restrictions which the uniform sought to impose were often subverted through adaptations carried out by many wearers, the leadership of the women’s agricultural movement intended to transform agricultural labour from a peasant occupation to one for respectable women (42). As one WLAA veteran remarked ‘Women of intelligence will not degenerate ... through being farm labourers. Rather they will raise labor to their own level, will give it dignity’ (56). Militaristic language coupled with the Protestant work ethic transformed ‘Ladies of leisure’ into ‘women of action’ for ‘Weeds, like U-boats, must be exterminated’ (13). Once again the class dimension of such pronouncements cannot be overlooked.

Another aspect of women’s perceived behaviour which received particular attention from the authorities was the realm of consumption. Women were rendered as the primary consumers in the emerging modern mass market. As women moved into the realm of wartime production, those who remained in the home were told to practise ‘food conservation’ (68). Such women were portrayed as wasteful spendthrifts who endangered the war effort and required re-education (71), in contrast to women war workers who ‘desire[d] to frequent the farm instead of the beauty shop’ (120).

Cultivating Victory highlights the transatlantic, Anglophone and internationalist connections that helped to sustain and build the women’s agricultural contribution to the war effort in Britain and the US. Familial links such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton of the US and her daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch who held found the International Council of Women in 1888. Blatch went on to play a leading role in the formation of the British WLA (44-45). Such links also accounted for the spread of the WLA movement to the Dominions of the British Empire (127). However, the comparative approach of this study also highlights some key differences that were to contribute to some of the underlying tensions in British–US relations during the twentieth century. During the First World War, US dietary needs were increasingly met through home-grown produce (as well as foodstuffs imported from the US-controlled markets of Central and South America and the Caribbean). The US government promoted war gardens during the First World War so as not challenge the image of the self-reliant male agricultural worker.

Britain’s greater dependence on imports from the Empire which stood at around 50% of consumption in 1914, rising to 70% by the outbreak of the Second World War, meant the British government was far keener to introduce women directly into agricultural production. The WLA was revived three months before the start of the Second World War and women were required to formally register for wartime employment by 1941 (106). A notable feature of the Second World War was the higher proportion of working class women who enlisted, attracted by the relatively high wages on offer (112-3). The WLAA did not mobilise at the same pace as WLA, the US Department of Agriculture choosing instead to recruit foreign labour and campaign on the issue of waste in the domestic sphere, especially among middle-class women (115-16). This produced more embedded representations of women’s agricultural labour in the British war memory, whereas in the US images of female industrial labour predominated (10). However, as Gowdy-Wygant shows in this rich study, public acclaim was no substitute for equal wages, allowances and assistance following demonization (114-5).

For many feminists a certain war of representation is still on: the war of media and popular culture against feminism. Postfeminism, as a discourse and sensibility, is increasingly dominating popular culture, and is therefore a term often used by feminist cultural analysts today. Although far from homogeneous, postfeminism generally celebrates ‘femininity’, female (hetero)sexuality, the pursuit of pleasure and fulfillment and freedom of choice, promoting a neoliberal notion of female subjectivity in which the subject acts out her identity and empowerment through consumerism and free-market individualism, oblivious and indifferent to collective movements. Postfeminism is an uneasy compromise between an embrace of and a backlash against feminism, with major contradictory elements coexisting: gender equality and female power are given, yet sexual difference and conventional femininity are unquestioningly accepted, and feminism is depicted as a thing of the past, while its structural critique is undermined. Joel Gwyne and Nadine Muller’s collection of essays captures these contradictions in the representation of femininities and masculinities, as well as in the ambiguous engagement with second-wave feminism within a wide range of contemporary Hollywood film genres: chick flicks, chuck flicks, romantic comedies, teen rom-coms, action and crime films, teen horror, makeover films, gross-out comedies, sports films, as well as films that queer up categorizations, it seems that they all have something to say about the new gendered subjects and the legacy of feminism.

The essays are grouped in three sections. The essays of the first section, Postfeminist Femininities, explore the development of new female subjectivities in Hollywood cinema. They contextualize the female cosmopolitan subject within a culture of consumer tourism and neo-feminism, uncover the extraor-dinary marriage between the queer-embrace-of-insecurity of lesbianism and postfeminist culture’s “insistence of fixity” (40), interrogate the empowering potential and the limitations of performing teen female sexuality and of the make-over paradigm, and examine older women’s representations in the context of postfeminist ageism. With their different points of focus, all essays foreground the afore-mentioned postfeminist contradictions. The second section, Postfeminist Masculinities, investigates male subjectivities developed after second-wave feminism’s attack on traditional masculinity. Whether it is a domestic superhero dad, a Male Singleto, a New Hero/object of the chick flick heroine’s desire, or a man-child who inhabits a gender-segregated mancave, according to the overall thesis of this section, the postfeminist man only superficially accounts for feminism while he retains old-fashioned male privilege,
“reify[ing] new hegemonic masculinities” (113) and promoting conservative gender politics. The essays in the third section, Postfeminism and Genre, provide an overview of the relationship of a number of film genres with feminism. Alexia L. Bower’s essay on romantic comedy uncovers contemporary rom-com’s increasingly intensified war on feminism. Martin Fradley’s essay on teen horror explores the genre’s radical potential found in the “sense of horror at the absence of social and political change vis-à-vis gender relations” (p. 219). Helen Warner builds on genre theories to show how the critical reception of Bridesmaids (Feig, 2011) as a feminist comedy depended on postfeminist and neo-liberal sensibilities undermining the film’s potential for feminist appropriation. Finally, Katharina Lindner’s essay on sports films analyzes the ways female-starring sports films appropriate feminist discourse to commodify female empowerment emphasizing individual agency and rendering systemic inequalities invisible.

In some of the essays, the emphasis on ambiguity and the reluctance to wholly declare popular cinema harmful to feminism – since there is some empowering potential in foregrounding female subjectivity – gives an optimistic touch to the volume. Feminism strikes back, ironically using some postfeminist weapons: it can appropriate postfeminist discourse to bring back a feminist agenda in popular culture. This positions contemporary feminist struggles, at least those within the realm of cultural studies, as necessarily post-postfeminist, meaning that in order to have any impact they must take into account the widespread impact of postfeminism. This approach, moreover, seems to depend on the assumption that female viewers are able to take what is useful for them out of a pile of junk — a politics not entirely distinguishable from a neoliberal notion of choice.

Postfeminism and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema is not the only book on gender and cinema that addresses the question of Hollywood’s representation of second-wave feminism, but it is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on postfeminism, and can be very useful for the cultural and film studies scholar, for the essays are well written examples of feminist cultural critique, successfully organized in themes, and they have a consistency in their approach. The most prevalent recurring question is whether the postfeminist element in the films can also be politically radical or it is only conservative? In answering this question, the book goes beyond acknowledging the postfeminism’s ambivalence: it contextualizes it and presents the reader with a nuanced analysis of the interaction between current political, social and economic climate and film genre conventions, as well as the institutions that foreclose or enable certain interpretations.

Vasso Belia
Utrecht University, The Netherlands
E-mail address: vbelia@hotmail.com

How are feminists to engage with the notion of citizenship? — particularly as ‘citizenship’ is a term that, as numerous feminist scholars have emphasised, is historically instituted upon the exclusion of women. Is it an inevitable component of our feminist vocabulary or should we aim to claim its obsolescence from the perspective of an increasingly globalised world? Beyond Citizenship? Feminism and the Transformation of Belonging demonstrates that theoretically and politically contestable notion of citizenship is nevertheless still a relevant precondition for feasible gendered lives. In that respect, it is undoubtedly worth of feminist attention.

Edited by Sasha Roseneil, Beyond Citizenship? Feminism and the Transformation of Belonging is a collection of papers introduced at the conference of the same name in 2010. The conference and related research are part of FEMCIT, Roseneil’s broader research project that investigates various relations between citizenship and gender from a transnational perspective. The book comprises a wide spectrum of disciplinary approaches, including history, rhetoric, philosophy, sociology, political studies, literature and art. Besides the underlying feminist perspective, some authors also address the topic using psychoanalysis as well as postcolonial studies and affect theory. Some of the topics covered by this thematically diverse book include the problem of representation, embodiment, disability, transgender sex workers, art activism, cosmopolitanism and inquiry into related concepts of community, collective, globalisation, boundaries, agency, activism, participation and recognition. Even though the papers compiled in this book are not formally or thematically subdivided, the first part of the book is both theoretically and geographically focused mostly on the context of Britain. The last four chapters introduce the transnational perspective more specifically, shifting the focus from the UK to Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pakistan, Austria and Latvia. Throughout the thematic and disciplinary diversity of the book runs the thread that invokes certain long-standing feminist concerns, such as the still highly gendered public/private division. Another key concern of the book is to theoretically accompany the alterations that the concept of citizenship is currently undergoing. The concept of citizenship is being extended in order to include phenomena that were traditionally not considered within its scope, such as sexuality and intimacy.

A concomitant of the concept of citizenship is the question of a feminist, historically often uneasy relation with the state. In that respect, several papers from this collection investigate the dangers of state-domestication of feminism and the role of governmental institutions in shaping feminist political goals. Another unifying element in these diverse papers is a constant tension between the advantages of the cooperation with the state institutions and the desire to resist the state incorporation. While Virginia Woolf’s Three Guineas and Mary Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Women as well as the figure of Antigone remain as permanent inspirations for feminist analyses of the concept of citizenship, the papers also engage with contemporary authors, most notably Judith Butler. Supported by Butler’s theory, analyses of the problematic related to the norms of citizenship run through several papers and once again illustrate the tension between complicity with the state and resistance. The central issue in the book is that every attempt to extend the concept of citizenship in order to increase its