



**Bilkent University**

Department of English Language and Literature

# Staff Seminar

**Time: 14:40 to 16:00, Monday 20 January 2020.**

**Location: G 160**

Aleksandar Stevic

## **Hating Rubens: Charlotte Brontë, Anti-Catholicism, and the Limits of Female Self-Fashioning in Victorian England**

What form can female development take in a culture committed to severely limiting the rights of women? What kinds of narratives about female education and growth



can be produced by a society that adamantly denies women the opportunities for professional and sexual fulfilment? This lecture addresses such questions by focusing on Charlotte Brontë, whose works attempt to endow the young and impoverished female heroine with an unprecedented level of independence, while nonetheless trying to reconcile her empowerment with the demands of Victorian domestic ideology. Brontë's 1853 novel *Villette* in particular demonstrates the remarkable cultural negotiations necessary to create a space for female self-fulfilment within the confines of mid-Victorian culture.

Aleksandar Stevic holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Yale (2012). His research is focused firmly on the fiction of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and he has been Assistant Professor of Victorian Literature at Qatar University since August 2017. His book on the *bildungsroman* is forthcoming with the University of Virginia Press in April 2020, and with Philip Tsang he has co-edited a collection of essays on *The Limits of Cosmopolitanism*, published by Routledge this year. He has also published several articles in journals such as *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Dickens Studies Annual* and *Victorian Literature and Culture*, as well as book chapters ranging across French, German and Serbian literature. He is also an active translator.