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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

erasing, hildegard, correction, biosphere, laughter, whales, build, transformers, julius caesar, apparent, war, eraser, fascinating, moby dick, autobots, fact, recognizing, overdoing, plays, realized

SPEAKERS

Nathan Dowell

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Nathan Dowell 00:03

Moby Dick is perhaps the best known novel about... whales (Laughter)
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Nathan Dowell 00:07

Uh people, write that down as Whales with an exclamation point. (Laughter)
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Nathan Dowell 00:15

But what's fascinating about Moby Dick is how much it's not just a story. Almost three fourths of it is basically textbook about whales, including useful facts, like the type of whales, ways to hunt whales. And the fact that whales, contrary to popular belief, are fish.
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Nathan Dowell 00:33

That part of the novel didn't age very well. (Laughter)
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Nathan Dowell 00:38

However, what's fascinating about Moby Dick is that yes, it wasn't very correct. But it was built within a very specific time period, Nantucket and all of the regions around it had been developed solely for the hunting and capture of whales. And so yeah, the

educational parts of the book didn't age well, but it's by adapting past these errors that the book is well known, something it wasn't really intended for, the story, became the dominating facet. And the way in which this book evolved, even past some of its apparent mistakes is apparent in today's quotation by Lawrence J. Peter "To err is human, but when the eraser is gone before the pencil, you are overdoing it." Now, Peter is drawing attention to the fact that we shouldn't only focus on erasing our mistakes. And we can agree today, not by doing away with the importance of correction, but by recognizing you can correct without erasing, which we can explore through two points of analysis. First, correction is often needed. But second, we need to devise new approaches to build upon the past.

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Nathan Dowell 01:45

First correction is often needed. It'd be easy to look at this location and say we shouldn't erase all the time, but sometimes you need an eraser. The way in which we can see that correction can be necessary can be seen through Transformers and Julius Caesar. Transformers, specifically the recent decade long run of IDW Transformers comics. Now as you all know, Transformers has a very complex premise (Laughter)

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Nathan Dowell 02:13

Giant transforming robots fight each other to the death. (Laughter)

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Nathan Dowell 02:18

But what these comics did that are fascinating is halfway through they ended the war between the Autobots and Decepticons, which is fascinating because they had to, there is nowhere else to go. You can't dig too deep into these characters as long as they're at war, especially because as the audience we're solely on one side, if you read transformers, you're an Autobot. That's how it throws you in. But if the war ends, they recognize that correction gives them all kinds of new directions, characters can become things the reader can realize things they never could, if the war still happened, but in a more historical sense this is also seen through Julius Caesar. Now Julius Caesar is probably best known for being a dictator who got stabbed. (Laughter)

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Nathan Dowell 03:03

But what's fascinating about Julius Caesar is, he was a course correction for the past few dictators because for all of his terribleness Julius Caesar didn't kill his enemies if he didn't have to, which for that time was humongous. He realized as long as leaders just killed the people they overcame, the cycle would never end. Now, it didn't end with him. But it

ended pretty soon after, because he realized like the Transformers, that correction is necessary.

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Nathan Dowell 03:31

Now, Autobots, roll out. (Laughter)

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Nathan Dowell 03:37

Because even though correction is necessary, what we actually need to take from today's quotation is that correction isn't always erasing. By finding new approaches to correct we can build upon what we've already written and honor the past rather than erase it, which is apparent through Hildegard and Biosphere Two. First Hildegard of Bingen is a well known phenomenon from the Early Medieval period, the problem is a lot of scholars and trying to make Hildegard important in a way she wasn't necessarily so showing that one of her plays, the *Ordo Virtutum* was actually an ancestor of the later morality plays. It's understandable they want to make Hildegard important but by doing this in this way, they miss why she was actually important.

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Nathan Dowell 04:21

Her play isn't like later plays because she had her own motivations and monastic surroundings. Recognizing this doesn't do away with the importance of Hildegard. It builds upon it. A course correction, but not an eraser. This is also apparent by recent outbreak what we should do with what was previously viewed as a failed experiment, Biosphere Two. If you haven't been to Biosphere Two, it's bizarre. Biosphere Two was an attempt to build an entire sustainable community with around a dozen humans living in it with a rain forest a Desert and a coral reef to show how we can save Biosphere One, it's classroom. (Laughter)

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Nathan Dowell 05:03

Actually it's the Earth. But even though Biosphere Two collapsed within a few years, there's still data we can use writing this off as a failure misses the fact that we still need to understand the complex processes that we need to view in our own Earth, thus moving on and building upon what we had in the past. Whenever we return to today's quotation, by Lawrence J. Peter "To err is human, but when the eraser is gone before the pencil, you're overdoing it". We've agreed with the notion that we can correct without erasing because correction is needed. But we have new approaches to build upon the past. And so yeah, *Moby Dick* isn't great in terms of being factual, but we can build upon it without

entirely erasing. What it achieved.