African American women involved in this movement were keen to stress the ways in which black men have historically been oppressed by the same sexual economy that oppresses women, particularly black women – whose abuse at the hands of white men has been overlooked while black men could find themselves confronting a lynch mob if they so much as looked at white women. Many white feminists were, in the view of a number of black female activists including Angela Davis, colluding in this sexual economy with its origins in southern slavery by perpetuating "the myth that black men were the most frequent sexual offenders" (171).

Thus Valk's narrative, rather than seeing black feminism as heir to the legacy of a fabulated "white feminism," shows that black women were key shapers of feminism from the beginning, which, while harbouring racist currents, was never a "whites-only" affair. In this sense Valk's account takes on both the antagonisms and the points of agreement between different sections of the feminist coalition. The expectation one gets from reading the book's introduction – that the narrative to follow might be an all-too seamless story of feminist cooperation – is thus subverted.

What is missing from *Radical Sisters* is a sense of where it fits in with, and the extent to which it challenges, existing accounts of feminism. The book presents its readers with a wealth of description that is rarely contextualized by critical commentaries other than Valk's own. This lack of a comparative angle is mirrored in the book's focus on Washington, DC. While this location is significant for obvious reasons – among them its proximity to the federal government and the city's large African American population – Valk does not go far in underscoring this significance, neither does she offer many comparisons with other strands of the national or international movement to contextualize her choice.

That said, at a moment when the potential clash between gender and race politics has become headline news as a consequence of the presidential election, a thoughtful and nuanced account of the intersections between race, gender and class is a timely intervention.

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Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008, $27.95). Pp. xvi + 412. ISBN 978 1 58648 496 5.

US foreign policy between the end of the Cold War and the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 – 11/9 to 9/11 – is the subject of this excellent study. Derek Chollet has already published important work on Bosnian policy, and Goldgeier an authoritative study of NATO enlargement; both authors held government foreign-policy appointments in the 1990s. They compare the 1989–2001 period to the years between the two twentieth-century world wars, with the policy choices made at the end of one conflict affecting the later one. In terms of US policy priorities, the 1990s were characterized by continued American preoccupation with the affairs of Russia and, increasingly, with China; by the continuation of American "Vietnam syndrome" inhibitions on the use of military power; by a conscious and complex public

debate about the purposes of America-dominated alliance structures, and of US internationalism generally; and by the apparent replacement of geopolitics by geoeconomics as the driving force behind American internationalism. The period also saw the rise of "borderless threats," from AIDS to environmental threats, to international terrorism. Chollet and Goldgeier's emphasis is continually on the complexity of international politics and policymaking. Bill Clinton is also berated for the excessive simplicity of his Panglossian invocations of "the boundlessly positive globalizing future," just as George W. Bush is criticized for his "with us or against us" distortions (xv).

The main focus of the book is on foreign policy under the elder Bush and Bill Clinton. On the former, Chollet and Goldgeier follow the conventional view that Bush was reactive rather than creative, and often inappropriately cautious: "He seemed to resist change, giving the impression that he was out of touch" (31). Such an interpretative framework tends – at least in the opinion of the present reviewer – to undervalue the administration's sureness of touch in handling the momentous changes of the times. It also makes it rather difficult to explain the 1992 Somalian intervention; Chollet and Goldgeier link the intervention to a desire "in part to stave off increasing calls to do something about the humanitarian disaster unfolding in Bosnia" (54). Clinton is convincingly seen as becoming tangled in the contradictions surrounding the sustaining internationalist notion of America as indispensable nation in a globalizing world. The discussion of Clinton's foreign policy is reliable and extremely well informed. The section on international terrorism puts paid to the view that Clinton was somehow unaware of the threat. Rather, it "would have taken the best of circumstances – including greater presidential credibility with the military – for Clinton to garner the domestic and international support needed for a policy to match the private rhetoric within the White House about being at war" with terrorism (269). As Chollet and Goldgeier show, the 11/9–9/11 years confounded many expectations, not least in terms of the continued centrality to US foreign policy of its military dimension. They also show that, though Americans generally became less concerned with world affairs after 1989, Presidents did not.

America between the Wars shows what can be done by scholars of recent history, enquirers into the era from which journalists and political scientists have retreated, but to which document-oriented historians have not yet turned. Despite their semi-insider status, Chollet and Goldgeier do not cite or quote many new documents (an exception is their use of "transition memos" relating to Madeleine Albright's assumption of authority at the State Department in 1996–97). Some of the strongest sections of *America between the Wars* actually relate to the domestic political backdrop to US foreign policy. Chollet and Goldgeier offer valuable analyses of the frequently topsy-turvy world of post-Cold War domestic alignments on international issues. They elucidate the Republican varieties of foreign-policy position-taking: the confident but circumscribed internationalism of the new world order, the "paranoid isolationism" (141) of Pat Buchanan, the extravagant nationalism of Dick Cheney and the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, the introverted nationalism of the Contract with America, the fizzing certainties of neoconservatism. They trace the debates about free trade and liberal interventionism which transformed the internal dynamics of the Democratic Party in the 1990s. The book has some

disappointments. Its authors have a tendency to make connections, for example between neoconservatism and the Clinton/Albright advocacy of America as "indispensable nation," which obscure more than they illuminate. It is a shame that Chollet and Goldgeier did not find space for some discussion of Clinton's Irish interventions. However, this is a fine piece of contemporary history: fluently written, fascinating, and lucid.

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