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Sarah Walsh’s study of eugenics science and Catholicism in Chile offers a detailed examination of the aligning values of science and religion in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chile. The author examines “interactions between Catholicism and eugenics as intellectual frameworks to highlight their symbiotic relationship in the construction of Latin American racial thought” (p. 4). By comparing writings of Catholic and secular eugenicists, Walsh aims to establish how each group interpreted and dealt with the other and how their thinking contributed to the notion of the *raza chilena*.

In her first chapter, Walsh compares writings from both Catholic and secular eugenicists to establish the mutual perception of threats toward the Chilean race, specifically regarding the marriage crisis of the interwar years. Next, Walsh examines the compatibility as well as the friction between Catholicism and science in twentieth-century Chile. Notably, Catholic eugenicists proved more accepting of their secular counterparts than vice versa, arguing that Catholicism and science adhered to the “same laws prescribing human life and experience” (p. 18). Chapter 3 contrasts Chilean eugenics with the broader eugenic themes of the North Atlantic world, citing the unique ethical perspectives of Catholic Chilean eugenicists. The author dedicates the fourth chapter to a detailed analysis of Chilean physician Nicolás Palacios’s *Raza Chilena* (1904), arguing that Palacios’s work strongly influenced the changing perceptions of the Chilean race during the twentieth century. Chapter 5 compares Catholic and secular writings detailing the need to control female sexuality in order to protect the future of the Chilean race. Finally, Walsh’s sixth chapter analyzes visual culture in Chile to examine how Whiteness existed alongside the pride in the mestizo heritage of the *raza chilena*.

Catholic eugenicists aligned their population controlling aims with their secular counterparts by means of perceived gender roles and the controlling of—primarily female—sexuality. While male sexual control might better achieve aims of disease prevention and spread, females, according
to eugenicists’ perceptions, were easier to control in terms of both their sexual selection and reproductive power. As a result, eugenics programs targeted women almost exclusively. Here, Walsh’s analysis would have strongly benefited from the inclusion of Jadwiga E. Pieper Mooney’s *The Politics of Motherhood: Maternity and Women’s Rights in Twentieth-Century Chile* (2009), which is neither cited nor mentioned in this work.

Walsh’s comparative historiography of Catholic and secular publications from the first half of the twentieth century deftly establishes alignment of both parties in their eugenic aims. In spite of this alignment, the historiography does not reveal evidence of Catholic influence over secular eugenicists. However, this work does a fine job of revealing both religious and secular approaches to defining, protecting, and perpetuating the *raza chilena* as part of Chilean national identity.

This work is a strong contribution to the history of science in Latin America, centering on Chilean actors in eugenic science rather than on North Atlantic narratives and perceptions. Anyone interested in race and eugenics in Latin America, particularly in relation to the creation and perpetuation of national identities, would benefit from reading Walsh’s work.

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