**Classics and the Poverty of Philosophy**

As arts and humanities come under increasing pressure to realign research outputs in terms of quantifiably measurable ‘impact’ in order to legitimise their presence in the Higher Education landscape, there is a concomitant move towards adopting methods drawn from STEM. Yet Classics, as one of the more conservative humanities, has been slow to adopt some of the theoretical insights which have become common sense in other disciplines. The resistance, in mainstream classical academia, to oppositional readings of antiquity, for example through postcolonial theory, limits the scope for the required soul-searching of the discipline that other humanities, such as English literature, have benefitted from. This paper therefore argues that recourse to STEM methodologies for the analysis of classical literature serves to perpetuate this disciplinary solipsism, eliding both the history of the discipline of Classics, and reinforces the Eurocentric, patriarchal construction of the objective ‘Knower’.

In Karl Marx’s 1847 polemic against Proudhon, *The Poverty of Philosophy*,he writes that the French utopian socialist, ‘has the misfortune of being particularly misunderstood in Europe. In France, he has the right to be a bad economist, because he is reputed to be a good German philosopher. In Germany, he has the right to be a bad philosopher, because he is reputed to be one of the ablest of French economists.’ This, I argue, is the position of Classics within the arts and humanities. By outlining the history of the discipline as a *Wissenschaft* with claims to objectivity, in conjunction with Enlightenment ideals of universalism, bound up with projects of European imperialism, I will warn against the depoliticising tendencies of seeing the study of literature as a science. Such moves, I argue, demonstrate a profound anxiety over the inadequacy of the discipline in the 21st-century which could more productively be assuaged by self-examination.