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The Substance of *Montgomery* Retroactivity: The Definition of States’ Supremacy Clause Obligation to Enforce Newly Recognized Federal Rights in Their Post-Conviction Proceedings and Why it Matters

Eric M. Freedman*

**ABSTRACT**

*In Montgomery v. Louisiana, 136 S.Ct. 718 (2016), the Supreme Court made a decision of far-reaching importance to the criminal justice system: The Supremacy Clause requires states adjudicating post-conviction attacks to give full retroactive effect to “substantive” new rules of federal constitutional law. The significance of this holding has so far been under-appreciated because of the assumption that “substantive” has the same narrow meaning in the context of the state’s obligations under the Supremacy Clause as it does under Teague v. Lane, 489 U.S. 288 (1989), which sets forth prudential limitations on the claims that the federal courts will entertain when adjudicating federal habeas corpus attacks on state criminal convictions. But, this article argues, the two contexts are not the same and the assumption is unwarranted. To be sure, rules that are “substantive” under Teague are also substantive under Montgomery. But because Montgomery is based on the Supremacy Clause, the class of “substantive” federal rules for Montgomery purposes should be far*

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broader than it is for Teague purposes.

“Substantive” rules under Montgomery, I propose, include all those whose policy underpinnings extend beyond enhancing the factual accuracy of particular decisions. Examples of such rules are ones whose aims include discountenancing government misconduct (e.g., barring evidence derived from coerced confessions or unreasonable searches) and achieving full community participation in the judicial process (e.g., adding new groups to the ones that may not constitutionally be excluded from jury service, and expanding the categories of juror bias that a defendant must be permitted to litigate).

Adopting the proposed definition will have structural benefits to the system of criminal justice adjudication. The Montgomery decision will necessarily have the effect of increasing the number of state post-conviction decisions. The broader the definition of “substantive” the more pronounced the effect. The more pronounced the effect the better off the criminal justice system will be, for two reasons. First, state post-conviction decisions will to some extent be able to fill the gap in the common law creation of new rules by lower federal courts that has resulted from the restrictive ruling in Teague. Second, the greater the salience of post-conviction decisions, the greater the pressure on the states to improve the quality of their post-conviction systems.

Thus, in the interests of making modest but real improvements in the quality of our criminal law, lawyers, legislators, academics, judges, and all individuals concerned about justice should seek adoption of the proposal of this article.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

In Montgomery v. Louisiana the Court held, following its adoption of a new constitutional rule of criminal law, that the states’ flexibility to craft doctrines limiting the retroactivity of new rules in state post-conviction proceedings is subject to a constraint derived from the Supremacy Clause. The states must give
full retroactive effect to new rules of federal constitutional law which are “substantive.”

4 Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 731–32. The logic of Montgomery does not apply to, and this article does not discuss, state court opinions in criminal cases construing their own constitutional guarantees more broadly than the corresponding federal right, see, e.g., Gardner v. App. Division of Sup. Ct., 436 P.3d 946, 1008 (Cal. 2019) (holding indigent misdemeanor defendant entitled by California Constitution to appointed counsel on appeal of suppression order); State v. Santiago, 122 A. 3d 1, 140 (Conn. 2015) (holding death penalty violates ban on cruel and unusual punishments of state constitution); State v. Lilly, 930 N.W.2d 293, 307–08 (Iowa 2019) (holding Iowa Constitution forbids routine jury management practices whose effect is underrepresentation of minority groups); People v. Bridgeforth, 69 N.E. 611, 614 (N.Y. 2016) (holding prosecutor’s use of peremptory strikes on basis of skin color as opposed to race forbidden by New York Constitution); Commonwealth v. Alexander, 243 A.3d 177, 181 (Pa. 2020) (holding state constitution provides greater protection than Fourth Amendment against automobile searches); State v. Gregory, 427 P.3d 621, 627, 631–32 (Wash. 2018) (holding that the “death penalty, as administered in our state,” violates cruel punishment clause of state constitution); see also Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S. 558, 576 (2003) (citing five state supreme court decisions holding prohibitions on same-sex intimacy unconstitutional under state constitutions after Bowers v. Hardwick, 478 U.S. 186 (1986) refused to do so under Constitution); William W. Berry III, Cruel State Punishments, 98 N.C. L. REV. 1201 (2020) (discussing legal theories for death penalty abolition available under state constitutional analogues to Eighth Amendment); LaKeith Faulkner & Christopher R. Green, State-Constitutional Departures From the Supreme Court: The Fourth Amendment, 89 Miss. L.J. 197 (2020) (collecting state law cases providing greater protections than Fourth Amendment); David Rassoul Rangaviz, Compelled Decryption and State Constitutional Protection Against Self-Incrimination, 57 AM. CRIM. L. REV. 157 (2020) (canvassing state constitutions that might be interpreted to provide greater protection against compelled decryption than available under Fifth Amendment); Laura Denvir Stith, A Contrast of State and Federal Court Authority to Grant Habeas Relief, 38 VAL. U. L. REV. 421, 431–37 (2004) (collecting decisions holding under state law that freestanding actual innocence claims are cognizable in post-conviction proceedings although Court has not definitively determined whether such claims state a federal constitutional violation); see generally William J. Brennan, Jr., The Bill of Rights and the States: The Revival of State Constitutions as Guardians of Individual Rights, 61 N.Y.U. L. REV. 535 (1986); William J. Brennan, Jr., State Constitutions and the Protection of Individual Rights, 90 HARV. L. REV. 489 (1977); Bruce Ledewitz, How State Courts Can Help America Recover the Rule of Law: The Pennsylvania Experience, 82 ALB. L. REV. 1325 (2019).

For a proposal to utilize California law to extend the Bridgeforth holding to that state, see Emily Rose Margolis, Note, Color as a Batson Class in California, 106 CAL. L. REV. 2067 (2018). For a more general consideration of the context and implications of the case, see Vinay Harpalani, Civil Rights Law in Living Color, 79 Md. L. REV. 881 (2019).

During 2019, the Supreme Courts of Kansas and Pennsylvania were asked to decide whether the death penalty violates their state constitutions. See John Hanna, Kansas Abortion Ruling Prompts New Attack on Death Penalty, AP NEWS (June 26, 2019), https://apnews.com/article/dd55026d282043c9c07e41e6444; An-Li Herring, PA Supreme Court to Consider Putting End to Death Penalty, WESA-FM (Dec. 4, 2018), https://www.wesa.fm/post/pa-supreme-court-consider-putting-end-death-penalty. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that it would not determine the issue in the context of a statewide petition for extraordinary relief but would rule on claims properly presented by individuals’ post-conviction petitions. See Cox v. Commonwealth, 218 A.3d 384 (Pa. 2019). In the Kansas Supreme Court case, Carr v. State, No. 90108 (docket available at https://pittsreporting.kscourts.org/Appellate/CaseDetails?caseNumber=90198), briefing on the issue was completed in November of 2019 but no decision had been issued as of this writing.

Of course the expansion of state constitutional rights beyond contemporaneously-recognized federal ones may occur in civil cases as well as criminal ones, see, e.g., Obergefell v. Hodges, 135 S.
Properly understood, this arcane-sounding decision opens an important path towards reform of the entire structure of criminal adjudication. Following that path requires appreciating the critical importance of Montgomery’s roots in the Supremacy Clause. As the remainder of this article argues, those roots mean that many more new rules of federal law are “substantive” for purposes of state post-conviction review than for purposes of federal habeas corpus. In the context of state post-conviction proceedings, I propose, “substantive” rules of federal law should be defined as all those whose policy underpinnings extend beyond enhancing the factual accuracy of particular decisions. Examples include rules whose aims embrace the repudiation of government misconduct (e.g., barring evidence derived from coerced confessions or unreasonable searches) and the achievement of full community participation in the judicial process (e.g., adding new groups to the ones that may not constitutionally be excluded from jury service and expanding the categories of juror bias that a defendant must be permitted to litigate).

The consequence of adopting this broader definition of “substantive” will be to increase the number of state post-conviction proceedings. That, in turn, will improve the criminal justice system in two ways. First, state post-conviction decisions will to some extent compensate for the Supreme Court’s restrictions on the authority of the lower federal courts to adjudicate habeas corpus claims. Second, the greater the salience of post-conviction decisions, the greater the pressure on the states to improve the quality of their post-conviction systems. Thus, establishing the appropriate definition of “substantive” under Montgomery is not just a narrow doctrinal project. Adoption of the proposal of this article would make a modest but real improvement to the quality of our criminal law.

B. Outline

After explaining the background of Montgomery in Part II, Part III argues that the definition of “substantive” needs to be crafted to harmonize with the

surrounding legal context, keeping firmly in mind the problem at hand.\(^5\) The Court in *Montgomery* simply imported the definition that originated in *Teague v. Lane*.\(^6\) (Part III.A) But the still-evolving meaning of “substantive” for purposes of *Teague*, which arose in the context of federal habeas corpus review, should respond to the policy concerns arising when state prisoners mount federal collateral attacks on their convictions. (Part III.B) For purposes of *Montgomery*, the term should be defined so as to further the states’ long-established obligations under the Supremacy Clause to give full effect to federal rights.\(^7\) (Part III.C)

Part IV points out that the Supreme Court of the United States is not the only court with the power to recognize new federal rights to which *Montgomery* applies. The practical importance of this is that states will be required to give retroactive effect on state post-conviction to such rights in their own systems even before the rights are recognized by the Supreme Court.

As the canonical *Martin v. Hunter’s Lessee*\(^8\) affirmed, our system has recognized since the time of ratification that state courts are not just empowered but obligated to shape the contours of federal law.\(^9\) Their freedom in this regard is

\[^5\] See Hanna v. Plumer, 380 U.S. 460, 471 (1965) (“The line between ‘substance’ and ‘procedure’ shifts as the legal context changes.”); Guar. Tr. Co. of N.Y. v. York, 326 U.S. 99, 109–111 (1945) (stating that distinction between substance must be “applied with an eye alert to essentials” of the particular problem at hand, regardless of terms’ use in other contexts, because a “policy so important . . . must be kept free from entanglements with analytical or terminological niceties.”).


\[^9\] See id. at 340–42; Charlton C. Copeland, Federal Law in State Court: Judicial Federalism Through a Relational Lens, 19 WM. & MARY BILL RTS. J. 511, 576–78 (2011); Judith S. Kaye, State Courts in Our Federal System: The Contribution of the New York Court of Appeals, 46 SYRACUSE L. REV. 217, 228 (1995) (“[A]s established by Justice Marshall more than two centuries ago . . . our federal system has relegated the task of interpreting the federal constitution not only to the federal courts but also to the courts of fifty states.”); Goodwin Liu, State Constitutions and the Protection of Individual Rights: A Reappraisal, 92 N.Y.U. L. REV. 1307, 1329 (2017) (observing that under Supremacy Clause, “State courts are . . . obligated and entrusted to interpret [federal] constitutional principles”). For a comprehensive overview of the past, present, and potential future of this power, see Jason Mazzone, When the Supreme Court is Not Supreme, 104 NW. U. L. REV. 979, 980 (2010) (observing that “[s]tate courts have always exercised a good deal of authority to determine, independently and definitively, the meaning of the Constitution”).

This article is limited to the enunciation of federal rights in criminal cases, although a great deal of the relevant jurisprudence flowed originally from civil controversies, see id. at 984–93, and has continued to do so, see infra note 81; see generally Diego A. Zambrano, Federal Aggrandizement
subject to judicial check only by the Supreme Court of the United States. Within
the geographical limits to which they apply, their decisions are for Supremacy
Clause purposes just as much statements of federal law as decisions of the United
States Supreme Court. Federalism is multipolar, not vertical. (Part IV.A)

Part IV then offers some past, present, and predictable future examples in
modern criminal law of state courts recognizing broader federal constitutional
protections for defendants than contemporary Supreme Court doctrine. (Part IV.B)

Part V elaborates the definition of “substantive” that should be used in the
Montgomery context and applies it to a number of illustrative situations.

Under Montgomery, the term includes its meaning under Teague but is not
limited to that meaning (Part V.A). “Substantive” federal rules for Montgomery
purposes are those implementing national policies whose principal goals are not
confined to enhancing the factual accuracy of particular decisions. The many
examples of such rules include ones whose purposes include discountenancing
government misconduct and achieving full community participation in the judicial
process. (Part V.B)

Part VI describes how the increased volume of state post-conviction
proceedings that Montgomery will engender might bring about beneficial
architectural changes to the current system of criminal adjudication.

Regardless of how broadly Montgomery is read—but particularly if courts
adopt an appropriate understanding of “substantive”—the case should lead to the
partial restoration of the lower courts’ role in shaping federal constitutional law in
the criminal area. As numerous judicial and academic commentators have pointed
out, that role was effectively destroyed with respect to the federal courts by the
combination of Teague and the statutory restrictions imposed by the Antiterrorism
and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA).11 If state courts begin to be

10 See Martin, 14 U.S. at 351–52. See also Robert M. Cover & T. Alexander Aleinikoff,
Dialectical Federalism: Habeas Corpus and the Court, 88 Yale L.J. 1035, 1049 (1977). For a
description of the background that focuses specifically on modern problems of relevance to this
article, see James S. Liebman & William F. Ryan, “Some Effectual Power”: The Quantity and

11 See, e.g., 2 RANDY HERTZ & JAMES S. LIEBMAN, FEDERAL HABEAS CORPUS PRACTICE AND
PROCEDURE § 5.1, text accompanying note 27 (7th ed. 2016); CAROL S. STEIKER & JORDAN M.
STEIKER, COURTING DEATH: THE SUPREME COURT AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT 295 (2016) (describing
AEDPA as “decimating [the federal judiciary’s] ability to hear and redress claims of federal
constitutional violations” in criminal cases, rendering the remedy worthless); Richard H. Fallon, Jr. &
1731, 1820 (1991) (criticizing Teague “for sharply restricting habeas courts from either developing or
enforcing the constitutional law of criminal procedure”); Stephen R. Reinhardt, The Demise of
Habeas Corpus and the Rise of Qualified Immunity: The Court’s Ever Increasing Limitations on the
Development and Enforcement of Constitutional Rights and Some Particularly Unfortunate
heard from more often, the quantity of inter-court dialogue will increase, which should improve the overall quality of legal thinking. (Part VI.A)

Moreover, there are already pressures bearing on the states from a variety of angles to improve their post-conviction processes. The more Montgomery increases the number of such proceedings, the stronger those pressures will become, which should enhance the quality of all state post-conviction adjudications. (Part VI.B)

Part VII is a brief conclusion that encourages all stakeholders in the criminal justice system to take advantage of the reform opportunities that Montgomery provides.

II. MONTGOMERY IN THE SUPREME COURT

In 2012 the Court ruled in Miller v. Alabama that the Eighth Amendment forbade sentencing a juvenile to life without parole for homicide under a system

unfairness of this situation to state criminal defendants and encouraging state courts to develop federal law even at the price of occasional reversals). AEDPA was in many respects simply a codification of a number of rules limiting federal habeas corpus review that the Court had already adopted in cases decided during the two decades before the statute was enacted. See State v. Preciose, 609 A. 2d 1280, 1294 (N.J. 1992) (“[T]he Supreme Court's retrenchment of federal habeas review . . . forces state prisoners to rely increasingly on state post-conviction proceedings as their last resort for vindicating their state and federal constitutional rights.”); Christopher Flood, Closing the Circle: Case v. Nebraska and the Future of Habeas Reform, 27 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOC. CHANGE 633, 639 (2002) (“Since the early 1970s, Congress and the federal courts have instituted a number of dramatic changes to the structure of postconviction review. As a result of these changes, state postconviction proceedings have increasingly become both the first and the last opportunity for state petitioners to claim the protection of the courts from violations of their rights.”) (footnotes omitted); Mark Tushnet & Larry Yackle, Symbolic Statutes and Real Laws: The Pathologies of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Prison Litigation Reform Act, 47 DUKE L.J. 1, 1–4 (1997) (explaining that AEDPA would need to be interpreted in light of the fact that “the judicial train [had arrived] at the station before the legislative one”).

In one of its earliest such cases, the Court had cut off federal habeas corpus challenges to states’ erroneous rejections of Fourth Amendment claims. See Stone v. Powell, 428 U.S. 465, 481–82 (1976); Steven Semeraro, Enforcing Fourth Amendment Rights Through Federal Habeas Corpus, 58 RUTGERS L. REV. 983, 985–86 (2006) (proposing that Stone be overruled in light of AEDPA); Theodore J. Kristek, Jr., Note, Redefining the Relationship Between Stone and AEDPA, 106 VA. L. REV. 523 (2020) (arguing that AEDPA should be read to have superseded Stone); see generally, Mark R. Brown, Bruce’s “Other” Supreme Court Case, 48 STETSON L. REV 307 (2019) (discussing precursor to Stone). The particular relevance of Stone for present purposes is that it was in effect during the period of the conflicting state court Fourth Amendment rulings discussed infra text accompanying notes 115–17. Thus, a federal habeas court which concluded (accurately, as it turned out) that the pro-defendant states were construing the Constitution correctly was disabled from giving effect to its views.

12 See infra Part VI.B.

making the sentence mandatory. For the sentence to be constitutional, the
sentencer had to make a particularized determination that the defendant was one of
those rare juveniles whose crime reflected “irreparable corruption” rather than
“transient immaturity.”

In the wake of this ruling, Henry Montgomery, a Louisiana prisoner who had
been sentenced as a juvenile to life without parole for murder under a mandatory
system in which no such determination was made, brought state post-conviction
proceedings seeking the benefit of Miller. He was unsuccessful; the Louisiana
courts held that under state law Miller was not retroactive to cases on collateral
review. Because states are free, within the limits of federal law, to craft their own
retroactivity doctrines applicable to post-conviction review, one would have
expected the Louisiana Attorney General in opposing Montgomery’s certiorari
petition to take the position that the ruling below rested on an independent and
adequate state ground that foreclosed Supreme Court review. That official might
have urged that although the state’s framework for retroactivity analysis was based
on the one the Court had adopted for federal habeas corpus cases in Teague, it
was still state law. The Attorney General did not make this argument, however.

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14 The Court had decided two years earlier that the states could not sentence a juvenile
offender to life without parole for a non-homicide offense without providing “some meaningful
opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation.” See Graham v.
Florida, 560 U.S. 48, 75 (2010). The states were forbidden from making a permanent judgment at
the time of sentencing that all such defendants are “irredeemable, and thus deserving of incarceration for
the duration of their lives.” Id. In addition, as discussed in more detail infra Part IV.B.1, the Court
had previously decided in Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 276, 578 (2005), that capital punishment
could not be inflicted on defendants younger than eighteen.

15 Miller, 567 U.S. at 478–79 (internal citations omitted). The precise reach of the decision is
a matter of dispute. See infra text accompanying notes 107–09.

imprisoned. See Grace Toohey, After 55 Years in Prison, Baton Rouge Man Key to Supreme Court
parole denial; next hearing likely in two years).

17 See Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 727.

decided under their own law to apply Miller retroactively, see, e.g., Falcon v. State, 162 So. 3d 954
(Fla. 2015); People v. Davis, 6 N.E.3d 709, 722 (Ill. 2014); State v. Ragland, 836 N.W.2d 107, 114–
17 (Iowa 2013).

19 See Stephen M. Shapiro et al., Supreme Court Practice ch. 3.22 (11th ed. 2019)
(overviewing Court’s “Lack of Jurisdiction to Review Judgments Based on Independent and
Adequate State Grounds”).


21 Cf. Colwell v. State, 59 P.3d 463, 471 (Nev. 2002) (“We adopt the general framework of
Teague, but reserve our prerogative to define and determine within this framework whether a rule is
and the Court therefore appointed an amicus to do so.  

The Court’s Montgomery opinion, written by Justice Kennedy for a six-member majority, decided that, although Teague v. Lane had indeed been based on retroactivity considerations specific to federal statutory habeas actions challenging state criminal convictions, its ruling that new “substantive” rules of constitutional law applied retroactively on collateral review was also a requirement of the Supremacy Clause.  

The Court explained that convictions contrary to substantive rules are constitutionally void regardless of when the rule was announced and that under the Supremacy Clause states may not “mandate that a prisoner continue to suffer punishment barred by the Constitution.” Hence, Louisiana could not apply its own retroactivity rules to keep Mr. Montgomery out of court: “Where state collateral review proceedings permit prisoners to challenge the lawfulness of their confinement, States cannot refuse to give retroactive effect to a substantive constitutional right that determines the outcome of that challenge.”

The Court accordingly turned to the question of “whether Miller’s prohibition on mandatory life without parole for juvenile offenders indeed did announce a new substantive rule.” Applying Teague’s paradigm, the Court wrote that a procedural rule was one regulating “only the manner of determining the defendant’s culpability.” In contrast, a substantive rule (1) “forbids criminal punishment of

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new and whether it falls within the two exceptions to nonretroactivity (as long as we give new federal constitutional rules at least as much retroactive effect as Teague does.”

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22 See Brief in Opposition at 6, Montgomery (No. 14-280) (Dec. 3, 2014) (“Because Louisiana has adopted Teague the Louisiana Supreme Court’s determination as to whether Miller is retroactive pursuant to Teague renders its decision ‘interwoven with the federal law.’ Michigan v. Long, 463 U.S. 1032, 1040 (1983). Here, the Louisiana Supreme Court ‘decided the case the way it did because it believed that federal law [would require] it to do so.’ Id. at 1041.”).  


25 See Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 729. Stated slightly more technically, what Montgomery held was that although the basic Teague rule of non-retroactivity for “new” rules was a prudential one, its exceptions were constitutionally required. The Teague rule and its exceptions are described infra Part III.B.

26 Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 731.

27 Id. at 731–32.

28 Id. at 732.

29 Id. (internal citations omitted). For example, permitting an advisory sentencing jury in a Florida capital case to consider an invalid aggravating circumstance is unconstitutional, see Espinosa v. Florida, 505 U.S. 1079 (1992), but the rule is procedural rather than substantive and therefore a defendant whose direct appeal ended prior to Espinosa cannot successfully assert a claim based on it.
certain primary conduct” or (2) prohibits “a certain category of punishment for a class of defendants because of their status or offense.”30

The Court explained that Miller had declared “life without parole an unconstitutional penalty for ‘a class of defendants because of their status’—that is, juvenile offenders whose crimes reflect the transient immaturity of youth . . . As a result, Miller announced a substantive rule of constitutional law.”31 Therefore, “prisoners like Montgomery must be given the opportunity to show their crime did not reflect irreparable corruption.”32

The principal dissent, written by Justice Scalia and joined by Justices Thomas and Alito, attacked both the majority’s Supremacy Clause holding and its categorization of the Miller rule as substantive.

The rule of Teague, Justice Scalia said, was a prudential response to the problems of finality arising in the context of federal habeas corpus, and its transformation into a Supremacy Clause mandate was unwarranted.33 “The Supremacy Clause does not impose upon state courts a constitutional obligation it

to invalidate his conviction through a federal habeas corpus action. See Lambrix v. Singletary, 520 U.S. 518, 539 (1997). For other examples, see Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 735–36.

30 Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 732. A few months after Montgomery, Justice Kennedy, writing for the Court over only a single dissent, added to his earlier definition the thought that “this Court has determined whether a new rule is substantive or procedural by considering the function of the rule,” Welch v. United States, 136 S. Ct. 1257, 1265 (2016). See infra Part III.B(1) (suggesting that the meaning of “substantive” under Teague remains cloudy).

There is an extended discussion of what rules are “substantive” for Teague purposes in Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, §25.7. Examples in the first numbered category in the text include constitutional rules protecting from punishment certain sorts of speech, see, e.g., Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969), or intimate conduct, see, e.g., Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S. 558 (2003); Griswold v. Connecticut, 381 U.S. 479 (1965). Examples in the second category include imposing capital punishment on defendants who are mentally retarded, see Atkins v. Virginia, 536 U.S. 304 (2002); see also infra note 50 (noting subsequent change of nomenclature to “intellectually disabled”), or for the offense of rape, see Kennedy v. Louisiana, 554 U.S. 407 (2008); Coker v. Georgia, 433 U.S. 584 (1977).

31 Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 724 (internal citations omitted). The Court noted that this conclusion was unaffected by the fact that a state could meet the demands of Miller by adopting a procedure to determine that the juvenile was one of the few on whom a sentence of life without parole could appropriately be imposed. Id. at 734–35. Such a hearing would “not replace but rather give[] effect to Miller’s substantive holding that life without parole is an excessive sentence for children whose crimes reflect transient immaturity”, Id. at 735. For example, the Court said, the constitutional prohibition on executing intellectually disabled defendants is undoubtedly substantive notwithstanding that its implementation requires procedures to determine whether any particular defendant falls within that class. “Those procedural requirements do not . . . transform substantive rules into procedural ones.” Id.

32 Id. at 736.

33 Id. at 738–39. See also id. at 742–43 (describing majority as having “created jurisdiction by . . . converting an equitable rule governing federal habeas relief to a constitutional command governing state courts”).
fails to impose on federal courts.\textsuperscript{34}

In any event, Justice Scalia continued, the rule of Miller was procedural rather than substantive. That opinion had stated, “Our decision does not categorically bar a penalty for a class of offenders or type of crime—as, for example, we did in Roper or Graham. Instead, it mandates only that a sentencer follow a certain process—considering an offender’s youth and attendant characteristics—before imposing a particular penalty.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus, “it is as plain as day that the majority is not applying Miller, but rewriting it.”\textsuperscript{36}

The reason for this “distortion of Miller,” Justice Scalia suggested, was to enable the Court to proscribe the sentencing of juveniles to life imprisonment without parole while not acknowledging that it was doing so—an acknowledgement which “would have been something of an embarrassment” because the Court in outlawing the death penalty for juveniles in Roper\textsuperscript{37} had said that life without parole was a severe enough punishment.\textsuperscript{38}

Justice Thomas also contributed a separate dissent, whose thrust was that because the Constitution does not require either the state or federal courts to entertain post-conviction attacks at all, the extent to which they do so is “a matter about which the Constitution has nothing to say.”\textsuperscript{39}

III. SUBSTANCE IN CONTEXT

A. Overview

Montgomery imported its division between “substantive” and “procedural” rules from Teague. But Teague arose in a very different context than Montgomery. The problem presented by Teague was how to craft judicial rules for federal habeas corpus review of state criminal convictions to accommodate the disruptive effects of federal courts’ recognition of new constitutional rights, an issue misleadingly but universally denominated one of “retroactivity.”\textsuperscript{40} The problem

\textsuperscript{34} Id. at 741. But see infra Part III.C (suggesting numerous flaws underpinning this assertion).

\textsuperscript{35} Miller v. Alabama, 567 U.S. 460, 483 (2012).

\textsuperscript{36} Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 743. As indicated infra text accompanying notes 107–09, the Court is likely to re-address the Miller rule in the next year or so. Nothing in my argument depends on what it decides.


\textsuperscript{38} Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 744. See infra note 137 (discussing this passage).

\textsuperscript{39} Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 750. See infra text accompanying notes 164–66 & note 164 (discussing this statement).

\textsuperscript{40} See Danforth, 552 U.S. 271 & 271 n.5 (2008) (declining to alter terminology but explaining that “retroactivity” misleadingly suggests that issue is when right came into existence whereas in fact the question in such cases is “redressability,” i.e., “whether a violation of the right that occurred prior
presented by Montgomery was how to define the obligations of the state courts under the Supremacy Clause when called upon to adjudicate such rights, regardless of when they were first recognized. Those two questions are not the same.41

B. The Teague Context

There has been a great deal written on the origins, formulation, interpretation, and consequences of the Teague rule and I do not intend to repeat those analyses here.42

Tersely put, during the 1950s and 1960s the Court recognized a number of new constitutional rights in the criminal law area. In critiquing these developments, observers such as Justice Harlan noted that the settled expectations of the states would be upended and the costs to the court system increased if all state prisoners whose proceedings had not conformed to the newly-announced rules could afterwards mount successful collateral attacks on their convictions by federal habeas corpus.43

Eventually, the Court responded to these concerns by creating the doctrine announced in Teague.44 A federal court considering a federal habeas corpus attack

to the announcement of the new rule will entitle a criminal defendant to the relief sought”). Specifically, the Court described Teague as grounded in “equitable and prudential considerations,” id. at 278. Chief Justice Roberts, joined by Justice Kennedy, dissented, taking the position that the majority was wrong in its “view that retroactivity is a remedial question,” id. at 304. Their position was that in determining the question of retroactivity the Court was determining the content of the federal law applicable to the case at hand, id. at 307, “something on which the Constitution gives this Court the final say,” id. at 303. This view may well explain why Justice Kennedy could write, and Chief Justice Roberts join, the Montgomery majority in rejecting Justice Scalia’s complaint, quoted supra note 33, that the Court had “convert[ed] an equitable rule governing federal habeas relief to a constitutional command governing state courts;” they did not accept his characterization of Teague’s prohibition on the application of “new” rules by federal habeas courts as grounded in equitable considerations. These issues are further discussed infra note 44.


42 For a comprehensive discussion see Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, ch. 25. A recent treatment that situates the case within the Court’s overall civil and criminal retroactivity jurisprudence appears in Charles W. “Rocky” Rhodes, Loving Retroactivity, 45 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 383, 392–419 (2018).

43 Rhodes supra note 42, at 392–95; Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 7, at 916–17.

44 “Teague is plainly grounded in [the Court’s authority under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 (2017) to adjust] the scope of federal habeas relief in accordance with equitable and prudential considerations,” Dunfort, 552 U.S. at 278.

The court adopted Teague’s limitations on the application of new law to serve “the interests of the States, not the federal courts.” HERTZ & LIEBMAN, supra note 11, § 25.6, text accompanying
on a state criminal conviction must as a threshold matter decide whether a ruling for the prisoner would require the statement of a new rule.\textsuperscript{45} If so, the habeas court must dismiss the case unless the proposed new rule would be (1) substantive\textsuperscript{46} or a (2) watershed rule of criminal procedure.\textsuperscript{47} An early example of the application of the methodology took place in \textit{Penry v. Lynaugh},\textsuperscript{48} where a Texas Death Row prisoner asserted that the Constitution precluded his execution because he was mentally retarded. The Court held that it could reach the constitutional question, even though the rule he sought was “new,” because it was substantive.\textsuperscript{49} On the merits, the Court concluded that the new rule Penry sought did not exist,\textsuperscript{50} but that he was entitled to prevail on his claim that the proceedings below had violated the Court’s “old” rule requiring a sentencer to give consideration to his mental retardation as a mitigating factor.\textsuperscript{51} In partial dissent, Justice Scalia, speaking for

\textsuperscript{45} The requirement that this issue be considered first, which is criticized at length in \textit{Id.}, \S 25.4 (discussing “Nonretroactivity as a ‘threshold’ question”), “is far from a merely technical matter” because its practical effect is to forbid lower federal judges “to interpret the United States Constitution in habeas corpus cases and relegate[,] those judges to the virtually ministerial task of putting into operation decisions that the Supreme Court renders on direct review,” \textit{id.} at 1408. Thus the only criminal law contexts in which the lower federal courts may regularly engage in the common law development of new constitutional rules are the trial and direct appeal phases of federal criminal prosecutions.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{See} Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 732 (setting forth definition of substantive for \textit{Teague} purposes); \textit{supra} text accompanying note 30 (quoting definition); \textit{infra} text accompanying notes 61–62 (discussing definition).


\textsuperscript{49} \textit{id.} at 329–30.

\textsuperscript{50} This aspect of \textit{Penry} was explicitly overruled by \textit{Atkins v. Virginia}, 536 U.S. 304 (2002) (holding mentally retarded persons exempt from execution under Eighth Amendment). Some years later the Court changed its terminology from “mentally retarded” to “intellectually disabled,” \textit{see} \textit{Hall v. Florida}, 572 U.S. 704 (2014), but I have not done so retrospectively in this article.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Penry}, 492 U.S. at 328. The Court explained, \textit{id.} at 315–19, that \textit{Jurek v. Texas}, 428 U.S. 262 (1976) had upheld the Texas death penalty statute based upon the Court’s understanding that it would be read so as to “permit the sentencer to consider all of the relevant mitigating evidence a defendant might present in imposing sentence,” and that in cases decided well before the filing of
four Justices, heatedly disputed that this latter rule was “old.”

And so it goes. From the time it was announced, Teague has been both controversial in concept and incomprehensible in application. Within months of the decision, the New York City Bar Association called for it to be legislatively overruled with respect to capital cases because of its “arbitrary and perverse consequences . . . where life is at stake.” Leading scholars soon criticized the effects of the ruling on criminal justice adjudication generally, pointing out that it created an inappropriate incentive structure for the states, threatened norms of fundamental fairness, and deprived the justice system of the beneficial work of the lower federal courts. Today, like astronomers trying to elaborate the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, judges viewing Teague quarrel over whether their dueling perceptions result from sound “metaphysics” or instead “ignore[] reality . . . here on Earth, [where] the laws of physics still apply” and the Supreme Court cannot “alter the space time continuum.”

As desirable as it may be to abolish or modify Teague, that is not the argument of this section. The point here is far more modest. Even if no changes are made to the Teague doctrine in cases where it applies, i.e., on federal habeas corpus, to import it without reflection into contexts other than federal habeas corpus would be extremely poor policy. The Montgomery situation, which does not involve federal habeas corpus but rather the demands of the Supremacy Clause in

Penry’s habeas corpus petition the Court had applied the rule to invalidate portions of the Oklahoma and Ohio death penalty statutes. See Eddings v. Oklahoma, 455 U.S. 104 (1982); Lockett v. Ohio, 438 U.S. 586 (1978).

52 Penry, 492 U.S. at 352. At the other end of the spectrum, the four Justices who had dissented in Teague, a non-capital case, attacked its unconsidered extension to capital cases, see id. at 341 (Brennan & Marshall, JJ., dissenting), and two of those also specifically targeted the framework under which retroactivity is a threshold consideration. See id. at 350 (Stevens & Blackmun, JJ., dissenting) (“It is neither logical nor prudent to consider a rule’s retroactive application before the rule itself is articulated.”).

53 See Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, § 25.1, text accompanying notes 10–25 (overviewing continuing differences among Justices and confusion in lower federal courts “over the import and application of fundamental components of the doctrine,” and observing that other jurisprudential developments suggest “that the Court may or ought to be prepared to reconsider the premises underlying the Teague doctrine as a whole”).

54 See Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Committee on Civil Rights, Legislative Modification of Federal Habeas Corpus in Capital Cases, 44 Rec. Assoc. Bar 848, 849, 852–53 (1989). By way of disclosure, I was the principal author of this report, see id. at 860.

55 See Fallon & Meltzer, supra note 11, at 1816–20.

state post-conviction proceedings, is one of those contexts.

As we move on to consider that context in the next section, two points about *Teague*, one intellectual and one practical, should be borne in mind.

1. A great deal of thinking has been devoted to the still-murky questions of whether a rule is "new,"57 and when during the course of an individual prisoner’s litigation it became so.58 Much less has been devoted to *Teague’s* exceptions.59 In particular, there is no reason to think that we have fully mapped the cloudy astronomical region of the so-called first *Teague* exception, viz. that even if a rule of constitutional law is "new," a federal habeas corpus court may apply it if the rule is "substantive."60 Indeed, the Court has hinted that the term "substantive" covers more territory than has yet been explored. "Although *Teague* describes new substantive rules as an exception to the bar on retroactive application of procedural rules, this Court has recognized that substantive rules ‘are more accurately characterized as . . . not subject to the bar.’"61 This otherwise unexplained statement may reflect a recognition that in the context of federal review of detentions the concept currently sought to be captured by labelling some claims "substantive" is not a new one that sprang into being in the second half of the twentieth century. There is a long history, dating back to the Judiciary Act of 1789, of making federal review available to federal and state prisoners

57 See Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, §25.5.

58 Because *Teague* only applies to new rules, if a rule was announced before the prisoner’s conviction became final the doctrine will not be a barrier on federal habeas corpus. See id., § 25.6, text accompanying note 1 (explaining that “The point at which ‘finality’ sets in is . . . critical for nonretroactivity purposes”); see also McKinney v. Arizona, No.18-1109 (2019), Petition for a Writ of Certiorari at 19–20, cert. granted 2019 WL 936074 (June 10, 2019) (arguing in successful petition for review that under *Teague* “finality is not always final”). This insight is the basis for the proposal made in Ruthanne M. Deutsch, Federalizing Retroactivity Rules: The Unrealized Promise of Danforth v. Minnesota and the Unmet Obligation of State Courts to Vindicate Federal Constitutional Rights, 44 Fla. St. U. L. Rev. 53, 77–81 (2016) that the state courts are in certain circumstances required to hear in post-conviction proceedings constitutional claims that did not exist at the time of direct appeal but would be barred from federal habeas corpus review as stating a "new" rule.

59 See Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 7, at 920 (noting relative lack of commentary regarding provenance of *Teague* exceptions).

60 See supra text accompanying note 45. The next paragraph of text parses the “so called.” In its current formulation, the second *Teague* exception, for “watershed” new rules of criminal procedure, see supra text accompanying note 47, is very narrow, see Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, §25.7, text accompanying notes 26–27, and I will not discuss it further.

asserting claims that their imprisonments violated either the Constitution or other fundamental rights of national importance. To the extent that *Teague* jurisprudence has become disconnected from this history, that is a flaw in *Teague*’s doctrinal framework. Students of *Teague* should be working to repair the flaw. More to the present point, it should not be carried forward when legal thinkers are called upon to build doctrinal frameworks in other environments.

2. As previously noted, one deleterious practical effect of current *Teague* doctrine has been that, in the criminal area only, the process of formulating new constitutional rules has been substantially deprived of the benefits of percolation through the lower federal courts that commonly enriches and improves the quality of judicial decision-making. Ameliorating that situation would benefit the justice system.

C. The Montgomery Context

The Supremacy Clause background relevant to this article is uncontroversial. Under the Constitution, no lower federal courts need be created. And even if they are, they might be granted only limited subject matter

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62 See 1 Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, § 2.4[d][x], text accompanying notes 287–89; id., §2.4 [e]; see also Danforth v. Minnesota, 552 U.S. 264, 271–72 (2008); Eric M. Freedman, *Habeas Corpus: Rethinking The Great Writ Of Liberty* 61–62 (2003). There is also a long history of criticism of judicial attempts to articulate the boundaries of this territory. See, e.g., Note, The Writ of Habeas Corpus in the Federal Courts, 35 Colum. L. Rev. 404, 406, 412 (1935) (describing contemporary doctrine respecting availability of writ to prisoners as displaying “the confusion and inconsistency necessarily incident to the attempt to conceptualize the inconceptual” and arguing that its “hopeless entanglement” be replaced with a rational jurisprudence focused on “the relative values, as applied to the specific defect, of finality of judicial determination and flexibility in reexamination of errors in the interests of human liberty.”).

63 See supra note 45.

64 The effect of *Teague* in combination with that of AEDPA, see supra text accompanying note 11, has been that “state postconviction is the best opportunity for…lower courts, and ultimately the Supreme Court…to decide open questions in federal constitutional criminal procedure.” Giovanna Shay, *The New State Postconviction*, 46 Akron L. Rev. 473, 475 (2013).

65 See infra Part VI.A.

66 The propositions in the next three sentences of text are all to be found in *Palmore v. United States*, 411 U.S. 389, 400–02 (1973).

67 See U.S. Const. art. III, § 1 (creating Supreme Court and authorizing creation of “such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish”); Richard H. Fallon et al., Hart and Wechsler’s *The Federal Courts and the Federal System*, Ch. 1, § C.2 (7th ed. 2015) (describing background of the “Madisonian Compromise” leading to this provision).
jurisdiction. Hence, if national law is to be truly national, state courts need to implement it. As the Court has held since the Marshall era, that is why the text of the Clause states explicitly: “This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States . . . shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.”

The state courts must accordingly be open to federal claims absent a “valid excuse.” Of course, it is not a valid excuse that a state disagrees with the policy

extensively documented discussion of the proceedings at the Constitutional Convention respecting both Article III and the Supremacy Clause that eventuated in the “Madisonian Compromise” appears in Liebman & Ryan, supra note 10, at 705–73.


Justice Scalia’s statement, “The Supremacy Clause does not impose upon state courts a constitutional obligation it fails to impose on federal courts,” is one that he himself describes as “a maxim,” Montgomery v. Louisiana, 136 S. Ct. 718, 741 (2016) (Scalia, J., dissenting), and is unsupported by any authority. More significantly, it is at odds with both the original intent of the provision and its drafting history. These have been recently been canvassed in a detailed scholarly study which describes the obligations that the Supremacy Clause does impose on the federal courts. See William Michael Treanor, The Case of the Dishonest Scrivener: Gouverneur Morris and the Creation of the Federalist Constitution, https://ssrn.com/abstract=3383183, at 81–82 (draft dated June 15, 2020 of article to be published in Michigan Law Review). For a discussion of other legal provisions bearing on the obligation of the federal courts to hear habeas claims, see infra notes 184–91 and accompanying text. The federal government is of course bound by the prohibition against the imposition or enforcement of substantively invalid convictions or sentences, see Leah M. Litman, Legal Innocence and Federal Habeas, 104 Va. L. REV. 417, 486–87 & 487 n.328 (2018), but that long-recognized rule is more comfortably rooted in principles of substantive due process than supremacy.

71 See Haywood v. Drown, 556 U.S. 729, 735 (2009); Testa v. Katt, 330 U.S. 386, 392 (1947). Subsequent to my writing of this article, an argument has been made by Ann Woolhandler and Michael G. Collins, State Jurisdictional Independence and Federal Supremacy, 72 Fla. L. Rev. 73 (2020) that the cases in this line were historically wrong and should not be followed in implementing Montgomery. The many flaws in this argument are ably sketched out in Carlos M. Vázquez & Stephen I. Vladeck, Testa, Crain, and the Constitutional Right to Collateral Relief, 72
of the federal law.\textsuperscript{72} Hence, states have often defended refusing to hear a federal claim by asserting that their reason for doing so was not policy-based but rather “procedural.”\textsuperscript{73} The Supreme Court has never accepted that argument.\textsuperscript{74} The definition of a “valid excuse” does not depend on whether the state rule is “substantive” or “procedural,” but rather on whether its enforcement will frequently and predictably interfere with vindication of the federal right.\textsuperscript{75} Thus, for instance, a state rule requiring the prompt filing of a detailed notice of claim as a predicate to damages actions against government officers cannot be applied to actions based on a federal statute because the rule would systematically deprive plaintiffs of the full benefit of such actions, as well as leading to inconsistent results depending on the state in which the federal action was brought.\textsuperscript{76}

Hypothetically, then, if post-conviction actions in Louisiana must be filed on 8.5 x 11 inch paper but Henry Montgomery had filed his \textit{Miller} claim on 11 x 14 inch paper, there would probably have been no Supremacy Clause violation in rejecting the claim. The Louisiana rule would be a “valid excuse,” not because the paper size rule is “procedural” rather than “substantive” but because its application would not frequently and predictably defeat enforcement of the federal right.\textsuperscript{77} A

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\textsuperscript{72} Haywood, 556 U.S. at 736. It makes no difference that the state’s view on the matter is so strong that it also keeps from its courts corresponding state-law claims. See \textit{id.} at 739–42 (dispelling “misperception” that state excuse is valid so long as state and federal claims are treated equally; “equality of treatment is . . . the beginning, not the end, of the Supremacy Clause analysis”).


\textsuperscript{74} See, e.g., \textit{id.} at 245–46 (rejecting defense and holding that question for determination was whether the state court proceeded in such a way that “rights of the parties under controlling federal law would be protected”). See also Allen Erbsen, \textit{A Unified Approach to Erie Analysis for Federal Statutes, Rules, and Common Law}, 10 U.C. IRVINE L. REV. at 25–28, 93 (forthcoming 2020) (available at https://ssrn.com/abstract=3607678) (noting that distinction between substance and procedure plays no role in Supremacy Clause analysis).


\textsuperscript{76} See \textit{id.} at 140–53. The text of the Supremacy Clause applies not just to federal rights arising under the Constitution but also to ones flowing from treaties and federal statutes, and many important Court precedents, including \textit{Haywood, Testa, Garrett} and \textit{Felder}, have glossed the Clause in the latter situation, e.g., \textit{Charles Dowd Box Co. v. Courtney}, 368 U.S. 502, 507–08 (1962); \textit{Clafin v. Houseman}, 93 U.S. 130, 136–37 (1876). The source of the federal right does not make any difference to the Supremacy Clause analysis. See generally Carlos Manuel Vázquez, \textit{Treaties as the Law of the Land: The Supremacy Clause and the Judicial Enforcement of Treaties}, 122 HARV. L. REV. 599, 601–02 (2008). Thus, although most \textit{Montgomery} cases are likely to arise in situations where the newly recognized right arises under the Constitution, nothing in my analysis \textit{infra} Part V.B depends on that circumstance. See \textit{infra} note 138.

\textsuperscript{77} The “probably” in the last sentence covers some unusual hypothetical fact pattern under which this statement would be untrue, as, for example, if there existed a prison rule forbidding
blanket rule of state law denying retroactivity to Miller claims, on the other hand, would have that effect and be invalid under the Supremacy Clause. The same would be true of state default or exhaustion rules requiring the assertion of claims not yet in existence.

In the actual Montgomery case, the Supreme Court was not using “substantive” to define the nature of the state’s barrier to relief, but rather to define the class of new rules of constitutional law that the state post-conviction court was required to hear irrespective of its retroactivity doctrines. Nevertheless, because the strong impetus of Supremacy Clause law since the founding has been to require federal constitutional claims brought in state court to be heard while the strong impetus of retroactivity law in the Teague era has been to prevent federal constitutional claims brought in federal court from being heard, the appropriate definition of “substantive” rules for Montgomery purposes requires an analysis that focuses on the policies underlying the Supremacy Clause.

Such an analysis appears in Part V below. But to conduct it soundly we must first remind ourselves that the Supreme Court of the United States is not the only judicial body with the power to recognize new federal rights that a state court must enforce. The reminder is needed for two reasons. First, as an intellectual matter, a definition of “substantive” rules in the Montgomery context that is true to the structural postulates of the Supremacy Clause needs to take into account that state supreme courts have the same authority. Second, as a practical matter, once a state supreme court recognizes a new federal “substantive” right, the state post-conviction courts will be required to enforce it regardless of whether the Supreme Court has yet recognized the right.

possession of 8.5 x 11-inch paper. Cf. Johnson v. Avery, 393 U.S. 483, 485 (1969) (invalidating state prison rule forbidding prisoner from assisting others to prepare habeas petitions; “Since the basic purpose of the writ is to enable those unlawfully incarcerated to obtain their freedom, it is fundamental that access of prisoners to the courts for the purpose of presenting their complaints may not be denied or obstructed.”)

78 See Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 7, at 935–39 (providing additional doctrinal support for this conclusion); Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 71, Part II (providing strong further support for this aspect of their argument in response to Woolhandler & Collins, supra note 71). See also Bowles v. Florida, U.S. LEXIS 4565, at *1–2 (Aug. 22, 2019) (statement of Justice Sotomayor respecting denial of certiorari) (noting that state procedural rule requiring claims of eligibility for execution based on the intellectual disability ruling in Hall v. Florida, 572 U.S. 701 (2014) to be filed ten years before the case was decided “creates grave tension with this Court’s guidance in Montgomery v. Louisiana”).

79 Cf. Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 7, at 954 (“[W]e think that the right recognized in Montgomery is a right to obtain collateral relief in state courts for claims based on new substantive rules that have been definitively recognized for the first time by the Supreme Court after the petitioner’s conviction became final. The holding [rests on an understanding] of the effect of Supreme Court decisions recognizing new substantive rules.”) (original emphasis). I think this statement is correct as a description of the situation that the Montgomery Court had particularly in mind, see infra note 87. But, for the reasons described in the remainder of this article, I do not think that the case is limited to those circumstances.
IV. STATE RECOGNITION OF NEW FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

A. Overview

The autonomy of state courts to interpret federal constitutional guarantees independently of Supreme Court jurisprudence was so intrinsic to the original structure of the Constitution that the federal jurisdictional statutes in place until the end of 1914 did not give a litigant asserting that a state supreme court had rendered a decision over-protecting federal constitutional rights recourse to the Supreme Court; only a party asserting the wrongful denial of a federal claim (meaning in criminal cases the defendant) could seek Supreme Court review. The modern statutory framework is different, though, and in parsing it the Supreme Court has been assiduous in asserting its exclusive role as the last word on the scope of federal constitutional rights.

There are, nevertheless, many reasons why a state decision expanding defendants’ federal constitutional rights may go unreviewed by the Supreme Court and thus become binding in the rendering jurisdiction. For instance, the government may not seek review; the decision may not be final for purposes of

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80 See Mazzone, supra note 9, at 990.

81 See Peter N. Salib & David K. Suska, The Federal-State Standing Gap: How to Enforce Federal Law in Federal Court Without Article III Standing, 26 WM. & MARY BILL RTS. J. 1155, 1203–09 (2018) (explaining jurisprudence, much which has developed in civil disputes and rests on “shaky” legal foundations, as driven by Court’s wish to “reserve[] to itself the power to conclusively interpret federal law.” id. at 1203).

82 The cases of interest for this Part are ones in which the state courts self-consciously break new doctrinal ground, e.g., Eunjoo Seo v. State, 148 N.E.3d 952 (Ind., 2020) (holding that Fifth Amendment forbids requiring defendant to reveal password of lawfully-seized electronic device); Commonwealth v. Davis, 220 A. 3d 534 (Pa. 2019) (same), not ones in which they simply apply old doctrines to fact patterns that have not yet come to the Court. See, e.g., Jardines v. State, 73 So. 3d 34 (Fla. 2011), aff’d Florida v. Jardines, 569 U.S. 1 (2013) (finding dog sniff search on homeowner’s property unconstitutional); In re Ellison, 385 P.3d 15 (Kan. 2016) (holding, in accord with other state courts, that federal constitutional right to speedy trial applies to civil commitment proceedings against sex offender). Of course, how any particular case is to be categorized may well be a disputed question whose resolution depends on the ultimate opinion of the Court.

83 For example, in 2018 the local authorities in the District of Columbia and New York State determined not to appeal decisions of their highest courts that misdemeanor defendants not otherwise entitled to jury trials under existing Supreme Court Sixth Amendment doctrine gained that right if they could be deported as a result of their convictions. See Bado v. United States, 186 A.3d 1243 (D.C. 2018) (en banc); People v. Suazo, 118 N.E.3d 168 (N.Y. 2018); Dan M. Clark, DA Will Not Seek SCOTUS Review of Immigrant’s Jury Trial Right, N.Y. L.J., Dec. 5, 2018, at 1. In an earlier example, no review was sought by the government when, in Perez v. Sharp, 198 P.2d 17 (Cal. 1948), the Supreme Court of California held in a civil case that the state’s statute prohibiting interracial marriage violated the Equal Protection Clause. See Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1, 6 n.5 (1967) (citing case).
the Court’s certiorari jurisdiction, the federal constitutional ruling may not be
dispositive of the outcome, or the Justices may decide for prudential reasons to
allow the envelope-pushing ruling to stand. Moreover, some Justices have
suggested that discretionary review should be granted particularly sparingly when
sought by state governments in criminal cases.

A rule of federal constitutional law recognized idiosyncratically by a state
may of course form the basis of a state post-conviction claim in that state.
Moreover, because the rule is in that state as fully an authoritative construction of
the Constitution as is a decision of the United States Supreme Court, the courts of
that state are required under the Supremacy Clause to give their new rules the
retroactive effect mandated by Montgomery. This doctrinal conclusion is both

84 See 28 U.S.C. § 1257 (a) (2017) (granting certiorari jurisdiction over “[f]inal judgments or
decrees rendered by the highest court of a State in which a decision could be had”). For example, as
further discussed infra note 97, in Barber v. Gladden, 298 P.2d 986 (Ore. 1956), the Oregon Supreme
Court decided as a matter of first impression that the Equal Protection Clause required that an
indigent unsuccessful petitioner for state habeas corpus be permitted to appeal without posting an
appeals bond. That, however, was an interlocutory ruling and whether the Supreme Court could
(much less would) have reviewed it at the State’s behest is murky at best. See SHAPIRO et al., supra
note 19, ch. 3.7 (describing case law under § 1257 (a)). Eventually the prisoner lost his appeal on the
merits and the Supreme Court then denied his certiorari petition. See Barber v. Gladden, 309 P.2d
192 (Ore. 1957), cert. denied, 359 U.S. 948 (1959). Similarly, Eunjoo Seo is an unlikely candidate for
Supreme Court review because it is arguably moot under federal, although not state, standards. See
148 N.E.3dat 963 (Massa, J., dissenting).

v. Kentucky, 476 U.S. 79 (1986) (forbidding jury challenges on basis of race) that Equal Protection
Clause forbids jury challenges on basis of religion but determining that challenge under review had
not been made on that basis). For a comprehensive overview of Batson jurisprudence, see Elisabeth
Semel, Batson and the Discriminatory Use of Peremptory Challenges in the 21st Century, in 1 NJP
LITIGATION CONSULTING, JURYWORK: SYSTEMATIC TECHNIQUES 245 (2d ed. 2018–19). For a
discussion of the current status of jury challenges based on religion, see id., at 270–73.

86 See SHAPIRO ET AL., supra note 19, ch. 4.25 (describing common considerations influencing
whether to grant review of state court decisions).

collecting authorities). Justice Scalia responded for the Court: “What a state court cannot do is
experiment with our Federal Constitution and expect to elude this Court’s review so long as victory
goes to the criminal defendant.” Id. at 641. As this example shows, the Justices are at some level
aware of the state courts’ authority to formulate new federal constitutional law doctrines, but that
awareness may be fairly described as sporadic. Their default mode, as in Montgomery, is to assume
that any new rule of federal constitutional law, at least any important and long-lasting one, will
emanate from themselves.

88 See supra text accompanying notes 8–10.

89 The text of the Supremacy Clause, which has been quoted, supra note 3, is specifically
directed to state court judges. See generally, supra Part III.C.

90 See infra Part V.B (describing Montgomery mandate). A further discussion of the subject
matter of this paragraph of text appears in Part II of my reply article, Eric M. Freedman, Montgomery
sensible and unremarkable because for Supremacy Clause purposes the critical point is the origin of the rule in the Constitution, not the identity of the court pronouncing it.

Confining itself to the last half century or so, and with no pretense to exhaustive coverage, the next section of this Part provides a few examples of criminal cases in which state supreme courts have construed the federal constitution in a way more protective of individual rights than the Supreme Court of the United States had done at the time.

Of course, if a court follows this path without also determining that the same result would follow under state law, then its ruling is vulnerable to reversal by the Supreme Court of the United States, a highly significant risk that would not otherwise exist. Furthermore, because Montgomery is bottomed on the Supremacy Clause, a state supreme court basing its ruling on non-federal law is not subject to the retroactivity obligations that the case imposes.

On the other hand, there may be a number of affirmative reasons for a state supreme court to utilize its authority to expand the contours of federal constitutional rights. Quite apart from the possibility that the legal arguments are


The Court’s decision in New York v. Ferber, 458 U.S. 747 (1982), which I have criticized at some length elsewhere, see Eric M. Freedman, A Lot More Comes into Focus When You Remove the Lens Cap: Why Proliferating New Technologies Make it Particularly Urgent for the Supreme Court to Abandon its Inside-Out Approach to Freedom of Speech, and Bring Obscenity, Fighting Words, and Group Libel Within the First Amendment, 81 IOWA L. REV. 883, 925–29 (1996), was also a reversal of a New York Court of Appeals decision upholding a First Amendment challenge. In that instance, the Court of Appeals on remand held that the defendant’s claim lacked merit under the state constitution. See State v. Ferber, 441 N.E.2d 1100 (N.Y. 1982). In light of this view, the Court of Appeals could not have avoided deciding the First Amendment issue in its original opinion. This differentiates the case from Arcara, where the Court of Appeals thought that the challenge had merit under both bodies of law and therefore had freedom to choose between them without changing the outcome.

92 For an overview of a number of these by a retired Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, see Chase T. Rogers, Putting Meat on Constitutional Bones: The Authority of State Courts to Craft Constitutional Prophylactic Rules Under the Federal Constitution, 98 B.U.L. REV. 541, 572–73 (2018) (including possibility that effect of awaiting Supreme Court pronouncement which may never come would be that “important rights may be underenforced, and large areas of constitutional law may never be developed, to the loss of both state courts and, ultimately, the Supreme Court”) (footnotes omitted).
in fact stronger under federal than state constitutional law, there may be constraints on the ability of the state supreme court to rest its decision on state constitutional law that do not apply to its interpretation of the Constitution. For example, various provisions of the state constitutions of California, Florida and Louisiana provide that they shall not be interpreted more expansively than their federal counterparts.

Moreover, state supreme courts, which are subject to electoral accountability, may sometimes find it attractive to rely on the federal constitution. Following that course might permit them to shift the blame for potentially unpopular results to the federal government and to take advantage of

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94 Any hypothetical attempt to impose constraints through the state’s political process on interpreting the Constitution would encounter obvious Supremacy Clause obstacles, see Mazzone, supra note 9, at 1056, as well as potential state and federal constitutional law problems relating to the independence of the judiciary.

95 See CAL. CONST. art. I § 7 (providing that nothing in state constitution imposes duties on the government “which exceed those imposed by the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution with respect to the use of pupil school assignment or pupil transportation;” provision upheld against Equal Protection Clause challenge in Crawford v. Los Angeles Bd. of Educ., 458 U.S. 527 (1982)); id. at art. I § 24 (“In criminal cases the rights of a defendant to equal protection of the laws, to due process of law, to the assistance of counsel, to be personally present with counsel, to a speedy and public trial, to compel the attendance of witnesses, to confront the witnesses against him or her, to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures, to privacy, to not be compelled to be a witness against himself or herself, to not be placed twice in jeopardy for the same offense, and to not suffer the imposition of cruel or unusual punishment, shall be construed by the courts of this State in a manner consistent with the Constitution of the United States. This Constitution shall not be construed by the courts to afford greater rights to criminal defendants than those afforded by the Constitution of the United States, nor shall it be construed to afford greater rights to minors in juvenile proceedings on criminal causes than those afforded by the Constitution of the United States.”); FLA. CONST. art. I § 12 (providing that protections against unreasonable searches, seizures, and interceptions of private communications and corresponding exclusionary rules, “shall be construed in conformity with the 4th Amendment to the United States Constitution, as interpreted by the United States Supreme Court”); id. at art I § 17 (providing that state prohibition on cruel and unusual punishments “shall be construed in conformity with decisions of the United States Supreme Court which interpret the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment provided in the Eighth Amendment to the United States Constitution”); LA. CONST. art. I § 4(G) (providing that with certain exceptions compensation for takings “shall not exceed the compensation required by the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America”); Mazzone, supra note 9, at 1055–56.

96 See Levinson, supra note 4, at 802–04 (summarizing state judicial selection and retention mechanisms).

97 See Kansas v. Carr, 577 U.S. 108, 118 (2016). For example, in its ruling, discussed supra note 84, that the Constitution required that an indigent be permitted to take an appeal of an adverse
the general cultural respect for the commands of the Constitution. Because so many more cases are denied review by the Supreme Court than are granted it, the statistical odds are that a state court which wishes to achieve those goals will succeed.

To be sure, if a number of state courts have agreed with the expansion of a federal constitutional right and the Supreme Court later disagrees, those state courts may have to reconsider their views. But that is already the case and has not resulted in any notable practical problems.

B. Illustrative Modern Cases

1. State Innovations Resulting in Expeditious Supreme Court Response

The cases of least interest for present purposes are ones in which the Supreme Court promptly confirms or rejects the state court’s view. In those cases, there will not be an extended period during which the state courts have an unusual interpretation of the federal constitution in place and need to confront the retroactivity issue on state post-conviction.

An example is *Simmons v. Roper.* Two Supreme Court cases decided in 1989 had established that juveniles aged 16 and above were eligible for execution. But in 2003, Simmons persuaded the Missouri Supreme Court that

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98 See Mazzone, *supra* note 9, at 1063. See also Rogers, *supra* note 92, at 572 (observing that “the parties and the general public may have more confidence in a rule that is subject to correction by the Supreme Court.”).

99 See Shapiro et al., *supra* note 19, ch. 1.20(h); Rogers, *supra* note 92, at 572 & 572 n. 167 (commenting that small percentage of cases reviewed by Court means that state supreme court rulings on federal constitutional rights “may not come before the Court for years. . . . if ever”); see also *supra* text accompanying note 83 (noting that government may choose not to seek Supreme Court review of decision expanding defendants’ federal constitutional rights).

100 Thus, for example, the decision in *Barber* was never reviewed by the United States Supreme Court. See *supra* note 84.


102 Simmons v. Roper, 112 S.W.3d 397 (Mo. 2003).

the landscape had been altered by an intervening Supreme Court death penalty case and that the Eighth Amendment line should now be drawn at the age of 18. The Supreme Court granted the state’s certiorari petition and in a 2005 decision affirmed the ruling of the Missouri Supreme Court. Thus Missouri was no longer uniquely generous in its interpretation of the Eighth Amendment, as it would have been if the Court had denied certiorari.

More recently, faced with confusion as to the meaning of Miller v. Alabama’s ban on mandatory sentences of life without parole for juveniles in the wake of Montgomery, the Supreme Court has signaled its intention to resolve that issue in the October 2020 Term.

2. State Innovations Resulting in Delayed Supreme Court Response

In some cases, there has been a substantial delay before state court rulings expanding the federal constitutional rights of criminal defendants beyond the limits of contemporary Supreme Court jurisprudence have received the Court’s endorsement.

For example in a 1968 case the California Supreme Court granted state habeas corpus relief vacating the convictions of a topless dancer and a nightclub manager for lewd exposure and dissolute conduct based on an erotic dance performance at the club. “Although the United States Supreme Court ha[d] not ruled on whether the performance of a dance is potentially a form of expression protected against

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105 See Simmons, 112 S.W. 3d at 399–400.


108 See Alice Reichman Hoesterey, Confusion in Montgomery’s Wake: State Responses, the Mandates of Montgomery, and Why a Complete Categorical Ban on Life Without Parole for Juveniles is the Only Constitutional Option, 45 FORDHAM URB. L.J. 149 (2017).

109 On March 9, 2020, the Supreme Court granted the Petition for a Writ of Certiorari in Jones v. Mississippi, No. 18-1259, which was predicated on conflicting interpretations by the lower courts of Montgomery’s restatement of the Miller rule. See id. at 9–14. For an overview of problems that have divided the lower courts, see Zachary Crawford-Pechukas, Note, Sentence for the Damned: Using Atkins to Understand the “Irreparable Corruption” Standard for Juvenile Life Without Parole, 75 WASH. & LEE L. REV. 2147, 2184–91 (2018). For a discussion of still-emerging problems in the area and possible solutions, see Mary Marshall, Note, Miller v. Alabama and the Problem of Prediction, 119 COLUM. L. REV. 1633 (2019).

state intrusion by the guarantees of the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the federal Constitution,” the California court determined that it was.\textsuperscript{111} Thirteen years later, in \textit{Schad v. Borough of Mount Ephraim},\textsuperscript{112} the United States Supreme Court, upholding a challenge brought by an establishment which allowed customers to view nude dancers in glass booths, endorsed this view: “as the state courts in this case recognized, nude dancing is not without its First Amendment protections from official regulation.”\textsuperscript{113}

In another instance, in \textit{United States v. Matlock}\textsuperscript{114} the Court determined in 1974 that where two people had joint control over a physical space one of them could give consent to a police search in the absence of the other, who could not later seek to contest the search when its fruits were offered in evidence against her at a criminal trial. This left undecided the issue of whose views controlled if the second person were present and objected to the search. Between 1977 and 1992 three isolated state supreme courts determined, against the great weight of state and federal authority,\textsuperscript{115} that under the Fourth Amendment there was no effective consent in that situation.\textsuperscript{116} In 2004 the Georgia Supreme Court agreed.\textsuperscript{117} The United States Supreme Court granted the state’s certiorari petition and in 2006 affirmed the ruling in favor of the criminal defendant.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{111} Id. at 538. Hence, the court concluded, the convictions before it could not stand because the constitutional requirements for the suppression of obscenity had not been met. Id. at 538–41.


\textsuperscript{113} Id. at 66. In \textit{Barnes v. Glen Theatre, Inc.}, 501 U.S. 560 (1991), the Court eventually reaffirmed this conclusion, see id. at 565 (“[N]ude dancing . . . is expressive conduct within the outer perimeters of the First Amendment”), while adopting a far more government-friendly test on the merits than \textit{Giannini} had. \textit{See also City of Erie v. Pap’s A.M.}, 529 U.S. 277 (2000) (concluding that Pennsylvania Supreme Court had erred in distinguishing \textit{Barnes} and upholding a First Amendment challenge by a nude dancing establishment to a ban on public nudity). For a thoughtful but unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Supreme Court to reform the relevant First Amendment doctrine, see Jeffrey S. Raskin, Comment, \textit{Dancing on the Outer Perimeters: The Supreme Court’s Precarious Protection of Expressive Conduct}, 33 \textit{Santa Clara L. Rev.} 395, 432–36 (1993).


\textsuperscript{117} \textit{See State v. Randolph}, 604 S.E.2d 835 (Ga. 2004).

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{See Randolph, supra note 115.}
3. State Innovations Currently Without Supreme Court Response

As this is written, the Justices have yet to be heard from regarding several areas in which state supreme courts have recognized broader federal constitutional rights for criminal defendants than provided in existing Supreme Court caselaw. In 2016 the Court held in Hurst v. Florida,119 that Florida’s death penalty system was invalid under the Sixth Amendment because the jury was not required to make factual findings of the aggravating factors supporting the death sentence. On remand, the Florida Supreme Court held in Hurst v. State that the Sixth and Eighth Amendments imposed several additional requirements, including a jury determination that the balance of aggravating and mitigating factors warranted a death sentence and that the jury decision be unanimous.120 Florida filed a petition for certiorari asserting that these requirements extended defendants’ rights under those Amendments beyond the limits of the Court’s existing jurisprudence.121 The petition was denied,122 leaving Hurst v. State as the binding law in Florida on the federal constitutional issues.

Continuing efforts to implement Batson v. Kentucky,123 the leading case on the permissibility of peremptory jury challenges under the Equal Protection Clause have generated a number of issues currently splitting state supreme courts124 as well as some rulings pushing the boundaries of existing law. But the Supreme Court has not intervened. Thus, for example, there was no Court response when in


120 Hurst v. State, 202 So. 3d 40 ( Fla. 2016). There is a further discussion of this case infra text accompanying notes 159–63. More recently, the Florida Supreme Court has modified its views on the constitutional issues so as to significantly constrict the requirements for jury decision-making. See State v. Poole, 297 So. 3d 487 ( Fla. 2020). It has, however, left unchanged the retroactivity framework described infra text accompanying note 163. See Brown v. State, No. SC19-704, 2020 WL 5048548 at *24 & n.16 ( Fl. Aug. 27, 2020).


124 See, e.g., People v. Williams, 299 P.3d 1185, 1242–54 (Cal. 2013) (Liu, J., dissenting) (overviewing conflicting caselaw regarding standard of appellate review applicable to a trial court’s determination regarding the third step of the Batson inquiry), cert. denied, Williams v. California, 571 U.S. 1197 (2014). For additional examples, see Semel, supra note 85, at 317–18 & 318 n.5 (determining whether prosecutorial explanation for strike is race-based), 359–60 (assessing strike made for mix of valid and invalid reasons).
2017 the Washington Supreme Court adopted a unique “bright line rule” under which “the peremptory strike of a juror who is the only member of a cognizable racial group on a jury constitutes a prima facia showing of racial motivation,” sufficient to satisfy the first of the three requirements imposed by *Batson* for a successful Equal Protection Clause challenge.

4. State Innovations on the Horizon

Identifying examples of state innovations that may emerge over the next several years is not difficult.

In *Peña-Rodriguez v. Colorado*, the Supreme Court held that a state court evidentiary rule protecting secrecy of jury deliberations violated the Sixth Amendment to the extent that it prevented a criminal defendant from putting forward post-conviction evidence that the jury’s consideration of his case had been infected by racism. In *Rhines v. Young*, a capital defendant brought a federal habeas corpus petition asserting that the same rule should apply to anti-gay bias. Although his effort founedered on procedural shoals and the Supreme Court denied review, it is entirely plausible that a state supreme court might soon accept the claim.

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126 The Washington Supreme Court subsequently adopted WASH SUP. CT. GEN. RULE 37 (e)—(i), which lay out a series of evidentiary rules “to eliminate the unfair exclusion of potential jurors based on race or ethnicity,” id. at 37(a). See Semel, *supra* note 85, at 281 (describing rules as “replac[ing] the *Batson* inquiry with a more rigorous approach.”). If Washington courts in the future read the rules as incorporating *Erickson* and rely on the former not the latter in applying the “bright line rule,” described in text, there is little likelihood of United States Supreme Court review. See *supra* text accompanying note 85.


130 See Jason Kofler, *Note, Laboratories of Equal Justice: What State Experience Portends for Expansion of the Pena-Rodriguez Exception Beyond Race*, 118 COLUM. L. REV. 1801, 1805, 1845–47 (2018) (predicting that “Courts are likely to... apply the *Pena-Rodriguez* exception to biases beyond race” and supporting such expansion); id. at 1804 n.14 (collecting commentary to same effect). See also Richard Lorren Jolly, *The New Impartial Jury Mandate*, 117 MICH. L. REV. 713, 719 (2019) (“[W]hile the Court is adamant that the *Pena-Rodriguez* holding is limited to racial bias, it is unlikely the Court can identify a limiting principle to exclude biases against other classes.”) (footnotes omitted); Sydney Melililo, *Note, “Vegas Rule: Jury Deliberation Edition”: Should the Sixth Amendment Exception for Alleged Racial Bias in Deliberations Extend to Gender?*, 11 DREXEL. L. REV. 705, 708–09 (2019) (arguing “that the *Pena-Rodriguez* exception... should be extended to gender-motivated animus of jurors.”).
Similarly, the lower age limit of 18 that the Supreme Court set for executions in Roper v. Simmons,131 is now under sustained assault as advocates urge that the 8th Amendment line should be set at 21.132 Some state supreme court may well find the attack meritorious before too long.

V. DEFINING “SUBSTANTIVE” UNDER MONTGOMERY

A. Introduction

We now return to the issue of defining “substantive” for Montgomery purposes. Any rule that is substantive under Teague133 is substantive under Montgomery. That is exactly what Montgomery held134 and its legal conclusion was correct. But the proper frames of reference for Montgomery problems and Teague problems are different.135 The conclusion that new substantive rules under Teague are also new substantive rules under Montgomery is most soundly reached by applying the definition of “substantive” set forth at the start of the next section as the appropriate one for use in cases presenting Montgomery issues.136 That definition necessarily embraces at a minimum rules that are substantive under the Teague paradigm but is independent of, and in no way restricted to, rules within that template.137


133 As explained supra Part III.B, I disclaim any purpose to define what those rules might be. Some of the rules that I classify in the next section as “substantive” under Montgomery may well be so under Teague. That, however, is a Teague discussion, not a Montgomery one, and this article does not engage in it.


135 See supra Part III. For that reason, my discussion in the next section of various doctrines that do or do not apply retroactively under a sound understanding of Montgomery carries no implication regarding their status under Teague. This article is about Montgomery retroactivity, not Teague retroactivity. See supra note 133.

136 My purpose is to define “substantive” not “new,” see supra text accompanying notes 57–58. I assume for the sake of discussion that my various examples in the next section involve “new” rules, although in many instances they may actually be just the application of old rules to new fact patterns.

137 Suppose, for instance, Justice Scalia was correct when he said in his Montgomery dissent, see supra text accompanying notes 35–38, (1) that the Court’s new rule was procedural under Teague and (2) that its purpose was not primarily having “state and federal collateral-review tribunals . . . engage in [the] silliness [of], probing the evidence of ‘incorrigibility’ that existed decades ago,” but rather “eliminating life without parole for juvenile offenders.” Montgomery, 136 S.
As we have seen thus far, Montgomery arose when a new federal constitutional right had been recognized\(^\text{138}\) and a state post-conviction petitioner then sought to vindicate it.\(^\text{139}\) The Court used the term “substantive” to capture the sort of right that the Supremacy Clause requires a state to enforce retroactively when it adjudicates collateral attacks on its convictions.\(^\text{140}\) The Supremacy Clause context of Montgomery should be key to defining the term.\(^\text{141}\) The principle guiding the formulation of Supremacy Clause doctrine has always been vindicating federal public policy goals by insuring that states do not act in ways that frequently and predictably defeat a federal right.\(^\text{142}\) Let us follow that lodestar.

B. The Definition

I propose: a new “substantive” rule of federal law that a state is required to enforce retroactively in state post-conviction proceedings is one whose policy underpinnings extend beyond enhancing the factual accuracy of particular decisions. The remainder of this section applies that proposed definition to a variety of illustrative fact patterns.

A straightforward example of a substantive rule of federal constitutional law is the one against the admission into evidence of coerced confessions. Although the rule may certainly tend to enhance factual accuracy, it is also significantly grounded in other considerations.\(^\text{143}\) Hence, the rule is “substantive” under

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\(^\text{138}\) Although the case arose under those circumstances, the analysis of this section is equally applicable to rights flowing from federal statutes and treaties. See supra note 76. For example, the last twenty years or so have seen significant litigation, some of it in the state post-conviction context, in which litigants have asserted claims under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, Apr. 24, 1963, 21 U.S.T. 77, e.g., State v. Gutierrez, No. 74236, 2020 WL 7183533 (Nev. Dec. 4, 2020); Torres v. Oklahoma, 120 P.3d 1184 (Okla. Crim. App. 2005). See Sandra Babcock, The Limits of International Law: Efforts to Enforce Rulings of the International Court of Justice in U.S. Death Penalty Cases, 62 SYRACUSE. 183, 189–93, 197 (2012).

\(^\text{139}\) See supra Part II.

\(^\text{140}\) See supra text accompanying notes 25–27.

\(^\text{141}\) See supra Part III.C.

\(^\text{142}\) See supra Part III.C.

\(^\text{143}\) See Rogers v. Richmond, 365 U.S. 534, 540–42 (1961) (“To be sure, confessions cruelly extorted may be . . . untrustworthy. But the constitutional principle of excluding confessions that are not voluntary does not rest on this consideration.”); see generally Dean A. Strang, Inaccuracy and the Involuntary Confession: Understanding Rogers v. Richmond Rightly, 110 J. CRIM L. & CRIMINOLOGY 69 (2020).
Montgomery. The day after the rule was announced144 the Supremacy Clause required a state postconviction court to entertain a claimed violation of it notwithstanding any retroactivity barrier under state law.

Similar considerations apply to the decision in Randolph145 against the Fourth Amendment validity of one-party search consents. The constitutional rule that was announced there was not premised on considerations of accurate fact-finding (and may in fact have run counter to them) but rather reflected the outcome of a balancing between the government’s investigative interests and “an objecting individual’s claim to security against the government’s intrusion into his dwelling place.”146 Because the rule was therefore substantive for Montgomery purposes, the states which had previously reached the same federal constitutional conclusion as the Court147 were required to apply it retroactively in state post-conviction from the moment they did, and all states were so required following the Court’s decision.

Confrontation Clause cases, on the other hand, should ordinarily not be classified as substantive under Montgomery. Consider Williams v. Illinois,148 which rejected a challenge under that Clause to testimony regarding an out-of-court laboratory test. If the Supreme Court overruled the case tomorrow, that decision would announce a new rule of federal constitutional law but not one that the Supremacy Clause would require a state court to enforce in a subsequent state post-conviction proceeding. The reason is that the fundamental public policy behind the new rule would be the enhancement of factual accuracy in the individual case.149

Rules adding new groups to the set whose exclusion from jury service violates either the fair cross-section requirement of the Sixth Amendment150 or the Equal


146 Id. at 115.

147 See supra note 116.


149 See Williams, 567 U.S. at 119 (Kagan, J. dissenting) (explaining that “the Confrontation Clause prescribes a particular method for determining” whether evidence introduced at trial to support a conviction is reliable).

150 See, e.g., Taylor v. Louisiana, 419 U.S. 522, 528 (1975) (noting that “the selection of a petit jury from a representative cross section of the community” is an essential component of the Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial and invalidating conviction returned by jury where statutory selection
Protection Clause\textsuperscript{151} should be considered substantive for \textit{Montgomery} purposes. Although increasing the diversity of jurors surely increases the accuracy of their factfinding, the public policy behind such new rules goes well beyond that.\textsuperscript{152} Two system permitted women to serve only if they had previously filed a written declaration of desire to do so. \textit{See also} \textit{Thiel v. S. Pac. Co.}, 328 U.S. 217 (1946) (exercising supervisory power over federal courts and reversing verdict in civil case for violation of fair cross-section requirement where daily wage-earners not called for service). \textit{See generally} Nina Chernoff, \textit{Black to the Future: The State Action Doctrine and the White Jury}, 58 Washburn L.J. 103 (2019) (criticizing current fair cross-section doctrine as insufficiently strict against government).

\textsuperscript{151} Most of the recent activity in this area has been in the field of peremptory challenges after \textit{Batson v. Kentucky}, 476 U.S. 79 (1986) overruled the crippling standards that had been imposed by \textit{Swain v. Alabama}, 380 U.S. 202 (1965). Because \textit{Batson} represented “an explicit and substantial break with prior precedent,” the Court, applying its pre-Teague retroactivity doctrines respecting federal habeas review, held in \textit{Allen v. Hardy}, 478 U.S. 255, 258–59 (1986) that only defendants whose cases had not yet become final on direct review would be able to invoke the new rule. For the reasons already noted, see, e.g., supra text accompanying note 135, that decision and ones like it have no bearing on the argument presented in this paragraph of text.

\textsuperscript{152} \textit{See} Allen, 478 U.S. at 259 (“By serving a criminal defendant's interest in neutral jury selection procedures, the rule in Batson may have some bearing on the truth-finding function of a criminal trial. But the decision serves other values as well. Our holding ensures that States do not discriminate against citizens who are summoned to sit in judgment against a member of their own race and strengthens public confidence in the administration of justice. The rule in Batson, therefore, was designed "to serve multiple ends," only the first of which may have some impact on truth finding. See Brown v. Louisiana, 447 U.S. 323, 329 (1980).”); \textit{see also} Flowers v. Mississippi, 139 S. Ct. 2228, 2242 (2019) (“By taking steps to eradicate racial discrimination from the jury selection process, Batson sought to protect the rights of defendants and jurors, and to enhance public confidence in the fairness of the criminal justice system.”); Edmonson v. Leesville Concrete Co., 500 U.S. 614, 628, 631 (1991) (“Racial bias mars the integrity of the judicial system and prevents the idea of democratic government from becoming a reality . . . [and] cause[s] injury to the excused juror.”). For a discussion of the importance of this rationale in the context of the Court’s extension of \textit{Batson} to the exclusion of women in \textit{J.E.B. v. Alabama ex rel. T.B.}, 511 U.S. 127 (1994), see Joanna L. Grossman, \textit{Note, Women’s Jury Service: Right of Citizenship or Privilege of Difference}, 46 Stan. L. Rev. 1115 (1994). For a summary of the Court’s expansions of \textit{Batson} in the years after the case was decided, see Flowers, 139 S. Ct. at 2243; Semel, supra note 85, at 252. \textit{See generally} Mark E. Wojik, \textit{Extending Batson to Peremptory Challenges of Jurors Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity}, 40 N. Ill. U. L. Rev. 1, 3 (2019) (arguing that \textit{Batson} should be extended to “prohibit excluding potential jurors based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity”). A recently-adopted Alabama statute has enacted this and a number of other reforms as matters of state law. \textit{See} 2020 Cal. Legis. Serv. Ch. 318 (A.B. 3070) (West) (prohibiting exclusions based, inter alia, on “age, mental disability, physical disability, medical condition,[or] genetic information,” and providing enforcement procedures). Discussing the fair cross-section requirement of the Sixth Amendment, the Court noted in \textit{Taylor} that the exclusion of women from the jury “may not in a given case make an iota of difference.” 419 U.S. at 532. But, it ruled, the policy purpose of guarding “against the exercise of arbitrary power” by prosecutors and “the professional or perhaps over conditioned or biased response of a judge” is not served “if the jury pool is made up of only special segments of the populace or if large, distinctive groups are excluded from the pool. Community participation in the administration of the criminal law, moreover, is not only consistent with our democratic heritage but is also critical to public confidence in the fairness of the criminal justice system.” \textit{Id.} at 530. Similarly, the Court in \textit{Thiel} wrote that the exclusion did “violence to the
simple, if slightly time-shifted, examples illustrate the Supremacy Clause consequences of this conclusion. The day after the Court decided _Strader v. West Virginia_,153 the courts of that state became required to adjudicate the post-conviction claims of state prisoners challenging their convictions on the ground that non-Whites had been statutorily excluded from their juries.154 The day after some state supreme court decides that the federal constitution prohibits religion-based peremptory challenges of jurors, the courts of that state will be required to adjudicate the claims of any state prisoners challenging their convictions on the ground that the prosecutor struck venire members on the basis of religion.155

Along the same lines, the actual new rule of _Peña-Rodriguez v. Colorado_,156 that the Sixth Amendment grants a convicted defendant the right to inquire into racial bias during juror deliberations, and a hypothetical new rule of a state supreme court extending the principle to anti-gay bias157 are both “substantive” under a proper reading of _Montgomery_. In ruling for Mr. Pena-Rodriguez, the Court’s concern was not just the risk that an innocent man might have been convicted but “ensur[ing] that our legal system remains capable of coming ever closer to the promise of equal treatment under the law that is so central to a functioning democracy.”158 Thus after the announcement of either rule _Montgomery_ requires that state post-conviction courts entertain claims of its violation regardless of their own retroactivity doctrines.

The same reasoning applies to the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in _Hurst v. State_.159 The court held that in a capital case the Sixth and Eight Amendments require that a jury determine beyond a reasonable doubt and

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153 _Strader v. West Virginia_, 100 U.S. 303 (1879) (invalidating as racially discriminatory a statute limiting jury service to white males and reversing prisoner’s conviction). Almost a century later _Taylor_ repudiated the suggestion of _Strader_ and some subsequent cases that the gender discrimination in the statute was permissible. _See Taylor_, 419 U.S. at 536 n.19.

154 Although _Strader_ assumed that the claim was only available to minority-race prisoners, the Court eventually concluded otherwise. _See Peters v. Kiff_, 407 U.S. 493 (1972); _see also Powers v. Ohio_, 499 U.S. 400 (1991) (reaching same conclusion with respect to _Batson_ claims).

155 For further discussion of this hypothetical, see _infra_ Part VI.A.


157 _See supra_ text accompanying notes 128–30.

158 _Peña-Rodriguez_, 137 S. Ct. at 868.

uniformly that the balance of aggravating and mitigating factors warrant a death sentence. The opinion explained that these rules not only increased reliability with respect to each finding, but also served on a systemwide basis to limit the number of death verdicts returned, thereby serving “to help narrow the class of murderers subject to capital punishment.” Moreover, the unanimity requirement would align Florida with the evolving standard of decency among the states and ensure that its juries were performing their critical role of ensuring that capital sentences reflected the moral consensus of the community. These policy bases demonstrate that the rules of federal constitutional law announced in Hurst v. State are “substantive” within the meaning of Montgomery.

As in the cases discussed so far, the necessary legal consequence of that conclusion is that, notwithstanding any state law retroactivity doctrines, the courts of Florida must entertain in state post-conviction proceedings claims by prisoners that they were sentenced in violation of the rules announced in Hurst v. State. “Where state collateral review proceedings permit prisoners to challenge the lawfulness of their confinement, States cannot refuse to give retroactive effect to a substantive constitutional right that determines the outcome of that challenge.” To date, however, Florida has indeed refused. Instead of entertaining state post-conviction claims by all prisoners whose death sentences were returned in violation of Hurst, it has formulated a retroactivity rule closing the courthouse doors to all Death Row inmates whose direct appeals became final before a specific date in 2002 when a relevant Supreme Court precedent was decided.

Pace Justice Thomas, state retroactivity law is not “a matter about which the Constitution has nothing to say.” What the Constitution says in its Supremacy

160 Hurst v. State, 202 So. 3d at 60.
161 Id. at 61–62.


164 Montgomery, 136 S. Ct. at 750 (Thomas, J., dissenting). This statement could hardly be taken literally even if Justice Thomas were correct in his underlying premise that state post-conviction review processes need not exist at all. There are any number of situations in which a state is not required to offer a benefit but is subject to constitutional constraints if it does. See, e.g., Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer, 137 S. Ct. 2012, 2021–25 (2017); Rosenberger v.
Clause is that the state may not enforce in its courts any rule of state law that will frequently and predictably interfere with vindication of a federal right.\textsuperscript{165} That was the law long before \textit{Montgomery} and still is.\textsuperscript{166} The new question created by \textit{Montgomery} is what federal rights are “substantive” for purposes of its holding.

Returning to that issue, a cluster of representational and autonomy rights of criminal defendants should be considered “substantive” under an appropriate reading of \textit{Montgomery}. For instance, \textit{McCoy v. Louisiana}\textsuperscript{167} held that the petitioner’s Sixth Amendment rights had been violated when, over his vociferous objections, his trial counsel conceded to the jury that McCoy was factually, although not legally, guilty of the charges. The rationale for the decision was not limited to considerations of factual accuracy but significantly grounded in furthering “that respect for the individual which is the lifeblood of the law.”\textsuperscript{168}

The Court wrote:

Violation of a defendant’s Sixth Amendment-secured autonomy ranks as error of the kind our decisions have called “structural”; when present, such an error is not subject to harmless-error review. \textit{See, e.g.}, McKaskle

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In this case, Florida’s retroactivity rule suffers from several constitutional defects beyond its inconsistency with the Supremacy Clause encapsulated in the next sentence of text. As more fully described in the unsuccessful Petition for Certiorari, \textit{Kelley v. Florida}, 139 S. Ct. 112 (2018) (No.17-1603) (\url{https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketpdf.html/public/17-1603.pdf}), Florida’s partial retroactivity rule, whose practical effect is to deny new sentencing trials to a class of defendants who would be least likely to be sentenced to death today, cannot be squared with the requirements of either the Equal Protection Clause, \textit{see, e.g.}, Skinner v. Oklahoma, 316 U.S. 535, 541 (1942) (applying “strict scrutiny” to state criminal law distinctions bearing on fundamental rights and invalidating sterilization statute because “the law lays an unequal hand on those who have committed intrinsically the same quality of offense”) or the Eighth Amendment, \textit{see, e.g.}, Godfrey v. Georgia, 446 U.S. 420, 428 (1980) (“[I]f a State wishes to authorize capital punishment it has a constitutional responsibility to tailor and apply its law in a manner that avoids the arbitrary and capricious infliction of the death penalty.”).

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{See} Felder v. Casey, 487 U.S. 131, 141 (1988).

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{See supra} Part III.C.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{McCoy v. Louisiana}, 138 S. Ct. 1500 (2018).

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Id.} at 1507 (internal citations omitted). \textit{See} State v. Horn, 251 So. 3d 1069, 1075 (La. 2018) (“\textit{McCoy} is broadly written and focuses on a defendant’s autonomy to choose the objective of his defense.”).
[v. Wiggins,] 465 U.S. 168, 177 [1984] . . . (harmless-error analysis is inapplicable to deprivations of the self-representation right, because “[t]he right is either respected or denied; its deprivation cannot be harmless”); United States v. Gonzalez-Lopez, 548 U. S. 140, 150 . . . (2006) (choice of counsel is structural); Waller v. Georgia, 467 U. S. 39, 49-50 (1984) (public trial is structural) . . . . An error may be ranked structural, we have explained, “if the right at issue is not designed to protect the defendant from erroneous conviction but instead protects some other interest,” such as “the fundamental legal principle that a defendant must be allowed to make his own choices about the proper way to protect his own liberty.”169

This suggests the likelihood that as a general matter new federal constitutional rules of criminal law that are “structural” for harmless error purposes are “substantive” for Montgomery purposes because the inapplicability of harmless error analysis implies that such rules do not have as their principal concern the likelihood that the contested proceeding reached the correct factual result.170

VI. THE POTENTIAL OF MONTGOMERY ENFORCEMENT IN STATE POST-CONVICTON PROCEEDINGS FOR IMPROVING THE STRUCTURE OF CRIMINAL ADJUDICATION

A necessary consequence of Montgomery is that the number of state post-conviction decisions will increase in light of the states’ new Supremacy Clause obligation to hear claims based on new substantive rules of federal constitutional law,171 both ones originating in the Supreme Court of the United States and ones originating in their own court systems.172 The broader the definition of “substantive” the more pronounced the effect will be. Enhancing the salience of state post-conviction proceedings in the overall structure of criminal adjudication would be desirable for two reasons.

169 McCoy, 138 S. Ct. at 1511 (internal citations omitted).

170 See generally Sullivan v. Louisiana, 508 U.S. 275 (1993) (holding that where jury is erroneously instructed on reasonable doubt reversal is automatic without consideration of whether the trial evidence was actually sufficient for conviction under proper instructions); Elizabeth Earle Beske, Backdoor Balancing and the Consequences of Legal Change, 94 WASH. L. REV. 645, 687–88 (2019) (listing additional examples).

171 See supra text accompanying note 4.

172 See supra text accompanying notes 55–57.
A. Enriching Systemwide Dialogue

As noted above,\textsuperscript{173} the sidelining of the lower federal courts as expositors of constitutional law in the criminal area has impoverished the usual dialogue among courts that, in accord with our common law tradition, ordinarily enriches constitutional thinking before the Court pronounces a definitive legal rule.\textsuperscript{174} To the extent that the voices of state courts are heard more often, the damage will be mitigated.\textsuperscript{175}

This is a structural benefit that is independent of whatever particular decisions are reached, including decisions that a certain rule is not “substantive” within the meaning of Montgomery or that, if it is, the prisoner is not entitled to prevail. For example, suppose there is a holding by the Supreme Court of the United States or a state supreme court that the federal constitution prohibits jury strikes on the basis of religion. That would be a substantive rule under the framework set forth in Part V.B above.\textsuperscript{176} Not surprisingly, I think a court should accept that framework and reach the same conclusion. But legal discourse would be advanced if a court were to write a reasoned explanation in support of some other paradigm or some other conclusion.\textsuperscript{177} If, on whatever rationale, the new rule was classified as substantive, then, under Montgomery, a state post-conviction court could not invoke state

\textsuperscript{173} See supra text accompanying notes 63–65.

\textsuperscript{174} See SHAPIRO et al., supra note 19, ch. 4.4(b) (discussing benefits of “percolation” of issues through lower courts); Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Codes and the Arrangement of the Law, 5 AM. L. REV. 1, 1 (1870) (“It is the merit of the common law that it decides the case first and determines the principle afterwards . . . It is only after a series of determinations on the same subject-matter that it becomes necessary to ‘reconcile the cases,’ as it is called, that is, by a true induction to state the principle which has until then been obscurely felt.”); Harry W. Jones, Our Uncommon Common Law, 42 TENN. L. REV. 443, 445, 462 (1975) (observing that common-law methodology has pervaded American constitutional law from its origins through modern times). During our early national period, the establishment of the legitimacy of judicial review was intertwined with the establishment of the legitimacy of judicial exposition of the law by common law methods. See ERIC M. FREEDMAN, MAKING HABEAS WORK: A LEGAL HISTORY 98–101 (2018); see generally Graham Mayeda, Uncommonly Common: The Nature of Common Law Judgment, 19 CAN. J.L. & JURIS. 107, 123–24, 131 (2006) (arguing that legitimacy of common law flows from its methodology).

\textsuperscript{175} As a theoretical matter this benefit might at some point be outweighed by the costs to the judicial system of having to deal with a burdensome influx of new claims but as a practical matter there is little likelihood of reaching that point. Issues under Montgomery arise only after a court has recognized a new substantive constitutional right in the field of criminal law, a fairly rare occurrence.

\textsuperscript{176} See supra text accompanying note 155.

\textsuperscript{177} I agree with Vázquez & Vladeck, supra note 7, at 958–59, that Montgomery entitles a state prisoner to file a state post-conviction petition asserting that a newly-recognized federal constitutional right is retroactive without any requirement of awaiting a Court decision to that effect. As the discussion supra Parts III—V should make clear, the definition of “substantive” is a question of federal constitutional law that a state court is both empowered and required to decide in the first instance.
retroactivity doctrines to foreclose a prisoner’s claim that her incarceration followed a trial at which the rule was violated. But the prisoner might still lose on the merits. For example, the post-conviction court might decide that the basis of the challenged strikes of Muslim venire members had not been religion but record-based doubts as to their ability to be impartial in a case where the defendant was accused of dumping a truckload of pork bellies into a mosque.\textsuperscript{178} That ruling would both give the prisoner her day in court and contribute to the growth of the law.\textsuperscript{179}

B. Enhancing State Post-Conviction Processes

To the extent Montgomery results in more and more visible, state post-conviction proceedings, it will augment the states’ motivation—already increasing in recent years—to make those proceedings meaningful.

As effective federal habeas corpus review has withered, state post-conviction courts have come under growing pressure to improve the quality of their adjudicatory processes through such mechanisms as the provision of competent counsel and robust discovery rights.\textsuperscript{180}

The practical source of this pressure is that the constriction of federal habeas corpus review has increasingly left the state courts as the only realistic opportunity for the merits of post-conviction claims to be heard and injustices corrected.\textsuperscript{181}

The doctrinal manifestations of this pressure appear at two levels: first, the structural level and, second, individual case level.\textsuperscript{182}

(1) The structural level. State post-conviction systems must provide due process. Their failure to do so is subject to attack through a federal

\textsuperscript{178} This hypothetical is similar to the actual ruling in State v. Hodge, 726 A.2d 531, 549–54 (Conn. 1999) (cited supra note 85).

\textsuperscript{179} See Rogers, supra note 92, at 572–573 (commenting that Court will benefit from previous analyses by state supreme courts when it considers federal constitutional issues).

\textsuperscript{180} See Kovarsky, supra note 41, at 444–45, 448–50.

\textsuperscript{181} See id. at 456–60; see also Am. Bar Ass’n, Guidelines for the Appointment and Performance of Defense Counsel in Death Penalty Cases, 31 Hofstra L. Rev. 913, 935 (2003) [hereinafter ABA Guidelines] (Commentary to Guideline 1.1) (“Because state collateral proceedings may present the last opportunity to present new evidence to challenge the conviction, it is imperative that counsel conduct a searching inquiry to assess whether any mistake may have been made.”). As a matter of disclosure, I serve as Reporter to the ABA Guidelines. Id. at 915.

\textsuperscript{182} See Eric M. Freedman, Enforcing the ABA Guidelines in Capital State Post-Conviction Proceedings After Martinez and Pinholster, 41 Hofstra L. Rev. 591, 600 (2013); Shay, supra note 64, at 481.
(2) The individual case level. When state prisoners seek federal habeas corpus review of their convictions, the states (A) face the threat that the outcomes of inadequate state post-conviction processes will not survive, and (B) benefit from a promise that if those proceedings have been fair the federal habeas courts will largely defer to their outcomes.

A. Where a state post-conviction system exists, a state prisoner must utilize it as a pre-condition to the grant of federal habeas relief—unless it is unavailable or “ineffective to protect the rights of the applicant.”

Similarly, a federal habeas corpus court is required to presume the truth of the facts found by the state courts—unless the petitioner

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185 See Smith v. Wyrick, 693 F.2d 808, 810 (8th Cir. 1982), cert. denied, 460 U.S. 1024 (1983). See also Eric M. Freedman, Fewer Risks, More Benefits: What Governments Gain by Acknowledging the Right to Competent Counsel on State Post-Conviction Review in Capital Cases, 4 Ohio St. J. Crim. L. 183, 189 (2006) (observing that a state post-conviction system that “cannot be effectually employed without the assistance of a competent attorney” should meet § 2254(b)(1)’s description); Eve Brensike Primus, Effective Trial Counsel After Martinez v. Ryan: Focusing on the Adequacy of State Procedures, 122 Yale L.J. 2604 (2013) (making similar suggestion in wake of Martinez v. Ryan, 566 U.S. 1 (2012)). For an overview of the duties of counsel representing a state post-conviction petitioner, see ABA Guidelines, supra note 181, at 932–35. These efforts to improve the quality of state post-conviction representation are taking place against the backdrop of a federal habeas corpus jurisprudence that very frequently refuses to reach the merits of constitutional claims because of missteps by whatever counsel petitioners may have had during state post-conviction. More often than not, “[w]ether an inmate obtains merits review is hugely sensitive to differences in postconviction representation and barely sensitive at all to the quality of the underlying claim.” Lee Kovarsky, The Habeas Optimist, 81 U. Chi. L. Rev. Dialogue 101, 121 (2014).

has not been given a full and fair opportunity to develop the claim there. See 1 Hertz & Liebman, supra note 11, ch. 7 (discussing this exception). See generally William J. Brennan, Jr., Federal Habeas Corpus and State Prisoners: An Exercise in Federalism, 7 Utah L. Rev. 423, 441–42 (1961) (suggesting that to the extent states increased the robustness of their post-conviction review processes, “intervention by any federal court...would become unnecessary.”).

See Townsend v. Sain, 372 U.S. 293, 312 (1963) (holding state determinations of fact not binding in federal habeas corpus proceeding if not based on “full and fair” factfinding procedures). See also Keeney v. Tamayo-Reyes, 504 U.S. 1, 10 (1992) (noting that the state “must afford the petitioner a full and fair hearing on his federal claim” or else federal rehearing of the facts is required).

The Court discussed this longstanding rule in Jefferson v. Upton, 560 U.S. 284, 292–94 (2010), and ordered a remand for consideration of its applicability. The eventual result was that the Court of Appeals, reviewing a District Court hearing into the procedures employed by the state postconviction court, “agree[d] with the district court that the factual record compels the conclusion that Jefferson did not receive a full and fair hearing in his state habeas proceeding[,]” and held “that the state court’s factual findings were not entitled to a presumption of correctness.” See Jefferson v. GDCP Warden, 941 F.3d 452, 476 (11th Cir. 2019). Hence, on federal habeas corpus petitioner needed only prove his case by a preponderance of the evidence, see id. at 473.

For a complete discussion of the current statutory situation, see Justin F. Marceau, Don’t Forget Due Process: The Path Not (Yet) Taken in § 2254 Habeas Corpus Adjudications, 62 Hastings L.J. 1, 57–64 (2011).

See Moore v. Dempsey, 261 U.S. 86, 92 (1923) (holding that state post-conviction processes were not “sufficient to allow a Judge of the United States to escape the duty of examining the facts for himself”). This ruling seems to have reflected an acceptance of petitioner’s argument that the facts had been determined at the state level on a motion for a new trial heard by the very judge whose conduct was in question and whose decision could only be reviewed for legal error. See Freedman, supra note 62, at 80–81 (quoting Moore’s brief); see also id. at 87–88, 91, 199 n.7, 200 n. 10 (discussing predecessor cases of Frank v. Magnum, 237 U.S. 309 (1915) and Ex parte Bollman, 8 U.S. (4 Cranch) 75 (1807)).

See Boumediene v. Bush, 553 U.S. 723, 773–92 (2008) (holding that power to conduct inquiry into law and facts after assessing adequacy of prior proceedings is, along with power to order release, the core of habeas); Freedman, supra note 174, at 9–10, 20, 24–26 (discussing importance of factfinding in habeas proceedings through the centuries); Eric M. Freedman, Habeas Corpus in Three Dimensions—Dimension Three: Habeas Corpus as an Instrument of Checks and Balances, 8 N.E. U. L.J. 251, 303 n.264 (2016) (endorsing views of scholars who have noted that duty of factfinding means that “in adjudicating habeas cases courts must employ procedural mechanisms, e.g., discovery, that are sufficient for this purpose, regardless of whether those procedures existed at common law, are made available by statute, or conform to the wishes of the jailers.”). See generally James H. Brewer, Suspension Clause Interpretation and the Development of Postconviction Remedies in Washington and Oregon, 54 Willamette L. Rev. 495, 527 (2018) (considering applicability of Boumediene to interpretation of state constitutional prohibitions on suspension of writ).
upon the Constitution.\textsuperscript{191}

B. On the other hand, AEDPA contains various limitations on the federal courts’ authority to grant the writ to state prisoners, including the provision of 28 U.S.C.\S 2254(d)(1) that “with respect to any claim that was adjudicated on the merits in State court proceedings”\textsuperscript{192} the writ shall not be granted unless that adjudication “resulted in a decision that was contrary to, or involved an unreasonable application of, clearly established Federal law, as determined by the Supreme Court of the United States.”\textsuperscript{193} Construing this provision as a threshold barrier to fact-finding by the District Court, \textit{Cullen v. Pinholster} held that in determining whether petitioner has met AEDPA’s legal standard the federal habeas court must confine itself at the outset to a consideration of the record that the state courts had before them.\textsuperscript{194} Thus if the states conform to the requirements discussed in Paragraph 2 (A) and “create robust processes for post-conviction review, the federal courts will under \textit{Pinholster} treat their individual outcomes with greater respect than before.”\textsuperscript{195} The prospect of an uptick in the number of state post-conviction proceedings as a result of \textit{Montgomery} is yet another reason why states should respond positively to the converging pressures to improve the quality of those proceedings, an outcome that would benefit the whole criminal justice system.

\textsuperscript{191} See Panetti v. Quarterman, 551 U.S. 930, 948–54 (2007) (refusing to defer to state courts’ factual finding that petitioner was mentally competent because their fact-finding process was inadequate); Pennsylvania ex rel Herman v. Cloudy, 350 U.S. 116, 116–19, 123 (1956) (reversing state Supreme Court for summarily denying habeas petition on merits simply based on respondent’s denial and without providing evidentiary hearing); Liebman & Ryan, \textit{supra} note 10, at 835–36 (discussing Article III); Marceau, \textit{supra} note 188, at 7 (discussing due process); Samuel R. Wiseman, \textit{Habeas After Pinholster}, 53 B.C. 953, 992–99 (2012) (discussing Suspension Clause, U.S. Const. art. I, \S 9, cl. 2).


\textsuperscript{194} \textit{See Pinholster}, 563 U.S. at 183.

\textsuperscript{195} Freedman, \textit{supra} note 182, at 600. \textit{See generally} Lee Kovarsky, \textit{Preclusion and Criminal Judgment}, 92 NOTRE DAME L. REV. 637, 671 (2016) (observing that in cases where \textit{Pinholster} applies its effect is “to form an almost insurmountable \S 2254(d) hurdle.”).
VII. CONCLUSION

Formulating an appropriate definition of “substantive” for *Montgomery* purposes is not just a narrow doctrinal project. The case arose in the context of a noxious current problem in criminal law adjudication, namely the set of issues that has arisen as the Justices have struggled over the forty years since *Teague* to create sound rules for administering post-conviction attacks on state convictions. If read appropriately, *Montgomery* represents an opportunity to advance towards a solution by employing some old but recently-unmined resources—legal resources from a vein of Supremacy Clause law that might enable the reframing of thinking about the retroactivity of new rules of federal law, and practical resources from reinvigorated decision making by state post-conviction courts.

In the interests of making modest but real improvements in the quality of our criminal law, lawyers, legislators, academics, judges, and all individuals concerned about justice should take full advantage of every opportunity to secure adoption of the proposal of this article: “Substantive” new rules of federal law under *Montgomery* include all those whose policy underpinnings extend beyond enhancing the factual accuracy of particular decisions.