Occupation of Japan and which are lacking in Wood’s analysis. The very fact that Australia had representation in so many parts of the Occupation was a watershed in Australian diplomatic and military history in and of itself.

Wood explores the role of communism in the postwar world and its impact on Japan, but does not really go far enough to explore how this may have impeded Australia’s diplomatic representation in Japan. He also seems to overlook H.V. Evatt’s efforts to avoid Australia entering sides in the bipolar world, instead attempting to forge a ‘third way’ with the other labour governments in power in Britain and New Zealand. This makes some of Wood’s claims that the Australian government was simply falling into line with US policy a little unfair and incomplete. Overall, Wood’s book *The Forgotten Force* is a fine and welcome contribution to the emerging scholarly literature and research on Australia’s contribution to the Allied Occupation of Japan. Yet there remains plenty of work to be done on this complex and important period of Australia’s military, diplomatic and political history.

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The *Last Colonies* is an encyclopaedic book which provides quite a comprehensive amount of detail about the few relics of empire left, ‘once strategically important, now just dots in the oceans of the globe,’ as *The Independent* described them. But it is more than just a compendium of information. It poses the question – of vital interest now, in light of events in East Timor – of the linkage between a state’s size and its potential viability as an independent entity, and leaves us with the answer that no, size doesn’t matter.

The accepted thesis regarding the continuing existence of colonies (‘overseas territories’, as the authors prefer to define them) would have it that those few that remain are either too small, too remote, too unpopulated, or too economically barren to be able to graduate to nationhood. The effect of *The Last Colonies* is to seriously question this assumption. The colonies (territories) under consideration in this book attest to the variety of circumstances that have determined their continuing dependent status. So, for example, the book includes Bermuda, with an average per capita income higher than its metropolitan state, which receives no aid at all, and to which nearly half of the companies listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange had moved by 1996; but where a referendum in 1995 showed 74 per cent in favour of continuing dependency
on Britain. At the other end of the scale, it includes Pitcairn Island, whose fifty inhabitants exist on British budgetary handouts and the sale of postage stamps, and who – understandably – have persistently resisted British attempts to, as the authors put it, ‘get off the hook’. Puerto Rico presents another example: a 1993 referendum saw 48 per cent favour retention of its existing status, 46 per cent prefer incorporation into the US as a state, and only 4 per cent voted for independence. This in a territory where tourism alone brings in hundreds of millions of dollars annually ($1670 million in 1993/94, well ahead of any other Caribbean territory), with a population of three and a half million, and whose close proximity to the United States would seem to offer a comparatively rosy post-NAFTA economic future. I could go on. The book is bursting with examples which prove that there is very little that these territories have in common with one another, apart from some kind of continuing dependence on their respective metropolitan states. Size, economic strength and location all vary, to the confusion of any political scientist seeking to trace a common thread linking these features to national status.

The bulk of The Last Colonies is an exhaustive examination of the overseas territories of the last colonial powers: the United Kingdom, France, the United States, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand. Included in its vista are territories as far apart as Tristan Da Cunha (UK), St-Pierre et-Miquelon (France), Guam (the USA), Greenland (Denmark), Christmas Island (Australia), Aruba (the Netherlands), Ceuta (Spain), and Niue (New Zealand). Left out are those whose status remains in dispute – Hawai’i, Tibet, East Timor – as well as those which are recognised as sovereign, to the extent that the United Nations has extended membership to them. The Federated States of Micronesia, despite having association with the USA, are consequently left out, while the Cook Islands, with similar association to New Zealand, are included. One chapter examines the ways in which territorial disputes are mediated: ranging from the peaceful (the retrocession of Macao to China) to the violent (the 1982 Falklands War between the UK and Argentina). The effects of some territories having strategic importance are explored: the United States’ network of bases; the French in Polynesia; even the Falklands, where British soldiers outnumbered the civil population for five years following the war. The economies, constitutional arrangements, languages spoken, types of association with the metropole, and various ways that the territories’ inhabitants have negotiated their dependent status are all included. The book even provides a listing of each territory with succinct and to-the-point profiles, making this a useful aid for teaching in this interesting sub-discipline of nationalism, decolonisation, and international relations.

The diversity of living arrangements of the last colonies is proof that there are few characteristics common to territories. Perhaps the most telling, in this era of self-determination, is that by and large the people of the colonies themselves have opted
for continuation of their dependent status. Even in those colonies where resistance to
the metropolitan state is greatest – New Caledonia being one – there remains majority
support for the status quo, with correspondingly less enthusiasm for no-strings
independence. There is a blurring of the line between dependence and independence,
and it may be that the last colonies have a more advantageous position than many a
decolonised nation state.

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Playing the Man: New Approaches to Masculinity, edited by Katherine Biber,
Tom Sear and Dave Trudinger, Pluto Press Australia Limited, Annandale, 199. Pp. vii
+ 249. $24.95 paper.

Popular understandings of masculinity in Australia have been under the shadow of
Russell Ward’s seminal Australian Legend for too long. The image of the man in the
bush: virile and engaged in hard manual work under the hot sun, is certainly a far cry
from the reality of masculinity in the suburbia that is modern Australia. Playing the Man
goes some way toward remedying this. It is edited by three PhD candidates who
‘thought that holding conferences was somehow commensurate with their ambition to
complete their theses’ and hence ended up engaged in ‘procrastination on the grandest
scale’ (p. 1). The collection of papers interrogates cultural manifestations of masculinity
and also serves as a showcase of postgraduate work. It tackles the vexed subject of
masculinity through topics as wide as bushwalking, Buddhism, masturbation, work,
sexuality, and cinema.

Katherine Biber’s statement in her essay on Australian cinema haunted me as I
read the collection:

We know that our heroes, having been fatally defeated by racism, or
corruption, or a simple misunderstanding are better off dead; in death
they are safe from the emasculating corporeal disappointments of
ageing, and from damaging the prototype of the composite national
man (p. 28).

The spectre of the destructive characteristics of the masculine hero – so evident in
male violence against others and themselves – set the tone for my approach to the
collection. Biber seeks to understand male hysteria and the constant performance that
masculinity entails: ‘We have killed these troublesome men to validate their claims to
heroism, but we have not eradicated the shadow of hysteria that looms between men