



The Office of The Scarlet Letter (Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society)

By Sacvan Bercovitch

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'Recipient of the Modern Language Association's James Russell Lowell Prize.'
"Goes a long way to proving that any literary masterpiece, read with sympathy and intelligence, works to re-establish the connections between the work of art and the life and thought of its time."--James R. Mellow, 'Times Literary Supplement'

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Editorial Review

Review

Goes a long way to proving that any literary masterpiece, read with sympathy and intelligence, works to re-establish the connections between the work of art and the life and thought of its time.

(James R. Mellow *Times Literary Supplement*)

Magisterially developing the second word of the title and searching out the ambiguities of the romance in the various ideological, social, and cultural contexts, *The Office of The Scarlet Letter* reads the romance in its seventeenth-century context; in the context of Hawthorne's individual understanding, and his contemporaries' understanding, of that earlier context; and in the context of our understanding of both earlier contexts. The resulting study successfully implicates late-twentieth-century American culture with its earliest origins. The book's office is to aid us through ideological, sociocultural, and aesthetic interpretation, in understanding our fate and hope in our time.

(MLA, James Russell Lowell Prize Citation)

About the Author

Sacvan Bercovitch was Powell M. Cabot Research Professor of American Literature at Harvard University as well as fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and past president of American Studies Association. His books include *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*, *The American Jeremiad*, and *Rites of Assent: The Symbolic Construction of America*.

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