

Ben Okri. A Way of Being Fantastic

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DOI: 10.26379/1681

Abstract

In 1997 the Nigerian author Ben Okri published a small collection of nonfiction pieces called *A Way of Being Free*, whose value for the student of storytelling and fantastic literature appears to be inversely proportional to its size. In this sort of poetic claim for the primacy of storytelling (seen as fantastic by definition) in the Internet era, three sections are devoted to “the joys of storytelling”. The third section, which is composed of 101 aphorisms and fragments, is particularly interesting for the purposes of this essay. Okri’s aphorisms are commented in the light of Walter Benjamin’s famous essay on the storyteller and confronted with Salman Rushdie’s recurring pronouncements on the “unreality of realism”, from the interviews he gave in the early Eighties of the last century, on the wake of the success of *Midnight’s Children*, to his latest collection of essays, *Languages of Truth* (2021).