Darcy Variations: Queering the Past in the Jane Austen Fandom

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To many readers across the world, Mr. Darcy from Pride & Prejudice (1813) may be the epitome of a heterosexual romance hero: tall, dark, and handsome, not to mention inordinately rich. But in the online Jane Austen fan community, there is a much greater variation in how this character is received and retold. Through the literary genres of headcanons and fanfiction, the haughty Mr. Darcy may instead become a socially awkward lesbian lingering in the back of the ballroom, too shy to dance; or he may be twisted into an evil doppelgänger of himself – a Dark Darcy, embodying all the masculine horror and sexual violence of the Gothic. In this seminar, PhD student Camilla Wallin Lämsä (SoK) will be discussing her ongoing dissertation about the collective constructions of gender and desire in the contemporary Jane Austen fandom, in which reimaginings of Darcy play a crucial part.