

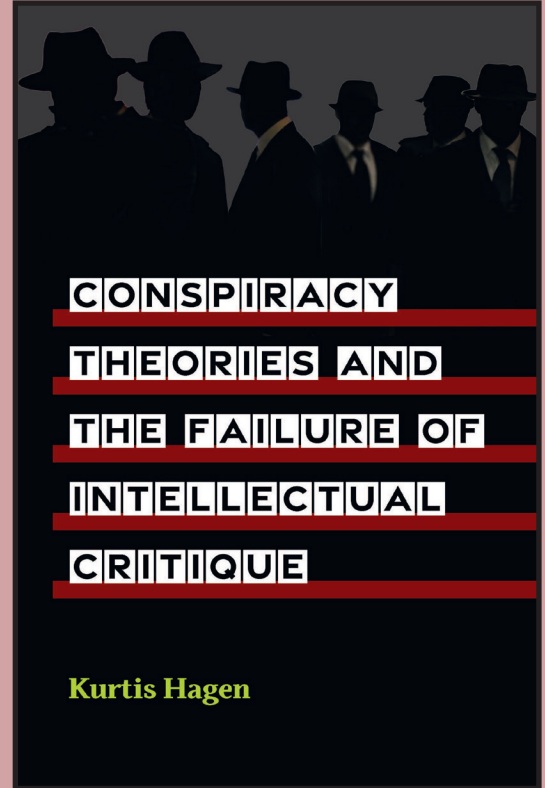
# Conspiracy Theories and the Failure of Intellectual Critique

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*Conspiracy Theories and the Failure of Intellectual Critique* argues that conspiracy theories, including those that conflict with official accounts and suggest that prominent people in Western democracies have engaged in appalling behavior, should be taken seriously and judged on their merits and problems on a case-by-case basis. It builds on the philosophical work on this topic that has developed over the past quarter century, challenging some of it, but affirming the emerging consensus: each conspiracy theory ought to be judged on its particular merits and faults.

The philosophical consensus contrasts starkly with what one finds in the social science literature. Kurtis Hagen argues that significant aspects of that literature, especially the psychological study of conspiracy theorists, has turned out to be flawed and misleading. Those flaws are not randomly directed; rather, they consistently serve to disparage conspiracy theorists unfairly. This suggests that there may be a bias against conspiracy theorists in the academy, skewing “scientific” results. *Conspiracy Theories and the Failure of Intellectual Critique* argues that social scientists who study conspiracy theories and/or conspiracy theorists would do well to better absorb the implications of the philosophical literature.

**Kurtis Hagen** is an independent scholar and former Associate Professor of Philosophy at SUNY Plattsburgh.



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