



Speaker: A philosophy that informs post-modernism is Deconstruction, which rejects universals. A rose is a rose is a rose. A rose is not a symbol of love or even beauty. It is a rose or whatever interpretation the viewer wants of that rose. Postmodernists accept the principle that nothing an artist creates is truly original. Everything they do is based on representations and symbols that the artist has seen before.

Therefore, postmodernists want us to still look at the meaning of the symbol and recognize that it may not always have the same message, particularly if it is presented in a different context. Therefore, when we look at something like a rose, examine our judgments about that rose, and then deconstruct how we have constructed meaning for that rose, it's a philosophical stripping away of the previous notions of truth or reality, and really examining the subject in many possible lights to see if there are other possible truths or realities.

Here's another conceptual example. When I went to school, we were taught that the human body is primarily made of water. Now, that in itself gives you a very different view of your identity and who you are. If you think of yourself as just a big old bag of walking water, it's a little different. Now, quantum physics is saying that the largest component of our body is actually empty space.

We have more empty space at an atomic level than anything else in our bodies. Whoa. What if we think of ourselves as almost nothingness? Out of that nothingness, does it make almost anything possible? A notion like this is an example of how the arts are striving to take a topic like something really basic like what we're made of and deconstructing universals, and presenting subject matter in a perspective that causes the viewer to really stop and ponder.

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