central concern is to challenge ‘the disguised nonsense in policy and practice’ (p. 3), highlighting the persistent failure to address systems and practices that poorly serve the needs of a significant group of young people, leaving them educationally, economically and socially excluded. Specific concerns include the academic-vocational divide, identified as a false binary, and the failure to provide high-quality and impartial advice and guidance to support progression. Pring’s stance is then both inclusive and holistic, and he argues for the importance of placing the learner at the centre and understanding them in relation to both society and community. Although written from a strongly critical position, the book is by no means negative, however. There are, for instance, lists of solutions to the problems identified in a number of the chapters as well as a concluding chapter in which Pring briefly summarises what he considers to be the ways forward.

Pring is an advocate for greater reflexivity at all levels. While a reader might not agree with every aspect of his analysis, it cannot but be good for the education of all if educators and policy-makers are asked to question the underpinning values and aims of education. Indeed, Pring is quite clear that he wants to make people who think they have the right answers ‘uncomfortable’ (p. 48) and to challenge them to see that although people use the same words, they may have very different understandings of their meanings. Pring’s fundamental position is that everyone involved in education should understand its power and potential as well as its current limitations. After all:

Is not education the empowerment of all young people to manage their lives more intelligently, to find fulfilment and a sense of dignity in those lives, and to be able and disposed to make a valuable contribution to the wider community? (p. 198)

Despite the specific focus on secondary education in the title – the phase covering young people from ages 11 to 18 – much of the book is relevant to wider educational policy and practice.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.816045

Between educationalization and appropriation: selected writings on the history of modern educational systems. By Marc Depaepe. Pp. 496. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 2012. £49.50 (pbk). ISBN 978-9-098-67917-8.

Over the past generation, the history of education has become increasingly internationalised as a field of study, with an infrastructure of conferences, societies and journals that seeks to address international as well as national issues. Marc Depaepe of the University of Leuven, Belgium, has been one of the leaders in this overall development, especially through his work on behalf of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education and the journal Paedagogica Historica. This set of essays serves to demonstrate the extent of Depaepe’s
contribution in terms of historical scholarship in both its national and international dimensions.

The collection consists of 23 papers previously published as articles or chapters, 10 of them in collaboration with other authors, and all in English. The earliest of them dates from 1997, although his publications in the field stretch back considerably further than this. Thirteen of the papers have been published in the last five years. Although Depaepe has contributed several papers to British-based journals such as *History of Education*, none of these are included here. As a compendium of Depaepe’s writings in the field, then, this volume is highly selective. At times, too, it is rather repetitive, because the papers overlap in a number of cases, and there is only a short introduction, and no index, to bind the whole together. The styles of the different pieces vary widely depending on their original published formats. The organisation of the work into five distinct sections does help to provide a measure of coherence, as does the general conceptualisation of ‘educationalization’ and ‘appropriation’.

Several of the papers in the collection concentrate on aspects of the history of education specifically in Belgium. The first and third sections, in particular, explore a range of issues based principally on the Belgian case, such as the rise of schools in modern society, the youth movement in the interwar period, the feminisation of the teaching profession in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, open-air schools, the impact of evolutionism, the New Education, modern school architecture, pedagogic progressivism, educational research, and educational science. These studies provide fascinating insights into the historical development of education in Belgium in its broader social context, and international implications and themes are always evident. A good example of these characteristics is the case study in Chapter Four of the open-air school of Diesterweg, considered as the ‘sacralization of childhood in a secularized world’, and effectively grounded in a discussion of historical images of childhood since the work of Philippe Aries in the early 1960s.

Much of the collection seeks to develop broad international issues in depth. The essays in Part 2 all focus on the theme of educationalisation, which Depaepe defines as the modernisation of society through education. He argues that this has had both positive and negative effects over the longer term, and that the process has been a key means of providing both emancipation and control. This involves paradoxes such as ‘the pastoral compulsion of the educator, who wants to concretise his or her intentions on the one hand, and the liberating experience of the learning, knowledge-acquiring individual on the other’ (p. 138). These paradoxes become a little elusive in Chapter Six, which provides a broad-ranging survey of educational historiography. In Chapter Seven, the theme of educationalisation is addressed in a somewhat more direct fashion to address ‘the overall orientation or trend toward thinking about education as the focal point for addressing or solving larger human problems’ (p. 167).

Another broad issue that is tackled in the volume is colonisation or, as Depaepe prefers to describe it, appropriation – a process in which imposition of culture
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and acquisition of learning have never been far apart. Several essays focus on the Belgian Congo, a specialist area of Depaepe’s research that again yields some very interesting and significant treatments. Chapter Nine discusses Belgian images of the psycho-pedagogical potential of the Congolese, and the importance of these both in Belgium and in the Congo. In Chapter Ten, Depaepe provides insights into Belgian educational policy in the Congo which he sees as ‘indispensable for a proper interpretation of the post-colonial impasse in which education in Congo now finds itself’ (p. 225), although he is unwilling to commit himself, here as elsewhere, to drawing clear lessons from this history. Chapter Eleven is concerned with the collapse of the colonial educational structures in Zaire from 1960 until 1995, a study that deserves to be updated. He then pursues in Chapter Eleven ideas for a planned research project on the intercultural hybridity of the Congolese elite by means of secondary education.

General issues of historiography, interpretation and method are referred to throughout, but these are the central concern of the final chapters of the volume that seek to elaborate in more detail the nature of a demythologised new cultural history of education. It takes some searching to actually pin down this idea in the collection, and perhaps Chapter Six is most helpful in this respect, with reference being made here to Foucault and postmodernism, and the priority given to understanding how ‘language and culture give intentionality to our deeds through their own logic’ (p. 143). There is a dogmatic streak in some of Depaepe’s work that is evident especially in the recent piece reprinted here entitled ‘The Ten Commandments of Good Practices in History of Education Research’. Yet, at his best, Depaepe is not rigid in his approach to history, and indeed he is able to argue that: ‘We have need of intermediary theories and concepts that, without abandoning interpretational schema such as social control, domination, and disciplining, are fine-meshed and narrative enough to permit a contextualised history of education without reductionism’ (p. 445). It is a characteristic of many of the chapters in the collection that he is willing to try on different interpretations for size. If some of them do not quite fit then we can appreciate, as we should, the depth and range of erudition that underpins Marc Depaepe’s historical scholarship and his undoubted contribution to the international field.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2013.816048

International education policy in Japan in an age of globalisation and risk. By Robert W. Aspinall. Pp. 207. Leiden: Global Oriental. 2013. €86 (hbk). ISBN 978-9-004-23528-1.

Ever since the opening of feudal Japan to the outside world in the 1850s, successive Japanese governments have viewed the learning of foreign languages as being closely tied to the nation’s international fortunes. During the Meiji era, knowledge of English and Dutch in particular gave Japan’s elites access to the