

On Rights III

It has become fashionable among the philosophical circles I run in to proclaim something along the lines of “Rights don’t exist!” The reasoning usually focuses on the fact that no person or group can point to a right that they claim they have. Even the so-called right to life or right to self-defense are nonexistent, they proudly say. Can’t be logically justified, or so it goes. Whether or not they are wrong on that count is a matter for debate, but where they falter is on their actions. Every person thus claiming that rights don’t exist no doubt recognizes where and when they should or should not ask for permission before interacting with someone or their property. Even if it’s solely on the basis of desiring to keep away from harm, their recognition of the limits to their behavior as it concerns other people and their stuff is a recognition of some underlying rights-based structure. Because that’s what rights, logical conceived, are: *limits on behavior*. If you want to claim that rights don’t exist, fine. But if you behave otherwise, you’re contradicting yourself. And that’s today’s two cents.

Skyler.