

# The Narrative Matrix Hides the Truth About the World, and About Ourselves

## [The Narrative Matrix Hides the Truth About the World, and About Ourselves](#)

by [Caitlin Johnstone](#)

September 21, 2022

I talk about narrative all the time partly because narrative control is the source and foundation of the power of the US-centralized empire. The ability to control the way people think, act and vote with [mass-scale psychological manipulation](#) allows our rulers to dominate us more pervasively than we could ever be dominated by brute totalitarian force, which is why so much energy goes into keeping the people from controlling their own narratives. That's all the current mainstream [panic about "disinformation"](#) is, for example. If narrative control were fully decentralized, our rulers couldn't rule.

But I also focus on narrative because its consequences are so much more far-reaching than that.

The fascinating thing about paying attention to the way narrative differs from reality is that it doesn't just change your understanding of politics and power throughout the world: you start to notice that your whole life is dominated by narratives – not just about the world, but about you.

You start out getting curious if the narratives you've been fed about your country, your government, and global power dynamics are really true, and if you're sincere you start

taking that curiosity to questions about narratives you've come to believe about your own life. Narratives about what's important, about what's real, about what's true, about what's helpful. Narratives about how you are, narratives about *who* you are. Narratives that were put in your head by teachers, preachers, friends and family, and narratives you made up yourself long ago and kept believing.

You start getting curious about the way your own life has been shaped by believed narrative, and you start to discover a whole reality underneath the matrix of stories which buzzes around in your consciousness. A reality that could not possibly be more different from your stories about it.

You start to discover that your entire framework for perceiving the world is based on believed stories which are not ultimately true and are generally very unhelpful for moving through life in a harmonious way. Stories about others. Stories about life. And stories about yourself.

That last one is the real kicker. Because it turns out that underneath the narrative matrix, what you are is more different from your mental stories about what you are than you could possibly imagine. And these misperceptions of identity shape your entire experience of reality. You start to see that this finite, separate "me" character your entire mental world has revolved around your whole life has no more reality to it than a fictional character in a storybook. After that illusion becomes clarified, life is no longer dominated by narrative.

To be clear, narrative in and of itself is not the problem; narrative in and of itself is a useful tool. "I went to the store" is a narrative. "Those berries are poisonous" is a narrative. "One should look both ways before crossing the street" is a narrative. The problem isn't narrative, the problem is that it dominates our experience instead of serving as a tool. The goal isn't to eliminate narrative but to put it in its proper place as a useful tool rather than the writer,

director and star of the entire show of life. The problem isn't narrative but *believed* narrative, in the same way watching a horror movie causes no problems for you if you remain clear that it's just a movie.

Look closer and you see through the stories about your nation, your government and your world. Look closer still and you see through your believed stories about life which lead you to think the way you think and act the way you act. Look even closer and you see through the stories about your actual fundamental nature.

The reason propaganda works is because human experience is so thoroughly dominated by mental stories that if you can control the dominant narratives, you can control humanity. The quest is not just to refute propaganda, but to cease having an experience that is dominated by narrative.

And of course all this is a narrative too. But it points to something real which can be clearly perceived in your own experience without narrative, in the same way you can see your hand in front of your face without having to tell any stories about it.

[Connect with Caitlin Johnstone](#)

*cover image credit: [geralt](#)*