

What Should Truth Do?
—On the Normative Implications of Truth in
Reference to the Pragmatic Turn of
Jürgen Habermas' Consensus Theory of Truth

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Abstract

In 1999 Habermas admitted that his consensus theory of truth fails as an effort to make the semantic concept of truth epistemological, because the identification of “truth” with “rational assertability” involves an antinomy. For either instances of rational assertability are fallible or they are infallible by virtue of their being made in an ideal speech situation. To avoid this antinomy Habermas claims that truth is not an epistemological concept but a normative one. Its function is not to produce what is infallible, rather, its function is to regulate speech acts. In the following essay I explain wherein Habermas' pragmatic turn consists. In the process, the normative implications of the concept of truth are clarified.

Key Words: consensus theory of truth, pragmatic turn, Habermas, pragmatics