

Module: Literary Texts

Level : 2nd year

Teacher: Dr. Nassima Amirouche

Lecture 1: continuation

John Winthrop (1588-1649) was an English Puritan lawyer, leading figure in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and its first governor. He played a crucial role in shaping the early history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the development of New England.

Winthrop was born into a wealthy landowning family in Suffolk, England. He received a classical education and studied law at Trinity College, Cambridge. He later became involved in the Puritan movement and was drawn to the idea of establishing a Puritan society free from the religious persecution they faced in England.

In 1629, Winthrop was instrumental in organizing the Massachusetts Bay Company, a joint-stock company that aimed to establish a Puritan settlement in New England. He was elected as the company's governor and led a group of Puritan settlers to the New World in 1630 aboard the ship *Arbella*.

As governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Winthrop played a central role in shaping its early policies and governance. He emphasized the importance of community and cooperation, and his leadership helped to establish the colony as a successful and prosperous settlement.

Winthrop is perhaps best known for his sermon "A Modell of Christian Charity", delivered aboard the *Arbella*, in which he articulated the vision of the colony as a "city upon a hill," a shining example of Christian virtue and community living. This vision has had a lasting impact on American identity and has been invoked by subsequent generations of leaders to express the idea of American exceptionalism.

The phrase "city on a hill" became woven into the canon of American founding myths and has been used in speeches by subsequent generations of U.S. political figures, including Presidents Kennedy, Reagan, and Obama. However, since the phrase's origin is biblical, it also has appeared in a variety of other religious and political arenas. The image of a model Christian community, connected in common purpose and illuminated by God's light, functioned as a potent symbol of the settlement even if differences and disagreements later emerged. One of the main reasons Winthrop is important is because of how he merged political and religious authority in the colony.

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Excerpt from the Sermon "A Modell of Christian Charity"

"for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a byword through the world, wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of god and all professours for Gods sake; wee shall shame the faces of many of gods worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into Cursse upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whether wee are going"