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BOOK REVIEW #6 John Berger & Selçuk Demirel What Time Is It?

BOOK REVIEW #6 – John Berger & Selçuk Demirel, What Time Is It? (Notting Hill Editions)

13 FEBRUARY 2020 [BOOK REVIEWS](#), [LITERATURE](#), [VISUAL ARTS](#) MARC LOUIS-BOYARD

The story behind the production of *What Time Is It?* is essentially meta. *What Time Is It?* is the result of a continuous battle against time for the sake of literary production. For the sake of material too precious to be lost or put on hold.

John Berger (1928 – 2017) hardly needs any introduction. The award-winning author of the renowned *About Looking and Ways of Seeing* would be immensely proud of this finished opus, magnified by Italian translator Maria Nadotti's introduction.

Notting Hill Editions released this book two years after Berger's passing. This publication is also proving once again Notting Hill Edition's legendary sense of tradition in modernity, et vice versa. *What Time Is It?* is a highly valuable handbook, made for the pleasure of the senses and the joy of knowledge.

John Berger & Selçuk Demirel, What Time Is It?: our review.

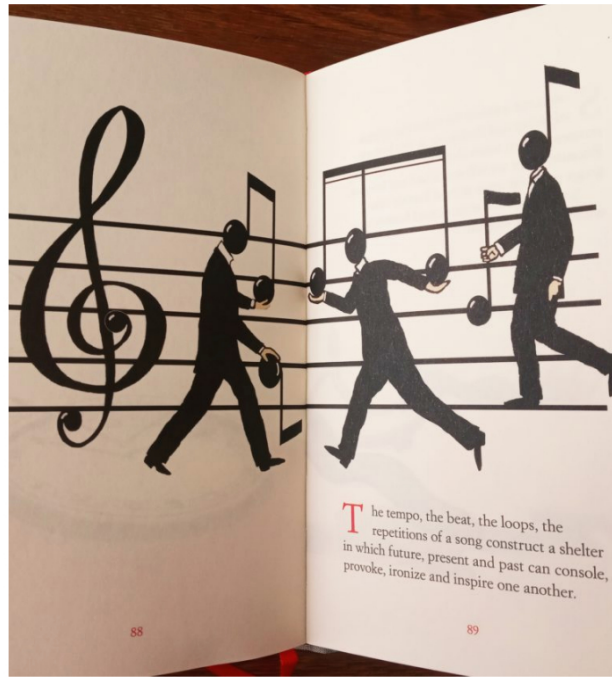
Soothing enlightenment

What Time Is It? accomplishes the daydreamer's wish of creating a safety nest for intellectual reflection and personal development. To our knowledge, only Jennah Barry and Aniole Nessa Frances succeeded that mission in terms of cultural production recently. The formula? Short sentences. Unpretentious and wise propositions. Soft but deep views on the joys and tragedies of being human. Generous consolation and advice on how to position ourselves in this fast-paced world, too.

John Berger's words and Selçuk Demirel's illustrations do not knock each other. They echo. They prolong the debate in the reader's mind. They let the (relative) weight of Berger's sincere assertions fly away slowly. *What Time Is It?* has its own space and time.

This diocet is a comprehensive nonposition, where the notion of time is broken down, stretched, overturned.

This agreeable and playful method reminded us of [Descartes](#) and [St Augustine's](#) works on this subject, but this time, *imperatoria brevis* included.



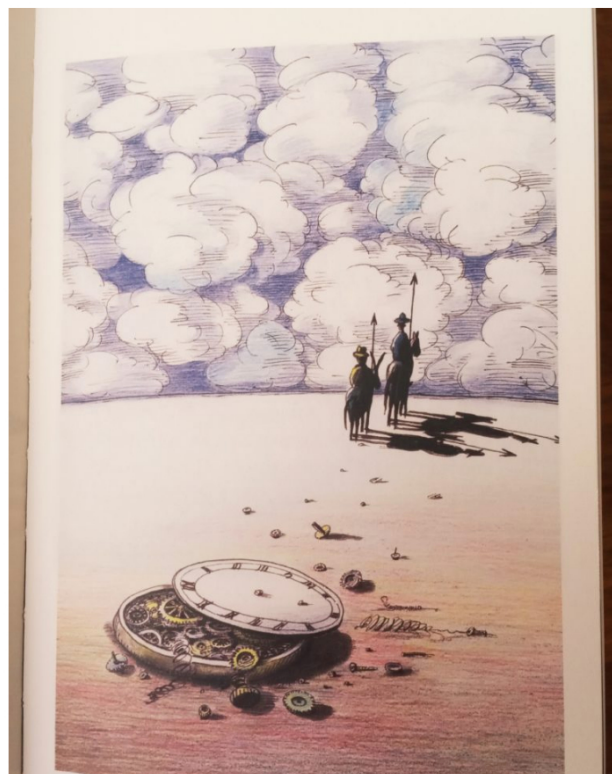
Explain me like I'm five

If libraries are *I-don't-know* places according to Jerry Seinfeld, *What Time Is It?* is a please-teach-me room full of soft pillows. Some concepts might appear a bit farfetched or obscure for some, but never should the reader feel judgement on himself. Smooth pedagogy is John Berger's most noble offering to the curious and patient sensibilities.

This book offers something unique and quite mainstream at the same time. Its content has the power to captivate the ingenuous and to humble the know-it-all. This book makes you feel great and small at the same time. A spatial experience in the immense forest of the mind, and of mankind.

The general ideas and thought process are made accessible without ever watering down the subject to its detriment.

What Time Is It? is an emotional and practical invitation to peace and understanding. Understanding of the world, and peace within ourselves.



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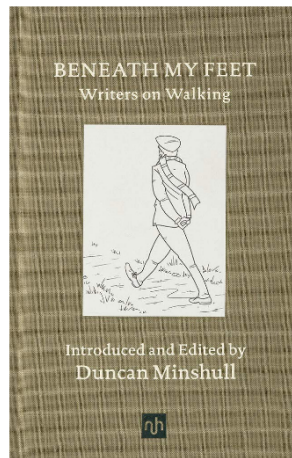
Where to begin w

Why I Write

“ Modern thought has transferred the spectral character of Death to the notion of time itself. Time has become Death triumphant over all.

– John Berger

A complementary Notting Hill Editions book we truly enjoyed and recommend:



Duncan Minshull, Beneath My Feet, Writers on Walking.

Notting Hill Editions. Available.

Walking and writing have always gone together. Think of the poets who walk out a rhythm for their lines and the novelists who put their characters on a path. But the best insights, the deepest and most joyous examinations of this simple activity are to be found in non-fiction – in essays, travelogues and memoir. Beneath My Feet: Writers On Walking rounds up the most memorable walker-writers from the 1700's to the modern day, from country hikers to urban strollers, from the rationalists to the truly outlandish.

– [BUY](#).

John Berger & Selçuk Demirel, What Time Is It?

Notting Hill Editions. Available.

Visionary thinker John Berger and Turkish artist Selçuk Demirel came together for the last time to create this precious little volume about time.

What Time Is It? is a playful meditation on the illusory nature of time. Our perception of time assumes a uniform and ceaseless passing of hours, but Berger suggests that time is turbulent. It expands and contracts according to the intensity of the lived moment. In this beautiful essay in pictures, Berger posits the idea that by experiencing the extraordinary, we can defy time itself.

