Dual Constitutionalism in Practice and Principle

Judith S. Kaye
DUAL CONSTITUTIONALISM IN PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLE†

Judith S. Kaye*

In this year of celebration of the federal Constitution’s 200th anniversary, we appropriately also focus attention on the New York Constitution, adopted ten years earlier. Given that we have both a state and federal Constitution, a state and federal Bill of Rights, and state and federal courts that are sworn to uphold them, the relation and accommodation between the two is naturally a subject of interest.

Of particular concern are provisions that are parallel if not identical in both constitutions, including, for example, such significant protections of the Bill of Rights as the right of free speech; the right to counsel, due process and equal protection of the law; and the protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. Should state courts decide such common issues on a state or federal basis? Should they read their own constitutions to provide greater protection than found under the equivalent provisions of the federal charter, or should they simply conform to federal precedents? I would like to explore these questions both as a matter of history and as a matter of theory.

I

Much has been written on the recent emergence of state constitutional law.¹ The literature indicates that, more often now,
state courts are deciding that standards set by the United States Supreme Court under the federal Constitution do not satisfy the more rigorous requirements of similar provisions of state constitutions, as to which state courts are in general the final arbiters. Some describe this as a new judicial federalism; others, more pejoratively, as an unprincipled reaction to particular criminal law decisions and perceived directions of the Supreme Court.

History tells us that, whether in civil or criminal matters, the independent protection of individual rights under state constitutions is not new; nor is it an illegitimate assumption of authority by state courts. Ironically, in this bicentennial year, the emergence of state constitutional law is in many respects a return to a philosophy of federalism similar—although admittedly not identical—to that of the framers.

When the framers gathered in Philadelphia, each of the Colonies already had adopted a constitution setting out the fundamental terms by which it was to be governed. In New York, our Constitution, drawn up under the stress of war and revolution, was adopted on April 20, 1777.

The state charters for many years were the sole protection against governmental overreaching. Indeed, when the federal Constitution was first drawn up, a Bill of Rights was viewed as unnecessary, in part because state constitutions already safeguarded the rights of citizens. And when the Bill of Rights was later added, it was taken from and actually mirrored corresponding state enactments. Despite this deliberate duplication, there was no thought
that state constitutions were thereby superseded or their Bills of Rights rendered redundant. To the contrary, the contemplation was that the states would remain the principal protectors of individual rights—"the immediate and visible guardian of life and property"—with the powers of the national government principally directed to external objects such as war, peace and foreign commerce.

The framers designed a system of dual federalism—that the federal government and the states constituted separate sovereignties, each supreme within its sphere. For the first century of our history, the federal Bill of Rights was a protection solely in relation to federal authorities; state constitutions protected the People from abuse by state authorities. Barron v. Mayor of Baltimore, decided by the United States Supreme Court in 1833, exemplifies this design. By a series of ordinances, the City of Baltimore had redirected the course of several streams so that they ran into a harbor near a wharf owned by Barron. Barron proved to the satisfaction of the trial court that the soil and debris carried down by the streams made the harbor so shallow that his pier became unusable. After losing before a Maryland court of appeals, Barron appealed to the United States Supreme Court, arguing that the City of Baltimore had taken his property without just compensation in violation of the fifth amendment. In a unanimous decision written by Chief Justice Marshall, himself a great federalist, the Court dismissed the appeal for want of jurisdiction. The fifth amendment—and by analogy, the entire Bill of Rights—in Chief Justice Marshall's words, "is intended solely as a limitation on the exercise of power by the government of the United States, and is not applicable to the legislation of the states." As the Court wrote:

---

5 See, e.g., The Federalist Nos. 45, 46 (J. Madison); see also Mosk, State Constitutionalism: Both Liberal and Conservative, 63 Tex. L. Rev. 1081, 1082 (1985) [hereinafter Mosk, Liberal and Conservative].
8 Id. at 250-51.
Each state established a constitution for itself, and, in that constitution, provided such limitations and restrictions on the powers of its particular government, as its judgment dictated. . . . In their several constitutions [the states] have imposed such restrictions on their respective governments as their own wisdom suggested; such as they deemed most proper for themselves. It is a subject on which they judge exclusively. . . .

The state courts, by the same token, understood that they were the arbiters of their own constitutions. In New York, as early as 1856, in Wynehamer v. People, the New York Court of Appeals struck down a statute as violative of the due process clause of the State Constitution. That case involved an 1855 “Act for the prevention of intemperance, pauperism and crime,” which made unlawful the possession and sale of “intoxicating liquors.” The court found that the Act constituted a deprivation of property without due process of law, stating:

[The court is] not insensible to the delicacy and importance of the duty [it assumes] in overruling an act of the legislature, believed by so many intelligent and good men to afford the best remedy for great and admitted evils in society; but we cannot forget that the highest function intrusted to us is that of maintaining inflexibly the fundamental law. And believing . . . that the prohibitory act transcends the constitutional limits of the legislative power, it must be adjudged to be void.

In the wake of the Civil War and in a spirit of nationalism, the fourteenth amendment was adopted. Although its full reach was not immediately manifest, the fourteenth amendment eventually changed half of the Barron formula. After a false start in the Slaughter-House Cases, the Supreme Court began repeatedly suggesting that the due process clause of the fourteenth amendment applied to and limited the exercise of power by the states.

As the federal Constitution marked its centennial, the Su-
supreme Court had occasion to consider whether a Kansas statute barring the manufacture and sale of "intoxicating liquors" constituted a denial of due process.\textsuperscript{13} Despite counsel's reliance on that leading New York State case—\textit{Wynehamer v. People},\textsuperscript{14} seemingly right on point—the Supreme Court held that it did not. The Court, however, made clear its belief that the fourteenth amendment applied to the states, specifically noting that state legislation could "come within" the amendment if "it is apparent that [the legislation's] real object is not to protect the community, or to promote the general well-being, but, under the guise of police regulation, to deprive the owner of his liberty and property, without due process of law."\textsuperscript{15}

By the end of the century, the Supreme Court's oft-repeated suggestion\textsuperscript{16} ripened into a holding. The Court struck down, as violative of the federal due process clause, a Louisiana statute regulating the issuance of marine insurance, ushering in the "Lochner era" of substantive due process.\textsuperscript{17} Although that era ended dramatically in 1937,\textsuperscript{18} two legacies remain viable to this day. First, the federal due process clause applies to the states and sets a floor below which state conduct may not fall. And second, one of the tasks of the Supreme Court is to establish where that floor should be set. To this extent, the fourteenth amendment modified the vision of two independent sovereigns described by Chief Justice Marshall in \textit{Barron v. City of Baltimore}. However, for present purposes, it is more important to recognize what the fourteenth amendment did not do: it did not alter the other half of the \textit{Barron} formula—that each state by its own constitution may limit and restrict its own powers as its wisdom suggests.

In short, as a historical matter, state constitutions exist and function independently of the federal Constitution. As the New York Court of Appeals concluded in 1911, Supreme Court interpre-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Mugler v. Kansas}, 123 U.S. 623 (1887).
\item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{See supra} text accompanying notes 10-11.
\item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Mugler}, 123 U.S. at 669.
\item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{See The Railroad Comm'n Cases}, 116 U.S. 307 (1886); \textit{Barbier v. Connolly}, 113 U.S. 27 (1885); \textit{Hurtado v. California}, 110 U.S. 516 (1884); \textit{Munn v. Illinois}, 94 U.S. 113 (1876).
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Allgeyer v. Louisiana}, 165 U.S. 578 (1897). The "Lochner era" is, of course, named for \textit{Lochner v. New York}, 198 U.S. 45 (1905), in which the Court invalidated a New York law setting maximum working hours for bakers.
\end{itemize}
tations of the fourteenth amendment are simply not "controlling of our construction of our own Constitution." Decades after the adoption of the fourteenth amendment, state and federal courts continued to function as a partnership of equals in the protection of constitutional rights.

While dual federalism remained theoretically intact, one of the two partners thereafter began to play a more dominant role. This trend may, for convenience, be dated to 1938—when the Supreme Court suggested in *United States v. Carotene Products Co.* that the specific prohibitions of the first ten amendments might be embraced within the fourteenth amendment and apply to the states. The process of incorporation accelerated sharply during the 1960's. By 1969, all or part of the first, fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth amendments were applied to the states.

At the same time—while expressing dissatisfaction with many

---

19 304 U.S. 144, 152 n.4 (1938).
Provisions of the first eight amendments that have not been made applicable to the states through incorporation but are found in the New York State Bill of Rights include the fifth amendment right not to be tried except upon indictment by a grand jury, N.Y. Const. art. I, § 6; see *People v. Iannone*, 45 N.Y.2d 589, 593 n.3, 384 N.E.2d 656, 659 n.3, 412 N.Y.S.2d 110, 113 n.3 (1978); the seventh amendment right to trial by jury in a civil case, N.Y. Const. art. I, § 2; and the eighth amendment right to nonexcessive bail, N.Y. Const. art. I, § 5; see *People ex rel. Klein v. Krueger*, 25 N.Y.2d 497, 499 n.1, 255 N.E.2d 552, 553 n.1, 307 N.Y.S.2d 207, 209 n.1 (1969).
state courts’ discharge of their “front-line responsibility for the enforcement of constitutional rights”\textsuperscript{27}—the Supreme Court began actively widening and raising the federal floor. Individual rights became increasingly federalized. The broadening application of provisions of the federal Bill of Rights to the states “made U.S. Supreme Court law the touchstone for much of the nation’s constitutional decisionmaking concerning individual rights.”\textsuperscript{28} These are the years in which many of us received our professional education and training. As lawyers, we have acquired an easy familiarity with the federal Bill of Rights and have grown accustomed to controlling federal precedents in the adjudication of constitutional rights of the citizens of this State, even though this is in fact a relatively new development in our nation’s history.

In our dual system, the Supreme Court’s growing dominance necessarily affected constitutional law as applied by state courts. While state courts have at all times been important contributors to the body of constitutional law, they too became involved in the application of federal law. So long as the federal floor, or national minimum, was satisfied, state courts could have imposed ceilings in the form of greater rights applicable within their own borders under their own constitutions, and these judgments would then have been conclusive, beyond Supreme Court review.\textsuperscript{29} But as a

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{28} Collins & Galie, \textit{Judicial Review}, supra note 1, at 322. To give but one example of the expansion, in the 1920’s the Supreme Court upheld, as consistent with the first amendment, state statutes prohibiting the advocacy of criminal anarchy. See Whitney v. California, 274 U.S. 357 (1927); Gitlow v. New York, 268 U.S. 652 (1925). Although the progression was not smooth, see, e.g., Dennis v. United States, 341 U.S. 494 (1951) (convictions affirmed of Communist Party leaders for knowingly and willfully conspiring to organize a group to teach and advocate overthrow of federal government), by the late 1950’s the Court had moved toward a distinction between advocacy of doctrine and unprotected advocacy of action. See Yates v. United States, 354 U.S. 298 (1957). This trend culminated in 1969 in Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969) (per curiam), which overruled Whitney v. California, and where the Court held that the first amendment barred the states from penalizing advocacy “directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action” unless it was “likely to incite or produce such action.” Brandenburg, 395 U.S. at 447. See also Brennan, \textit{State Constitutions}, supra note 1, at 490, 493.

\textsuperscript{29} See, e.g., PruneYard Shopping Center v. Robins, 447 U.S. 74, 81 (1980); Oregon v.
\end{footnotesize}
practical matter, the federal guarantees as then interpreted by the
Supreme Court in general not only satisfied but often exceeded
their view of the requirements of comparable state provisions.\textsuperscript{30}

This same fundamental dualism has more recently sparked
the heightened interest in state constitutional law, but now it is
the state courts that are expressing dissatisfaction with the Su-
preme Court's role in the enforcement of constitutional rights.\textsuperscript{31}
While state courts interpreting parallel provisions of their charters
may have been satisfied in particular cases that the federal floor
also established their own ceiling, reformulation of the floor cannot
help but bring the rest of the structure into question. The point to
be drawn from history, however, is that in a system of government
that is founded upon dual sovereignties, independent state court
adjudications based on state constitutions—two layers of constitu-
tional protection—are hardly revolutionary or illegitimate.

This heightened interest in state constitutional law has gained
impetus from other developments in the United States Supreme
Court, not the least of which have been the writings of individual
Justices.\textsuperscript{32} Of the past few years, to my mind a most significant
development in this regard has been the 1983 Supreme Court deci-
sion in \textit{Michigan v. Long}.\textsuperscript{33}

The question of when a state court judgment is subject to Su-
preme Court review, and the source of such authority, is not easily
answered, except we know that as a matter of policy a state judg-
ment will not be reviewed if it rests on a nonfederal ground which
is independent of the federal question in the case and adequate to


N.E.2d 556, 508 N.Y.S.2d 907 (1986), \textit{cert. denied}, 107 S. Ct. 1301 (1987); see also Brennan,

\textsuperscript{32} See, e.g., \textit{Massachusetts v. Upton}, 466 U.S. 727, 735 (1984) (Stevens, J., concurring);
\textit{Michigan v. Mosley}, 423 U.S. 96, 120 (1975) (Brennan, J., dissenting); \textit{Brennan, Bill of
Rights, supra note 1}, at 552; \textit{Brennan, State Constitutions, supra note 1}, at 491. "In recent
years particularly the Supreme Court has emphasized and encouraged this and related as-
pcts of Federalism by exercising special restraint in prescribing constitutional rules of pro-
cedure which would displace or foreclose development of State rules specifically tailored to

\textsuperscript{33} 463 U.S. 1032 (1983).
support the judgment. What is an "adequate and independent" state ground has itself remained elusive, and appears to have been determined by any of several techniques applied on an ad hoc and largely unexplained basis. Until Michigan v. Long, however, it was safe to assume that any lack of clarity as to the basis of a state court judgment would be resolved in favor of the state court as the final arbiter, and against further review. Michigan v. Long, of course, reversed this historical presumption. As a result, more state court judgments extending the rights of its citizens will, for the time being, be brought under Supreme Court scrutiny.

However much one might be discomfited by this shift or by the new methodology, Michigan v. Long has sharply focused the issue; it has staked out the state courts' sphere of autonomy; and it has given the state courts the ability to assure that they remain the ultimate arbiters of state law decisions. Where a state court makes clear that its judgment rests on bona fide separate, adequate and independent grounds, the Supreme Court has declared that it will not review that decision. As Justice O'Connor wrote: "We believe that such an approach will provide state judges with a clearer opportunity to develop state jurisprudence unimpeded by federal interference, and yet will preserve the integrity of federal law."

Justice Stevens has added a further ingredient: it is not only fundamental that state courts be left free to develop their own jurisprudence but also, from the federal perspective, desirable and important that they do so. Justice Stevens, in a recent concurrence, took the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts to task for premising a decision on federal grounds, needlessly inviting Supreme Court review and ultimately remand for a decision on state grounds, when it might have finally resolved the issue in the first instance under its own constitution. In charging the Massachu-

34 "The reason for the[re] restraint is that the Supreme Court decision on the federal question would be merely an advisory opinion . . . ." Pollock, State and Federal Courts, supra note 6, at 980. See generally Baker, State Ground, supra note 6, at 804 (independent and adequate state grounds examined on "constitutional, statutory, and prudential" levels).


36 Massachusetts v. Upton, 466 U.S. at 735 (Stevens, J., concurring); see also South Dakota v. Neville, 459 U.S. 553, 566-71 (1983) (Stevens, J., dissenting). As the Vermont Supreme Court wrote in State v. Badger, 141 Vt. 430, 450 A.2d 336 (1982), "fulfillment of
setts court with "a misconception of our constitutional heritage and the respective jurisdictions of state and federal courts," Justice Stevens echoed a sentiment found in our earliest history, that the states in our federal system are the primary guardian of the liberty of the people. This is a premise of our constitutional system.

As a matter of history, therefore, it is hardly a novel doctrine that underlies contemporary interest in independent state court adjudication of concurrent constitutional provisions.

II

Against this background, I would like to turn to New York State in particular.

As an expression of inviolable principle and fundamental law, the New York Constitution is a curious document—particularly when compared with the United States Constitution. I mean this in two respects.

First, the State Constitution is long and filled with detail, like a volume of miscellaneous statutes, specifying even—as a matter of constitutional dimension—the width of certain ski trails. The article dealing with local finances (article VIII) is longer than the entire federal Constitution. Since its enactment 210 years ago, it has swelled in size and scope, particularly in the aftermath of the Depression, as part of the amendments of 1938. Provisions relating to barge canals, elimination of railroad grade crossings, social welfare and returning veterans reflect paramount concerns at given moments in the rich history of this State, alongside the abiding concern in our extensive Bill of Rights and throughout the constitution for fundamental rights and individual liberty.

Second, while the federal Constitution has been amended only twenty-six times in its entire history, the State Constitution has been amended often, for the most part in isolated fragments initiated by the legislature and thereafter approved by the People at a general election. The Constitution has also been extensively re-

---

37 Massachusetts v. Upton, 466 U.S. at 737 (Stevens, J., concurring).

38 New York has actually had four constitutions: those of 1777, 1821, 1846 (the "People's Constitution") and 1894. The 1894 Constitution, extensively revised and supplemented in 1938, remains in effect today. Since its first amendments in 1801, the New York Constitution has also undergone steady piecemeal revision, initiated by one legislature, approved by
vised as the consequence of constitutional conventions, although
the 1938 Convention was the only one in this century to have its
major work accepted; the reports of the 1915 and 1967 Conven-
tions were entirely rejected by the voters. Additionally, as the
constitution itself directs, every twenty years, and whenever the legis-
lature provides, the People are asked at a general election, "Shall
there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend the
same?"39

The combination of high detail and accessibility of the amend-
ment process gives our Constitution a distinctive New York char-
acter. It is a product and expression of this State.

While current interest centers on the common provisions of
our two constitutions, to proceed right to that issue ignores the
fact that the People of this State have chosen to "constitutional-
ize" a great number of other matters in the Bill of Rights and
throughout the State Constitution. Fortuitously, the heightened
interest in concurrent provisions has drawn attention as well to the
many matters uniquely part of the state charter.

I will not linger long on a recitation of the provisions of the
State Constitution that have no specific analogue or counterpart in
the federal document. No one would question that, though other
considerations such as due process or equal protection may also be
implicated, these singular provisions must at some point be ana-
lyzed as a matter of state law.

Our State Constitution provides, for example, the right to a
free education40 and declares that the aid, care and support of the
needy are public concerns.41 It directs that provision be made for

the next, and then approved by the public at a general election. See C. LINCOLN, THE CON-
STITUTIONAL HISTORY OF NEW YORK (1905) (comprehensive early history of State Constitu-
tion); id. at 613 (critical assessment of amendment process as "rather too easy").

While the resolution for a convention to draw a constitution also provided for a bill of
rights, the 1777 Constitution contained no bill of rights; indeed, a formal bill of rights was
first added to the State Constitution in 1846. The 1777 Constitution, however, continued the
English bill of rights, and further provided for a right to vote, trial by jury, right to counsel,
and religious liberty. This Constitution established the three branches of government and bicameral legislature that persist to this day as the structural framework of our state, as well
as national, government. It was at the time regarded as "the most excellent of all the
American Constitutions."" Id. at 559.

39 N.Y. Const. art. XIX, § 2.
40 Id. art. IX, § 1; see Levittown Union Free School Dist. v. Nyquist, 57 N.Y.2d 27, 47-
41 N.Y. Const. art. XVII, § 1.
the protection and promotion of public health, and it recognizes that the legislature in its discretion may provide for low-rent housing and nursing home accommodations for persons of low income.\footnote{2}

It specifies that environmental conservation is a policy of this State, and mandates that adequate provision be made for abatement of pollution and noise.\footnote{3} As a matter of constitutional directive, certain executive rules and regulations cannot be enforced until they have been publicly filed.\footnote{4} The benefits of membership in a state pension or retirement system may not be impaired,\footnote{5} and the jurisdiction of the Appellate Divisions to hear appeals may not be...
diminished. The Bill of Rights bars the abrogation of a cause of action for wrongful death; it guarantees the right of workers to the prevailing wage, and to organize and bargain collectively; and it provides for workers' compensation.

Given its laborious detail, our Constitution may not in every phrase ring with the majesty of Chief Justice Marshall's declaration: "it is a constitution we are expounding." But it is a constitution we are expounding, and its commands are therefore entitled to the particular deference that courts are obliged to accord matters of constitutional magnitude. To borrow former Chief Judge Breitel's eloquent words, in overturning the moratorium on enforcement of city obligations as violative of the state constitutional requirement of a pledge of faith and credit: "it is a Constitution that is being interpreted and as a Constitution it would serve little of its purpose if all that it promised, like the elegantly phrased Constitutions of some totalitarian or dictatorial Nations, was an ideal to be worshipped when not needed and debased when crucial."

One cannot help but wonder, reading our Constitution, why some seemingly everyday matters were elevated to a place in that document of fundamental law and, even beyond, enshrined in its Bill of Rights. Many of these matters were and are the subject of state statutes, some additionally the subject of federal statutes. They were nonetheless purposefully placed in our State Constitution—within an ambit of special deference and protection—in many instances to declare the existence of a right and correlative commitment by the State, to put them beyond repeal by the legislature, and to insure that derivative legislation involving the expenditure of state money and credit would not be cast out as unconstitutional by the judiciary. The People have declared to the courts and others that, as part of the Constitution, these matters stand above the miscellaneous statutes as their expression of what they consider to be particularly important and not subject to revision except by them.

46 N.Y. Const. art. VI, § 4(k). Section 4(k) provides that the Appellate Divisions shall have all the jurisdiction possessed by them on the effective date of the article. See id.; People v. Pollenz, 67 N.Y.2d 264, 270, 493 N.E.2d 541, 544, 502 N.Y.S.2d 417, 420 (1980).
47 N.Y. Const. art. I, § 16 (wrongful death); id. § 17 (labor); id. § 18 (workers' compensation).
This being so as to the provisions that have no federal analogue or counterpart, no less can be said of the provisions of our State Constitution that do have a parallel in the federal Constitution. These provisions have obviously also been placed, and retained, in our Constitution as an expression of the significance they have within this State.

III

Where the text of a state constitution deals with matters not enumerated federally there is obviously basis—indeed necessity—for independent interpretation. Similarly, where there are material textual differences between a state constitution and a corresponding provision of the federal Constitution, there is little difficulty concluding that something different may have been intended. Does the absence of textual difference in comparable provisions preclude principled independent analysis under the state constitution?

History itself answers this question. The federal Constitution was, after all, taken from state models. Provisions of our State Constitution have been drawn from the federal document, and many of the same individuals had their hand in both. Common objectives, common drafters and common models naturally engender common texts. Yet it is most significant that, as a political act, two separate constitutions were adopted, neither expressly superseding the other, and two have endured. As a juridical act, therefore, constitutional analysis by state courts cannot stop with a mechanical matching of texts; significant protections of a state constitution are otherwise relegated to redundancy.\(^5\)

In this State, in fact, there is a long tradition of reading the parallel clauses independently and affording broader protection, where appropriate, under the State Constitution. One commentator, having studied the New York cases between 1960 and 1978, has concluded that the courts of this State have consistently recognized the independent value of their own constitutional traditions, a recognition that “is not a recent phenomenon brought about by

\(^5\) For an example of a state's choice so to treat a provision of its own constitution, see Fla. Const. art. I, § 12. The Florida Constitution mandates that the state's search and seizure guarantee be construed in conformity with the fourth amendment to the United States Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court. Id. See generally Wilkes, First Things Last: Amendomania and State Bills of Rights, 54 Miss. L.J. 223 (1984).
the Burger Court’s retrenchment in criminal procedure.”\(^{51}\) In this
connection, a substantive area that springs to mind is the right of
an accused to the assistance of counsel, found in similar words in
both Bills of Rights. The right to counsel was first set out in the
State Constitution of 1777. From earliest times, this right has been
insisted upon in our case law and given wider scope than the corre-
sponding federal right. The New York decisions upholding the
right to counsel have been characterized as “the strongest protec-
tion of right to counsel anywhere in the country,” and cited as “a
striking illustration of a constitutional tradition that has developed
on its own terms and, thus, was not susceptible to the vagaries of
changing Supreme Courts.”\(^{52}\)

The reasons why separate interpretation and broader protec-
tion under the State Constitution may be appropriate are perhaps
best shown by two additional examples of parallel provisions: the
due process clause and the protection against unreasonable
searches and seizures.

The New York Constitution’s due process clause, enacted
before the fourteenth amendment, concludes: “No person shall be
deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law.”
The fourteenth amendment to the federal Constitution provides:
“nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property
without due process of law.” Does due process under the State
Constitution mean whatever the Supreme Court says due process
means under the federal Constitution?

Early in its history, in the *Ives* case,\(^{53}\) New York’s due process
clause became the basis for striking down the Workmen’s Compen-
sation Act of 1910, a statute requiring employers, irrespective of
fault, to contribute to an insurance fund to benefit employees in-
jured in the course of employment. That unanimous opinion of the
New York Court of Appeals was immediately and immensely un-
popular. It was publicly declaimed by Theodore Roosevelt, then
planning his Progressive political movement; it led to amendment
of the state constitution specifically to include workers’ compensta-

\(^{51}\) Galie, *State Constitutional Guarantees and Protection of Defendants’ Rights: The
Case of New York, 1960-1978*, 28 BUFFALO L. REV. 157, 192 (1979); see also Kramer & Riga,
*The New York Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court, 1960-76*, 8 PUBLIUS
75 (1978).

\(^{52}\) Galie, *The Other Supreme Courts: Judicial Activism Among State Supreme Courts*,

tion in no less than the Bill of Rights; it was rejected nationally; and it cost the author of the offending opinion the chief judgeship of the Court of Appeals in the next election. That decision has, moreover, earned a permanent place in the study of jurisprudence, as an example of how a court’s choice of methodology can dictate the outcome of a case.64

But apart from its historical, political and jurisprudential interest, Ives is also relevant to the present discussion in that two proffered decisions of the United States Supreme Court which supported the validity of the statute were rejected by the Court of Appeals as “not controlling of our construction of our own Constitution.” The court wrote:

[all that it is necessary to affirm in the case before us is that in our view of the Constitution of our state, the liability sought to be imposed upon the employers enumerated in the statute before us is a taking of property without due process of law, and the statute is therefore void.65

Ives thus stands as a declaration of the independence of the state court in construing the due process clause of its state constitution. A statute possibly valid as a matter of federal due process nonetheless was upset as a matter of state due process.

Since Ives, New York courts have drawn on the State’s constitutional history, as well as its judicial history, in having accorded the due process clause wider scope than its federal counterpart. Sharrock v. Dell Buick-Cadillac, Inc.,66 for example, involved a challenge under the state and federal due process clauses to the statutory lien enabling garagemen to foreclose for delinquent repair and storage charges. Two months earlier, the Supreme Court had made clear that a private sale of property subject to a warehouseman’s possessory lien did not constitute “state action” for purposes of the fourteenth amendment,67 a holding which might have been dispositive. The New York Court of Appeals, however, recognized that it could, and in this instance should, give a broader reading to the “state action” requirement because the state due process clause—unlike its federal counterpart—contains no refer-

65 Ives, 201 N.Y. at 317, 94 N.E. at 448.
ence to “state.” The material factors cited by the Court of Appeals in invalidating the statute were the difference in constitutional text, the history of the clause within New York, the long record of due process protections particularly afforded our citizens, and fundamental principles of federalism.58

Thus, the treatment afforded the State due process clause shows that any difference between texts may become significant in particular cases as a point of departure from federal precedents. Moreover, how a concurrent provision arrived in our charter, as well as how it has been interpreted within this State, may signal whether, in certain cases, greater rights should be afforded under the State Constitution.69

58 45 N.Y.2d at 159-61, 379 N.E.2d at 1173-74, 408 N.Y.S.2d at 43-45. See also Svendsen v. Smith’s Moving & Trucking Co., 54 N.Y.2d 865, 429 N.E.2d 411, 444 N.Y.S.2d 904 (1981) (mem.), cert. denied, 455 U.S. 927 (1982). The dissent in Sharrock v. Dell Buick-Cadillac, Inc., 45 N.Y.2d 152, 169, 379 N.E.2d 1169, 1179-80, 408 N.Y.S.2d 39, 50 (Jasen, J., dissenting), and the concurrence in Svendsen, 54 N.Y.2d at 865, 429 N.E.2d at 412, 444 N.Y.S.2d at 905 (Jasen, J., concurring), would instead have relied on the per curiam opinion in Central Savings Bank v. City of New York, 280 N.Y. 9, 19 N.E.2d 659 (1939), cert. denied, 306 U.S. 661 (1939), in which the Court of Appeals held, on remittitur, that the state and federal due process “clauses are formulated in the same words and are intended for the protection of the same fundamental rights of the individual and there is, logically, no room for distinction in definition of the scope of the two clauses.” Id. at 10, 19 N.E.2d at 659. The court explained that the conclusion in its original opinion that the amendment violated the state due process clause “followed necessarily from our determination that in accordance with a long line of decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, the statute is repugnant to the Federal Constitution.” Id.

One is hard pressed, however, to find the “long line” of due process decisions of the Supreme Court purportedly relied upon by the Court of Appeals in Central Savings Bank. Moreover, construction of the state and federal due process clauses as identical was wholly unnecessary. As the Court of Appeals noted,

We did not by reference solely to the Constitution of the State intend to indicate that though we cannot give validity to a statute which is repugnant to the due process clause in the Federal Constitution we would give wider scope to the same clause in the State Constitution and hold invalid statutes not repugnant to the Federal Constitution as defined by the Supreme Court. No such question was presented or considered in this court.

Id.

59 An “interpretive” analysis considers whether the language of a state constitution specifically recognizes rights not enumerated in the federal Constitution; whether language in a state constitution is sufficiently different to support a broader interpretation of the individual right under state law; whether the history of the adoption of the text reveals an intention to make the state provision coextensive with, or broader than, the parallel federal provision; and whether the very structure and purpose of the state constitution serves to affirm certain rights rather than merely restrain the sovereign power of the state. A “noninterpretive” analysis deals with other matters, such as policy and tradition of the state. See People v. P.J. Video, Inc., 68 N.Y.2d 296, 302-03, 501 N.E.2d 556, 560-61, 508 N.Y.S.2d 907, 911-12 (1988), cert. denied, 107 S. Ct. 1301 (1987). See also Maltz, The Dark Side of State Court
In contrast, the state protection against unreasonable searches and seizures has neither this textual nor historical distinction from the federal Constitution. Indeed, article I, section 12, taken word-for-word from the fourth amendment, did not become part of the State Constitution—in fact, New York possibly was the last state to adopt it—until 1938.

The protection against unreasonable searches and seizures itself generated little dispute at the 1938 Convention—that very protection had for a decade already been contained in the Civil Rights Law—but there were heated exchanges regarding the exclusionary rule. The Supreme Court had held that the exclusion of evidence in federal courts was essential to meaningful protection against intrusive searches, but the New York Court of Appeals chose not to accept that holding as a matter of state law. Writing for the New York court, Judge Cardozo observed that state courts were not bound to interpret their own statutes in the same manner as the federal courts had interpreted the federal Constitution, and concluded that the public policy of New York favored rejection of the exclusionary rule. Ultimately, the protection against unreasonable searches and seizures was added to the State Constitution

---

Activism, 63 Tex. L. Rev. 995 (1985) (questioning value of yet another layer of noninterpretive review).

60 The analysis with respect to search and seizure pertains as well to the equal protection clause. Despite an identity of text and history, the Court of Appeals on occasion has concluded that greater rights should be accorded under the equal protection clause of the State Constitution. The equal protection provision approved at the 1938 Constitutional Convention, N.Y. Const. art. I, § 11, was designed simply to embody "in our Constitution the provisions of the Federal Constitution which are already binding upon our State and its agencies." Dorsey v. Stuyvesant Town Corp., 299 N.Y. 512, 530, 87 N.E.2d 541, 552 (1949) (citations omitted), cert. denied, 339 U.S. 981 (1950). See also Under 21 v. City of New York, 65 N.Y.2d 344, 360, 482 N.E.2d 1, 7-8, 492 N.Y.S.2d 522, 528-29 (1985) (applying federal precedents); Esler v. Walters, 56 N.Y.2d 306, 313-14, 437 N.E.2d 1090, 1094-95, 452 N.Y.S.2d 333, 337-38 (1982) (same coverage as under federal provision). In Cooper v. Morin, 49 N.Y.2d 69, 399 N.E.2d 1188, 424 N.Y.S.2d 168 (1979), cert. denied, 446 U.S. 984 (1980), however, the Court of Appeals, concluding that the denial of contact visitation privileges to pretrial detainees would not violate the federal Constitution, found this unacceptable as a matter of state law. The court wrote:

We have not hesitated when we concluded that the Federal Constitution as interpreted by the Supreme Court fall short of adequate protection for our citizens to rely upon the principle that that document defines the minimum level of individual rights and leaves the States free to provide greater rights for its citizens through its Constitution, statutes or rule-making authority.

Id. at 79, 399 N.E.2d at 1193, 424 N.Y.S.2d at 174.


but an explicit exclusionary rule was not, thus leaving open the issue whether the exclusion of evidence was to follow implicitly, as it did under the federal scheme. Subsequently, the courts have held that it does.\(^6\)

Faced with this history and text, for many years, when considering state search and seizure arguments, the Court of Appeals chose to follow a policy of uniformity with the federal courts.\(^6\) This meant that New York in general followed fourth amendment precedents, recognizing as a valued consequence that police officers and reviewing courts would thereby have but one bright-line rule to guide them.\(^8\) Two significant factors, of course, attended that policy. First, as in all things, continuing a policy of conformity necessarily depends upon the continuation of that to which one has chosen to conform. And second, a policy of having a single workable rule can as readily be served by imposing a higher state standard as by conforming to the federal standard. As the Court of Appeals recently noted, the interest of uniformity is only “one consideration to be balanced against other considerations that may argue for a different State rule. When weighed against the ability to protect fundamental constitutional rights, the practical need for uniformity can seldom be a decisive factor.”\(^6\)

Where the text and history of a provision point to uniformity—and without addressing whether a state court should first consider the federal precedents or its own state law, itself a subject of lively difference\(^6\)—what other factors have nonetheless motivated


\(^{67}\) Three modes of analysis have been identified: reliance on both state and Federal Constitutions; the “primacy” approach, i.e., looking first to the state constitution; and the “interstitial” or supplemental approach, i.e., consulting the state constitution if action is first found valid under the federal Constitution. See Pollock, State and Federal Courts, supra note 6, at 983-86; Bamberger, Methodology, supra note 1, at 301. Compare Sterling v. Cupp, 290 Or. 611, 614, 625 P.2d 123, 126 (1981) (state constitutional law examined prior to federal constitutional analysis) with Right to Choose v. Byrne, 91 N.J. 287, 301, 450 A.2d 925, 932 (1982) (survey of federal decisions appropriate before adjudication of state constitutional claim). See also Baker, State Ground, supra note 6, at 833 (discussion of primary, supplemental, and co-equal theories); Linde, E Pluribus—Constitutional Theory and State Courts, 18 Ga. L. Rev. 165, 178-79 (1984) (state law analysis prior to consideration of federal
the conclusion that greater protection should be afforded under state law?

A response to that question lies in the fact that the Supreme Court’s role is to establish only the minimal level, the lowest common denominator of individual rights applicable throughout the nation, while it is the role of state courts, in discharging their additional responsibility to uphold their own constitutions, to safeguard and supplement those rights where necessary. Sound policy considerations have therefore been cited as the basis for different interpretations of common provisions—such considerations as statutes or common law, traditions of the state, and distinctive public attitudes toward the scope, definition and protection of the right in question. An argument for a broader construction under a state constitution than that established under the federal Constitution requires more than merely urging that some other result is preferred.

It has long been recognized that issues relating to free expres-

claim); Linde, First Things First: Rediscovering the State Bills of Rights, 9 U. BALt. L. Rev. 379, 380 (1980) (states bill of rights “first in time” and “first in logic”) [hereinafter Linde, First Things First].


See State v. Hunt, 91 N.J. 338, 450 A.2d 952 (1982) (list of relevant considerations in this determination). “[T]o make an independent argument under the state clause takes homework — in texts, in history, in alternative approaches to analysis. It is not enough to ask the state court to reject a Supreme Court opinion on the comparable federal clause merely because one prefers the opposite result.” Linde, First Things First, supra note 67, at 392. See also Bamberger, Methodology, supra note 1, at 306; Howard, State Courts and Constitutional Rights in the Day of the Burger Court, 62 Va. L. Rev. 873, 934-44 (1976). In State v. Jewett, 146 Vt. 221, 500 A.2d 233 (1985), the Vermont Supreme Court declined to address the state constitutional issue raised because the parties had failed to discuss it adequately in their briefs and directed that supplemental briefs be filed on the issue. Id. at 228-29, 500 A.2d at 237-39. In response to the decision, the Vermont Attorney General set up a committee to research history and precedents connected with the Vermont Constitution. Collins & Galie, Judicial Review, supra note 1, at 335.
sion involve community standards and traditions; disputes regarding land use are another example raising policy concerns peculiar to the state. Considerations of policy have similarly led the New York Court of Appeals to depart from federal precedents in search and seizure cases. For example, by decisional law developed over the years, clear, definable standards had been established and consistently applied to probable cause determinations within this State. The New York Court of Appeals in recent cases has continued to apply those standards as a matter of state constitutional law under article I, section 12. Its departure from fourth amendment precedents has been expressly predicated on policy considerations, particularly the perception that the Supreme Court of late had changed the federal standards, muddying the rules and diluting judicial supervision of the warrant process, thereby “heightening the danger that our citizens’ rights against unreasonable police intrusions might be violated.”


P.J. Video, 68 N.Y.2d at 305, 501 N.E.2d at 562, 508 N.Y.S.2d at 913; see also State v. Kimbro, 197 Conn. 219, 496 A.2d 498 (1985). As Chief Justice Peters of the Connecticut Supreme Court recently noted, in choosing as a matter of state constitutional law to adhere to the “well-developed federal test” of Aguilar-Spinelli, instead of the newer, “less stringent” test of Illinois v. Gates,

[T]he Connecticut court was able to profit from a developed history of an established, workable test for warrantless searches, without having to commit itself to changing federal views on the reach of the fourth amendment. We were reinforced in our view of our constitution by a similar decision reached by a Massachusetts court with similar constitutional history.

E. Peters, Remarks at the Second Circuit Judicial Conference, at 3 (Sept. 5, 1986) (unpublished text); cf. Peters, Remarks, supra note 3, 115 F.R.D. at 405-09 (published version of
Thus, despite perceived or even actual identity of texts, there may in particular instances be principled basis for broader protection within this State because of our history in adopting or applying a clause, or for other reasons. While language differences between the two constitutions may determine that there is a need for independent analysis, where our Constitution is at issue, the fact that there is no language difference does not spell the end of state judicial review. It invites inquiry into matters of history, tradition, policy and other special state concerns.

IV

I would like to shift the focus from the historical and practical to the theoretical by asking, is independent state court adjudication of parallel protections supported by a cohesive theory, or is this merely a passing disagreement with particular decisions of the United States Supreme Court?

Currently, a great debate rages in the law as to how a constitution should be interpreted. Some insist that it must be read by the intent of the framers; others assert that intent of the framers cannot be controlling, and that the document must be interpreted in light of prevailing attitudes and modern values. It occurs to me that this issue, as well as the one at hand, both propel us to an even more fundamental inquiry. We can answer the question of how to interpret a constitution, whether state or federal, only by first understanding what, in a real sense, a constitution is.

The very word “constitution,” in common understanding, means the most basic structure of a thing, how it is constituted. The English regarded themselves as having a constitution long before the Colonials began drawing up constitutions for themselves on paper, yet the English constitution has never been written down in a single document. That the English can speak of their unwritten constitution helps to underscore exactly what a constitution means. A community’s constitution is its basic make-up, the source, delineation and delimitation of rights and powers within that society, the collective assessment of the rules of the game under which the process of decision-making and exercise of power text). See also Collins & Galie, Judicial Review, supra note 1, at 318 n.3 (survey of state decisions providing constitutional protections unavailable under federal constitution).

within that community will proceed. As the very basis of a living community, a constitution is necessarily a thing of that community.

The essential difference between English and American constitutionalism is not that American constitutions are written. Rather, it is that the English constitution is founded upon a concept of parliamentary supremacy. Under English theory, constitutional sovereignty resides in Parliament. The laws enacted by Parliament, though restrained by traditions and principles, are perforce within the constitution. Our nation, by contrast, is rooted in a concept that sovereignty resides in the People. Thus it is possible that our designated lawmakers can at times enact laws that fall outside the basic law established by the People. Where the People are sovereign, their conception of their constitution exists apart from, and above, ordinary legislative enactments.

The day-to-day function of a constitution, however, goes further. It is a fact of human nature, and of the democratic process, that our actions—both as individuals and as a community—sometimes conflict with our most basic, or overarching, values. Therefore, what we set out to embody in a constitution are those values we do not wish to sacrifice to more transient choices. Our constitutional values can of course be explicitly changed, but amendments are accomplished only through extraordinary political processes—the approval of two successive legislatures followed by a popular referendum in the case of the New York Constitution, and the approval of two-thirds of both Houses of Congress and three-fourths of the states in the case of the federal charter. A constitution, in short, is that set of values to which we have bound ourselves, the values that transcend even our currently made choices—or, in the words of James Madison, the values that "counteract the impulses of interest and passion."

This is no abstraction but rather a reflection of the most abiding reality of both our past and present. We talk a great deal about the constitutional shield provided the People against the government, but in a democracy the threats to our values often have popular support. The Constitution throughout history has been called upon to protect long venerated values that are momentarily aban-
doned or neglected.

It is a function of constitutional law, then, to preserve a community's overarching values in the face of its transient choices. And it is a significant function of the courts to ascertain and identify these most basic values, and flag them when they are at risk. As Judge Cardozo aptly wrote in The Nature of the Judicial Process:

The restraining power of the judiciary does not manifest its chief worth in the few cases in which the legislature has gone beyond the lines that mark the limits of discretion. Rather shall we find its chief worth in making vocal and audible the ideals that might otherwise be silenced, in giving them continuity of life and of expression, in guiding and directing choice within the limits where choice ranges. This function should preserve to the courts the power that now belongs to them, if only the power is exercised with insight into social values, and with suppleness of adaptation to changing social needs.\footnote{B. Cardozo, \textit{The Nature of the Judicial Process} 94 (1921).}

What many, most notably Justice Hugo Black, have sought in a jurisprudence of original intent—the protection of civil liberties by fixing us to an a priori commitment to them—cannot realistically be achieved in that manner. The right to a fair trial or free speech does not exist today simply because a group of framers two centuries ago intended them to exist. They can and do exist today because we mean them to, even though at times we may do or say otherwise. The overarching values of the past can and surely do inform our inquiry into what values make up our “constitution” today.\footnote{See United States v. Classic, 313 U.S. 299 (1941).} We are, after all, \textit{interpreting} a text, not \textit{inventing} one.

\footnote{We may assume that the framers of the Constitution in adopting that section, did not have specifically in mind the selection and elimination of candidates for Congress by the direct primary any more than they contemplated the application of the commerce clause to interstate telephone, telegraph and wireless communication, which are conceded within it. But in determining whether a provision of the Constitution applies to a new subject matter, it is of little significance that it is one with which the framers were not familiar. For in setting up an enduring framework of government they undertook to carry out for the indefinite future and in all the vicissitudes of the changing affairs of men, those fundamental purposes which the instrument itself discloses. Hence we read its words, not as we read legislative codes which are subject to continuous revision with the changing course of events, but as the revelation of the great purposes which were intended to be achieved by the Constitution as a continuing instrument of government. \textit{Id.} at 315-16 (Stone, J.).}
Moreover, we look to the past because our most basic values, when they change, tend to do so very slowly, and then by a process of evolution. But interpreting a constitution cannot stop with values of the past. It necessarily involves as well a community's present values—identifying the values that a community has declared should limit the ordinary processes of its government.

All of this speaks with particular force, and has special relevance, to the subject of state constitutions.

Where a provision has been adopted into a state constitution from the federal charter, intent-based interpretation would obviously be unusually difficult. When dealing with intentions of several distinct groups of framers and amenders, are we to look to the intent of the federal framers, or the intent that the state framers believed—perhaps erroneously—the federal framers held? Or did the state framers intend something altogether different? A text-based “contemporary values” approach fares no better. If we read the words of all the constitutions of this nation in terms of what those words mean today, it is hard to argue that the same words have any different definition anywhere. Obviously, if there is any variation across this nation it is not in the definition of the words themselves, it is in the concepts they embody.

It should be immediately apparent that the Constitution established by New York under threat of British invasion in 1777, and painstakingly reviewed and amended throughout the ensuing centuries, reflects its own values, which may or may not be identical to those held elsewhere.

Indeed, the history that has shaped the values of this State is different in many respects from that which has shaped the consensus in other states, not to mention our nation as a whole. Many states today espouse cultural values distinctively their own. Alaska, for instance, is unique in its constitutional guarantee of the right to possess marijuana in one's home. If it is the judiciary's duty to look at what a “constitution” represents in order to determine what it says, and if what a constitution represents is that community's most basic, overarching values, then it is only right to interpret a state constitution independently of others, even where concepts are expressed in the same words. An independent

70 See Ravin v. State, 537 P.2d 494, 511 (Alaska 1975). The court in part based its holding on article I, section 22 of the Alaska Constitution, which states: "The right of the people to privacy is recognized and shall not be infringed." See id. at 500-04.
interpretation of course does not mean that identical clauses will invariably be read differently, or more broadly, than their federal counterparts or those of sister states. The Supreme Court, in reading the federal Constitution, must lay out a minimal rule for a diverse nation, with due concern for principles of federalism. State courts, even when working with the same basic provisions, have a different focus, which is to fashion workable rules for a narrower, more specific range of people and situations. Their solutions thus may at times be identical to the federal solutions, but they are not necessarily so.

Practical considerations support this theory. State courts are generally closer to the public, to the legal institutions and environments within the state, and to the public policy process. This both shapes their strategic judgments and renders any erroneous assessments they may make more readily redressable by the People. Moreover, building a coherent body of law—one that is not merely reacting to particular Supreme Court decisions, or waiting on the Supreme Court to flesh out the contours of a developing right—has the advantage of furthering predictability and stability in our state law.

---

80 “'Horizontal federalism, a federalism in which states look to each other for guidance, may be the hallmark of the rest of the century.' Pollock, State and Federal Courts, supra note 6, at 992. State courts may find additional guidance in dissenting opinions of the United States Supreme Court.


That the United States Supreme Court has overruled Swain in Batson does not mean that the laboratories operated by leading state courts should now close up shop. For one thing, Batson rests on federal grounds of equal protection, whereas Wheeler and its progeny rest on state constitutional rights to trials by an impartial jury. For another, Batson is not the final word in this area — as the majority recognized, and as Justice White emphasized in concurrence, ‘[m]uch litigation will be required to spell out the contours of the Court’s Equal Protection holding. . . .’

Accordingly, we base our decision on the New Jersey Constitution, which protects fundamental rights independently of the United States Constitution.
In short, the development of an independent body of state constitutional doctrine not only has deep historical roots but also is theoretically sound.

V

We have so far been concerned with the conditions under which state constitutional rights depend upon the delineation of federal constitutional rights. I think it is only proper to turn the tables and ask, are there conditions under which federal constitutional rights should depend upon the delineation of state constitutional rights?

Development of federal law through experimentation within the states has a long tradition. Justice Brandeis, in his famous New State Ice dissent, described as one of the “happy incidents” of the federal system that a state, if its citizens chose, could serve as a laboratory for novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country. The Supreme Court implicitly recognized this process in Mapp v. Ohio, in giving the exclusionary rule national application, noting that, since its own prior decision declining to recognize the exclusionary rule as binding nationally, two-thirds of the states had themselves adopted the rule. Only last term, the Supreme Court reversed its prior ruling on the discriminatory use of peremptory challenges. A few years earlier, in denying certiorari in a New York case, three Justices explicitly

---

Id. at 522, 511 A.2d at 1157 (citations omitted).

86 A similar process of recognizing constitutional rights — which are then beyond legislative revision — may occur within state law. In In re Storar, 52 N.Y.2d 363, 420 N.E.2d 64, 438 N.Y.S.2d 266, cert. denied, 454 U.S. 858 (1981), the Court of Appeals recognized, as a matter of common law, the right of a competent adult to control the course of his medical treatment, and not to have his life prolonged by medical means; the court did not reach the question whether this right is also guaranteed by the Constitution. Id. at 376-77, 420 N.E.2d at 70-71, 438 N.Y.S.2d at 272-73. The lower court, in In re Eichner (Fox), 73 App. Div. 2d 431, 426 N.Y.S.2d 517 (2d Dep’t 1980), had held that the right to refuse medical treatment was guaranteed by the constitutional right to privacy. Id. at 461, 426 N.Y.S.2d at 536. In Rivers v. Katz, 67 N.Y.2d 485, 493, 495 N.E.2d 337, 341, 504 N.Y.S.2d 74, 78 (1986), the Court of Appeals concluded that the fundamental common law right to refuse medical treatment “is coextensive with the patient’s liberty interest protected by the due process clause of our State Constitution.” Id.

87 Mapp, 367 U.S. at 651.
made known their interest in the issue, but said they preferred to allow it to percolate further in the state laboratories, to generate solutions upon which the Supreme Court might rely. The growing trend among the states ultimately led the Court to depart from its holding in *Swain v. Alabama*, and also provided content for the new rule.

This practice comports with the theory outlined earlier. As states may well have different constitutions from the national community, it logically follows that if a value is recognized by enough such communities, then that value has come to be so recognized by—and become part of the "constitution" of—the larger community as well. In short, rights that come to be recognized as such by enough of the People acting through the states may become federal rights—values of national, constitutional importance.

Is there a place in our traditional constitutional structure for such a result? I suggest that there is—the ninth amendment, which reads: "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." The ninth amendment is perhaps the one sentence in the federal Constitution that has never been figured out. "In sophisticated legal circles," John Hart Ely tells us, "mentioning the Ninth Amendment is a surefire way to get a laugh. ('What are you planning to rely on to support that argument, Lester, the Ninth...

---

91 After it became apparent that the *Swain* rule had virtually no bite, two state courts, California and Massachusetts, decided on the basis of their state constitutions to adopt a stricter rule. See People v. Wheeler, 22 Cal. 3d 258, 583 P.2d 748, 148 Cal. Rptr. 890 (1978); Commonwealth v. Soares, 377 Mass. 461, 387 N.E.2d 499, cert. denied, 444 U.S. 881 (1979). Over the course of several years, the mechanics of the rule were fleshed out. See, e.g., People v. Hall, 35 Cal. 3d 161, 672 P.2d 854, 197 Cal. Rptr. 71 (1983); Commonwealth v. Robinson, 382 Mass. 189, 415 N.E.2d 805 (1981). Other state courts followed suit. See Riley v. State, 496 A.2d 997 (Del. 1985), cert. denied, 106 S. Ct. 3339 (1986); State v. Neil, 457 So. 2d 481 (Fla. 1984); see also State v. Crespin, 94 N.M. 486, 612 P.2d 716 (Ct. App. 1980). The Supreme Court noted in *Batson v. Kentucky* that two federal courts of appeals had found discriminating peremptory challenges violative of the federal Constitution by "[f]ollowing the lead of a number of state courts construing their state's Constitution." *Batson*, 476 U.S. at 82 n.1 (emphasis added). The Court's ruling itself basically adopted the California-Massachusetts procedure nationally.
92 See supra text accompanying notes 71-76.
93 U.S. Const. amend. IX.
Amendment?') . . . ." The ninth amendment has been dismissed as stating a mere truism: that all powers not delegated by the Constitution to the federal government remain undelegated as a result of the Bill of Rights. But, as Dean Ely points out, the tenth amendment, added to the Constitution at the same time as the ninth, says this much more clearly. Thus, if the ninth amendment is regarded as an unneeded truism, it also becomes a redundant unneeded truism. As a commonplace of constitutional interpretation, however, "[i]t cannot be presumed that any clause in the constitution is intended to be without effect . . . ."

In the case of the ninth amendment, then, what might that intended effect be? The amendment’s relatively few boosters have been singularly unsuccessful at developing any content for it that would do more than license the federal judiciary to define new rights without providing any standards or mechanisms for so doing. Yet as the text must have been intended to mean something, the task must be to reason our way to some set of standards or mechanisms that make sense of it. Reasoning through what it must mean to say that the enumeration of rights in the original Bill of Rights does not “deny or disparage” other rights retained by the People, one might very well arrive at the point also reached from the opposite direction: approaching state constitutional values as the building blocks of federal constitutional values.

It makes sense that rights protected by the federal Constitution should be expandable by the People acting through the states. Under prevailing political theory, when the Constitution was framed, particularly among the recalcitrant ratifiers at whose insistence the Bill of Rights was added, it was fundamental

---

84 J. ELY, DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST: A THEORY OF JUDICIAL REVIEW 34 (1980); see also C. BLACK, DECISION ACCORDING TO LAW (1981); B. PATTERTON, THE FORGOTTEN NINTH AMENDMENT (1955); Redlich, Ninth Amendment, in 3 ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION 1316-20 (1988) [hereinafter Redlich, Ninth Amendment]; Redlich, Are There "Certain Rights . . . Retained by the People"?, 37 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 787 (1962). The ninth amendment has been mentioned in several Supreme Court cases enlarging the scope of individual rights, although it has not yet served as the predicate for decision. See Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia, 448 U.S. 555, 579-80 & n.15 (1980); Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113, 152 (1973); Griswold v. Connecticut, 381 U.S. 479, 484 (1965); Griswold, 381 U.S. at 487-99 (Goldberg, J., concurring); cf. Griswold, 381 U.S. at 511-20 (Stewart, J., dissenting). As Dean Redlich has observed, persistent references to the ninth amendment suggest that it "could serve as an analytical tool for the appraisal of new claims of constitutional rights." Redlich, Ninth Amendment, supra, at 1319.


86 See supra text accompanying notes 81-87.
that the powers granted under the Constitution, being derived from the people, may be resumed by them whenever perverted to their injury; that every power not therein granted remains in the people at their will; that no right of any denomination can be cancelled, abridged, restrained or modified except in the instances and for the purposes for which power is given; and that among other essentials, liberty of the press and of conscience cannot be abridged.97

As Chief Justice Marshall made clear in *Marbury v. Madison*, “[t]hat the people have an original right to establish, for their future government, such principles as, in their opinion, shall most conduce to their own happiness is the basis on which the whole American fabric has been erected.”98

Whatever other rights may have been contemplated by the framers of the ninth amendment, one of these “original” rights was clearly the right to establish, and to alter, the principles of government.

The conception that state-generated constitutional rights could at some point become binding nationally gives the ninth amendment substance without license. First, it allows for growth in the federal Constitution slowly and through cautious experimentation, subject to testing and confirmation, and provides the People the time and opportunity, acting through their state processes, to reject, expand or modify rights declared at the state level before they are taken as part of a national consensus. Second, this conception of the ninth amendment gives the federal judiciary a point of reference as to the overarching values embodied in our Constitu-

97 Kelsey, *The Ninth Amendment of the Federal Constitution*, 11 Ind. L.J. 309, 314-15 (1936) (summarizing Virginia’s reservations in ratifying Constitution). The theory of the ninth amendment is, essentially, that “nothing has or can be lost by the people because these rights exist independent of the limited powers granted to the federal government.” Call, *Federalism and the Ninth Amendment*, 64 Dick. L. Rev. 121, 130 (1960). The problem lies in identifying what these rights might be. One student of the ninth amendment found, upon pursuing its legislative history, that the amendment’s purpose was “to guarantee that rights protected under state law would not be construed as supplanted by federal law merely because they were not expressly listed in the Constitution.” Caplan, *The History and Meaning of the Ninth Amendment*, 69 Va. L. Rev. 223, 254 (1983). The amendment, as conceived of by its framers, “simply provides that the individual rights contained in state law are to continue in force under the Constitution until modified or eliminated by state enactment, by federal preemption, or by a judicial determination of unconstitutionality.” Id. at 228. Thus, “[t]he retained rights envisioned by the framers . . . included not only those established by common law and statute as of the Constitution’s adoption, but also those to be subsequently established by state legislation.” Id. at 248.

98 *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) at 175-76.
tion today, insuring that the Constitution grows to fit society, but in a way more accessible to the democratic process and less dependent on any individual judge's divination of "contemporary values." Finally, this view reinforces the role of the states as not only guarantors but also generators of individual rights.

VI

In summary, state constitutional law is significant historically; its independent development is sound today, both practically and theoretically; and it represents an avenue for the future delineation of constitutional rights nationally.