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The Reconsideration of Liberty and Political Order in Hume’s Rejection of the Social Contract Theory¹

Abstract: In this paper I will focus on analysing Hume’s rejection of the theory of the social contract, in the light of his major philosophical project of establishing a “science of man” based on the experimental method, which presupposed the reconsideration of human nature and especially of individual liberty and its relation with the legitimacy of the political order. Therefore, I will argue that following Hume’s empirical scepticism regarding the powers of human intellect, and his moral theory based on our sensibility and not on our freedom and will powers, we can better understand his objections against the theory of social contract.

Keywords: liberty, political order, Hume, social contract theory, artificial virtue

¹ **Acknowledgement:** This article was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNCS-UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2016-0941 (Scientific Director: Cristian Petruț Moisuc), within PNCDI III.