In *Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, Jonathan Culler defines theory simply as a collection of “works that succeed in challenging and reorienting thinking in fields other than those to which they apparently belong.” In these terms, the project of the present panel refers not to a current need in academia to apply extraliterary texts to those by Henry James; whether we date the birth of the poststructural or theoretical James in the mid-80s with the publication of John Carlos Rowe’s *The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James* or even earlier, perhaps in 1977 with Shoshana Felman's Lacanian reading “Turning the Screw of Interpretation” and Leo Bersani’s “The Subject of Power,” we can agree that the theoretical James has not only been a familiar figure for at least a quarter century, but also that this post-Edelian James—culturally and historically alert, technologically curious, politically engaged, sexually fluid, painfully aware of capitalism and the literary market—has never been more pervasive. This new James has not, of course, been uncontroversial; as our organizer David McWhirter has written, “Postmodern James studies has undoubtedly risked...the imposition of "our" concerns or (as some would have it) fashions (identity politics; queer theory; cultural studies' debunking of traditional high/low hierarchies; the de-essentialization of gender) on a generally (if not unconflictedly) politically conservative nineteenth-century practitioner of resolutely, if not uncomplicatedly, realist fiction.” Yet contemporary scholarship on the intersection between James and theory—concerned, for example, with forging new domains like queer formalism and transnational modernism by borrowing liberally from James' oeuvre—avoid charges of anachrony because in these cases, theory is not added on to James after the fact in order to yield an interpretation, but rather, theory
itself is produced through reading James. In this spirit, the title of this panel, “Henry James in Theory,” foregrounds the flows from James to theory—a flow my current paper addresses by exploring the crucial roles that James' texts play in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The relationships among James, Deleuze, and Guattari have been touched on recently by a handful of scholars, including—forgive the following list; its length is meant to dramatize the flows passing through a Jameso-Deleuzo-Guattarian body without organs—Jonathan Freedman's brief enunciation in *Professions of Taste* of the resonances between the “decentered, playful, mobile, perceptually hyperactive models” of artists given by Deleuze, Guattari, and James' uptake of Walter Pater, Julian Cowley's work on *The Sacred Fount* and Steven Salmoni's on *Italian Hours*, both of which take flight from Deleuze's book on Leibniz, Dana Luciano's use of Deleuze's book on *Masochism* to understand desire and de-identification in *The Portrait of a Lady* (and Leland Person's use of the same Deleuze work to meditate on Jamesian masculinity), Paul Giles' account of the enfolding of deterritorialization and globalization in *The Sacred Fount*, Susan Gunter's portrait of James' rhizomatic relations to his niece, Kendall Johnson's consideration of James' picturesque as multiplicity through Kim Ian Masichaw's account of Deleuze and Guattari's adaptation of Duns Scotus' haeccticity—talk about flows! which touches on Thomas Laughlin's “The Double Life of the Cage,” which reroutes Deleuzo-Guattarian flows of desire to show that James believes “literature can only reach truth in a roundabout way.” All of these readings produce a James in line with Deleuze's characterization of the writer in *Dialogues II*: that a writer should create “a flux which combines with other fluxes – all the minority-becoming of the world... through which life escapes from the resentment of persons, societies, and reigns,” but what I would like to add to these readings is a reason why James resonates with the two theorists:
because it is not through the relative limits of capitalism and schizophrenia, but through the
labyrinthine abstractions of Jamesian style that Deleuze and Guattari learn to enunciate absolute
deterritorialization. My argument will proceed in two parts: first, a straightforward genealogy of
the portrait of James as an abstraction-machine in Deleuzo-Guattarian thought, and second, a
closer look at their use of James' *Daisy Miller* and *In the Cage* meant less as readings of the
novellas than as an account of Deleuze and Guattari's use for Jamesian style as a provocation to
confront the limits of interpretation, affirm the productivity of repetition and translation.

Deleuze's *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* manifests James three times in order to
solve the problem of retaining the concept of point of view, “without which disorder or even
chaos would reign,” but to do so without retaining relativism, essentialism, the dialectic, or a pre-
existing subject who takes up that point of view. Leibniz's point of view, Deleuze explains, is
“not a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition in which the truth of the
variation appears to the subject.” This could be a plot synopsis of *The Ambassadors*, in which
subjectivation only comes into focus for the protagonist as he situates himself as the point of
view that faces the truth of a young man's total transformation. In a brilliant characterization of
James' infinite qualification—that is, the ceaseless folding of thoughts and enunciations—
Deleuze mimes, “*That which* I am talking of and *which* you are thinking of too, do you agree to
tell *him* about it, providing we know what can be expected from *her* in relation to *it* and we can
also agree on which is *he* and which is *she*?” In the hands of another writer, this sentence might
be a parody pointedly conflating *The Wings of the Dove* or *The Golden Bowl* with *Who's On
First?* Alain Badiou, however, praises this miming of James as “a description for thought,” which
I would elaborate on by mapping a parallel between Deleuze and Guattari’s insistence in *A
Thousand Plateaus that literature should not signify but map, to the diagramming required to read a late Jamesian sentence. Each extra subject, verb, prepositional phrase, or dependent clause folded into a sentence makes the reader agree with Deleuze that for James, “the unit of matter is the fold, not the point” and a speaker is “a 'communicating' figure [bearing] knowledge without object...[but] labyrinthine complexity....irreducible to any elementary composition.” In terms of language, Deleuze's substitution of variation for point suggests that Jamesian style is a kind of calculus, performing an integration function in which, according to Deleuze, “the description takes place of the object, the concept becomes the narrative, and the subject [becomes] point of view or subject of the enunciation.” Deleuze's elaboration of point of view as focus specifically invokes the algebraic graphing—the focus of a parabola being the point where direction changes and a fold is made—making point of view, rather than the subject, the agent creating concepts. As the integration intensifies by folding finer distinctions into the plane of consistency, the content of knowledge paradoxically recedes even further than the subject; Deleuze describes this phenomenon by referring to his miming of James as “the determination of the indeterminate by means of ambiguous signs,” where determination here is a verb, the situating movement, rather than an identification. While readers might strive to identify the referents in each Jamesian sentence, Badiou glosses, “What is important [for Deleuze] is not so much to decide (on him, on her, that which, etc) but to be led to the point of capture or of focus where these determinations define a figure, a gesture, or an occurrence.” In terms of Jamesian scholarship, we might revise the famous statement on the late style by Wells by saying that James reverently places on the altar not a dead kitten or bit of eggshell, but perhaps the moment someone wonders if another person may have realized the kitten could have died or the egg broken.
James' appearances in *A Thousand Plateaus* are better known than Deleuze's invocation of James in *The Fold*, so I will only briefly invoke them before giving a longer account of Plateau 8. In the Rhizome plateau, James is named in a footnote as heading “the search for a specifically American code and for a recoding with Europe,” which resituates the Jamesian “international theme” as an exercise in overcoding—having James manifest literary cartography as a productive activity taking part in generalized flows of simultaneous deterritorialization and reterritorialization that may include (but certainly exceed) the particular abstraction-machine we call geopolitics. Another reference in *A Thousand Plateaus* culls from New York Preface to *The Wings of the Dove*, where James explains why he must build up a situation for Milly before introducing her, “I can scarce remember a case when [my] curiosity of 'beginning far back', as far back as possible, and even of going, to the same tune, far 'behind,' that is behind the face of the subject, was to assert itself with less scruple.” Though one might expect Deleuze and Guattari here to create links to the *Year Zero: Faciality* plateau, they instead gloss Jamesian style as “blocks of wrought matter” for which “it is no longer a question of imposing a form upon a matter but of elaborating an increasingly rich and consistent material, the better to tap increasingly intense forces. What makes a material increasingly rich is the same as what holds heterogeneities together without their ceasing to be heterogeneities.” Here, Deleuze and Guattari invoke James as a supplement to their argument about multiplicities; James appears as the pinch-hitter that both amplifies and moves beyond their architectural metaphors (stems that allow movement between plateaus, pillars, beams, vaults, concrete), enabling the transition from this spatial language to their consideration of birdsong. Just as they claim James' “increasingly rich material” taps “increasingly intense forces” and makes it possible to have both consistency and
heterogeneity, their invocation of James seems to speed up or intensify their own text by providing the “stem” that moves them from one plateau to another. An intense James who increases the intensity of Deleuze and Guattari's own text? Those who do not enjoy the intricacies and convolutions of Jamesian style (and I assume there are none of them here!) may assume that we must be talking about some other James, but in his essay “The Literary Element of Mille Plateaux,” Charles Stivale helpfully glosses this literary production of the rhizome as “a production of the multiple...not always by adding a further dimension...[but] by force of moderation...always n minus one...it is only in this manner that the one forms part of the multiple, through being always subtracted.” In Stivale's gloss we see flashes of Badiou's Deleuze in _The Clamor of Being_—austere, ascetic, rigorous—a perspective I would rather turn back onto James: if Deleuze invokes James' sobriety, so do Deleuze and Guattari find in James' sobriety echoes of their own liberatory energies—specifically because the rigor of Jamesian style pursues interpretation to the point where such meaning dissolves into the plane of immanence.

James' next apparition is again as a conscientious figure whose rhizomatic style enacts what Deleuze and Guattari lament that they themselves could not achieve, despite the challenging structure of _A Thousand Plateaus_. “To attain the multiple,” they explain, “one must have a method that effectively constructs it; no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending or creation of words...can substitute for it.” But more specifically, the Jamesian apparition I am alluding to consists of what they consider to be James' unrivalled capacity to situate moments of becoming-woman. As close readers of _Portrait of a Lady_ can attest, James, according to Deleuze and Guattari, was “swept up in an irresistible becoming-woman. He never stopped pursuing his goal, inventing the necessary technical means.” _What Maisie Knew_ is
described as “the becoming-child of the secret,” while *Daisy Miller* is the “becoming-woman of the secret.” While the queer formalist criticism of Eric Savoy and Kevin Ohi has pressed harder on this suggestion of a flexibly-bodied James, Deleuze and Guattari quickly take a line of flight from explicit questions of gender to questions of form: more specifically, the form of the secret, where it is not the content of the secret that matters but the form of its transmission, and eventually, the collapse of a knowledge economy entirely. Consider Winterbourne in *Daisy Miller*. I argue that Winterbourne interacts with Daisy in such a way to create erotic machines—not flirting for its consequences (for a marital partner or even casual sex), but rather for multiplying the number and intensity of erotic experiences across the leisure-assemblage he creates from a variety of other machines, including flirtation, the hotel and its view, the castle at Chillon, expatriate Rome, and family as he manipulates his aunt and Daisy's mother to smear his pleasure across as many social, material, and abstract machines as possible. In this productive mode, Winterbourne attributes each piece of evidence of Daisy's innocence and simplicity to a sphinx-like mystery that he needs to interpret; the more legible her surface becomes, the more complex her interiority must be, and the more pleasure he derives from interpretation. Daisy's bland, earnest geniality and equability paradoxically multiply the scope and intensity of the play around her as Winterbourne produces erotic dramas from the very behaviors and comments that mark Daisy's shallowness. Returning to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim that Daisy's function is to mark “a transparency that is no longer anything more than a pure line that scarcely leaves traces of its own passage.” Accordingly, at the novella's end, Winterbourne no longer hierarchically interprets but faces the transparent mind of Daisy Miller by accepting her final message: that she never had anything to hide. Deleuze and Guattari remark about Daisy's
message, “the secret has lost both its content and its form, where the imperceptible, the
clandestine with nothing left to hide, has finally been perceived. From the gray eminence to the
gray immanence.” The marriageable American young woman in Europe, the focus of much of
James' oeuvre, is finally emptied out of the shadows, folds, and mysteries that made it so
productive an assemblage. She never became engaged and it turns out, never intended to.
Crucially, Winterbourne's battle with interpretosis occasions an unusually warm parenthetical
ejaculation from Deleuze and Guattari: juxtaposing James' portrayal of Daisy as an “innocent a
priori” next to the “guilty a propri” of narration and meaning, they cry out, “all Daisy asked for
was a little respect, she would have given her love for that.” This apparent concern for Daisy
recalls their condemnation of psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus*, making it possible to locate in the
more technical *A Thousand Plateaus* a low-intensity but significant ethical flow they call
attention to through their invocations of Jamesian style

What Jamesian style gives them is a map of what they term the micropolitics of
corversation. This micropolitics is elaborated in the plateau 1847: Three Novellas, or What
Happened? where James' *In the Cage* is parsed as a three-layered architecture or expression-
machine in which point of view creates the protagonist—here, a young telegraphist—by
flickering between what is said, what is left unsaid, and what is emptied of metaphorical
meaning. The first line of communication in *In the Cage* is the molar line: Deleuze and Guattari
explain, “there is a line of rigid segmentarity on which everything seems calculable and foreseen,
the beginning and end of a segment, the passage from one segment to another [so that] they are
segmented, not in such a way as to disturb or disperse, but on the contrary to ensure and control
the identity of each agency, including personal identity.” Each telegram is a rigid segment, as is
the space of her office which abuts another rigid segment (the grocery store where her fiance works), as is her position as telegraphist next to the rigid segment of the stranger-as-customer—all of these segments enact territorializing operations, in contrast to the second line of enunciation in the novella, which Deleuze and Guattari call “supple segmentation.” Nodding to Nathalie Sarraute's analysis of English novelists, they explain that rigid segments are “run through and swept up by micromovements, fine segmentations distributed in an entirely different way, unfindable particles of an anonymous matter, tiny cracks and postures operating by different agencies even in the unconscious, secret lines of disorientation or deterritorialization.” These two lines are constantly intertwining, and in the novella, the telegraphist's point of view flickers between molar and molecular segmentation as she realizes that each telegram or conversation reveals “the existence of another life [in which] there are two politics involved...a macropolitics and a micropolitics that do not envision classes, sexes, people, or feelings in at all the same way.” The novella is structured as a kind of forward progress in which the telegraphist, with her “prodigious talent for interpretation,” increasingly realizes how the moral and molecular lines constantly intermingle; by reading the Sarrautian “subconversation within a conversation,” she begins to trace or read from the outside an adulterous affair; the way she analyzes a situation only by knowing the telegrams, the form of the secret instead of the content of that secret—the names, the faces, the flesh—recalls Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of Jamesian style that I mentioned earlier: “the determination of the indeterminate by means of ambiguous signs.” As a broker in words who mines the molecular lines of the telegram (the smallest quantum of enunciation) to create richer and richer material, the telegraphist effectively plugs into the desire of the two lovers. This affair reaches a tense climax in which her own facility as a telegraphist
saves the day, and as she toys with the helpless lover who stands in front of her cage, she
suddenly reaches the limit that signals that she has come as close as possible to the body without
organs. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, “she has reached a sort of maximum quantum...beyond
which she cannot go...She has reached something like a new line, a third type, a kind of line of
flight that is just as real [yet] no longer tolerates segments.” They helpfully summarize this
architecture of conversation that is a wonderful précis for Jamesian style: “On the first line, there
are many words and conversations, questions and answers, interminable explanations, precisions;
the second is made of silences, allusions, and hasty innuenos inviting interpretation. But the third
line flashes, if the line of flight is like a train in motion, it is because one jumps linearly on it, one
can finally speak 'literally' of anything at all, a blade of grass, a catastrophe or sensation, calmly
accepting that which occurs when it is no longer possible for anything to stand for anything
else.” All three lines figure prominently in Jamesian style: the precisions of the narrator on the
first line, the unspoken connotations of the characters' dialogue on the second line, and on the
third line, all of the moments—so easily parodied—when a pronouncement is made like this: So
there they were. Here we are. Exactly so. So that's it. Because you--? Precisely. More
specifically, during the novella's climax, the customer proclaims, “If it's wrong, it's right, you
see?” and the telegraphist responds, “If it's right, then it's wrong.” Such pronouncements signal
the moment when the infinite unfolding finally yields to the plane of immanence, the end of
metaphor and interpretation, when allusiveness finally succumbs to banality and tautology.
James' convolutions tend towards the point, in other words, where they are no longer needed.

Deleuze and Guattari put it this way: “She has achieved a kind of absolute
deterritorialization.” They then quote from the novella: 'She ended up knowing so much that she
could no longer interpret anything. There were no longer shadows to help her see more clearly, only glare.” And then they conclude, “You cannot go further in life than this sentence by James.” What is fascinating about this pronouncement, though, is that it is not a sentence by James, but rather a creation of the 1925 translation of *In the Cage*. The French translators take away the telegraphist's *certainty* by saying “she could no longer interpret” instead of James' “she lost her earlier sense of merely guessing,” and by using “shadows” instead of James' “shades of distinctness;” further, they translate James' line “all distinctions bounced out” as “all that was left was a harsh light.” Brian Massumi explains this significant alteration by remarking, “The French translation consulted by the authors reversed the meaning of this passage,” and by quoting the Jamesian original. Except Massumi too gets it wrong by a difference of two words and erases all evidence that the French translators had good reason to add the optic imagery of the harsh glare.

While these differences may seem to be minor, we end up with four radically different versions of the line that Deleuze and Guattari say you cannot get further in life than: the Jamesian original, the French translation, the rending of this French quotation into English by Massumi, and Massumi's mistaken version of the Jamesian original. The point is not to deflate Deleuze and Guattari's grandiose use of James but rather that these mistranslations are essential for understanding the theorists' method and how Jamesian style flows through it. Each time we turn to the Jamesian text, we return to it through a text that doesn't exist—or rather, a text that exists virtually, not on the line of hard segmentarity but in the micropolitics of Jamesian style, in the molecular currents of *In the Cage*, whose use for Deleuze and Guattari is to give a model for abstraction that abandons interpretation and stratification in favor of a *productive* eternal return.

You cannot get further in life than this sentence by James because it crystallizes the moment
when thought faces reaches the plane of immanence. Readers are now beyond the content of the secret (we no longer speak of the adulterous couple) and beyond the form of the secret (we no longer care which of the four “translations” we read). Ultimately, James' function for Deleuze and Guattari transcends exemplification; novellas like *Daisy Miller* and *In the Cage*, structured by confrontations among the three lines of enunciation, provide a model for creating lines of flight through escaping the cramped space of critical thought—in the same way that the telegraphist's cage, the source of her constraint, her restriction to content-less, formal relations to the customer's lives around her, is what leads her, and James's readers, out of the cage of molar segmentation.

*A Thousand Plateaus*

“She has attained a kind of absolute deterritorialization. 'She ended up knowing so much that she could no longer interpret anything. There were no longer shadows to help her see more clearly, only glare.' You cannot go further in life than this sentence by James.”

*Milles Plateaux*

<< Elle avait fini par en savoir tant qu’elle ne pouvait plus rien interpréter. Il n’y avait plus d’obscurités pour elle qui lui fissent voir plus claire, il ne restait qu’une lumière crue. >>

Brian Massumi's footnote:

“The French translation consulted by the authors reversed the meaning of this passage. The original reads, 'She knew at last so much that she had quite lost her earlier sense of
merely guessing. There were no different shades of distinctions—it all bounded out.”

The Jamesian “original:”
She knew at last so much that she had quite lost her earlier sense of merely guessing. There
were no different shades of distinctness—it all bounced out.”