretation, which situates the concept within his broader philosophical framework. However, a more specific, contextual meaning is detailed in *Mille Plateaux*, while retaining the essence as described in “un nouveau cartographe”. The diagram in *Mille Plateaux*
maintains its feature as an ensemble of informal functions and matter.\textsuperscript{48} While the diagram in \textit{Foucault} is bound to the reading of Foucault, the diagram in \textit{Mille Plateaux} is developed further, by way of a comparison with the signification and signifier-signified relation. The asignifying aspect of the diagram is important here, since it is a central feature of the diagram as used in \textit{Francis Bacon}.

Deleuze’s conception of the diagram facilitates his criticism toward a stubborn tradition of thought based on principles inherited from a number of disciplines. This is asserted in several ways in \textit{Mille Plateaux}. “The principal strata binding human beings are the organism, signification and interpretation, and subjectification and subjection.”\textsuperscript{49} We are surrounded by many kinds of givens that restrict us. We have a concrete concept of ‘self’ that we normally do not doubt. Likewise, signification is another of these givens: we tend to think and see the world based on a signifier-signified relation, a concept that has been handed to us without significant consideration and has become deeply rooted in our thought. For Deleuze, we are immersed in signification, never thinking to question the framework that structures our conceptual worlds. Similarly, we naturally accept the distinction between the organs of human body; however, this classification can be

\textsuperscript{48} In \textit{Mille Plateaux}, Deleuze and Guattari use the expression ‘abstract machine’ which is equivalent of ‘the diagram’ in many cases. Sometimes, abstract machine is suggested as ‘diagrammatic.’ We can sense that the diagram, or abstract machine’s active aspect as a ‘machine’ that enables the formation of matter and functions is more emphasized through Deleuze and Guattari’s frequent use of the term abstract machine in \textit{Mille Plateaux}.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p.167 (Eng. p.134)
tentative when we think of our body as a whole. According to Deleuze, these kinds of conceptual schema can become obstacles to thought, or even to life itself, if they are accepted without criticism. They constitute a schematic regime that limits the possibility of thought and action beyond its borders. As we will see further in Ch.3., the artist faces analogous obstacles to free thought and conception. Artists inevitably have preconceptions such as figurative givens and clichés that occupy their minds, and these place limits on their work.

Deleuze and Guattari compares the diagram with index, icon and symbol, which originate in Peirce. Peirce distinguishes these three concepts by the relations between signifier and signified, and Deleuze and Guattari compare them with the relation formed by the diagram. First, when the signifier and the signified have contiguity, the signifier is classified as index. For example, smoke is an index of fire. Next, icon indicates a signifier which has similitude with its signified. We can easily come up with a case of icon in many paintings which represent an object and have similarity with it. Still-life paintings that imitate certain objects such as an apple or a glass can be examples of icon. Lastly, as for symbol, the signifier and the signified follow conventional rules. In the case of symbol, signifier and signified are not similar or contiguous but have a certain association as a pigeon is associated with peace. At the bottom, index, icon and symbol presuppose a

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50 Peirce views that a diagram is an example of an icon as it contains similarity with the original object it represents.
signifier-signified relationship in common. Comparing the diagram with those three semiotic relations, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that the diagram is not subsumed by the distinction between signifier and signified.

While explaining the diagram, Deleuze refers to the two representative regimes that dominate our thought. First, there is a physical regime that divides substance and form. For example, in the case of ice, it has ‘water’ as its substance and ‘solid status’ as its form. Or we can divide ice at the level of the particle. At whichever level we conceive of ice, as ‘solidified water’ or ‘aggregated particles’, we presuppose the distinction between substance and form. This presumption of substance and form is dominant in the way we see things. On the other hand, the semiotic regime divides contents and expressions. When we see a cube of ice, the actual ice corresponds to content and the name ‘ice’ corresponds to expression. We can come up with many examples of substance and form, and contents and expressions. These are the dualistic regimes of physics and semiotics that constitute our thought.

Based on a critical attitude toward those regimes, Deleuze and Guattari declare that “we must therefore arrive at something in the assemblage itself that is still more profound than these sides and can account for both of the forms in presupposition, forms of expression or regimes of signs (semiotic systems) and

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51 *Mille Plateaux*, p.177 (Eng. p.531)
forms of content or regimes of bodies (physical systems).”

Through their discourse on the diagram, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to promulgate a more fundamental dimension which is ‘before’ all formations, and in which everything, whether physical or nonphysical, is informal and non-discernible. In Mille Plateaux, the diagram is proposed as the profound ground on which the signifier-signified relationship ceases to exist.

Deleuze and Guattari state that the diagram disregards the division between substance and form, and content and expression. “There are no regimes of signs on the diagrammatic level,” because there are no forms of expression or forms of content in the diagram. Here, the diagram’s asignifying feature is revealed in that it vanishes the existing system of meaning. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the diagram operates only by matter and function, not by substance and form, or content and expression. Matter is not physically formed, and functions are not semiotically formalized. In the diagram, there is no distinction between content and expression. For example, consider the example of a sound. Sound exists as a continuum that, when undivided and rendered meaningless, can

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52 Ibid., p.175 (Eng. pp.140-141)
53 Ibid., p.176 (Eng. p.141)
54 Ibid., p.178 (Eng. p.142)
55 Ibid., p.176 (Eng. p.141)
56 Ibid., p.176 (Eng. p.141)
be understood as the diagram. The moment a chunk of sound is divided into syllables, it attains meaning.

So far, the diagram’s asignifying feature is negatively elucidated. However, Deleuze and Guattari also introduce the concept “trait” which is a basic unit of the diagram, and elaborate on the mechanism of how the diagram functions. Deleuze and Guattari draw on the trait concept to show how the link between expression and content is possible. Traits function as an agency between expression and content, but the traits themselves do not signify anything. Just as lines compose a diagram in its conventional sense, traits together compose the diagram. There are two kinds of traits – the trait of content and the trait of expression. In the regime of semiotics, expression and content take different forms, thus they can be distinguished. However, the two kinds of traits cannot be strictly divided, as traits of content and traits of expression can change their characteristics while interacting with each other; a trait “carries it [the other kind of trait] off, raises it to its own power.” Coexisting with formed contents and formalized expressions, the diagram enacts changes by mutual interactions among traits of content and of expression. The diagram “conjugates” the traits of expression and

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57 Ibid., p.176 (Eng. p.141)

58 ‘Trait’ appears again in *Francis Bacon* to indicate the lines on canvas that don’t imply any kind of signification.

59 *Mille Plateaux*, p.177 (Eng. p.142)
content, and these traits enable the connection between contents and expressions.\textsuperscript{60} However, the diagram, which has traits as its only component, does not signify anything.

In the previous section, we have seen how the diagram operates as a common cause of the visible and the articulable. While the diagram acts as a cause, it does not cease at the moment of causing the visible and the articulable. The diagram enables a continual rebirth of the visible and the articulable through its instability. The diagram, therefore, has two functions: it vanishes the existing system of meaning, and it functions to construct “a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality.” In this sense, it “does not function to represent, even something real.”\textsuperscript{61} Again, the reality that the diagram bears is not simply a repetition of the existing system that represents itself, rather it is newly engendered every time by the diagram with which it coexists. This ‘asignifying’ diagram is no longer restrained by the signifier-signified relation.

1.3. Functional aspects of the diagram

The diagram discussed in \textit{Foucault} is inevitably grounded in the social field, referring mainly to Foucault’s arguments around the prison and penal law of

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p.177 (Eng. p.141)

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p.177 (Eng. p.142)
the 18th century, which was Deleuze’s main focus in the work. Despite that, Deleuze does go on to explore the functional role of the diagram as a common cause of the articulable and the visible, that enables their mutual influence and fusion. Also, the imbalance between the articulable and the visible in Foucault is caused by the presupposed priority of the articulable, which is overcome by Deleuze’s conception of the diagram, under which the articulable no longer unilaterally determines the visible – rather, they are of equivalent importance. Deleuze problematizes this conventional thought where the discursive domain, the articulable for Deleuze, takes priority over other elements, entitling the articulable to determine the rest. Deleuze views this conventional idea as underlying Foucault’s past works, and *Surveiller et punir* reveals the transition of Foucault’s thought as the visible is raised to the surface, with Foucault considering it as another axis of knowledge.

In *Mille Plateaux*, Deleuze goes further with his diagram concept as developed in *Foucault*. Rather than restricting it to the social field, the diagram is employed at a more general level of conception. As an informal dimension that ignores any kind of signification, the diagram exists everywhere any preceding signification is established and prevents people from thinking about it. The diagram is another layer that Deleuze interposes into the existing world of signification. It does not function to demolish the signification; rather, as a completely informal dimension which not only subsumes the physical world but also the world of signs; the diagram is ‘before’ all signification, yet coexists with the world of signification
at the same time. From this point of view, art is also not an exception as it has its own history of practices, conventions and theories that inevitably affect the artists when they produce artworks.

In sum, we can understand Deleuze’s diagram as outlined in *Francis Bacon* with reference to its two functions. Firstly, by including all functions and matter before they take specific forms, the diagram exists as an overlooked domain which was not taken into account despite its importance. In the case of Foucault’s thought, although previously disregarded as of lesser importance, the visible is raised as an equivalent of the articulable, and the diagram resolves the problem of how these irreducible forms can influence each other. The diagram can be analogously applied to cases in which the presupposed priority of one hides the other and disturbs its proper understanding. Secondly, by setting up the dimension ‘before’ various existing systems of representation, Deleuze’s thought on the diagram is significant in that it enables us to build on a foundation without any kind of restricting presupposed signification. The significance of the diagram lies in its destructive and constructive features, which liberate us from our invisible restraints. Retrospectively, therefore, I think the diagram in *Foucault* can be regarded as a case of the application of Deleuze’s diagram to Foucault’s thought. Although it was in *Foucault* that the concept of diagram initially appears, the diagram is further expanded and defined as an independent concept of Deleuze, abstracted from any application to a specific case. Therefore, the diagram’s role as a common cause of the visible and the articulable can be understood as a specific
case where the diagram initially exemplifies its function.

I will argue that this perspective is maintained when Deleuze analyzes paintings in *Francis Bacon*. Through a pictorial application of the diagram, I argue that the hidden axioms that overwhelmed the paintings – the prioritization of the optical over the manual – is problematized. Also, the diagram provides a way to begin from a ground where the figurative givens that restrict the artist are destroyed and both the manual and the optical are compatible. In the next chapter, we will see how Deleuze reorganized the past paintings according to his new standard of the manual and the optical, which will ground the essential position of the diagram in painting.⁶²

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⁶² Éric Alliez’s approach toward the diagram in “Ontology of the Diagram and Biopolitics of Philosophy: A Research Programme on Transdisciplinarity” focuses on the role of a work of art itself in the field of art, or more broadly, in human life. In regard to this approach, the diagram’s function is placed under the range of the human life in broad sense, to which the diagram in *Mille Plateaux* has a close affinity. In this thesis, I focus on the role of the diagram as it appears in the process of painting and the context of *Francis Bacon*. 
2. Deleuze’s theory of painting

2.1. Aim of painting: the capture of forces

Deleuze asserts that there is a basic nature that every genre of artwork has in common. *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991) is Deleuze and Guattari’s latest work where they sum up their position on art in general. Before that, Deleuze wrote about particular art genres or specific artists in several works. In *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, Deleuze states that the common aim of art is “to extract a bloc of sensations.”63 Above all, sensation is the pivotal point of every artwork for Deleuze.

What is the sensation that a painting or artwork should extract? Sensation is conventionally defined with reference to perception, such as touch, taste, smell, noise, etc., as enabled by our sense organs. However, despite the fact that sensation is usually associated with the subject, Deleuze argues that sensation doesn’t solely belong to a subject. Rather, Deleuze states that “sensation has one face turned toward the subject (the nervous system, vital movement, "instinct," "temperament" a whole vocabulary common to both Naturalism and Cezanne) and one face turned toward the object (the "fact," the place, the event).”64 From the viewpoint of a

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63 *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p.158 (Eng. p.167)

64 *Francis Bacon*, p.39 (Eng. p.34)
subject, sensation pertains to the subject’s body and nervous system. However, Deleuze tries to complement the notion of sensation by viewing it from a differing perspective. Viewed from the objective perspective, when the subject senses something where the body is located, the body is in fact going through a change or a movement inside or around the body, although the change or the movement are minimal and they cannot be captured by others. That is, in terms of the place that the body is located, we can say that something is happening at that place when the body senses something. From this objective point of view, sensation is an ‘event’, rather than a mere subject-driven percept.

If a painting, or even any artwork, should be ‘a bloc of sensation’, how can an artist achieve this? To understand this, we can take the view that sensation does not belong to a subject, but is rather an ‘event’ that happens inside or around a body. Whatever a sensation indicates, however, it is clear that the sensation only lasts for the moment when it is there, and it soon disappears. This is the point at which the role of the artist gains its significance. Artists preserve the sensation by utilizing material. That is, through the process of producing artwork with material, the material undergoes the sensation, which is an event happening around the artist’s body through his or her act. In this way, the sensation is transferred into the material and it can be preserved with the material as long as the material lasts. There is a remarkable statement that helps to understand Deleuze’s ontology of artwork: “It is true that every work of art is a monument, but here the monument is
not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it.”  

A work of art is not a memory of the past, or a statement of opinion, or an expression of feeling, but an eternal preservation of sensation.

But why is art supposed to be about sensation, excluding other possibilities for the matter of concept? In Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the common aim of science, philosophy and art is to confront chaos. Chaos is defined by “the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes.” Without any order, we cannot protect ourselves from chaos. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the three domains – science, philosophy and art – impose order on chaos. However, the domains of science, philosophy and art are separate and thus each of them has its own differing method. According to Deleuze, function is a means of science and concept is a means of philosophy. Lastly, sensation is a means of art. They confront chaos in their own ways, which are not reducible to each other. Deleuze and Guattari states that “perhaps the peculiarity of art is to pass through the finite in order to rediscover, to

65 Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?, p.158 (Eng. p.167)

66 Ibid., p.186 (Eng. p.197)

67 Ibid., p.111 (Eng. p.118)

68 Ibid., p.189 (Eng. p.200)
restore the infinite.”⁶⁹ Works of art can confront chaos by preserving sensation: “it is certainly not an allegory but the act of painting that appears as a painting.”⁷⁰ As we have seen, for Deleuze, sensation is an ‘event’ that happened at a moment in time. A work of art presents the viewers with the sensation preserved in the artwork, and it does not aim to deliver intellectual meaning by allegory.

We can more clearly understand this assignment by looking at Deleuze’s criticism toward conceptual art with the ground that it cannot handle the problem of both sensation and concept properly. Deleuze indirectly mentions Joseph Kosuth’s works as one of the examples of conceptual art.⁷¹ In One and Three Chairs (Figure 3), we can see a real chair, a same-sized photograph of it and its dictionary definition. This evokes a viewer’s idea about the relationship between referent, image and language, without intervention of sensation. For Deleuze, it subordinates the problem of sensation to the viewer’s opinion, reducing the existence of art to concept. For Deleuze, producing artwork is not about making a certain form whereas many theorists and artists at that time pored over the matter of form or concept. Although material is indispensable to artwork, it is “only the

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⁶⁹ Ibid., p.186 (Eng. p.197)

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.186 (Eng. p.197)

⁷¹ Deleuze doesn’t mention the name of the artist clearly, but the description that “things, images or cliches, propositions-a thing, its photograph on the same scale and in the same place, its dictionary definition” supposedly indicates Joseph Kosuth’s work One and Three Chairs (Figure 3).
facto condition”72 and what makes an artwork exist as an art is sensation. What Deleuze argues is that the artworks are supposed to be about sensation, but neither about reproducing and manipulating forms nor results of rational thought.

Therefore, we can also understand the ontology of artwork through the association between force and sensation. In Francis Bacon, we also find Deleuze briefly writing that art has “a common problem” which is “to capture forces.”73 Sensation and force are not irreducibly identical, but sensation is ontologically dependent on force. In Ch.1, we discussed how the world is full of forces which themselves are not perceptible or visible. According to Deleuze, sensation is produced when forces traverse the body.74 The sensation is generated when the invisible forces traverse the body, and it is the same when it comes to the process of making artwork. Even when a person is standing still, forces are restlessly traversing the body and sensation is produced.

The relationship between sensation and force is well revealed in Deleuze’s idea of the ‘Body without Organs’. For Deleuze, the body is contingent on the operation of forces and thus organs of our bodies are provisional. “… at a certain level, an organ will be determined depending on the force it encounters; and this organ will change if the force itself changes, or if it moves to another level. In short,
the body without organs is not defined by the absence of organs, nor is it defined solely by the existence of an indeterminate organ; it is finally defined by the temporary and provisional presence of determinate organs. In our daily lives, we naturally live with our organs as if they were originally assigned their own role: eyes have the role of seeing, and ears have the role of hearing, together composing an organism. However, Deleuze points out that this separation between organs is merely a result of the representation of an organized body that hinders people from thinking beyond its boundaries. As the opposing part of the organism, the ‘Body without Organs’ indicates a state which is “before (avant)” the organized body, where the components of a body are not discernible. Whereas the organized body represents the state where we clearly recognize each organ, in Body without Organs, there is no distinction between organs. However, it does not mean that the Body without Organs exists outside our ordinary body. It rather shows that the distinction between organs can be tentative. What makes the organ exist as an organ is the operation of invisible forces. Forces are everywhere and they, of course, operate through our body. Here, forces are omnipresent and are not something exerted by other elements or subjects, but they exert themselves on others. This is not restricted to the human body; for Deleuze, all things in general are temporary and not of fixed substance, and this is the reality that ought to be revealed through

75 Ibid., p.50 (Eng. p.48)

76 Ibid., p.47 (Eng. p.45)
As discussed, sensation is the inevitable result of the movement of forces. As the work of art is preserved sensation, it too engages forces. To clarify the bodily nature of the work of art, Deleuze contrasts ‘screaming’ with ‘horror’. When someone screams, we hear the voice and see his or her facial expression. The screaming is an event that happening in a particular place, and can be understood as an operation of forces. However, horror is a feeling, a secondary effect that is aroused by watching a spectacle. This is distinguished from the bodily action that one goes through. Screaming and horror can appear at the same time, but the two are totally different in that the former is an ‘event’ happening at a place whereas horror is a ‘representation’ of someone’s emotions and not an event. Deleuze thinks that Bacon painted screaming, not horror in *Study after Velazquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X*77 (Figure 4). This is because sensation clearly differs from sentiment or something sensational. If a painter aims to paint the sentiment of horror, or to arouse a viewer’s horror, what he or she draws is a representation of the concept: “Sensation is the opposite of the facile and the ready-made, the cliché, but also of the “sensational,” the spontaneous, etc.”78

In this section, we have examined how a work of art should preserve sensation. That is, it should capture invisible forces. A work of art gives order to

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77 Ibid., p.54 (Eng. p.53)
78 Ibid., p.39 (Eng. p.34)
chaos by means of sensation. Deleuze is skeptical of conceptual art in that it cannot handle the problem of sensation well. Also, sensation is distinguished from sentiment or something sensational.

2.2. ‘The optical’ and ‘the manual’ in paintings

2.2.1. The Modern Convention of the Optical

Deleuze thinks that if a painting aims to be about sensation, it should first avoid figuration. Figuration or representation inevitably entails a relationship between a certain image and the object which the image is supposedly illustrating. Also, if there are several images which compose a whole, a narrative will obtrude. To be specific, if there are several figures in one painting, we tend to assume the relationship between them and derive a story from this. For example, when we are assuming whether the two figures on a certain painting are enemies, the assumption is derived from our preconceived ideas. In this way, figuration always involves illustrative and narrative features.

These features should be prevented because they hinder a painting’s own

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79 “The figurative (representation) implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them. Narration is the correlate of illustration. A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole.” Ibid., p.12 (Eng. pp.2-3)
role in addressing “reality,”80 or “matters of fact”81 which are not figurative, illustrative or narrative. What are the ‘matters of fact’ or the ‘reality’ that Deleuze addresses here? First, we should clearly distinguish this expression from what ‘matters of fact’ means in everyday life. When Deleuze mentions matters of fact, he does not mean if a certain event actually happened or not. It is about telling what is truly happening, without any intervention by our preconceptions that make us find figurative, illustrative and narrative features in the event. What is happening at a place, without any interpretation of our intelligence, is what Deleuze calls a matter of fact. According to Deleuze, painting is not about concept or conceptual thought but about force and sensation which is not graspable by our reason. Figuration contains illustrative and narrative features, and these features inevitably involve the intervention of our intelligence or ideas. To be precise, an illustration merely represents the object or the painter’s conception while it cannot include all the detail of it. On the other hand, a narrative feature entails a story that the painter wants to deliver to the viewer. This story is conceived by the painter, and the story abstracts some points that are regarded as important in an event. When a painting is narrative, it merely delivers the abstracted and interpreted information of an event. Therefore, a painting should avoid figuration if it aims not to be mere recapitulation of an idea. That is, in preserving a sensation and addressing a matter

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80 Ibid., p.12 (Eng. p.2)
81 Ibid., p.13 (Eng. p.4)
of fact, the artist should move along the axis of the visible, without straying onto the articulable.

To avoid figuration, there are two methods the painter can choose. However, referring to some aspects of Clement Greenberg’s formalist analysis, Deleuze points out that the matter of opticality has been predominant when appreciating and criticizing paintings. Traditional figurative paintings build a three-dimensional optical space which has a tactile referent inside.\textsuperscript{82} The tactile referent makes the viewer see depths, contours, forms and grounds in the painting. Through the tactile referent, the viewers can experience the two-dimensional figures on the surface of the painting as three-dimensional objects in space. However, abstract paintings lack the tactile referent and three-dimensional space. That said, abstract expressionist paintings have been commended by formalist critics as achieving pure opticality. However, Deleuze doesn’t agree with this stance and views that these paintings should be judged according to another standard, one related to the painter’s actions and physical process. This is linked to Deleuze’s idea that a work of art should contain sensation which can be understood as an event. For Deleuze, the manual plays a critical role in the consideration of sensation in terms of the appreciation and creation of paintings.

Deleuze points out that the abstract method allows the artist to avoid figuration. When Deleuze reviews Modernist paintings, he is especially conscious

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p.100 (Eng. p.107)
of Greenberg, and also refers to Michael Fried. Greenberg and Fried suggested that
Abstract Expressionist paintings are characterized by “strict opticality” or “the
creation of a purely optical space, exclusively optical, peculiar to “modern man.””\textsuperscript{83}
Greenberg explicitly reveals his stance of placing a high value on the matter of
form, and criticizes a position which prioritizes the theme or subject matter of the
painting: “The explicit comment on a historical event offered in Picasso’s Guernica
does not make it necessarily a better or richer work than an utterly "nonobjective"
painting by Mondrian.”\textsuperscript{84} (Figure 5) (Figure 6)

Emphasizing the significance of the nature of each medium, Greenberg
elevates the value of paintings that stick to their formal aspects.\textsuperscript{85} Since paintings
are fundamentally visual art, Greenberg views the optical or visual trait as the most
important for paintings. At the same time, however, paintings should also be
distinguished from sculptures. In terms of the formal aspect of figurative paintings,
they build a three-dimensional space on the canvas where the tactile referent is
located. The three dimensional space of traditional figurative paintings is no longer
essential to paintings, because the three-dimensional space pertains to sculptures,

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p.100 (Eng. p.186)

\textsuperscript{84} Greenberg, Clement. “Abstract, Representational, and so forth”, \textit{Art and Culture}, p.134

\textsuperscript{85} “It follows that a modernist work of art must try, in principle, to avoid dependence upon
any order of experience not given in the most essentially construed nature of its medium.
This means, among other things, renouncing illusion and explicitness. The arts are to
achieve concreteness, "purity," by acting solely in terms of their separate and irreducible
selves.” Greenberg, Clement. “The New Sculpture”, \textit{Art and Culture}, p.139
and these elements diminish the purity of paintings.

For this reason, Greenberg assesses paintings based on the standard of how far they fulfill the purity of the medium – with a two-dimensional surface: flatness.\textsuperscript{86} For Greenberg, these are achievements of Modernist paintings and among these works, the degree of achievement varies.\textsuperscript{87} Especially, Greenberg places a high value on American abstract expressionist paintings such as Jackson Pollock or Barnett Newman in that they achieved flatness to a high degree.\textsuperscript{88} Similarly, Fried, in his writing “Three American painters: Noland, Olitski, Stella”, emphasizes that Pollock’s works are ‘optical’. (Figure 7)

In a painting such as \textit{Number 1, 1948}, there is only a pictorial field so homogeneous, overall, and devoid both of recognizable objects and of abstract shapes that I want to call it optical, to distinguish it from the structured, essentially tactile pictorial field of previous modernist painting

\textsuperscript{86} Greenberg repeatedly argues his formalist perspective in his critiques contained in \textit{Art and Culture}.

\textsuperscript{87} In \textit{Francis Bacon}, some examples of abstract paintings – Kandinsky and Mondrian – and abstract expressionist paintings – Jackson Pollock and Morris Louis – are brought into Deleuze’s focus to be examined. As we can see, Deleuze is suggesting only a few representative examples of Modernist paintings which show a radical change of method or style compared to other paintings at that time. This places some limits on generalizing Deleuze’s description of ‘abstract paintings’ or ‘abstract expressionism’ to all of the paintings categorized accordingly. However, I think that these selective examples in \textit{Francis Bacon} well reveal the nature of the optical and the manual that Deleuze would like to compare. Therefore, I will limit the argument within the examples of the four artists, and focus on their examples.

\textsuperscript{88} See “Contribution to a Symposium” and “‘American-Type’ Painting” in \textit{Art and Culture}.
from Cubism to de Kooning and even Hans Hofmann. Pollock's field is optical because it addresses itself to eyesight alone. The materiality of his pigment is rendered sheerly visual, and the result is a new kind of space.89

Here, both Greenberg and Fried define opticality through the lack of a tactile referent and three-dimensional space. Because they lack these narrative and illustrative features of traditional figurative paintings, abstract expressionist paintings are considered highly optical.

According to this formalist perspective, those abstract expressionist paintings are examined based on the standard of opticality, which is defined as the lack of a tactile referent and three-dimensional space. In this sense, abstract expressionist paintings share the nature of opticality with Mondrian and Kandinsky’s painting in that they highlight the flatness of the canvas and construct a two-dimensional space.

2.2.2. Invasion of the manual

Deleuze disagrees with Greenberg’s argument that these paintings are optical, and argues that the opticality is incorrectly defined, a mistake caused by “a

89 Fried, Michael. “Three American painters: Noland, Olitski, Stella”, *Art and Objecthood*, p.224
quarrel over words, an ambiguity of words” that the word ‘opticality’ has. Greenberg and Fried defined opticality as a lack of tactile referent, and Deleuze states that this tendency is grounded upon their intention to rupture from an “extra-aesthetic criteria.” From the formalist point of view, paintings should focus on the nature of the medium itself; other elements regarding painting, which do not help explain the purity that a painting should achieve, do not have to be taken seriously. For example, the term ‘action painting’ evokes the method of a painter or process of painting rather than the painting itself as a final result. Greenberg is skeptical of the expression ‘action painting’ as it invokes the painter’s actions and the process of producing a painting. For Greenberg, a painting should be evaluated according only to the final result. However, Deleuze finds the expression ‘action painting’ aesthetically meaningful, maintaining a different position from Greenberg. Although both Greenberg and Deleuze positively evaluate Pollock’s paintings, the standards are completely different for them. Whereas Greenberg is interested in Pollock’s painting as a final result, Deleuze focuses on how Pollock’s painting was made.

This is where Deleuze invokes the matter of ‘the manual’ to render the painter’s action significant, something which was overlooked by the formalist perspective. The manual, in its literal sense, relates to something conducted by the painter’s hand that produces uncommon marks on the canvas. Methods can vary

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90 Francis Bacon, p.99 (Eng. p.107)
depending on the artists, however, the manual is showing its nature to the utmost in Pollock’s paintings. Pollock put the canvases on the floor and flung paint all over the canvas with sticks dipped into paint.91 For Bacon’s paintings, Deleuze describes the manual traits as follows: “It is here that the painter works with a rag, stick, brush, or sponge; it is here that he throws the paint with his hands. It is as if the hand assumed an independence and began to be guided by other forces, making marks that no longer depend on either our will or our sight.”92 In Jet of Water, one of Bacon’s paintings, the manual is quite explicitly exemplified as we can see the huge mark of thrown paint in the middle. (Figure 8) Bacon states that he made the mark by following method: “I collected an enormous amount of paint, and I didn’t really mix them, I put them all into a pot, and I had painted the background in, and I just threw the paint onto the canvas.”93 As he mentioned, he used the unusual method of throwing massive amount of paint onto the canvas and didn’t use elaborate brushstrokes to make the mark. The painter does not have to transfer the paint with his hand specifically; the essence of the manual lies in the painter’s use of his bodily force to make a certain mark.

Here, the manual is suggested as a counterpart of the visual or the optical.


92 Francis Bacon., p.100 (Eng. p.101)

93 Interviews with Francis Bacon, pp.162-164
The manual corresponds to the physical elements of a painting excluded by Greenberg’s formalist critique: “the human body is no longer postulated as the agent of space in either pictorial or sculptural art; now it is eyesight alone.”\textsuperscript{94} For the formalist, only the painting as an observed final result is aesthetically meaningful; the process of painting or the action of painters is not important. However, Deleuze disagrees with this and goes further by designating the manual as an essential part of a painting. Modernist paintings, which were restricted by the boundary of opticality, are examined again from the viewpoint of the manual. Thereby, as we will see, Pollock and Morris Louis’s paintings are characterized by the manual, not the merely optical.

Deleuze compares abstract expressionist paintings with abstract paintings, showing that the former embody the manual to the maximum and the latter embody the optical. In the case of abstract paintings, the optical becomes dominant and the role of the manual is minimized: “the abstract forms are part of a new and purely optical space that no longer even needs to be subordinate to manual or tactile elements.”\textsuperscript{95} The painter’s hand works to draw the lines and shapes, following the painter’s eye and not moving on its own. In this sense, the hand is subordinated to the eyes and does not get its own position in abstract paintings. As a result, abstract

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{94} Greenberg, Clement. “The New Sculpture”, \textit{Art and Culture}, p.143

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Francis Bacon}, p.97 (Eng. p.103)
\end{footnotesize}
paintings create a “symbolic code.” For example, in the case of Kandinsky, vertical lines and white color symbolize activity and horizontal lines and black color symbolize inertia. (Figure 9) Conforming to these codes, the colors and lines on the canvas imply something other than themselves. In this sense, abstract paintings compose something “cerebral” which is conceived in the painter’s mind.

On the other hand, abstract expressionist paintings go to the other extreme. The hand is not subordinated to the eye at all; contrarily, the hand is fully liberated and the eye cannot grasp what is on the canvas. There isn’t any tactile referent or code that symbolizes something. A painting dominated by the manual is described as follows: “the painting remains a visual reality, but what is imposed on sight is a space without form and a movement without rest, which the eye can barely follow, and which dismantles the optical.” For instance, in Iris by Morris Louis, we can see transparent colors are poured and the stains are overlapped. (Figure 10) In this case, the shapes of these stains are not determined by the painter’s eye and the

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96 Ibid., p.97 (Eng. p.104)

97 Ibid., p.97 (Eng. p.104) Originally, Kandinsky writes about white and black colors, and horizontal and vertical lines as follows: “I call black the symbol of death and white, of birth. The same thing can with complete justification be said about the horizontal and the vertical—low and high. The former is lying; the latter is standing, walking, moving about, finally climbing upward. Supporting—growing. Passive—active. Relatively: feminine—masculine.” See Point and line to plane, p.63

98 Ibid., p.102 (Eng. p.109)

99 Ibid., p.129 (Eng. p.155)
colors made by overlapped stains are accidental. It is obvious that Pollock’s paintings show bodily nature the best in that he used his whole body to pour and spray the paint on a large canvas.

Why is the manual significant in paintings, and why does Deleuze invoke the manual against the optical? Deleuze often associates the optical with the brain, which is the source of our intelligence and rational thought, using the expression “cerebral” which contrasts to “nervous.”\footnote{Ibid., p.46 (Eng. p.42)} The optical entails codes that need to be interpreted as in the cases of Kandinsky and Mondrian, whereas the manual does not demand interpretation as it does not elaborate any code: “The code is inevitably cerebral and lacks sensation, the essential reality of the fall, that is, the direct action upon the nervous system.”\footnote{Ibid., p.102 (Eng. p.109)} We can read ‘cerebral (or brain)’ as a synecdoche of rational thought, and ‘nervous (system)’ as the body or physical aspect. The optical in a painting, consequently, engages with rational thought and the manual relates itself to the body.

This refers back to Deleuze’s theory on art that a work of art should capture invisible forces, and should not be about a concept or thought. In traditional figurative paintings or abstract paintings, the painter’s hands were subordinated to the painter’s intelligence, using a brush and following the directions of the painter based on what she sees or conceives. However, the bodily
action that intervenes in a painting, such as throwing the paint or scrubbing the canvas, is an ‘event’ that is happening at that place, or what Deleuze calls sensation. In this sense, Deleuze defines these bodily actions as part of the “act of painting,” in that the most essential part of a painting lies in these bodily actions, not in the intentional brush strokes to recreate a shape conceived in the painter’s mind. Bodily actions of a painter, which do not relate to any intellectual thought, can be understood as a sensation that engages an invisible force. This is why figurative paintings and abstract paintings cannot be just pure sensation: “the same criticism can be made against both figurative painting and abstract painting: they pass through the brain, they do not act directly upon the nervous system, they do not attain the sensation…” They make up a kind of code on the canvas that necessitate the intervention of our rational thought.

So far, we have looked into how Deleuze problematizes the dominance of the optical in the painting and raises the significance of the manual to the surface. As the manual directly engages with the painter’s action and sensation which is the central aim of a work of art, the manual should be regarded as important in painting. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, Deleuze also points out the manual alone cannot achieve the attainment of sensation. Why is the manual alone insufficient to complete a painting, even though it is an essential element of

102 Ibid., p.92 (Eng. p.98)
103 Ibid., p.41 (Eng. p.36)
painting? In the following section, we will look into the implications of the manual as the diagram and how the diagram works in paintings, with a focus on Francis Bacon.
3. Pictorial application of the diagram

3.1. Function of the diagram in painting

In the previous chapter, we have looked into how the manual is raised as a significant factor in painting since it directly engages the painter’s bodily sensations with the canvas. Elaborating on the manual’s significance, Deleuze states that the diagram is essentially manual.\(^{104}\) As we will see later in this chapter, the diagram in *Francis Bacon* is different from what we have already seen in *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*. The account of the diagram in *Francis Bacon* is explicated with pictorial elements. However, it is interesting that Deleuze raises the diagram with relevance to paintings; this takes a different approach to his other works. The appearance of the diagram can be regarded abrupt, considering the definition and function of the diagram that we have seen in chapter 1. However, I view that the diagram in paintings, or the pictorial diagram, has a continuity in its function with the diagram in the other works of Deleuze. The implications of the pictorial diagram and its context can be grasped more easily by reading it as a continuation of the diagram in *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*.

\(^{104}\) *Francis Bacon*, p.149 (Eng. p.159)
3.1.1. Collapse of the figurative given

In chapter 1, we examined the figurative givens that suffuse our lives, and signification is one of the givens that restrict us within their boundaries of conception. Likewise, on the canvas, there are givens that occupy the canvas or the artist’s mind. Deleuze states that there exist figurative givens even on an empty canvas where a painter can see only a white plane: “…what we have to define are all these “givens” that are on the canvas before the painter's work begins, and determine, among these givens, which are an obstacle, which are a help, or even the effects of a preparatory work.” 105 A figurative given refers to any physical factor that composes the environment around a painter, such as photographic images which are illustrative or the images of television or film that are narrative. Painters are bombarded with these images, and this affects the way they draw something on the canvas.

Alternatively, figurative givens can be psychological factors that preoccupy a painter’s mind, such as a memory or a fantasy that is conceived by the painter. These physical or psychological images, according to Deleuze, determine what we can see and the way things are seen. “No doubt they are ways of seeing, and as such, they are illustrative and narrative reproductions or representations (photographs, newspapers). But we can already see that they can work in two ways:

105 Ibid., p.83 (Eng. pp.86-87)
by resemblance or by convention, through analogy or through a code.” 106

Although photographs or articles in newspapers are thought to deliver relatively objective information, they are configuring or framing what we can perceive or recognize in the world. For example, there is a conventional way that newspapers describe an event. An article does not include all the information about an event, but it selects seemingly necessary information to reproduce the event. Similarly, photographs inevitably contain distortion because they modify a three dimensional space into a flat surface. We are under the relentless effects of these media, and the media affect how we accept information. These figurative givens are also called “prepictorial givens,” 107 in the sense that these givens precede the most essential part of painting and they themselves are not ready to be a painting, whereas the acts that produce the manual marks are part of the ‘act of painting’ which has the potential of being a successful painting.

The conceived image is a figurative or prepictorial given, and it allows the painter to begin drawing. Not all figurative givens are negative, but some of them are necessary; Bacon mentions that he has “images” 108 he wishes to draw before he begins. However, it also bears the risk of leading the painting into banal

106 Ibid., p.86 (Eng. pp.90-91)
107 Ibid., p.88 (Eng. p.92)
108 “There are certain images which suddenly get hold of me and I really want to do them.” Interviews with Francis Bacon, p.156
figuration. In his interview, Bacon clarifies his antipathy towards the illustrative image and the deliberate creation of the image. This is where Bacon calls for the manual marks to be liberated from the conceived image. He uses diverse methods to destroy what he has been drawing on the canvas.¹⁰⁹ Deleuze emphasizes the significance of this perspective in Bacon’s method: “how do I proceed so that what I paint does not become a cliché? ‘Free marks’ will have to be made rather quickly on the image being painted so as to destroy the nascent figuration in it...”¹¹⁰ Deleuze names these free marks which lack illustrative and narrative functions “asignifying traits”.¹¹¹

The trait, which was suggested as a component of the diagram in *Mille Plateaux*, appears again in the pictorial diagram in *Francis Bacon*. When it comes to a painting, traits are the result of making random marks by scrubbing, sweeping, or wiping the canvas that Bacon adopted as his own method.¹¹² These traits remove the figurative given which is already on the canvas, or in the painter’s mind.

¹⁰⁹ “you don’t know how the hopelessness in one’s working will make one just take paint and just do almost anything to get out of the formula of making a kind of illustrative image – I mean, I just wipe it all over with a rag or use a brush or rub it with something or anything or throw turpentine and paint and everything else onto the thing to try to break the willed articulation of the image, so that the image will grow, as it were, spontaneously and within its own structure, and not my structure. Afterwards, your sense of what you want comes into play, so that you begin to work on the hazard that has been left to you on the canvas.” Ibid., p.160

¹¹⁰ *Francis Bacon*, p.89 (Eng. pp.93-94)

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.14 (Eng. p.5)

¹¹² Ibid., p.93 (Eng. p.99)
Deleuze is not clarifying what the trait means in the context of *Francis Bacon*. However, considering that traits were suggested as constituents of the diagram in his former work, I think that the characteristic of trait as defined in *Mille Plateaux* offers a clue to a deeper understanding of traits in paintings. In *Mille Plateaux*, traits indicate particle-signs which are not assigned any kind of signification. They exist in the dimension where nothing takes a form that we can conceive or name, and they enable the dynamic nature of the diagram and cause changes in reality.

In *Francis Bacon*, a trait indicates the manual marks on a canvas. Deleuze sometimes refers to the trait on the canvas as a “line-trait.” In chapter 1, the trait is suggested as a unit that collectively composes the diagram. DeLanda points out that the diagram is virtual while it operates to give birth to a form.\textsuperscript{113} Traits are virtual as the diagram is virtual. However, the expression ‘line-trait’ implies that the trait, in case of painting, is a visible line while it bears virtuality at the same time. We can distinguish the trait in painting from ordinary lines. Typically, the lines drawn on the canvas establish a form that the painter planned to draw. When a painter draws the line with an intention to make a shape, the painter’s intelligence is inescapably involved since the line is associated with the painter’s conception of what to draw beforehand. In this case, the brushstrokes serve the painter’s intentions and ideas. It applies not only to figurative painting but also to abstract

painting. When it comes to abstract paintings, the brushstrokes create a ‘code’, as we’ve seen in Kandinsky’s painting. Meanwhile, Deleuze articulates the characteristics of pictorial traits in *Francis Bacon* as follows:

…these marks, these traits, are irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, random. They are nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, nonnarrative. They are no longer either significant or signifiers: they are as signifying traits. They are traits of sensation, but of confused sensations (the confused sensations, as Cezanne said, that we bring with us at birth). And above all, they are manual traits.114

Each of the manual lines on the canvas that do not involve the painter’s intention, do not serve figuration, which entails representative, illustrative and narrative characteristics. Nor do they create the abstract codes that Kandinsky’s optical paintings produced. Rather, the traits in the painting do not imply any kind of signifier-specified relation and they only involve the sensation that was enacted through the painter’s act. The pictorial application of the trait clarifies the as signifying role that the manual marks perform in painting. The manual traits, without implying anything of their own in the painting, intervene into the figurative given which is already occupying the canvas, and are likely to be developed into a figurative shape or code of which the painter conceived beforehand. Deleuze provides the examples of Bacon’s early paintings which contain free marks or

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114 *Francis Bacon*, p.94 (Eng. p.100)
assignifying traits, which belong to the preliminary stage of “the great technic of local scrubbing” with various tools that appears in the later stage of Bacon’s paintings. 115 The four paintings that Deleuze suggests as examples show landscapes covered with grass.116 (Figure 11) In Landscape (1952), the grass is painted in a rough manner with strong brushstrokes. As we can see in the painting, these are not delicately drawn nor accurately express the appearance of grass.

In line with this conception of the trait, the diagram is an ensemble of the traits and color-patches that are made by scrubbing, wiping or sweeping the canvas “in order to clear out locales or zones.”117 The diagram on the canvas is composed of line-traits and color-patches. As line-traits indicate the assignifying lines on the canvas, color-patches indicate spots that occupy the plane and also perform an assignifying role. Line-traits and color-patches have different shapes and appearances, but they have a similar function on the canvas. This is followed by Deleuze’s description of the diagram: “it is as if the unit of measure were changed, and micrometric, or even cosmic, units were substituted for the figurative unit. … It is as if, in the midst of the figurative and probabilistic givens, a catastrophe overcame the canvas.”118 In the early phase of the process of painting, these

115 Ibid., p.14 (Eng. p.5)
116 The four paintings are Landscape (1952), Study of a Figure in a Landscape (1952), Study of a Baboon (1953), Two Figures in the Grass (1954).
117 Ibid., p.93 (Eng. p.99)
118 Ibid., pp.93-94 (Eng. p.99)
figurative givens guide the painting and the painter is also under their rule. However, at a certain moment, the diagram intrudes on the canvas and the figurative givens lose their function. The diagram displaces the figurative givens, and opens up a new possibility on the canvas.

However, at the same time, the diagram should be understood as something beyond the marks on the canvas. If we try to understand the diagram from the perspective of a painter as a subject, the painter ‘experiences’ the diagram as a moment when he or she cannot extract any meaning from the lines, marks or patches on the canvas. In *Francis Bacon*, the diagram is described as something the painter “confronts.”119 Confronting the diagram “is not a psychological experience, but a properly pictorial experience, although it can have an immense influence on the psychic life of the painter. Painters here confront the greatest of dangers both for their work and for themselves.” Designating it as a ‘pictorial experience’ and not a psychological one, Deleuze alludes that the diagram does not belong to the subject although it offers a kind of experience to the subject. Rather, the diagram is essentially intrinsic to a painting. This implies that as a result, the painting does not solely spring out of a painter. The conception of the diagram marks the moment at which the lines and color patches on the canvas cease to signify anything for the painter; the figurative givens are eliminated and the painter is ready to create.

The moment exists there, and the experience of the subject renders the

119 Ibid., p.95 (Eng. p.102)
canvas a “chance“\textsuperscript{120} where nothing on the canvas is probable nor is supposed to be developed into a certain shape. According to Deleuze, chance is distinguished from ‘probability.’ Probability is related to the painter’s own preconception of an image. If the painter follows his or her own conception when painting, the shape on the canvas develops according to that preconception, and the preconception guides the probability of a certain image being developed on the canvas. That is, probability is intrinsic to the subject’s own thought, and plays a prescriptive (and proscriptive) role in the painter’s ability to create freely. However, when the painter faces the moment that all the lines and patches do not signify anything, a new kind of ‘chance’, which does not follow the probability established by the preconception, is opened up on the canvas. Thus, we can appreciate the new chance that the diagram creates as a ‘white canvas’ in its true sense. By opening up a new chance, the diagram eliminates the probability on the canvas that restricts a painting to being figurative, narrative and illustrative.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, this asignifying role of the pictorial diagram is already alluded to in \textit{Mille Plateaux}. As an asignifying dimension that disregards all signifier-signified relations, the diagram helps us to escape from existing significations that bind us to thinking within their boundaries. In the case of paintings, the diagram eliminates figurative givens that are caused by the painter’s experience and preconceptions, and suggests a ground where the givens

\textsuperscript{120} Francis Bacon, p.96 (Eng. p.102)
are all removed. From there, the painter is ready to paint beyond the boundary that the figuration shapes.

We can find a few examples of an asignifying diagram in Bacon’s paintings. In the central panel of *Triptych Inspired by T. S. Eliot's Poem 'Sweeney Agonistes'* (Figure 12), the viewers can see the mark made with red paint which doesn’t clearly show what it is expressing or what form it is shaping. The paint is recklessly used and does not signify anything, while thrown on the figurative background. In another painting, the central panel of the triptych *Three Studies for a Portrait of George Dyer (on Light Ground)* (Figure 13), we can see the distorted head whose surface appears to be wildly scrubbed with white paint. In his interview, Bacon mentions that he “often throw[es] it (paint) and then take[s] a great sponge or rang and sponge it out.”121 In the portrait of George Dyer, Bacon referred to the photograph of Dyer with a certain posture. (Figure 14) Since he was utilizing a photograph to draw a portrait, the painting entailed a risk to be representative or figurative. However, the white mark which is not delicately drawn to shape Dyer’s face prevents the painting from descending to mere figuration. The diagram is “the emergence of another world”122 on the canvas, where the figurative givens were already settled, and it undermines the dominance of the figurative givens.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that the diagram is not engendered only

121 *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, p.94

122 *Francis Bacon*, p.94 (Eng. p.100)
by throwing the paint to the canvas or by sweeping the canvas, although these actions show the nature of the diagram of painting most clearly. The diagram can emerge even from what were originally figurative lines intended to shape a certain form. In the example of *Painting* (1946), according to Bacon’s interview, he tried to draw a bird in a yard at first (Figure 16). However, it turned into a man with an umbrella, which is not remotely similar to what he intended to draw in the beginning.\(^{123}\) Bacon says that the lines he drew suddenly “suggested something totally different”\(^{124}\) and the image was engendered. He also makes it clear that the shape of a bird didn’t give birth to the shape of umbrella.\(^{125}\) That is, it is not true that a figurative image turned into another figurative image; the lines originally drawn to compose a bird performed a diagrammatic function. At that moment, for the painter, the lines are not figurative anymore and they do not signify or imply anything, merely showing their appearance to the painter. We can infer that the pictorial diagram involves not only the mark that was initially made through the

\(^{123}\) As we will see further in the section 3.1.2., a painting demands a second figuration to properly attain sensation. In the case of *Painting* (1946), the shape of the umbrella is born out of the process of second figuration. Therefore, it is distinguished from the figurative given – a shape of a bird.

\(^{124}\) *Interviews with Francis Bacon.*, p.11

\(^{125}\) “Well, one of the pictures I did in 1946, the one like a butcher’s shop, came to me as an accident. I was attempting to make a bird alighting on a field. … suddenly the lines that I’d drawn suggested something totally different, and out of this suggestion arose this picture. I had no intention to do this picture; I never thought of it in that way. It was like one continuous accident mounting on top of another. … I don’t think the bird suggested the umbrella; It suddenly suggested this whole image.” Ibid., p.11
manual and aggressive action of the painter, but also the lines that were originally
drawn to form something figurative.

So far, we’ve examined how the diagram of painting functions to destroy
the figurative givens which restrict a painting within their boundaries. I think that
the pictorial diagram performs an analogous function by collapsing the figurative
givens and only leaving forces that are engaged to make the marks, deviating from
any signification. As we’ve seen, the concept of the diagram in *Mille Plateaux*
indicates the informal dimension that ignores any kind of prior signification which
is already given to us and preoccupies our lives. We can observe that the painting
also has its givens because of a painter’s preconceptions, ideas or familiar images. I
maintain that Deleuze problematizes the existing presuppositions in painting and
emphasizes the necessity of deviating from it by applying his concept of the
diagram to painting.

3.1.2. Compatibility of the optical and the manual

In the previous part, we’ve examined that the pictorial diagram destroys
figurative givens. However, the diagram in paintings should not stop at this
moment. We can trace why the diagram should be more than the marks that destroy
the figurative givens by looking at the previous discussion in chapter 2. In chapter
2, we discussed how the examples of Pollock and Louis’s paintings are essentially
manual. Deleuze recognizes the values that those abstract expressionist paintings have since they give particular prominence to the manual elements in painting, which was overwhelmed by the priority of the optical. In abstract expressionist paintings, “the abyss or chaos is deployed to the maximum. … the diagram merges with the totality of the painting; the entire painting is diagrammatic. Optical geometry disappears in favor of a manual line, exclusively manual. The eye has difficulty following it.”126 According to Deleuze, the significance of abstract expressionist paintings lies in the fact that they discard “any visual sovereignty, and even any visual control” when the painting is produced.127 Whereas figurative paintings and the abstract paintings of Kandinsky and Mondrian are primarily subjected to the interpretive prominence of the eye, abstract expressionist paintings are liberated from the priority of the visual.

However, Deleuze also maintains a critical attitude toward the paintings which only have the manual as their constituent. Their nature entails certain limitations. Deleuze writes that “all the violent methods of action painting - stick, brush, broom, rag, and even pastry bag - are let loose in a catastrophe painting. This time sensation is indeed attained, but it remains in an irremediably confused state.” 128 Although the method of abstract expressionist paintings captures

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126 *Francis Bacon*, p.98 (Eng. p.104)
127 Ibid., p.99 (Eng. p.106)
128 Ibid., p.102 (Eng. p.109)
sensation, the sensation is not perfectly attained. Rather, the painting remains in the state of “chaos” or “catastrophe,” which cannot deliver complete sensation to the viewer. According to Deleuze, the diagram overwhelms abstract expressionist paintings and they even become a “mess.”

We have seen that Deleuze positively evaluates the existence of the diagram in paintings, however, he also asserts the necessity to move away from the diagram and restore the optical, to prevent the painting becoming dominated by the manual; similarly, the manual was invoked to destroy the dominance of the figurative givens. This relation between the pictorial diagram and a painting is analogous to the relation between the diagram and the reality, as discussed in chapter 1. The diagram is key in bringing that reality into existence, however, the diagram itself is not the reality. Likewise, although the diagram in painting performs a critical role for a painting, there should be more than the diagram for a painting to attain sensation, or to capture invisible forces.

This is where ‘Figure,’ through which a painting can attain both

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129 Ibid., p.96 (Eng. p.101)

130 Ibid., p.102 (Eng. p.109)

131 Deleuze refers to the term Figure from Lyotard’s *Discours, Figure*. The figure is contrasted with discourse which is “a closed system of relations that subordinates a signified object to an invariable set of rules.” (Ionescu, Vlad, “Figural Aesthetics: Lyotard, Valéry, Deleuze”, *Cultural Politics, Volume 9, Issue 2*, July 2013, p.145) The figure, on the other hand, is not affected by the rule of discourse. “The issue of Discourse, Figure concerns thus the role of the signifier in the formation of sense. Is its plasticity a dimension that erases itself in the mechanical production of sense, or does it generate an excess of sense that involves a libidinal involvement with an object in its density and spatiality? The figural designates the gesture that breaks through language and reveals its purely visual
manual and optical features, is suggested. Far from the broad meaning the term originally has, Figure indicates a “deformed” body that often appears in Bacon’s Paintings. In *Sleeping Figure* (Figure 15), the body is distorted and the parts of the body are not clearly recognizable. As indicated by the title, this painting does not represent any bodily movement. ‘Deformation’ is strictly distinguished from ‘transformation’: while transformation is related to an exterior movement of the body, deformation indicates a result of the invisible forces’ relentless action upon the body even when the body is static. Likewise, in a painting, transformation is merely about changing forms or rendering the content figurative or abstract. However, deformation occurs when the painter “render[s] invisible forces visible” by exerting unintentional actions toward the canvas. What a Figure contains is a deformation of the image, not a transformation.

Forms. … The figure is a “spatial manifestation” that textual space cannot turn into linguistic sense without undermining its density.” (Ibid., p.146) Likewise, Deleuze’s figure exists beyond the signifier-signified relation of language. However, Ionescu points out that the ‘figurative, illustrative and narrative’ features that Deleuze mentions correspond to Lyotard’s ‘discourse’. As in the case of diagram, however, Deleuze does not follow the strict definition of Figure in Lyotard and develops the concept independently in *Francis Bacon*.

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132 *Francis Bacon*, p.25 (Eng. p.18)

133 Deleuze gives an example of deformation of the body with the following description: “they are the most natural postures of a body that has been reorganized by the simple force being exerted upon it: the desire to sleep, to vomit, to turn over, to remain seated as long as possible…” Ibid., p.60 (Eng p.59)

134 Ibid., p.57 (Eng. p.57)
By means of deformation, the Figure on the canvas attains a kind of similarity with the original subject that the ordinary representative and figurative method cannot achieve. Through Figure, the subject of an abstract expressionist painting is presented in a way that differs from the representation of a photograph or figurative painting. According to Deleuze, this is “profound resemblance, a nonfigurative resemblance.” 135 This resemblance is lucidly captured in the portraits of people that Bacon painted. In his interview, Bacon compares his two portraits of Michel Leiris: “of those two paintings of Michel Leiris, the one I did which is less literally like him is in fact more poignantly like him. … being rather long and thin, that had in fact is nothing to do with what Michel’s head is really like, and yet it looks more like him”136 (Figure 17) (Figure 18). Also, he adds that this phenomenon is impossible to articulate. Bacon’s following statement shows how this kind of resemblance is produced in the process of painting: “the other day I painted a head of somebody, and what made the sockets of the eyes, the nose, the mouth were, when you analyzed them, just forms which had nothing to do with eyes, nose or mouth; but the paint moving from one contour into another made a likeness of this person I was trying to paint.”137 In this process, we can find the operation of traits, or the diagram which does not signify anything. Each of the

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135 Ibid., p.148 (Eng. p.158)

136 *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, p.146

137 Ibid., p.12
strokes or marks does not contribute to form the shape of eyes or nose. However, the result attains the resemblance with the original subject as a whole, and the result can be understood as Figure. This resemblance is different from what is produced by an icon. We have seen that Peirce classified signs into icon, index and symbol, and an icon has a resemblance with the object it is designating. In this case, the resemblance is derived from the similar form between the icon and the object. This resemblance is based on hylomorphism that presumes the relation between form and matter. The form works as a mold for matter, and matter serves to shape a certain form. However, Deleuze does not follow this existing hylomorphism. Instead, Deleuze substitutes it with the relation between material and force.\footnote{Sauvagnargues, Anne. (trans.) Samantha Bankston, \textit{Deleuze and Art}, Bloomsbury, 2013, Kindle Edition, p.72} It is the material itself that contains the force that is important for a painting, not the form. According to this point of view, paint on the canvas does not serve to shape a certain form; rather, it presents the force that is delivered to it when the painter paints.

Thereby, in Bacon’s paintings, the resemblance is not a mere similarity between shapes. It rather implies a ‘proximity’ between the two. Proximity is different from analogy: whereas analogy presumes the similarity between two forms, proximity is related to the indiscernibility between forms. It is the diagram that bequeaths proximity to the canvas by destroying the existing form and opening

up a new possibility where different forms can be connected: “But it is with the diagram, as the point of application or agitated locus of all forces, that the flow of colors enters into relations of proximity.” As a place of unorganized forces, the diagram creates a new ground of proximity. The portrait remains similar with the original person, however, the resemblance is created not by the brushstrokes with the purpose of imitating someone, but it rather emerges from the diagram. According to Deleuze, creating Figure is “to produce resemblance with nonresembling means.”

As the diagram is a prerequisite for a Figure to be born, a Figure demands another specific process of figuration which is not possible without the diagram. This other process of figuration is distinguished from the painter’s initial work of drawing a figurative image (the figurative given). Deleuze states that there are two kinds of figuration in painting: first, figuration as figurative given, and second, figuration engendered by the diagram. The indispensable factor for a Figure to be created is the diagram in the painting. The process through which Figure is produced is different for each painting, however, Figure requires both the diagram, which is made by the bodily action of the painter, and a second figuration. When the second figuration is conducted properly on the diagram, a Figure with a more

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139 *Francis Bacon*, p.142 (Eng. p.151)

140 Ibid., p.148 (Eng. p.158)

141 Ibid., p.92 (Eng. pp.97-98)
poignant resemblance with the subject is produced. In this sense, the second figuration, which is optical and depends on the painter’s deliberate and intentional work, is also involved in the ‘act of painting’ because of its decisive role in bringing about proximity with the subject. Therefore, Figure sits between abstraction and figuration, and what Bacon does on the canvas is “a kind of tightrope walk between what is called figurative painting and abstraction. … It’s an attempt to bring the figurative thing up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly.”

As we have seen in chapter 2, the optical predominates in painting. According to Deleuze, the aim of painting is to capture forces and attain sensation. However, the optical alone cannot relate invisible forces onto the canvas since it subordinates the painter’s hands to his or her intelligence. For a painting to attain sensation and render invisible forces visible, the painting should engage the manual with itself. Figure, in this sense, is a combination of the optical and the manual. The diagram, which is invoked by the bodily actions that leave free marks on the canvas, is a prerequisite of the Figure. This is the ground where the optical and the manual merge, and because of the diagram, the second figuration diverges from its simplistic representative role in abstract and figurative paintings. Because of the diagram, the optical and the manual can intersect and become compatible in a Figure. “To describe the relationship of the eye and the hand, and the values

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142 *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, p.12
through which this relation passes, it is obviously not enough to say that the eye judges and the hands execute. The relationship between the hand and the eye is infinitely richer, passing through dynamic tensions, logical reversals, and organic exchanges and substitutions.”¹⁴³ The diagram makes the fusion between the optical and the manual possible.

In chapter 1, the diagram is suggested as a common cause of the visible and the articulable, giving prominence to the visible which was previously considered subordinate to the articulable. In regard to painting, the manual was regarded as insignificant compared to the optical aspect. The optical aspect has been predominant in painting, especially from a formalist perspective, and painting has been thought of as a ‘visual art’ which only pertains to the eye. However, Deleuze stresses the importance of the productive process of painting, and from the fact that the painter paints with his hand and body, the manual is raised to be the equivalent of the optical. By finding the function of the diagram in the manual, Deleuze emphasizes the fundamental role the manual plays in painting, elaborating the possible merging of the optical and the manual embodied in Figure.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.145 (Eng. p.154)
3.2. The Diagram in paintings: seed of the ‘pictorial fact’

So far, we’ve probed how the diagram plays an asignifying role in the painting by destroying the figurative given. The figurative given is essential for a painter to begin his work, however, risks leading the painting to be figurative, illustrative or narrative. Through the painter’s action of painting, forces are brought to bear on the canvas, via the intervention of her manual marks. This precipitates the diagram, which provides a ground for the fusion between the optical and the manual. This fusion gives birth to the Figure, which facilitates proximity with the subject.

Here, a more fundamental question arises: by eliminating the figurative given and merging the optical and the manual, what does the pictorial diagram ultimately contribute to the painting? This returns us to Deleuze’s theory on painting, as discussed in chapter 2. Deleuze insists that the aim of a work of art is to make a bloc of sensation, namely, to capture invisible forces. Also, Deleuze articulates it through another expression, a “pictorial fact.”144 Earlier, we saw that a painting should avoid figuration to contain ‘matters of fact’ or ‘reality’. A matter of fact is not about whether a certain event happened or not, but directly describes the precise event that happened at a particular place. For Deleuze, a painting is about rendering the world full of forces visible. However, figurative paintings and

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144 Ibid., p.150 (Eng. p.160)
abstract (expressionist) paintings cannot properly contain matters of fact. The former fails to do so by subordinating the hand to the intelligence, and the latter fails because it only produces codes or chaos on the canvas. Therefore, the diagram is significant in the sense that it creates a ground for the capture of forces, suggesting a third way of painting.

In chapter 1, we saw that the diagram itself is not perceivable, but it is the basic principle that realizes the world of forces, by operating as a map of the relations between forces. The diagram always coexists with the reality that we can perceive or recognize. Similarly, in painting, “the diagram has introduced or distributed formless forces throughout the painting, which have a necessary relation with the deformed parts, or which are made use of, as, precisely, ‘places.’” \(^{145}\) The diagram in a painting is a “possibility of fact,” \(^{146}\) which transforms into the ‘fact’ itself if it is deliberately invested into another figuration by the artist: “For the diagram was only a possibility of fact, whereas the painting exists by making present a very particular fact, which we will call the pictorial fact.”\(^{147}\)

I argue that the ‘pictorial fact’ is fundamentally created by the diagram’s role of integrating the manual and the optical. Deleuze insists that figurative

\(^{145}\) Ibid., p.148 (Eng. p.158)

\(^{146}\) Ibid., p.150 (Eng. p.160)

\(^{147}\) Ibid., p.150 (Eng. p.160)
paintings and abstract paintings “pass through the brain, they do not act directly upon the nervous system, they do not attain the sensation, they do not liberate the Figure — all because they remain at one and the same level.”\textsuperscript{148} This means that these paintings are restricted to the level of the optical, and thus to the eye, which is just one of the organs of our body. However, sensation is an event as a whole that happens when invisible forces traverse the body, understood not just as the divisible sum of its organs but as a complete entity in itself. Although we naturally accept that painting is a visual medium, vision is only one level or aspect of the larger sensation as a whole. Therefore, the painting should be able to deliver a fully realized sensation, and not be restricted to just one specific level: “The painter would thus make visible a kind of original unity of the senses, and would make a multisensible Figure appear visually.”\textsuperscript{149}

For example, Deleuze writes decisively that \textit{Study for Bullfight No. 1} (Figure 19) causes the viewer to hear the bull’s hooves. Although this statement sounds exaggerated, I think the point is that the painting should be able to give the viewers an experience which isn’t merely limited to the visual, but contains the sensation that the painter had at the moment of painting. Despite the fact that the painting is literally perceived by the eye, it should give more than a visual experience, by recreating the original sensation and delivering that sensation as an

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., p.41 (Eng. p.36)

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.46 (Eng. p.42)
event to the viewer. That is to say, the pictorial fact “is the formation of a third eye, a haptic eye, a haptic vision of the eye, this new clarity. It is as if the duality of the tactile and the optical were surpassed visually in this haptic function born of the diagram.”150 The pictorial fact, which is created by the merging of the manual and the visual, supplies a haptic function to the eyes, allowing the viewer to sense the painting’s tactility, something that is impossible when the painting is restricted to the domain of the optical.

The following statement of Bacon well reveals what the pictorial fact is: “We nearly always live through screens – a screened existence. And I sometimes think, when people say my work looks violent, that perhaps I have from time to time been able to clear away one or two of the veils or screens.”151 We cannot live without the preconceptions we earn in our daily lives, and the painting should be able to provide a sensation that agitates the ‘veils’, namely, any kind of signification that predominates our lives. Citing Bacon’s interview, Deleuze indirectly tells us a painting’s unique role: “…the story that is already being told between one figure and another begins to cancel out the possibilities of what can be done with the paint on its own.”152 Here Deleuze is describing a different kind of relation, which is not conceptual, and rather indicates invisible forces and the

150 Ibid., p.151 (Eng. p.161).
151 Interviews with Francis Bacon, pp.81-82
152 Francis Bacon, p.13 (Eng. p.3)
indiscernibility between things. A painting should aim to give body to the chaos beyond the form and make it visible.

In chapter 1, we saw how the diagram, as the asignifying dimension, ignores the given signification that restricts us. Also, the diagram operates as a common cause of the visible and the articulable, and enables the mutual intersection between the two formations as a map of forces. The diagram in painting plays an analogous role: the pictorial diagram enables each painting to become itself as one and only, since the diagram “is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a germ of order or rhythm. It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens, but it is a germ of rhythm in relation to the new order of the painting.”

The pictorial diagram destroys the figurative givens that hinder the painting to be designated as a fact, and enables the merging of the optical and the manual. The pictorial fact cannot be achieved by having only the optical or the manual, or a subordination of one to the other. It is the same in the case of the world: the visible and the articulable together compose the reality, while the two intersect with each other. There is no predominance of one factor in either paintings or in the world.

Through the analogous relation between the world and a painting that is mediated by the diagram, we can grasp the most significant point of the painting: that a painting should be a ‘fact’ itself, the one and only instantiation of this

153 Ibid., pp.95-96 (Eng. p.102)
specific sensation. This cannot be achieved by the figuration or conception of the painter, but it becomes possible through the diagram which provides an unpredictable chance every moment. The pictorial application of the diagram reveals that a painting itself is like the world: it isn’t just repeated, or symbolized, or articulated as part of some narrative; its meaning is not restricted to the mere verbal interpretation of a previous event – rather, it persists as a pure, multimodal bloc of sensation, a crystallizing of interacting forces, preserved in perpetuity by the productive power of the artist, a fusion of the optical and the manual, not signified, or referenced, or articulated, but simply being.
Conclusion

This study has examined the implications of the pictorial application of the diagram introduced in *Francis Bacon*, based on the analysis of the diagram in *Foucault* and *Mille Plateaux*. In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze provides us with some hints for why he chooses the particular name ‘diagram.’ However, the diagram concept has its origins in Deleuze’s earlier works. Therefore, I began by tracking the origin of the concept of the diagram in Foucault’s work, and traced the context around Deleuze’s adoption of the concept. First drawn from Foucault’s work *Surveiller et punir*, the diagram is newly defined as a cause of reality. Based on the discovery of the diagram in *Foucault*, the diagram is further developed with its asignifying aspect. By analyzing the functional aspects of the diagram, this study delves into the diagram in painting, which is introduced as a significant element of painting in *Francis Bacon*.

Traditionally, paintings have been viewed as representational art. At the same time, there have been many attempts to approach paintings as more than mere representation. On the one hand, Greenberg’s formalist approach evaluates a painting according to its degree of optical purity. From this perspective, a distinctive feature of painting as a medium, compared to other media, is that it has
a two-dimensional flat surface. Thereby, a painting that well expresses its flatness is highly valued. From this point of view, representative and figurative paintings do not have high values. On the other hand, there is a semiotic approach toward paintings that adopts semiotic theory in the analysis and critique of paintings. Broadly, this applies the concept of sign and signification to the thinking of paintings. Such theories may contribute to the objective critiques which can be applied to most of the paintings. However, these approaches do not focus sufficiently on how a painting is produced, which embodies an engagement of body and sensation.

For this reason, we need to take into account Deleuze’s thinking on painting. Deleuze focuses on how a painting is produced and the actions performed by the artist. Unraveling the process of painting, Deleuze declares that the task of the artist is “to render visible forces that are not themselves visible.”154 This assignment is clearly distinguished from our ordinary perspective toward paintings as representation. Also, it differs from theoretical approaches that judge paintings according to their formal aspects or their relations with signs. Through this assignment, a painting renders the viewers a specific kind of experience that is not given in everyday life. A painting that captures sensation does not provide intellectual excitement; rather, it acts directly on the viewer’s nervous system. Throughout his work, Deleuze criticizes representation and repeating the

154 Francis Bacon, p.57 (Eng. p.56)
conventional way of thinking and existing concepts. As a form of thought, philosophy suggests a new way of thinking by producing concepts. Likewise, art does not merely represent existing concepts or forms. The aim of art is not to make people recognize what is already there, but to let them experience what is impossible to grasp in their daily lives.

The diagram gains its significance through association with the aim of painting as assigned by Deleuze. The diagram enables a painting to be more than a reproduction of reality, not subordinated by the paradigm of the optical and signification. Rather, the diagram contributes to the painting’s standing as a pictorial reality, which is one and only. First, Deleuze focuses on the diagram in Foucault to investigate how the reality is born, and draws his own definition that the diagram is a “map of relations between forces.” Based on this formulation, Deleuze redirects the role of the diagram in painting to the base of a pictorial reality. For a painting to embody a pictorial reality, it should go beyond the intelligence and capture invisible forces. In line with this, we can think of the title of the work “logic of sensation.” As the nature of the diagram in painting is ‘accidental,’ it may be seen contradictory to talk about ‘logic’ using the concept of the diagram. However, the accidental nature that the diagram bears works as an essential element to complete the logic of sensation, as it provides a ‘chance’ which is a preliminary stage for the creation of a Figure, through which sensation is properly attained. Here, the logic requires accident because sensation cannot be born based on any preconceived image nor be programmed in advance. The
accident on the canvas works to eliminate any preexisting images, given meanings or concepts. In this sense, the process of transition from the chaotic diagram to Figure can be understood as the logic of sensation.

My thesis aims to investigate the diagram in Francis Bacon based on its origination in Foucault and Mille Plateaux. There are two roles that the examination of the pictorial application of the diagram can perform. First, it helps us to redeem the manual elements in painting. The manual factors are disregarded when we view a painting, even though a painter essentially paints with her own hands. A painting can’t be born without a painter’s bodily action, and the existence of a painting is essentially dependent on a painter’s action. However, as we have seen in the case of Greenberg’s formalist perspective, we tend to think that a painting only pertains to opticality. If we think that a painting only relates itself to opticality, the hands are subordinated to the guide of the eye, which is associated with our intelligence. Just as the world is full of invisible forces, a painting should engage itself with forces. The bodily action which is not subordinated to the painter’s intelligence directly distributes forces on the canvas. Out of these manual marks, the diagram is born and a painting becomes ready to exist as its own reality. The diagram is thus associated with the bodily action that delivers force.

Secondly, through the concept of the diagram, we can more clearly understand the necessity of escaping the preconceptions that dominate us in the process of painting and to create the new. Even when we are not conscious, we are
physically and psychologically immersed in received concepts and images. A painter is not an exception: a painter facing a white canvas is, in fact, caught up in figurative givens that drive the painting to become banal figuration. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the diagram has an asignifying aspect: it does not function to signify anything. By understanding the diagram in painting through its asignifying aspect that is clarified in *Mille Plateaux*, we can understand the pictorial diagram’s role: it vanishes figurative givens and provides the painter a ground on which she can truly create. In this sense, the diagram prevents a painting from descending to mere representation or figuration by eliminating the painter’s preconceptions. Unlike our common belief that a work of painting is essentially produced by the painter’s elaborate brushstrokes based on his or her intentions, the diagram causes the painting by detaching the person from the existing order of signification. The essence of the diagram is that it is a completely unformed dimension that ignores all signification, providing an entirely novel ground to the artist where nothing is signified, thus breaking the obstacle that restricts the artist within the boundary of his or her preconceptions.

Of course, one can pose a following question: can the diagram be applied to other artists’ works? Is it not restricted to Bacon’s paintings? Since only Francis Bacon’s method is introduced in a detailed manner in Francis Bacon, it is presumable to think that the diagram only applies to Bacon’s paintings. However, I think Deleuze is not suggesting a dogmatic standard of what a good painting should be. Rather, I view Bacon’s paintings as a good example of the ‘logic of
sensation.’ Through Francis Bacon, Deleuze reveals some aspects that are not considered important when we produce or evaluate paintings, outlining an alternative way of reading paintings. Bacon used a specific method of throwing the paint or sweeping the canvas. It seems that the diagram is related to a specific kind of action that the painter takes. However, Deleuze briefly alludes to the possibility of applying the diagram to other artists. As Deleuze mentions, Van Gogh had his own diagram, a “set of straight and curved hatch marks that raise and lower the ground, twist the trees, make the sky palpitate, and which assume a particular intensity from 1888 onward.”155 Although Van Gogh’s diagram is not explained in detailed manner, we can sense from the case of Van Gogh that the diagram does not exist only for specific artists. However, how the diagram operates in other painters’ cases and in other forms of art is still not precisely understood, and this study leaves open the question of whether the diagram can be applied beyond Bacon. Further studies can perform this task.

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본 논문은 들뢰즈의 저작『감각의 논리』에서 제시되는 다이어그램 (diagramme) 개념을 분석함으로써, 다이어그램 개념이 회화 요소의 이분법적 구분을 극복할 수 있는 길을 제시하고, 모더니즘 회화를 보는 새로운 시각을 제시하였음을 밝한다.

본고는 들뢰즈의 철학 내에서 다이어그램이 갖는 세 가지 의미에 주목한다. 첫째, 다이어그램은 "힘 관계의 지도"로 재정의됨으로써 현실을 구축하는 가장 근본적인 차원을 가리키게 된다. 둘째, 다이어그램은 일상의 사고에 내재된 기표-기의 관계에 '앞서는' 차원을 가리킨다. 셋째, 다이어그램은 비담론적인 형태와 담론적인 형태의 공통 원인으로 작용하는데, 이를 통해 비담론적인 형태의 중요성을 제고하는 동시에 둘 사이의 환원불가능성을 설명할 수 있게 된다. 이는 들뢰즈가 푸코의『감시와 처벌』을 18세기의 감금시설에 대한 분석에 그치는 저작이 아니라, 보편적인 적용 가능성을 가진 하나의 철학적인 저작으로 보고 적극적으로 독해하는 데서 출발한다. 다이어그램 개념은 사회적 장에 적용됨으로써 비담론적인 형태의 존재를 확인하는 동시에 비담론적인 형태와 담론적인 형태의 상호 전환 가능하게 한다. 이와 유사하게, 회화의 다이어그램은 기존의 회화와 이론에서 형식되었던 손적인 것의 중요성을 드높인다. 동시에 기존의 미술사에서 설정한, 시각적인 것과 손적인 것 간의 긴장관계를 극복하는 역할을 한다. 이러한 한계를 극복하는 회화로, 들
뢰즈는 손적인 것과 시각적인 것을 융합하는 제 3의 길인 '형상(Figure)'을 제시한다. 형상은 전통적인 재현회화나 구상회화가 갖는 촉각적 지시대상과는 구분되며, 원본과 감각적인 닮음 관계에 놓인다. 베이컨 회화가 구현하는 형상에서 시각적인 것과 손적인 것은 구상화화와 추상화화, 추상표현주의 회화에서와 달리 상호 첨투적인 관계를 갖는데, 이 양자의 상호 첨투를 가능하게 하는 것이 바로 다이어그램이다.

화화에 적용된 다이어그램은 다음과 같은 역할을 한다. 첫 번째로, 화가의 신체적인 행위를 통해 만들어지는 회화의 다이어그램은 화폭에 힘을 직접적으로 개입시키는 역할을 함으로써 화폭 위에 감각이 구현되는 바탕을 마련한다. 다이어그램은 화가가 시각의 개입 없이 무작위적으로 던진 물감이나 화폭을 빗자루 등의 도구로 쓰어낸 자국을 가리킨다. 이렇게 손적인 것, 즉 화가의 신체가 직접적으로 가하는 힘을 통해 만들어진 다이어그램은 특정한 방식으로 작동하는 “특질들과 얼룩들, 선들, 지대들의 집합체”로 정의된다.

두 번째로, 이렇게 만들어진 다이어그램은 회화의 제작과정에 내재하여 있는 기표-기의 관계에서 벗어나 그에 얽어서 있는 탈의미작용적 영역을 개입시키는 역할을 한다. 들뢰즈가 보기에 구상성을 피하고자 손적인 것의 개입을 최소한으로 축소한 추상화화는 일종의 상징적 약호(code)를 만든다. 한편 잭슨 폴록의 회화로 대표되는 추상표현주의 회화는 화폭에 손적인 것만을 남김으로써 회화의 과정에 시각적인 것의 개입을 거의 불가능하게 한다. 모더니즘 회화들은 이와 같이 기존의 재현과 추상의 대립구도 하에 촉각적 지시대상의 부정에만 주목하여 다시금 기표와
기의의 관계에 갇혔다. 한편 베이컨의 회화는 탈의미작용적인 다이어그램을 통해 기표와 기의의 관계가 해체된 캔버스 위에서 출발함으로써 감각을 다루는 회화 본연의 역할을 하게 된다. 다이어그램은 흰 캔버스를 앞에 두고 화가의 머릿속에 자리 잡은 구상적 소여, 즉 이미지를 제거하는 역할을 한다. 구상적 소여는 화가가 일상을 살면서 접한 사진, 삽화 등의 이미지들이며, 아무것도 없는 흰 캔버스를 마주하고 있음을라도 이른 이미지들에 의해 화가는 영향을 받고, 그것에 약해질 수 있다. 우연한 표시인 다이어그램은 흰 캔버스 위에 예측할 수 없는 형태를 만들어 놓음으로써 이러한 이미지를 제거하는 역할을 하며, 이것이 다이어그램이 일차적으로 구상성을 제거하는 방식이다.

세 번째로, 다이어그램은 손적인 것과 시각적인 것의 양립을 가능하게 한다. 앞서 보았듯 다이어그램은 무엇을 재현하거나 그려내고자 하는 의도가 개입하지 않은 채로 손을 통해 우연적인 자국을 남기는 것이다. 다이어그램을 바탕으로 하여 화가의 이차적 구상작용이 일어나는데, 이 최종적인 과정을 통해 손적인 것과 시각적인 것의 상호 침투가 가능해진다. 이것은 마지막 단계를 통해 “사실의 가능성”에 불과했던 다이어그램은 이로부터 들뢰즈가 “회화적 사실”이라 부르는 것을 구현한다. 회화적 사실이라는 표현은 회화가 힘을 담음으로써 현재적으로 존재하고, 나아가 하나의 ‘사실’로서 존재함을 의미한다. 이러한 회화적 사실은 서술적이거나 삽화적이거나 구상적인 이미지를 담은 재현회화나 시각적인 것만을 중시하는 추상화로부터는 탄생하지 않으며, 힘을 배당하는 다이어그램의 작용을 통해 보이지 않는 힘을 포착한 회화를 통해서만 가능하다.
본 논문은 회화에서 다이어그램의 역할이 들뢰즈의 이전 저작『푸코』와『천 개의 고원』에서 드러나는 다이어그램의 기능적 측면을 회화에 적용하여 해석함으로써 보다 명료하게 드러남을 밝혔다.『감각의 논리』에 등장하는 다이어그램은 화폭에 힘을 분배하고, 그 자체로는 어떠한 의미작용도 하지 않으면서 동시에 다른 형식들 간의 상호 침투를 가능하게 하는 바탕의 역할을 한다. 다이어그램 개념은 본래 사회적 장에 대한 고찰에서 출발하였지만, 회화에 적용됨으로써 기존의 회화와 당대의 이론이 마주하였던 ‘시각성’이라는 보이지 않는 장벽을 가시화하고 극복하는 역할을 한다. 나아가, 회화의 다이어그램은 회화적 사실을 구축함으로서, 감각의 구현이라는 회화의 목적에 있어 핵심적인 역할을 한다. 결론적으로, 본 연구는 들뢰즈가『감각의 논리』에서 다이어그램 개념을 통해 회화 요소의 이분법적인 구분을 극복할 수 있는 길을 제시하고, 모더니즘 회화를 보면 새로운 시각을 제안하였음을 보다 명료하게 밝히고자 하였다.

주요어: 다이어그램, 감각, 모더니즘 회화, 들뢰즈, 프랜시스 베이컨, 푸코, 재현

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