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Freedom of Expression and the Mentally Disordered: Philosophical and Constitutional Perspectives

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In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorizing a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on the other, the man of madness communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity.

Michel Foucault, *Madness & Civilization*

I. Introduction

Mental illness is usually described as an impaired ability to communicate effectively. Yet the societal response—both historically and under modern psychiatric practice—has been to retard, rather than encourage, the acquisition of linguistic-kinesthetic studies to the understanding of schizophrenia in schizophrenia — an integrated approach 99-123 (A. Auerbach ed. 1959); R. Brown, *Words and Things* 292-98 (1958); J. Ruesch, *Disturbed Communication* 43 (1957); Sullivan, *The Language of Schizophrenia* in schizophrenia 4-16 (J. Kasanin ed. 1939).

The societal response to madness has traditionally been to isolate and remove the deviant elements from the community. In the sixteenth century, buildings which originally housed lepers became the homes of “incureables and madmen.” During the Renaissance, the response was “Stultifera Navis” or “Ship of Fools”; madmen were sent floating out along the serene waves of the Rhineland and the Flemish canals. However archaic these practices might seem to the modern psychiatrist, boats were often set to sail with the most benign of purposes. “Interest in cure and in exclusion coincide.” M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* 10 (1965). See also D. Tuke, *History of the Insane in the British Isles* (1882).


Further, there are the incorporeal barriers to the acquisition of linguistic skills due to the stigma which attaches to the resident upon his entrance into a mental institution. See notes 37-39 infra and accompanying text.

Finally, there are the more direct disincentives to the acquisition of communicative skills in the form of restraints on rights to use postal and telephone services, to consult with legal counsel, to interact with the opposite sex, and to make and receive visits. V. Viceroy & H. Ross, *Hospitalizing the Mentally Ill in Ohio* 143 (1969); Brief for National Center for Law and the Handicapped as Amicus Curiae at 18, Horacek v. Exon, — F. Supp. — (D. Neb. 1974):

All her [named plaintiff] outgoing mail is censored. The letters she sends to her sister have portions inked out by Beatrice officials. All her incoming mail is opened prior to her receiving it.

...
of linguistic skills. This impediment to normal social intercourse leaves individual interests in free expression ineffectuated; it concerns the legal profession because the government condones and enforces the restriction of first amendment rights in a potentially large segment of the population.4 This article will examine the philosophical justification for free communication for the mentally handicapped. It will further suggest a systematic application of the first amendment to the particular problems of the mentally defective.

II. Philosophical Perspectives

Under traditional theory, unlimited expression is indispensable to the advancement of knowledge.5 The most rational judgments are attained by allowing plenary access to intellectual marketplace6 because in a forensic contest between truth and falsehood the former will eventually prevail.7 This model admits all arguments, even of those persons considered less gifted in their thought processes.8


I. Individual residents with a past record of writing inappropriate news will have their mail screened by the unit social worker.

II. Ward employees should screen out all letters which are scribbled, or otherwise ineligible. Id. [Emphasis supplied in brief.]

Georgia Newton, a named plaintiff, was allegedly denied the right to socialize with men (Complaint, p. 5 § 5d), even though she was 26 years old, had been employed and had evidently developed the necessary social skills. Id. at 17.


4 Although there has been a decline in the total resident population of mental institutions in the United States, there were still 275,995 resident patients as of 1972. Developments, supra note 3, at 1402-03.


7 Z. Chafee, supra note 5, at 298, quoting Benjamin Franklin, An Apology for Printers (1731): "When men differ in opinion, both sides ought equally to have the advantage of being heard by the public; and when truth and error have their fair play, the former is always an overmatch for the latter." See also Milton, Areopagitica in English Reprints (Arber ed. 1869): "Let her and Falsehood grapple; whoever knew truth put to worse, in a free and open encounter?" But see Brett, Free Speech, Supreme-Court Style: A View from Overseas, 46 Tex. L. Rev. 668, 680-82 (1968).

8 Richardson, supra note 5, at 5: "The 'poor and puny anonymities' of a 'creed of ignorance and immaturity' must be accorded the same constitutional protection as the carefully weighed pronouncements of the loyal opposition." A. Meiklejohn, Political Freedom 19-28 (1968); E. Martin, Liberty 199 (1930): "Assuming that the foolish [the 'neurotic
The utility of an opinion is itself a matter of opinion and all opinions must remain open to continuous discussion if the truth is to emerge. Censorship weakens the democratic process because it presumes to decide issues for others without allowing them to hear the contrary view. It is only by testing personal judgment against all opposing judgments that an individual can make rational decisions.

One might object that an individual not in full control of his faculties cannot possibly contribute to the search for truth; only sane men can formulate veracious ideas. This objection, however, implies that one can readily distinguish the sane from the mentally defective, and that the person designated defective cannot contribute to the cause of truth. In Western culture, the psychiatrist finally determines who is mentally defective and, consequently, whose speech will be censored and under what circumstances. The psychiatrist will restrict communication based upon his individual clinical judgment or by acceding to the administrative judgment of the staff of a mental hospital. The restriction is often in large part due to the content of the speech. Ross and Victoroff, writing in a manual designed primarily for the psychiatric physician, stated:

The paranoid patient may write to newspapers or public officials outside the hospital making unfounded charges against the hospital or against those who admitted him. In such situations mental hospitals have traditionally exercised a power of censorship over both incoming and outgoing mail.

This silencing of expression is itself an assumption of infallibility since the psychiatrist obviously decides whether the patient's charges are "unfounded." The psychiatrist acts as a censor by suppressing an expression with which he disagrees. So far as the community can ascertain, the only truth is that seen through the eyes of the psychiatrist.

While a psychiatrist may recognize that, despite his extended study of mental illness, he is fallible, he often fails to take any precaution against his own fallibility. He does not realize that to refuse a hearing to an opinion, because he is
sure that it distorts reality, is to assume his own certainty. The marketplace of ideas remains less competitive insofar as the ideas of "the mentally ill" are judged unworthy of access. Zechariah Chafee summarized the point well:

Whenever we authorize a particular restriction on liberty we ought not to forget that we are entrusting to fallible human beings a power over the minds of others. Benjamin Franklin... stated... that the desireability of stamping out evil thoughts is obvious, but the question remains whether any human being is good and wise enough to exercise it.16

The psychiatrist assumes almost plenary power over a class of human beings.17 He must take care not to abuse the natural right of his patients to communicate: the definition of sanity or truth involves reconciling and combining many viewpoints.18

Complete liberty of thought and discussion has traditionally been considered beneficial to the social order. Furthermore, the fundamental purpose of the social order is the promotion of each individual's well-being. Therefore, the development of individuality and self-fulfillment is the primary benefit to be derived from freedom of expression.19 Just as every opinion is useful for the social good, so there is an individual human need to communicate freely and to entertain a unique experiment of living.20

A human being's written or verbal language is the primary reflection of his individuality, and the means by which he displays his self-image and self-

16 Z. CHAFEE, supra note 5, at 520.
17 Psychiatry as a field has been defined as a "system of social control." See generally T. SZASZ, LAW, LIBERTY, AND PSYCHIATRY 39-88 (1963).
18 Compare the following views: J. S. MILL, PREFACES TO LIBERTY 41 (Wishy ed. 1959):
For if you determine before-hand that opinions shall be promulgated only on one side of the question, in whom will you rest the power of determining which side shall be chosen? The answer is in those who are most enlightened and best qualified to judge. But there are no determinable and universal marks by which wisdom is known. To whom will you give the power of determining what men are the most enlightened?
Z. CHAFEE, supra note 5, at 520-21:
It is true that sometimes in our modern society we have to run the risk of abuses in the limitation of various kinds of liberty, because the evils we aim to avoid are so serious.... However, the risk of human error ought to be weighed in each case; and even when this risk is run it ought to be minimized as far as possible through the selection of persons who by training, habits, social background, are least apt to act mistakenly or unjustly.

E. MARTIN, supra note 8, at 200:
A first-rate mind would have nothing to do with such business [censorship]. It is intolerance, not desire for improvement, which commonly menaces freedom of speech. Intolerance and insincerity: I do not believe there was ever a censorship established except to perpetrate a falsehood.

Milton, supra note 7, at 54-55:
It cannot be deny'd but that he who is made judge to sit upon the birth, or death of books... had need to be a man above the common measure, both studious, learned, and judicious.... If he be of such worth as he behoovs him, there cannot be a more tedious and unpleasing journey-work, a greater losse of time levied upon his head.... Seeing therefore those who now possesse the imployment, by all evident signs with themselves well ridd of it, and that no man of worth, none that is not a plain unthrift of his own hours is ever likely to succeed them... we may easily foresee what kind of licencers we are to expect hereafter, either ignorant, imperious, and remisse, or basely pecuniary.

19 See generally Emerson, supra note 5, at 79-81; Mill, supra note 9, at 152-76; Richardson, supra note 3, at 4; E. MARTIN, supra note 8, at 193-238.
20 Mill, supra note 9, at 153.
worth. Freedom to develop and verbally assert one's own beliefs and opinions allows the individual to realize his fullest potential to develop his faculties,\textsuperscript{21} to develop his character,\textsuperscript{22} and to achieve a measure of positive self-regard.\textsuperscript{23} For these reasons, Milton described censorship as the "greatest displeasure and indignity to a free and knowing spirit that can be put upon him."\textsuperscript{24}

This theory of free speech applies with particular force to the "lower orders" of society such as the mentally ill. Societal intolerance along with fear of the deviant life-styles of those classified as mentally ill are the prime causes of the censorship of this social group. Nothing destroys freedom so surely as the spread of intolerance and the presence of fear.\textsuperscript{25} If liberty is to exist, the community cannot feel shocked or scandalized when custom is not followed; it cannot be aesthetically offended by differing tastes; and it cannot feel threatened by abnormal thought, language, appearance, or behavior.\textsuperscript{26} Yet, it is as true today\textsuperscript{27} as it was in Mill's time that the man, and still more the woman, who can be accused either of doing "what nobody does," or of not doing "what everybody does" is \ldots in peril of a commission \textit{de lunatice}, and of having their property taken from them and given to their relations.\textsuperscript{28}

The value of individuality should be apparent because deep within everyone

\textsuperscript{21} Whitney v. California, 274 U.S. 357, 375 (1927) (Brandeis, J., concurring).
\textsuperscript{22} Emerson, supra note 5, at 879.
\textsuperscript{23} See generally C. Rogers, On Becoming A Person (1961).
\textsuperscript{24} Milton, supra note 7, at 55.
\textsuperscript{25} E. Martin, supra note 8, at 194-95. See also J. Locke, A Letter Concerning Tol-eration (M. Montuori, ed. 1963).
\textsuperscript{26} Human beings fear others with an abnormal appearance. This is illustrated (although often in an exaggerated form) in much of our literature and art. The classic case is the fear of the person with "an insane look in his eye." Compare E. Poe, The Tell Tale Heart (1843) (the fictional portrayal of man's obsessive fear of an old man's glazed, filmy, distorted eye) with Francisco Goya y Lucientes' painting of The Desperates or the Proverbs (the artist, in attempting to create a scene which will evoke fear in the viewer, utilizes the classical portrayal of a madman. He paints his characters with a crazed look in their eyes).
\textsuperscript{27} See generally B. Ennis, Prisoners of Psychiatry (1972); T. Szasz, The Manufacture of Madness (1970).
\textsuperscript{28} Mill, supra note 9, at 168-69. Mill's footnote placed at this point in his text is worthy of restatement because of its description of the intolerance of the community to the slightest deviant activity:

There is something both contemptible and frightful in the sort of evidence on which, of late years, any person can be judicially declared unfit \ldots All the minute details of his life are pried into, and whatever is found which, seen through the medium of the perceiving and describing faculties of the lowest of the low, bears an appearance unlike absolute commonplace, is laid before the jury as evidence of insanity, and often with success; the jurors being little, if at all, less vulgar and ignorant than the witnesses; while the judges, with that extraordinary want of knowledge of human nature and life which continually astonishes us in English lawyers, often help to mislead them. These trials speak volumes as to the state of feeling and opinion among the vulgar with regard to human liberty. So far from setting any value on individuality — so far from respecting the right of each individual to act, in things indifferent, as seems good to his own judgment and inclinations, judges and juries cannot even conceive that a person in a state of sanity can desire such freedom. In former days, when it was proposed to burn atheists, charitable people used to suggest putting them in a madhouse instead: it would be nothing surprising now-a-days were we to see this done, and the doers applauding themselves, because, instead of persecuting for religion, they had adopted so humane and Christian a mode of treating these unfortunates, not without a silent satisfaction at their having thereby obtained their deserts.
is a desire to seek differentiation from the nameless crowd. The development of character and individual personality is a primary requisite for human happiness. Individual differences in communication and association are important not only for human dignity, but also for the development of interpersonal skills. No person, especially no institutionalized person, can develop communicative skills without ample opportunity to experiment with thought and language in his own way. Conformity causes only stagnation.  

Free speech is not only necessary in the search for truth but also indispensable to the operation of a democracy. It has been labeled "the cornerstone of the structure of self-government" without which "government by the consent of the governed would have perished from the earth." Self-government, however, requires that the normal political processes be available to all groups, including those whose access to the political system has traditionally been limited. The insular or discrete minority, those who have no realistic opportunity to influence their social situation through the democratic process, must be assured freedom of expression: in no other way can they hope to affect the political process so as to elevate their social status.

The mentally handicapped as a group fit naturally into the prototype of the insular minority. This is especially true of the nearly one-half million persons labeled "mentally ill" and institutionalized each year. The impact that these persons can normally hope to make on the political system is de minimis. Institutionalized residents are usually denied the franchise and barriers exist to normal social intercourse between them and the majority, which is exclusively authorized to make policy under a system of self-government.

In addition to the temporal barriers imposed by the institution's physical plant, there are incorporeal obstacles to meaningful communication between the institutionalized resident and civil society. The resident's disregard for his own self-worth impedes his desire to communicate effectively. The involuntary

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29 Strangely, mental hospitals are the ultimate breeders of conformity. The institutionalized residents all eat and sleep in unison. They are told when, where and how they are to work and play. In short, every decision that a resident could feasibly make for himself so as to assert his individuality is made for him. It is a small wonder that often upon his exit from the institution he cannot function on a day-to-day basis in the community. See E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 4, 5.

30 See generally A. Meiklejohn, supra note 8; Emerson, supra note 5, at 882-84.

31 A. Meiklejohn, supra note 8, at 55.

32 Mill, supra note 9, at 143:

On any of the great open questions just enumerated, [opinions favorable to democracy and to aristocracy; to property and to equality, to sociality and individuality] if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in a minority. That is the opinion which, for the time being, represents the neglected interests, the side of human well-being which is in danger of obtaining less than its share.

33 Z. Chafee, supra note 5, at 4.


35 See Developments, Civil Commitment of the Mentally Ill, 87 Harv. L. Rev. 1190, 1198 n.23 (1974).

36 See E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 4.

37 See Wales, Adjustment to the Total Institution in The Age of Madness 267, 268, 275-77 (T. Szasz, ed. 1973); E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 14-35, 131-32, 354-56 (description of the process of "mortification of the self"); Developments, supra note 3, at 1200-01. See also G. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (1961).
admission process, the house rules, and the values imposed by the wider world "press home to the patient that he is, after all, a mental patient who has suffered some kind of a social collapse." Thus, the resident senses that his speech cannot contribute to the social well-being. Moreover, every communication that the resident is likely to engage in with civil society will be accompanied by a reminder that this is a communication with a mental patient and therefore may be disregarded. The mail that the resident sends is postmarked with the stamp of the mental hospital; the visits from friends and relatives occur within the hospital plant while the resident remains in his or her hospital garb; the buses which transport the resident into the outside world are marked with the hospital emblem. Statements made by the resident under these circumstances may be discounted as mere manifestations of the symptomatology of the patient's mental malady. Finally, the resident's uniquely degraded living situation and the uniform sedation administered by hospital personnel also inhibit effective interaction with persons outside the institution.

The "mentally ill" are thus clearly an insular minority, devoid of a significant opportunity to change their social status through the democratic process. To this extent, their status undermines our system of self-government, for unless a democracy receives input from all of its disparate interest groups it will remain ineffectual.

III. The Advent of the First Amendment

Free speech protects three types of interests. These are the social interest in the attainment of truth, the individual interest in self-expression in order to maintain human dignity, and the interest of the insular minority in a system of self-government.

The framers of the first amendment were mindful of these values of free expression. They shared the beliefs of Milton and Locke that free expression is the fountainhead of a healthy society and that it should be left unfettered. They were also cognizant of the various state interests which justified some impediments on freedom of expression. Chief among these interests was the security

38 E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 151.
39 Id. at 24.
40 See, e.g., Ferleger, supra note 14.
41 To the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec, October 24, 1774, in L. Levy, Legacy of Suppression 176-77 (1960). In presenting its case before the people of Quebec, the Congress released this statement:
The last right we shall mention regards the freedom of the press. The importance of this consists, besides the advancement of truth, science, morality and arts in general, in its diffusion of liberal sentiments on the administration of government, its ready communication of thoughts between subjects, and its consequent promotion of union among them, whereby oppressive officials are shamed or intimidated into more honorable and just modes of conducting affairs. Id.
42 Milton, supra note 7.
44 See generally L. Levy, supra note 41, at 88-125.
of the colonies.\textsuperscript{45} In fact, the leaders of the colonies muffled expression which offered even the slightest affront to the struggle against England.\textsuperscript{46}

It was with this knowledge and within this context that the framers of the first amendment undertook to reconcile these competing interests.\textsuperscript{47} The express language of the first amendment stands as an admonition that they had struck the balance in favor of unfettered expression: \textit{\textsuperscript{48}Congress shall pass no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.}\textsuperscript{49}

Despite the mandate of the literal language of the first amendment,\textsuperscript{50} an analysis of the leading cases decided by the Supreme Court demonstrates that the Court has consistently recognized that freedom of speech and press is not an unlimited, unqualified right, but that the interest in free speech must on occasion be subordinated to other values and considerations.\textsuperscript{51}

The specific issue in this article is whether the State may constitutionally suppress free expression of the institutionalized resident or other person labeled

\textsuperscript{45} L. \textsc{Levy}, \textit{supra} note 41, at 180. Francis Hopkinson, a representative of the Continental Congress, conceived of the circumstances where the State would be justified in suppressing free expression:

\begin{quote}
[The liberty of the press is one of the most important privileges of government.] But when this privilege is manifestly abused, and the press becomes an engine for sowing the most dangerous dissensions, for spreading false alarms, and undermining the very foundations of government, ought not that government upon the plain principles of self-preservation to silence by its own authority, such a daring violator of its peace, and tear from its bosom the serpent that would sting it to death? \textit{Id.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{46} Mr. Hopkinson concluded that the government would be justified in "silencing a press, whose weekly productions insult the feelings of the people, and are so openly inimical to the American cause." \textit{Id.} at 180-81.

\textsuperscript{47} Z. \textsc{Chafee}, \textit{supra} note 5, at 31:

\begin{quote}
The true meaning of freedom of speech seems to be this. One of the most important purposes of society and government is the discovery and spread of truth on subjects of general concern. This is possible only through absolutely unlimited discussion. Nevertheless, there are other purposes of government, such as order, the training of the young, protection against external aggression. Unlimited discussion sometimes interferes with these purposes, which must then be balanced against freedom of speech, but freedom of speech ought to weigh very heavily in the scale. The First Amendment gives binding force to this principle of political wisdom.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{48} The first philosopher to read the First Amendment literally was Alexander Meiklejohn; the first Supreme Court Justice was Hugo Black. A. \textsc{Meiklejohn}, \textit{supra} note 8; Black, \textit{The Bill of Rights}, 35 \textsc{N.Y.U.L. Rev.} 865, 879 (1960):

\begin{quote}
Of course the decision to provide a constitutional safeguard for a particular right, such as . . . the right of free speech protection of the First [Amendment], involves a balancing of conflicting interests . . . . I believe, however, that the Framers themselves did this balancing when they wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{49} \textsc{U.S. CONST. amend. I.}

\textsuperscript{50} The language of the first amendment, although it appears clear on its face, has been criticized as ambiguous. \textit{See} Dennis v. United States, 341 U.S. 494, 523 (1951) (Frankfurter, \textsc{J.}, concurring); Emerson, \textit{supra} note 5; Chafee, \textit{Book Review}, 62 \textsc{Harv. L. Rev.} 891, 897-98 (1949). The absolute nature of the amendment’s command would have been clearer had the amendment read: “Congress shall pass no law abridging speech” Mendelson, \textit{On the Meaning of the First Amendment: Absolutes in the Balance}, 50 \textsc{Cal. L. Rev.} 821 (1962). \textit{See} Frantz, \textit{The First Amendment in the Balance}, 71 \textsc{Yale L.J.} 1424, 1432-50 (1962). \textit{Note}, \textit{The Speech and Press Clause of the First Amendment as Ordinary Language}, 87 \textsc{Harv. L. Rev.} 374, 382-89 (1973). It is similarly unclear whether the framers of the Constitution intended the first amendment to outlaw seditious libel. \textit{Compare} Z. \textsc{Chafee}, \textit{supra} note 5, at 18-22 with \textsc{L. Levy}, \textit{supra} note 41.

mentally ill." In order to examine this legal question, several levels of constitutional analysis will be undertaken.

IV. Application of the First Amendment: A First Level Analysis

Under the theoretical framework of constitutional free expression, the first amendment protects speech as a "preferred liberty" but does not protect conduct. In some cases, however, conduct expresses an idea: the action then becomes utterance and engenders a degree of first amendment protection. The reverse is also true: certain well-defined and limited categories of speech, because of the natural and probable effect of the utterance, become synonymous with conduct. The very utterance of the words leads almost immediately to retaliatory violence or direct injury to the listener's sensibilities. As with most actions these words do not form an essential part in the exposition of ideas, and are consequently left unprotected by the first amendment.

Included within the narrowly limited class of words which theoretically receives no constitutional protection are "obscenities" and "fighting words." Therefore, the first level of constitutional free speech analysis must be an examination of whether the expression can be categorized as an "obscenity" or a "fighting word.

53 Cantwell v. Connecticut, 310 U.S. 296, 303-04 (1940): Thus, the [First] Amendment embraces two concepts — freedom to believe and freedom to act. The first is absolute but, in the nature of things, the second cannot be. Conduct remains subject to regulation for the protection of society.
55 Mr. Justice Holmes stated this opinion long ago in Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 47, 52 (1919): The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic. It does not even protect a man from an injunction against uttering words that may have all the effect of force. The principle is as ancient as the English common law itself. 4 W. Blackstone, Commentaries *150:
Besides actual breaches of the peace, any thing that tends to provoke or excite others to break it, is an offence of the same denomination. Therefore, challenges to fight, either by word or letter, or to be the bearer of such challenge, are punishable by fine and imprisonment, according to the circumstances of the offence.
56 See generally Z. Chafee, supra note 5, at 149-52; Emerson, Freedom of Association and Freedom of Expression, 74 Yale L.J. 1, 21-22 (1964).
59 See notes 65-67 infra and accompanying text.
60 Libelous expression was commonly considered within the narrowly limited class of utterances which did not receive constitutional protection. See New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254, 266 n.5 (1964). However, in light of New York Times v. Sullivan and its progeny, it can hardly be said that "libelous" expression is granted no constitutional protection (unless one adopts the legal fiction that New York Times v. Sullivan merely altered the test of what expression will be considered libelous).
The guidelines for the factual determination of an "obscenity" have had a "tortured" history in the Supreme Court. The latest guidelines come from the companion cases of Miller v. California and Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton. The test should by now be familiar: (1) "Whether the 'average person applying contemporary community standards' would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest"; (2) whether the work patently depicts sexual conduct; and (3) whether the work as a whole lacks serious social value.

The test for "fighting words," as enunciated in Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire, is whether the words are likely to provoke an immediate violent reaction in an average listener. Subsequent cases indicate that the category of "fighting words" is particularly limited. The words must be employed in a personally provocative fashion, clearly directed toward the person of the listener. They cannot be merely general, undirected abusive or opprobrious remarks. Undifferentiated apprehension of a violent reaction will not place the expression within the category of "fighting words."

Often the expressions of the mentally handicapped cause considerable annoyance to passersby, friends, and family members. The speech of the mentally ill sometimes sounds bizarre, profane, or pretentious. The linguistic patterns of the schizophrenic have been described as dissociative, autistic, impersonal, and remote. Such language may initially appear to be of the kind contemplated in Paris Adult Theatre I or Chaplinsky. However, an application of the principles suggested above illustrates that the annoyance or intolerance of the listener is, without more, an insufficient constitutional justification for the abridgement of a speaker's communication.

First, it cannot be plausibly maintained that the bizarre, neologistic use of words, even in a superficially profane manner, is legally obscene. In order to classify an expression as obscene, it must suggest an erotic image. The dissoci-
tive use of words such as "penis-murderer" is not intended to be profane, nor is it normally heard as profane by the average listener. The language is more directly perceived as simply bizarre. Certainly it does not transmit an erotic message.

Second, the tense, impersonal or pretentious tone of some schizophrenic language does not turn such speech into "fighting words." Unless a specific listener could reasonably regard the speaker's words as personally insulting, the Chaplinsky doctrine does not apply. In most instances, the undifferentiated use of schizophrenic language is not specifically directed at the person of the listener. There is no real danger that the words will provoke immediate violence.

Under a first level constitutional analysis, most speech which may psychiatrically be classified as bizarre, pretentious or disoriented is not outside the protection of the first amendment.

V. Reconciliation of the Competing Interests: A Second Level Analysis

Under a variety of different formulae, the Supreme Court has asked whether in particular circumstances the State may justifiably restrict unfettered expression; whether in such cases the State interest is in preventing a danger of a substantial magnitude; and finally, whether the permissible restriction on free expression is only as stringent as necessary under the special circumstances of the controversy. This necessarily involves a balancing of the competing interests on a case-by-case basis, and may subject the parties to the particular predilections of the different justices.

The generic term "balancing" describes the process by which the Court compares the individual and societal interests in free expression with the social interest sought by the governmental action restricting free expression. Although the Supreme Court has failed to develop a single comprehensive, coherent first amendment theory, it has utilized several tests for the reconciliation of these

74 E. Bleuler, supra note 69, at 153.
75 Id.; Rutzick, supra note 66, at 2.
76 See J. Ruesch, Disturbed Communication 44 (1957).
79 See notes 91-95 infra and accompanying text.
80 See notes 119-35 infra and accompanying text.
82 See Emerson, supra note 5, at 912-14; Frantz, supra note 50, at 1441-42.
competing interests. These include: "bad tendency," "ad hoc balancing," "gravity of the evil," "clear and present danger," "incitement," and "compelling state interest." 44 These tests allow a large weight to the freedom of expression, while the other tests accord a particular weight to the value of each interest. 45

84 See generally Emerson, supra note 5, at 908-16. The different formulae used from time to time by the Supreme Court are set out in footnotes 85-90 infra. They are presented approximately in the order in which each grants the legislature a presumption of validity in its regulation of free expression: the "bad tendency" test grants the legislature maximum deference and "compelling state interest" places a heavy burden on the government in order to justify its regulation.

85 The bad tendency test was presented by Justice Sanford in Gitlow v. New York, 268 U.S. 652 (1925). Its rationale has since been repudiated. See Brandenberg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969). As presented in Gitlow the test afforded the legislature maximum deference in its regulation of free expression. Any utterance which had a tendency, or which the legislature could reasonably believe had a tendency, to lead to a substantial evil could be proscribed. The rationale for the test as stated by Justice Sanford was that "a single revolutionary spark may kindle a fire that, smouldering for a time, may burst into a sweeping and destructive conflagration." 46

86 It has been suggested that every test the Supreme Court has offered for the resolution of first amendment issues has involved some sort of reconciliation or balancing of the competing interests in the case. As Professor Freund put it, often the Court's business is the balancing of rights against rights, P. Freund, Constitutional Dilemmas, in ON LAW AND JUSTICE 23, 35-36 (1968). What sets "ad hoc balancing" apart from other tests is that it involves an unstructured as opposed to a formal weighing of all the competing interests involved in a case. Cf. Brett, Free Speech, Supreme-Court Style: A View from Overseas 46 TEX L. REV. 668, 673 (1968). While other tests accord a particular weight to the freedom of expression — e.g., the "bad tendency" allows the free speech interest a small weight and "compelling state interest" allows it a large weight — "ad hoc balancing" simply collects and compares all of the interests, with the value of each interest left undefined and unstructured. See Emerson, supra note 5, at 912-14.

87 It is normally assumed that "ad hoc balancing" had its first appearance in Schneider v. State, 308 U.S. 147, 161 (1939). See Frantz, The First Amendment in the Balance, 71 YALE L.J. 1424, 1425 (1962). Justice Frankfurter used the test to consistently defer to any reasonable legislative judgment:

It is not for us to decide how we would adjust the clash of interests which this case presents were the primary responsibility for reconciling it ours. Congress has determined that the danger created by advocacy of overthrow justifies the ensuing restriction on freedom of speech . . . .

Can we then say that the judgment Congress exercised was denied it by the Constitution?


[The balancing concept] was first accepted as a method for insuring the complete protection of First Amendment freedoms even against purely incidental or inadvertent consequences [and later it was misapplied to ] governmental action that is aimed at speech and depends for its application upon the content of speech.

Earlier Justice Black had joined in one opinion, Schneider v. State 308 U.S. 147 (1939), and written another opinion, Marsh v. Alabama, 326 U.S. 501 (1946), both of which adopted a balancing approach.


87 The "gravity of the evil" test is an interpretation of the "clear and present danger" formula presented in note 86 infra. It was originated by Judge Learned Hand and introduced by Chief Justice Vinson in Dennis v. United States, 341 U.S. 494, 510 (1951): "In each case
All of these formulae utilize the balancing process inasmuch as each concerns the relative importance of the various interests and their
courts] must ask whether the gravity of the “evil,” discounted by its improbability, justifies such invasion of free speech as is necessary to avoid the danger.”

The “clear and present danger” formulation first introduced by Justice Holmes in Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 47 (1919) has a scope of such enormity that its doctrinal reaches need not be fully presented. See, e.g., Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969); Scales v. United States, 367 U.S. 203 (1961); Debs v. United States, 249 U.S. 211 (1919); Abrams v. United States, 250 U.S. 616 (1919). See also Strong, Fifty Years of “Clear and Present Danger”: From Schenck to Brandenburg—And Beyond, 1969 S. GR. REV. 41; McKay, The Preference for Freedom, 34 N.Y.U.L. REV. 1182, 1203-12 (1959); Mendelson, Clear and Present Danger—From Schenck to Dennis, 52 COLUM. L. REV. 315 (1952). The best explanation of the doctrine of “clear and present danger” was presented in a concurrence by Justice Brandeis in Whitney v. California, 274 U.S. 357, 372 (1927). The test is premised on the belief that free speech and assembly are rights which are fundamental but not in their nature absolute. Their exercise is subject to restriction in order to protect the state from serious injury. Thus, free expression can be impeded only where it:

would produce, or is intended to produce, a clear and imminent danger of some substantive evil which the state constitutionally may seek to prevent . . . There must be reasonable ground to believe that the danger apprehended is imminent. There must be reasonable ground to believe that the evil to be prevented is a serious one.

274 U.S. at 373, 376.

The more recent cases adhering to the clear and present danger doctrine include Hess v. Indiana, 414 U.S. 105 (1973); Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).


It is often said that when a governmental regulation directly or incidentally restricts the “preferred liberty” of freedom of expression the state must demonstrate one.

A. Substantiality of the State Interest

A governmental action suppressing speech must be supported by more than a merely "reasonable" interest in order to overcome the burden placed on the State by the first amendment. A government regulation is likely to receive priority over first amendment claims if the State offers a cogent justification for the regulation unrelated to the suppression of free expression. However, even
the most substantial State interest will yield in appropriate circumstances. It is therefore not instructive to attempt to state the precise quality of the governmental interest needed by adopting such phrases as "compelling," "paramount," or "subordinating." The Supreme Court uses these terms more to signal the outcome of the case than to provide an explanation of the criteria used in making the decision. Once the infringement on individual liberties is considered so extensive that the State will need a "compelling interest" in order to justify its action, the controversy is all but decided.

State action restricting an institutionalized resident's freedom of expression might potentially be justified by any of three governmental interests. First, there is the interest in protecting society from any physical danger which may result from the utterance or association. This interest will weigh heavily in the first amendment balance and will usually prevail over the varied individual interests in free expression. However, the government can only rarely offer this interest as a justification for restricting communication in a mental hospital. It has been established that mental patients are not more dangerous than the population at large. Such a governmental interest can be offered only on an individualized basis and must be based upon evidence which establishes that the communication will create a clear and imminent probability of harm to other persons.

Second, there is the State's interest in the effective administration of the


93 Chief Justice Vinson in Dennis v. United States, 341 U.S. 494, 509 (1951) called the state interest in national security "the ultimate value of any society." The foundation cases in this area are Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 47 (1919); Frohwerk v. United States, 249 U.S. 204 (1919); Debs v. United States, 249 U.S. 211 (1919); Abrams v. United States, 250 U.S. 616 (1919). All of these cases were decided in 1919 and all affirmed criminal judgments under the Espionage Act in the face of first amendment claims. These cases demonstrate Vinson's point that internal security is a powerful state interest. Yet the fact that even the highest of state interests will yield given the proper circumstances has been illustrated by later cases. Thus, post-World War I decisions do not defer so easily the state interest in national security. Brandenburg v. Ohio, 395 U.S. 444 (1969); Yates v. United States, 354 U.S. 298 (1957); DeJonge v. Oregon, 299 U.S. 333 (1937); Herndon v. Lowry, 301 U.S. 242 (1937); Fiske v. Kansas, 274 U.S. 380 (1927). But see Communist Party of the United States v. Subversive Activities Control Bd., 367 U.S. 1 (1961); Dennis v. United States, 341 U.S. 494 (1951) (It is possible to explain these "peacetime" cases by noting that they were both decided during the communist scare period of the 1950's).


95 In cases where the Court verbalizes the "compelling state interest" test, the government invariably loses. See, e.g., DeGregory v. Attorney Gen. of New Hampshire, 383 U.S. 825, 829 (1966), citing Gibson v. Florida Legislative Investigation Comm., 372 U.S. 559, 546 (1963); N.A.A.C.P. v. Button, 371 U.S. 415, 439 (1963); Bates v. Little Rock, 361 U.S. 516, 524 (1960); N.A.A.C.P. v. Alabama, 357 U.S. 449, 463 (1958), citing Sweezy v. New Hampshire, 354 U.S. 234, 254 (1957) (Frankfurter, J., concurring). The precedent has been set in equal protection decisions. Where the Court requires the State to justify its classification by demonstrating a "compelling interest" the government will almost invariably lose the case. In the field of equal protection, the State has rarely demonstrated a "compelling interest." But see Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973) (abortions after viability may be constitutionally regulated by the State despite the mother's "fundamental" interest in privacy); Korematsu v. United States, 329 U.S. 214 (1945) (persons of Japanese ancestry excluded from a West Coast military area despite their "fundamental" right to be free from discrimination on the basis of national origin).

institution itself. Because the constitutional basis for the incarceration of a mental patient lies in a concern for his own well-being,97 there is little constitutional warrant for restricting his rights to suit mere administrative convenience. It is possible that indirect time, place, and manner restraints on communication might be upheld under the shibboleth of institutional convenience,98 but normally the governmental interest in administrative convenience will be insufficient to authorize a restriction of the institutionalized resident's free expression.

Finally, there is the State's interest in promoting the well-being of the resident himself. In order to understand the quality of this interest, it is necessary to evaluate the therapeutic justification both for the allowance and the restriction of free communication.

1. The Therapeutic Justification for Encouraging Free Expression

The concept of "normalization"99 dictates that a resident should not be restricted in the opportunity for free expression and association. To expeditiously return the liberty the State has taken from the resident, the institution must keep intact all of the normal behaviors vital to a functioning citizen. This is necessary to prevent the resident from becoming "institutionalized"—overly dependent on the hospital "way of life."100 The resident should not grow accustomed to exercising communicative skills because these skills are vital to the individual's successful readjustment to the community. Normal communication with others is a recognized therapeutic need of the institutionalized resident.101 Furthermore, communication keeps the resident in contact with the outside world, helps to hold in check some of the morbidity and hopelessness produced by . . . [institutional life] . . ., stimulates his more natural and human impulses and otherwise may make contributions to better mental health.102

97 American Bar Foundation, supra note 3, at 36, 72-76.
99 Defined as a set of principles derived from the belief that mental health institutions should primarily serve as the agents for a resident's rehabilitation to society, that is, each institution should allow the individual to live as normally as possible. The principle of normalization has been given constitutional sanction. Wyatt v. Stickney, 344 F. Supp. 387 (M. D. Ala. 1972); Wyatt v. Stickney, 344 F. Supp. 373 (M. D. Ala. 1972), and statutory sanction in Calif. Welfare and Institutions Code §§ 5001, 5115, 5200 (West 1972).
100 Even though the hospital may have "normalized" the resident's precommitment deviant behavior, the individual cannot leave the hospital because he or she has grown accustomed to and dependent upon institutional life. See E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 5-73 ("mass movement" and other "totalistic" features of institutions foster dependence and impair ability to make small independent decisions). See also H. Barnes & N. Teeters, New Horizons in Criminology 499, 503 (3d ed. 1959) (becoming unaccustomed to exercising communicative skills in prison is a nonnormalized behavior which can have adverse consequences when the prisoner is released).
102 H. Barnes & N. Teeters, supra note 100, at 492.
At the same time, the individual perceives countervailing ideas\textsuperscript{103} and becomes better informed on such matters as governmental issues (thereby enabling an intelligent use of the franchise\textsuperscript{104}) and patients' rights\textsuperscript{105} which are helpful in the resident's habilitation.\textsuperscript{106}

2. The Therapeutic Justification for Restricting Free Expression

It has been argued that restrictions on communication are necessary for a resident's well-being\textsuperscript{107} and therefore justified under the state's 	extit{parens patriae} power.\textsuperscript{108} Arguably, such restrictions could be constitutionally justified as serving the rational state interest of providing care for the mentally disabled. The hospital might rationally justify restrictions on first amendment freedoms through its medical prerogatives, the so-called medical model.\textsuperscript{109} The most prevalent use of the medical model to restrict communication rights is “milieu” therapy. In this model the hospital manipulates the resident's environment to modify deviant behavior or personality traits.\textsuperscript{110} This therapeutic notion can be used to isolate the resident from a “toxic” environment by restricting communication between the resident and this environment.\textsuperscript{111} Similarly, the resident's judgment might be so impaired as to necessitate restrictions on communication. The paradigmatic example is the manic depressive reactive in a hypomanic stage. Such a person is irrepresible and often unconventional in speech and manner. He is narcissistic, childishly proud, glib of tongue, genial of hand, extravagant with money, full of pranks, imprudent, and openly hostile and aggressive.\textsuperscript{112}

During this hypomanic phase the individual may write numerous letters. "No sooner, perhaps, has he posted a letter than he decides that the mail is too slow for his urgent business so he dispatches a telegram to his correspondent."\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{103} Note, The Right of Expression in Prison, 40 S. Cal. L. Rev. 407, 419 (1967).


\textsuperscript{105} Rollins, Suggested Revisions of North Carolina's Laws on Involuntary Hospitalization for Mental Illness, N. C. Med. J. 1019, 1020 (Dec. 1972): "Patients in state mental hospitals are deprived of rights not by law, but because they are unaware of their rights."

\textsuperscript{106} See note 101 supra and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{107} American Bar Foundation, supra note 3, at 155. Although modern medicolegal opinion rejects the notion that residents are incapable of exercising their rights “this is not to say that in modern times mental patients should retain all their personal rights. Effective treatment in many instances necessitates withdrawal of certain patient rights”. Id.

\textsuperscript{108} One of the legal theories for civil commitment is the 	extit{parens patriae} power of the state. American Bar Foundation, supra note 3, at 36. 	extit{Parens patriae} is a right of sovereignty and imposes a duty on the sovereign to care for persons who, because afflicted with some disability, are unable to act in their own best interests. See generally Developments, Civil Commitment of the Mentally Ill, 87 Harv. L. Rev. 1190, 1207-22 (1974).

\textsuperscript{109} Hearings on Constitutional Rights of the Mentally Ill Before the Subcomm. on Constitutional Rights of the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary, 91st Cong., 1st & 2d Sess., at 413 (1970):

The medical model essentially is that behavioral variances are analogous to disease in the physical body. The implication is a distinct discontinuity in the continuum of behavioral differences which can be objectively discerned, measured and labeled pathological.

\textsuperscript{110} Note, Conditioning and Other Technologies Used to "Treat?" "Rehabilitate?" "Demolish?" Prisoners and Mental Patients, 45 S. Cal. L. Rev. 616, 621-22 (1972).

\textsuperscript{111} Id.

\textsuperscript{112} L. Kolvo, Modern Clinical Psychiatry 369-70 (1973).

\textsuperscript{113} Id. at 370.
Should the hospital, acting in the resident's best interest, censor his mail or telephone communications in order to prevent the resident from: (1) impairing his integrity and credibility in the community? (2) writing away for a subscription to a magazine he cannot afford? (3) writing threatening letters to a family member or government official? (4) receiving contraband in the mail?

"The hypomanic is often erotic and, if a man, may indulge in sexual excess, while a previously chaste and modest young woman may become sexually promiscuous," often making indecent and obscene proposals. The manic depressive in a hypomanic stage is also overreactive to the extent of violent motor excitement. In the hospital, the resident may tear his or her clothing and destroy objects. Acting in the individual's best interests, as well as in the interest of other residents and of outside visitors, should the hospital allow the resident to: (1) interact with the opposite sex? (2) interact with other residents generally? (3) interact with visitors? (4) make visits outside of the hospital? (5) interact with legal counsel?

Given the additional psychiatric fact that on recovery from a manic stage the individual perceives his or her past behavior as unpleasant and is sorry for such behavior, should the law uphold hospital restrictions on free expression and association in these instances?

The first amendment may allow restrictions on communication when necessary to insure the mental and physical well-being of the resident. The hospital thus may prevent the communications illustrated in the questions posed above. In such cases, the State has identified a substantial interest in restricting first amendment liberties. However, to sustain such restrictions the hospital administrator must isolate a specific resident, such as a hypomanic, and give a rational and verifiable reason for restricting first amendment rights in a particular case. Moreover, since the mechanism used to restrict free expression in mental hospitals may often be categorized as a prior restraint, certain procedural requirements must be satisfied before the restriction will be upheld.

**B. Extent of the Restriction**

Although the State interest is a crucial factor in a "second level" constitutional free speech analysis, it is of no greater importance than the legal machinery used to implement that goal. It is the implementation of the goals which effectuates the precise restriction on first amendment liberties.

This legal machinery can be categorized under three overlapping headings: indirect, direct, and prior restraints. Categorization under one of these headings

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114 *Id.* at 370.
115 *Id.* at 371.
116 *Id.* at 372.
117 *See generally* id. at 376-77. Case study: m.m. was in and out of a state mental hospital for years. During manic phases she signed leases on strange apartments, bought furniture, went into debt, pawned her rings, wrote checks without finances, purchased fifty-seven hats, instituted divorce proceedings, smoked excessively and swore loudly (contrary to usual habits), and made advances to the physician. In the last year m.m. has lost her manic symptomatology and has been making an excellent home and community adjustment as a housewife and mother. If possible should the hospital have suppressed her actions while she was in a manic phase?
118 *See* notes 139-71 *infra* and accompanying text.
possesses no independent significance unless the categories expose regulations which differ in their relative severity. Indirect restraints are generally less restrictive than direct restraints because the former merely condition the exercise of free expression while the latter affirmatively punish it. Prior restraints are usually considered maximally restrictive of free expression because such regulations seek to prevent the expression from ever occurring.

These categories are discussed below in the inverse order of their restrictive effect on first amendment liberties. They do not provide a talismanic test in first amendment controversies but emphasize the need for a pragmatic assessment of the effect of legal machinery on first amendment freedoms.

1. Indirect Restraints

The regulation may only incidentally burden freedom of expression. This “indirect, conditional [or] partial” infringement of individual liberties does not prohibit speech but does place certain requirements on the speaker which must be met as a condition of speaking.\textsuperscript{120} The regulation does not affect the
content of speech but rather effectuates some other governmental objective by means incidentally affecting speech. Because no direct prohibition of speech occurs, it is normally the least restrictive means through which the government may implement its goal.

Legal machinery placing merely an incidental burden on freedom of expression, when found in combination with a substantial State interest, normally presents a compelling case for validation of the State enactment. The courts have realized that the first amendment does not guarantee that everyone shall speak at will, but that everything worth saying shall be said. The government may restrict an applicant to a limited number of public resources. For example, freedom of expression does not include a contest—at the expense of the unwilling listener—to determine who can speak loudest; it does not hold out to all persons with opinions an unlimited opportunity to address gatherings on the street; and it does not imply a license to speak at any time in any forum, public or private. The government may impede free expression by regulating the "time, place, duration or manner" of speech because the legal machinery imposes a de minimis burden on the individual's first amendment liberties. Such impositions of free expression may be justified by numerous valid governmental interests.

121 The Supreme Court has issued broad disclaimers that it is in the business of censoring the content of speech. Chicago Police Dep't v. Mosley, 408 U.S. 92, 95 (1972): "[A]bove all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content." Accord, Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104, 115 (1972); Cohen v. California, 403 U.S. 15, 24 (1971).

122 Just because a regulation is considered "indirect," is not to say that it is always less restrictive. There are certain "incidental" burdens which can have a profound chilling effect on first amendment rights. When this is so, these cases must be treated similarly to cases which present a "direct" infringement on first amendment rights. See Keyishian v. Bd. of Regents, 385 U.S. 589, 601-02 (1967); United States v. Robel, 389 U.S. 258, 265 (1967); Elfrandt v. Russell, 384 U.S. 11, 16-19 (1966).

123 See note 119 supra.


129 Among the state interests conceded priority over the limited individual interest in free expression are the safety, comfort, and convenience of the local citizenry. E.g., Cox v. New Hampshire, 312 U.S. 569 (1941). But see Niemotko v. Maryland, 340 U.S. 268, 273 (1951) (Frankfurter, J., concurring); Schneider v. State, 308 U.S. 147 (1939) (state interest in keeping public streets neat and clean is insufficient to justify an ordinance which prohibits persons from handing out literature to people willing to receive it); Lovell v. Griffin, 303 U.S. [February 1975]
Even in the area of indirect restraints, however, the government may not place an unreasonable burden on the exercise of free speech: "The crucial question is whether the manner of expression is basically incompatible with the normal activity of a particular place at a particular time."  

2. Direct Restraints

The second manner in which a governmental regulation can raise first amendment questions is by punishing the speaker because of the mere fact of the utterance. This "direct" infringement of freedom of expression is usually more suppressive of individual liberties because it controls the content of speech. The classic example of a "direct" abridgement of free expression is the government's attempt to promote internal security by imposing a subsequent punishment on those who communicate subversive utterances. As the cases suggest, where
the government imposes a direct suppression of free speech the Supreme Court
tends to apply a classificatory test such as "clear and present danger," as opposed
to the use of the ad hoc balancing approach for "indirect" abridgements of free
speech.138

3. Prior Restraints

The final means by which governmental authorities can raise a first amend-
ment controversy is by devising a legal machinery which imposes a prior restraint
on free expression. In a prior restraint, the "line where legitimate suppression
begins is fixed chronologically at the time of the publication."139 The govern-
ment restricts free communication in advance of the actual expression and thus
prevents the communication before its occurrence. This is usually accomplished
through the use of an injunction,140 a permit system,141 or a licensing tax.142 By
contrast, a "direct" restraint imposes a subsequent punishment because of the
content of the expression.

To the extent a prior restraint prevents the very exercise of free expression
it is maximally suppressive of first amendment liberties.143 Exceptions to this rule,
however, are apparent. The threat of an onerous punishment imposed sub-
sequent to a communication will as effectively preclude free expression as a court
order enjoining future utterance. The simple requirement of procuring a license,
the issuance of which is automatic, will not suppress first amendment liberties as
greatly as a severe penalty imposed subsequent to the communication.144 Strict
reliance on the form of the restraint—ignoring its precise effect upon communica-

139 Z. CHAFEE, supra note 5, at 9.
v. United States, 403 U.S. 713 (1971); Carroll v. Princess Anne, 395 U.S. 175 (1969); Teitel
Film Corp. v. Cusack, 390 U.S. 139 (1968); Walker v. City of Birmingham, 388 U.S. 307
697 (1931); Joynor v. Whiting, 477 F.2d 456 (4th Cir. 1973). Ex parte seizures of obscene
materials are closely related to injunctions: both are effectuated under judicial authority. See
496 (1973); United States v. Thirty-Seven Photographs, 402 U.S. 363 (1971); Lee Art
141 Shuttlesworth v. City of Birmingham, 394 U.S. 147 (1969); Interstate Circuit, Inc. v.
Dallas, 390 U.S. 676 (1968); Freedman v. Maryland, 380 U.S. 51 (1965); Times Film Corp.
v. City of Chicago, 365 U.S. 43 (1961); Kingsley Internat'l Pictures Corp. v. Regents of the
University of the State of New York, 360 U.S. 684 (1959); Staub v. City of Baxley, 355 U.S.
313 (1958); Polos v. New Hampshire, 345 U.S. 395 (1953); Joseph Burstyn, Inc. v. Wilson,
345 U.S. 495 (1952); Niemotko v. Maryland, 340 U.S. 268 (1951); Kunz v. New York, 340
(1945); Largent v. Texas, 318 U.S. 418 (1943); Cox v. New Hampshire, 312 U.S. 569 (1941);
Cantwell v. Connecticut, 310 U.S. 296 (1940); Hague v. GIO, 307 U.S. 496 (1939); Schnei-
142 Follett v. McCormick, 321 U.S. 575 (1944); Jones v. Opelika, 319 U.S. 103 (1943);
233 (1936).
143 Emerson, The Doctrine of Prior Restraint, 20 Law. & Contemp. Prob. 648, 656-57
(1955).
144 See generally Note, Previous Restraints upon Freedom of Speech, 31 Colum. L. Rev.
1148 (1931).
tion—is a substitution of dogma for reason. Nonetheless, courts have treated the two differently. When legal machinery imposes a prior restraint, the scope of constitutionally permissible punishment subsequent to the utterance becomes immaterial. Even if the communication incurs a subsequent penalty, it may not be proscribed in advance by a prior restraint save in exceptional cases.

The Supreme Court's hostility toward prior restraints appears in its holdings that such restraints are presumptively unconstitutional, by its determinations placing the burden of proof upon the government and in its use of outcome-determinative analyses. The rationale for such a judicial attitude goes


146 The cases which utilize the doctrine of prior restraint, when they attempt to justify the doctrine at all, do so by a reference to historical abhorrence of prior restraints. Carroll v. Princess Anne, 393 U.S. 175, 181 n.5 (1968); Joseph Burstyn, Inc. v. Wilson, 343 U.S. 495, 504 (1952); Niemotko v. Maryland, 340 U.S. 268, 276 (1951) (Frankfurter, J., concurring); Hannegan v. Esquire, Inc., 327 U.S. 146 (1946); Schneider v. State, 308 U.S. 147 (1946); Lovell v. Griffin, 303 U.S. 444, 451 (1938); Grosjean v. American Press Co., 297 U.S. 239, 245-49 (1936); Near v. Minnesota, 283 U.S. 697 (1931). The particular legal machinery of prior restraint has its roots firmly planted within the jurisprudential system under which we now operate. It can be immediately traced to 1643 where an order of Parliament specified: [T]hat no Book etc. shall from henceforth be printed or put to sale, unless the same be first approved of and licensed by such person or persons as both or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same.

J. MILTON, AREOPAGITICA 1 (Freedman ed. 1972). John Milton offered the dispositive critique of the order of Parliament in his Areopagitica but the struggle in England directed against censorship was not waged by him alone. Near v. Minnesota, 283 U.S. 697, 713 (1931). The culmination of the struggle is illustrated by Blackstone's exposition of the state of English Law. "The liberty of the press is indeed essential to the nature of a free state; but this consists in laying no previous restraints upon publications, and not in freedom from censure for criminal matter when published." 4 W. BLACKSTONE COMMENTARIES * 151-52. In the United States, Blackstone has been criticized not so much because of his special emphasis on protections against previous restraints but because that protection should not be deemed to exhaust the liberties granted by the right of free expression. Near v. Minnesota, 283 U.S. 697, 714-15 (1931). The state of American law is this. The chief, but not exclusive, purpose of the first amendment guarantee is to prevent previous restraints upon the exercise of free expression. Freedom from restraints is not absolutely guaranteed, but by the same token, protection against prior restraints does not exhaust the rights guaranteed by the first amendment.


A system of prior restraint is in many ways more inhibiting than a system of subsequent punishment: It is likely to bring under government scrutiny a far wider range of expression; it shuts off communication before it takes place; suppression by a stroke of the pen is more likely to be applied than suppression through a criminal process; the procedures do not require attention to the safeguards of the criminal process; the system allows less opportunity for public appraisal and criticism; the dynamic of the system drive toward excess, as the history of all censorship shows.

See Emerson, supra note 143, at 656-60. See generally Milton, supra note 7.


148 Near v. Minnesota, 283 U.S. 697, 716 (1931), implied that prior restraints would be upheld only in "exceptional cases." Mr. Chief Justice Hughes gave as examples certain obstructions of war-making powers, obscenity and incitement to violence. He gave no reason why he chose these to illustrate the principle, and for this reason the exceptional case notion is un


151 Of the numerous cases cited in notes 140-42 supra, which reflect the three major forms
to the foundations of Western jurisprudence, which is built upon a blending of coequal powers. The pervasive fear engendered by a system of censorship stems from a distrust of the unilateral authority of the censor. The writings of the great political philosophers such as Milton and Mill, and more recently, Chafee and Emerson, bear witness to the anxieties provoked by the spectre of the censor.

The internal workings of the "prior restraint" doctrine reflect this distrust of the censor. Inferior administrative officials derive their power to act from the precise will of an elected body; grants of power must be based upon narrow criteria strictly related to a valid legislative purpose and upon definite and explicit legislative standards which leave the public official with only ministerial authority.

of prior restraints, in only the following cases did the government regulation prevail. Kingsley Books, Inc. v. Brown, 354 U.S. 436 (1957) (focusing on the effect of the government regulation, the court held that it was tantamount to a subsequent punishment and therefore need not be analyzed under the higher standard of a prior restraint); Times Film Corp. v. City of Chicago, 365 U.S. 43 (1961) (the capacity for evil was so great that it may be controlled by a prior restraint); Walker v. City of Birmingham, 388 U.S. 307 (1967) (defendants convicted for failure to move to dissolve an injunction or apply for a permit). The same regulation was later invalidated in Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham, 394 U.S. 147 (1969). Poulos v. New Hampshire, 345 U.S. 395 (1953); Cox v. New Hampshire, 312 U.S. 569 (1941) (In both Poulos and Cox, permit systems were upheld only because the licensees were without discretionary authority); United States v. Thirty-Seven Photographs, 402 U.S. 363 (1971) (The only way this prior restraint could be upheld was for the Supreme Court to strictly construe the statute so as to assume strict procedural safeguards in congruence with the Freedman principle, see notes 159-64 infra and accompanying text); Heller v. New York, 413 U.S. 483 (1973) (The court did not consider that this was a prior restraint at all because there was no final restraint upon freedom of expression). See Pittsburgh Press Co. v. Comm'n on Human Relations, 413 U.S. 376 (1973) (The Court upheld an ordinance proscribing sex designated employment columns in newspapers. Because the ordinance was "based on a continuing course of repetitive conduct" the Court did not consider it to be a prior restraint); Donaldson v. Read Magazine, Inc., 333 U.S. 178 (1948) (Because of the exigencies of preventing the use of the mails for the perpetration of fraud, the Court upheld a prior restraint).


153 J. Milton, Areopagitica 23 (Everyman ed. 1927):

The State shall be my governors, but not my critics; they may be mistaken in the choice of a licenser, as easily as this licenser may be mistaken in an author. . . . For though a licenser should happen to be judicious more than ordinary, which will be a great jeopardy of the next succession, yet his very office and his commission enjoins him to let pass nothing but what is vulgarly received already.


For if you determine beforehand that opinions shall be promulgated only on one side of the question, in whom will rest the power of determining which side shall be chosen? The answer is, on those who are most enlightened and best qualified to judge. But there are no determinable and universal marks by which wisdom is to be known. To whom will you give the power of determining what men are the most enlightened?

155 Z. Chafee, supra note 5, at 29: "The censor is the most dangerous of all the enemies of liberty in the press, and ought not to exist in this country unless made necessary by extraordinary perils." Id. at 590.

156 Emerson, supra note 143, at 658: No adequate study seems to have been made of the psychology of licensers, censors, security officials, and their kind, but common experience is sufficient to show that their attitudes, drives, emotions, and impulses all tend to carry them to excesses. This is particularly true in the realm of obscenity, but it occurs in all areas where officials are driven by fear or other emotion to suppress free communication.

The courts will never allow the censor to supervise the tastes of the reading or listening public. 158

Judicial distrust of the censor lingers even after he has been legally stripped of discretionary authority. The Supreme Court insists upon a rapid and inexpensive review by an independent judicial body subsequent to an adverse ruling by the licensor. 159 This recognition that a right of procedural due process is implicit within the first amendment imposes three requirements. First, the State has both the burden of initiating a separate and independent review of its adverse decisions and the burden of proving that the expression is unprotected by the first amendment. 160 This necessitates an adversary procedure—with the usual elements of procedural due process—before a judicial, not an administrative, tribunal. 161 It requires the court to make a fresh determination of the merits of the controversy unencumbered by the legal judgments of the licensing authorities. In many cases this may require that the judicial body hear the case de novo, and there is some argument that it may require a jury trial. 162 Second, the prior restraint cannot be administered so as to place an anticipatory chill upon first amendment rights by giving finality to the censor's decision. Therefore, any final restraint on first amendment liberties prior to judicial review must be limited to the preservation of the status quo and to the "shortest period compatible with sound judicial resolution." 163 Third, a prompt final judicial resolution must be assured. 164

By its recognition of a due process component within the first amendment, the Supreme Court may appear unduly insensitive to the needs of the State to implement its varied legitimate interests. Governmental authorities might forego an attempt to prevent a substantial evil rather than resort to a judicial injunctive procedure each time it denies a license. Nevertheless, procedural justice in a court of law is central to the history of American freedom. Procedures lacking

161 In Monaghan's article on first amendment due process he has an interesting discussion on the merits of a judicial procedure over an administrative hearing. Supra note 159, at 520.
162 Id. at 525-32.
164 Id. at 59.
the necessary sensitivity to freedom of expression will chill first amendment rights just as effectively as oppressive substantive rules. For example, when officials seize allegedly obscene movie films pursuant to an ex parte order, or when movie censors require time-consuming procedures in order to procure a license or obtain judicial review, the exhibitor will suffer financial loss and the public will be precluded from viewing the film until these procedures have run their course. The licensor of public speeches may similarly impede first amendment rights by requiring lengthy procedures in license procurement and judicial review. As Mr. Justice Harlan aptly observed: “timing is the essence of politics. It is almost impossible to predict the political future; and when an event occurs, it is often necessary to have one’s voice heard promptly if it is to be considered at all.” In every case, timing is the essence of effective expression. At every moment that a person is precluded from speaking solely by the order of an inferior administrative official, constitutional rights are compromised.

C. Application to the Institutionalized Resident

It is important to differentiate among the various forms of restrictions on communication which exist in mental institutions. First, there are the indirect restraints which suggest less severe first amendment problems. In this regard, reasonable limitations on the hours, location, and form of visitation by friends or relatives will likely be upheld, provided rational interests are promoted by the regulation. Similarly, the requirement of a pass, the issuance of which is automatic, for visitation by the resident outside the institution will not present significant first amendment problems.

The institution will occasionally punish the resident because of the mere fact of an utterance. This punishment will take the form of isolation, restriction to closed wards, or deprivation of certain privileges. This is clearly a direct restraint and will be upheld only if the restriction on communication is necessary to prevent a clear and imminent danger to the resident or another person.

Finally, there is the prior restraint utilized by the hospital psychiatrist in disallowing mail, telephone, and visitation rights. Here the psychiatrist acts as a censor; on his unilateral authority, an individual’s expressions are suppressed in advance of their actual occurrence. The psychiatrist must be made to comply with judicial principles governing prior restraints. Legislative standards precisely

167 See Collin v. Chicago Park Dist., 460 F.2d 746 (7th Cir. 1972).
170 See generally E. Goffman, supra note 3, at 60-70; Ferleger, supra note 14, at 458-63.
171 Cf. Alberti v. Cruise, 383 F.2d 268 (4th Cir. 1967) (In an action for malicious prosecution and defamation of character the lower court enjoined the plaintiff from speaking or writing to defendant or members of his family. “We think this ... order is clearly a prior restraint upon Mrs. Alberti’s rights of freedom of speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.” Id. at 272.)
delineating permissible restriction of free expression must be promulgated to set limits on psychiatric power. Moreover, in the rare case where the psychiatrist must restrict the free expression of an individual patient, there should be a separate and independent judicial review of the decision.

VI. The Overbreadth Doctrine and Its Application to the Institutionalized Resident: A Third Level Analysis

A restriction on free communication which furthers an important interest of the mental institution, such as public safety or rehabilitation, will nevertheless be invalidated if its sweep is unnecessarily broad. Although the interest may be legitimate, and indeed substantial, the means must be calculated so as to effectuate only the precise governmental purpose. A state hospital—working from concrete standards of public safety or rehabilitation—may control the communicative behavior of an individual resident in a specific instance. For example, a hospital administrator may point to a hypomanic and give a rational reason for restricting first amendment rights in that particular case. However, a regulation which proscribes unprotected communication is facially invalid if, by reason of its scope, it might also curtail privileged utterance. If from a regulation

172 For the analogy to prisoner's rights, see Procunier v. Martinez, 94 S. Ct. 1800 (1974). The censorship of prison mail is justified only if (1) the regulation furthers an important interest unrelated to the suppression of expression, i.e., security, order, or rehabilitation, and (2) the limits on first amendment freedoms are no greater than necessary or essential to the protection of the particular governmental interest involved.

173 United States v. Robel, 389 U.S. 258 (1967) (The government interest in reducing the threat of sabotage in defense plants was not insubstantial. Yet the means chosen to implement that government purpose was held unconstitutional as overbroad). But see Colten v. Kentucky, 407 U.S. 104, 111 (1972) (The Court suggested that where the individual's interest in expression is minuscule compared to the particular public interest in preventing such expression or conduct at that time and place, an overbreadth argument will fail.)


175 Jus tertii standing concepts usually apply in the area of constitutional law. A person charged with the violation of a state regulation cannot assert the constitutional rights of another. So long as the state regulation is constitutionally applied to the person charged, he cannot be heard to say that the regulation, as applied to others, is unconstitutional. Broadrick v. Oklahoma, 413 U.S. 601, 610 (1973), and cases cited therein. However, in the area of the first amendment, the courts have allowed the individual charged to assert the unconstitutional nature of the regulation as applied to situations not before the court. E.g., Gooding v. Wilson, 405 U.S. 518, 521 (1972), and cases cited therein; N.A.A.C.P. v. Button, 371 U.S. 415, 438 (1963), and cases cited therein. The policy behind this judicial decision is inextricably bound to the preferred status of the first amendment and the fear that overbroad restrictions will pose a “chilling effect” on protected, as well as unprotected communication. Gooding v. Wilson, 405 U.S. 518, 521 (1972); Goates v. City of Cincinnati, 402 U.S. 611, 619-20 (1971) (White, J. dissenting); Note, The First Amendment Overbreadth Doctrine, 89 Harv. L. Rev. 844, 852-58 (1970). Recently, the Court has moved slightly from this position in the first amendment area. Instead of the Court’s concept of “precision of legislation,” N.A.A.C.P. v. Button, 371 U.S. 415, 438 (1963), it now only requires that the government enactment refrain from “substantial” overbreadth. Parker v. Levy, 94 S. Ct. 2547 (1974):
justifiable in a single case the administrator formulates a uniform policy of first amendment restriction, the regulation runs afoul of the Constitution. Such a general restrictive policy represents a lowest common denominator theory of mental hospital administration. Under this theory, the hospital restricts freedoms to the extent necessary for the well-being of its lowest functioning resident. These restrictions form a general hospital policy applicable to all residents even if they can exercise and benefit from greater freedoms. For example, if one resident is harmed by delusional information sent in a letter by the resident's paranoiac mother, the hospital not only reads and censors all future letters sent to him (by his mother or anyone else), but also reads and censors every letter sent to every resident as a general hospital policy.

When the government restricts communication it must do so within narrow, objective, and definite standards, limiting its scope to those individuals whom the policy must necessarily reach in order to achieve its purposes. A hospital policy promulgated from a lowest common denominator framework does not strictly correspond with the interests the State seeks to promote by its regulation. Such a policy may be necessary to promote the rehabilitation of some residents, but the restrictions also apply to others for whom they serve no habilitative purpose. Moreover, a reasonable alternative exists to the lowest common denominator policy. Any restriction necessary because of a clear and imminent danger to the health of the resident can be justified in writing by the chief medical officer of the hospital unit on the individual's hospital record. Mere entry into the hospital should not dilute first amendment rights.

VII. Conclusion

In examining the right of the incarcerated mentally ill to communicate, judicial attention has thus far focused on the statutory aspects of the right. The

Thus, even if there are marginal applications in which a statute would infringe on First Amendment values, facial invalidation is inappropriate if the "remainder of the statute covers a whole range of easily identifiable and constitutionally proscribable conduct...."

176 See Muller, Involuntary Hospitalization, 9 COMPREHENSIVE PSYCHIATRY 187 (1968) (Indignant protests arise when a former mental patient commits a crime. The result is a restrictive custody policy even though it is not strictly necessary for the welfare of the public). 177 Defined as a minimum trait or characteristic shared by all members of a group. Placed in the context of mental hospital administration, rules are geared to lowest level of communicative skill which is common to all residents. Therefore, if one person is hypomanic and as a result cannot have free expression and association, the hospital allows no one to exercise their rights of expression and association.

178 This alternative is in some ways similar to the Draft Act. A DRAFT ACT GOVERNING HOSPITALIZATION OF THE MENTALLY ILL. § 21, Public Health Publication No. 51 (rev. ed. 1952):

Right to communications and visitation . . . (a) Subject to the general rules and regulations of the hospital and except to the extent that the head of the hospital determines that it is necessary for the medical welfare of the patient to impose these restrictions, every patient shall be entitled (1) to communicate by sealed mail or otherwise with persons, including official agencies, inside or outside the hospital.

179 Courts have focused on the statutory rights to free communication or habeas corpus and not the first amendment right of free expression. See Stowers v. Wolodzko, 386 Mich. 119, 191 N.W.2d 355 (1971); Phagen v. Miller, 65 Misc. 2d 163, 317 N.Y.S.2d 128 (Sup. Ct. 1970) (The Court had the opportunity to review a New York statute which limited a patient
basis for many of these enactments is that communication is necessary to expose
cases of wrongful hospitalization. The statutory guarantee of correspondence and
visitation is thus often limited to named public officials or attorneys. Simultaneously, where courts have vindicated the right to communicate, they have
limited their inquiry to the federal or state constitutional right of habeas corpus.
This statutory and constitutional treatment of the resident’s right to communicate
is unnecessarily limited in scope. It protects the resident’s right to communicate
with his attorney or with officers of the state but does not protect against more
pervasive restrictions such as limitations of expression and association with friends
and relatives, as well as between residents of the opposite sex. A less restricted
reading of the first amendment would insure meaningful communication on a
broader front; it has been interpreted in other areas with an adaptability and a
sensitivity which should be extended to the problems encountered in mental
institutions.

upon admission to communicating only once with any person within the state. The Court saw
no violation of the First Amendment in light of the statutory allowance of unfettered cor-

180 American Bar Foundation, supra note 3, at 156.