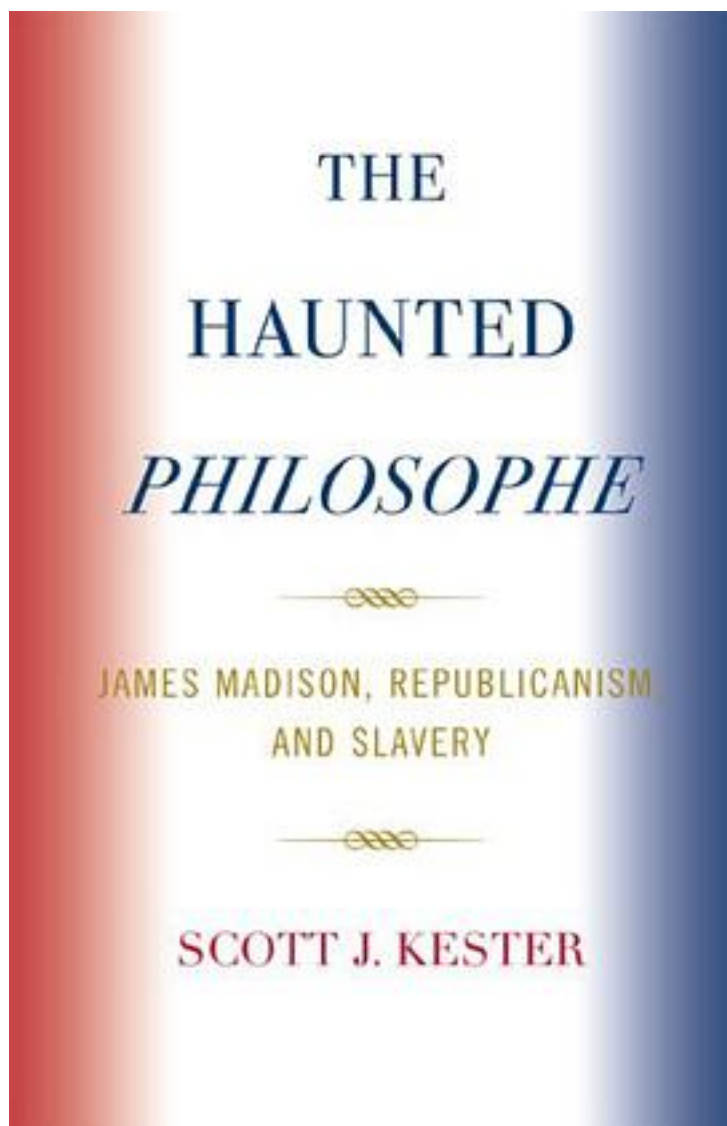


The Haunted Philosophe



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James Madison was a man of the Enlightenment and a believer in progress. He viewed America's Revolution as not simply a breaking away from the despotic British Empire, but a breaking away from the Old World monarchical system represented by that empire. He saw the American Revolution as a process whereby man was trying to become free. Although he used Christian vocabulary in his writing, there is in his correspondence an indication of a shift from a Christian kind of mental framework to a Deism common to Enlightenment philosophes. While Madison's papers lack a sense that salvation would come through Christ, they are marked by a strong sense of salvation from republicanism. Madison's republicanism meant a rejection of monarchy and aristocracy as found in Europe, territorial expansion with the spread of freedom, and a transmuted version of John Winthrop's Puritan vision-instead of a new Israel, America would be an example of freedom to the rest of the world. The British were enemies to the republican vision-ideological enemies whose opposition to France showed them to be enemies of liberty and even of human nature itself. Meanwhile, Madison saw France as carrying the torch of liberty and following the admirable lead of the United States. Madison's sense of the progress of freedom was international in scope. Madison believed republicanism would free mankind from the shackles of the past, implying that universal peace might come through government of the people. The chief problem with this vision was slavery, which he saw as hypocritical in a republic, since republicanism was supposed to bring justice. A tension in his ideology came to the surface in a tangible historical context, Madison being a slave-owner himself. He wanted to believe in progress, but was haunted by Christianity, especially Calvinism, for this worldview allowed that no structural arrangements could solve the problem of sin.

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