



Editorial

This is an issue about wars: cold and hot; ideological and military; imagined, watched, and experienced.

Yaddo, an artist's community in upstate New York, emerged from one couple's response to pain: their desire to retreat from and yet create something positive out of their repeated losses. Deprived of progeny but blessed with wealth, Spencer and Katrina Trask built an estate both welcoming and grand. The property they endowed was given over to nurturing creative endeavor, and their values were carefully guarded by a watchful overseer. When radical politics became dinner table conversation and the FBI took an interest in fellows' extra-artistic activities, however, the stage was set for a classic Cold War drama.

In 1699, Cotton Mather referred to the ten years following King Philip's War as the decade of sorrows. Although Indian hostility had been suppressed in southern New England, Native Americans to the north and east, given the relatively fewer number of colonists in those parts, were able to exert their influence. They chose to do so, in large part, through diplomatic means. But when English officials disregarded the political principles they themselves touted, diplomacy was at an impasse.

In 1775 and through the winter of 1776, colonists in Massachusetts faced a different kind of impasse. Hostilities had erupted in Concord and Lexington, and as the British retreated to Boston, the colonists pursued and set up camps surrounding the town. During the long blockade that followed, British and American officers struggled to feed their troops and protect them against the elements. In these early months of the American Revolution, then, the cow in the shed, the wheat in the field, and the wood in the lot—and the policies governing

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how they should be distributed—might well have tipped the balance of the nascent conflict.

Nathaniel Hawthorne faced his own, personal impasse in the early years of the Civil War. In what would also be the waning years of his life, the author struggled mightily against writer's block as he sought to practice his signature version of his art, romance, while becoming increasingly alienated from a literary culture that embraced a rhetoric of war that refused to entertain nuance or the value of compromise. But romance, Hawthorne's final manuscripts reveal, was also proving to be a casualty of war.

The Cold War, King William's War, the American Revolution, and the Civil War—events now distant but also strangely immediate. Government spying; disregarding the rights of the less powerful; disrupting the environment; manipulating the media for partisan gain: these issues demand repeated investigation and our ongoing vigilance.

—LINDA SMITH RHODES