Twitter Thread by Pankaj Saxena

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1. How Our Eyes Lie to Us

Cognitive Psychologists in the past two decades have been experimenting on narrative fallacy. They say that our minds create stories or narratives which do not portray reality as it is, but as our minds perceive them.



2. Daniel Kahneman, Dan Ariely, Daniel Gilbert etc. have published ground breaking works where they discuss the narrative fallacy. They tell us how our mind fools us in our behavior and we may think we are in control of our behaviors but our mind has different designs for us.

3. Daniel Gilbert in ‘Stumbling Upon Happiness’ tells us how our eyes betray us and we can’t even be sure of what we see, let alone what we think. Michael Gazzaniga tells us that how our instincts are not in our control and it seems we act according to a pre-written script.

4. These are very serious subjects and only future will tell us what is going to happen in these disciplines. But the bottomline of all this research is that: our mind and our senses lie to us and we cannot be sure of what we think or what we even see.

5. That our senses create a narrative fallacy is something that has been alluded to in many of our spiritual texts. Modern West is just rediscovering it through tests and experiments. But there is an experiment in our daily lives that gives us a clue of what narrative fallacy is.

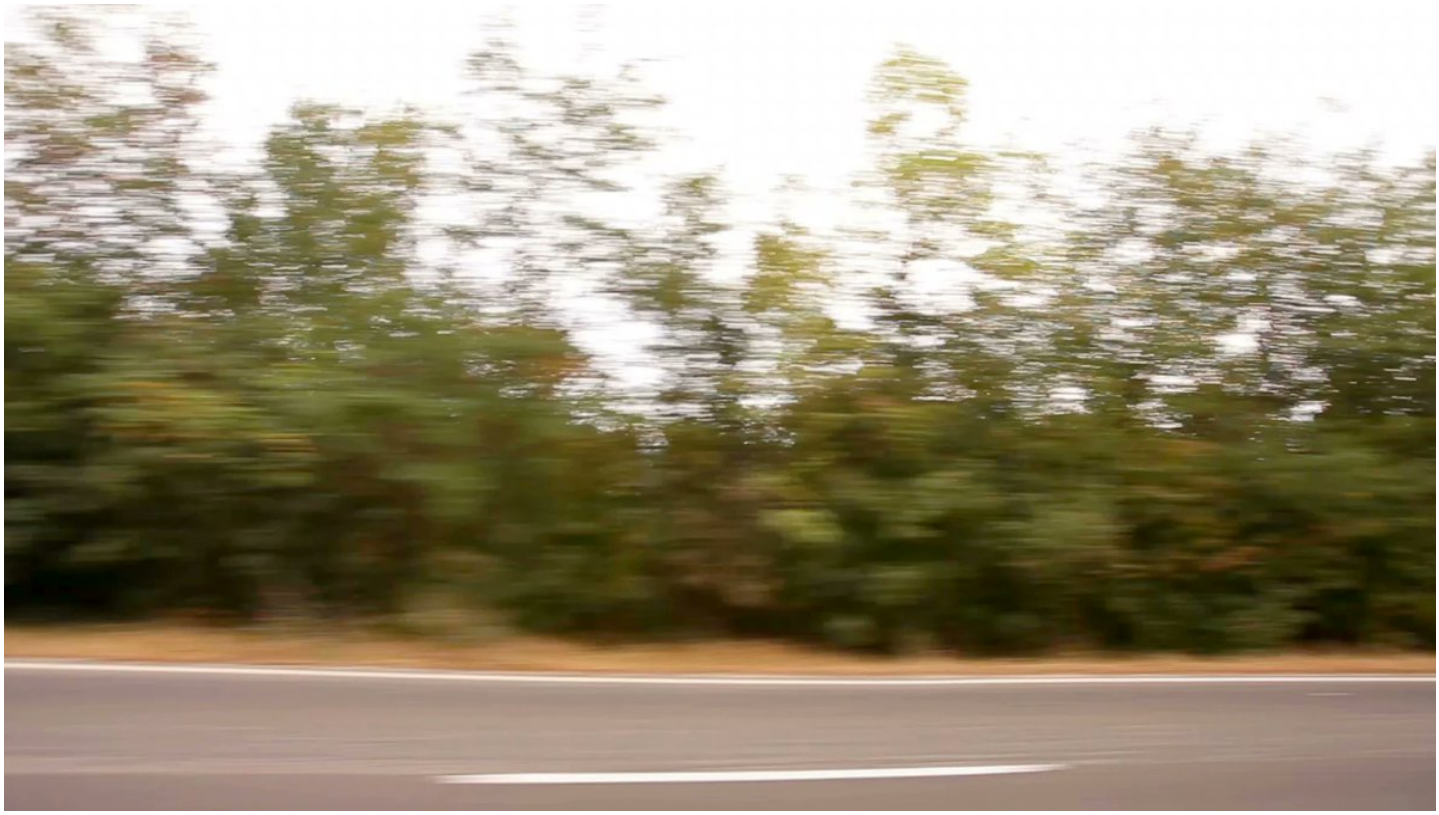
6. Anyone who has ever been on a mountain road is familiar with this routine. Sitting in a vehicle we are used to see steep mountainside with trees and roots hanging on one side and the steep sloping valley on the other. The valley offers a breathtaking view with great vistas.



7. We cannot take our eyes off the valley side and often we take out our cameras or mobiles to click a picture of the beautiful scene that we are constantly witnessing.



8. However, as soon as we click a picture it often comes off as nothing more than a blurry green with just a glimpse of what lies beyond. It is a rude shock and no matter how many times we try they come a blurry green.



9. Actually our view is constantly occluded by the trees which are on the mountainside slope. Their canopies constantly come in between our vision and the beautiful scene that lies beyond.



10. However, our mind edits what we are seeing and from the partial picture that it is constantly receiving it combines the thousands of frames and creates a narrative fallacy of a beautiful scene constantly in our sight.

11. This neat mental trick is beyond a machine, that is the camera and hence it captures what we actually see instead of what our mind tells us that we saw.

It is a great example of narrative fallacy that our minds create.

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