

2021 PCCBS Article Prize: Samuel Fullerton, “Fatal Adulteries: Sexual Politics in the English Revolution,” *The Journal of British Studies* 60, no. 4 (October 2021): 793-821

This engaging and exceptionally well-researched article makes a compelling case for the centrality of sexual polemics to mainstream political culture in mid-seventeenth-century England and beyond. Fullerton challenges the assumption that it was the court of the libertine Charles II that marked the pivotal moment in the birth of modern sexual politics, instead situating the critical transformation in the culture wars of the 1640s and 50s. Fullerton demonstrates that “porno-political” attacks on the sexual probity of three figures conventionally seen as paragons of marital chastity – Charles I, Henrietta Maria and Oliver Cromwell – called into question their moral authority and fitness as rulers in ways that were unprecedentedly participatory as well as obscene. This ambitious but ultimately persuasive argument is meticulously situated in the broader secondary literature and draws from an impressive array of primary sources, ranging from canonical works such as John Milton’s *Eikonoklastes* to the most scurrilous ephemeral broadsides. This is not only an important intervention in the field of early modern political and print culture, but a highly readable and diverting one as well.