The Century of Women. How Women Have Transformed the World Since 1900

Bessie Rigakos

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Maria Bucur’s *The Century of Women* is a book that I thoroughly enjoyed reading. As someone who is passionate about women’s rights and gender equality, I found this scholarly work to be a fascinating and informative exploration of how women have transformed the world since 1900. Bucur’s interdisciplinary approach, drawing on history, sociology, anthropology, and feminist theory, provides a comprehensive overview of the changing status of women in the twentieth century.

One of the strengths of this book is its structure—for instance, the seven chapters each focus on a different theme, diving deeply into various aspects of women’s experiences and contributions. By taking this approach, Bucur can offer a nuanced analysis of each theme while highlighting the interconnectedness of these issues.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the book’s main themes and argues that the twentieth century was the “century of women” due to the significant changes in women’s roles and status that occurred during this period. Bucur sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by providing a historical overview of the changing status of women in the twentieth century, charting the key events and movements that have shaped women’s lives, and examining how women have challenged and sought to change gender norms and expectations.

One of the most illuminating chapters in the book is chapter 2, which examines women’s political activism and participation throughout the twentieth century. Bucur provides a nuanced exploration of how women have engaged in activism, from the suffrage movement to the #MeToo movement. She highlights the importance of recognizing women’s role in shaping social and
political movements, as well as how gender-based discrimination and inequality have informed and affected those movements. Her analysis underscores the significance of women’s voices and leadership in creating change.

Chapter 3 discusses the changing demographics of the world’s population and the impact of these changes on women. Bucur examines women’s fertility rates, access to healthcare, and family planning trends, shedding light on the complex issues women face worldwide. She highlights how women’s experiences of these issues are shaped by race, class, and sexuality, emphasizing the importance of intersectionality in understanding women’s lives and experiences.

Another standout is chapter 4, which examines women’s changing roles in the global economy. Bucur explores issues related to pay equity, workplace discrimination, and the feminization of poverty. In addition, she dives deeply into the various ways women have participated in the labor force and entrepreneurship, highlighting the barriers women have faced and the progress that has been made.

Chapter 5 discusses women’s contributions to intellectual and scientific fields, including education, literature, and science. It examines women’s barriers to accessing education and how women’s contributions have challenged gender stereotypes. Bucur provides a detailed analysis of how women have been excluded from these fields historically and highlights the ongoing challenges women face in pursuing careers in these areas.

Chapter 6 examines women’s cultural production and consumption roles, including the arts, media, and popular culture. It looks at how women have challenged traditional gender roles and representations and provides a fascinating analysis of how women have used cultural production to assert their agency and challenge gender norms.
Finally, chapter 7 discusses the changing nature of family structures and relationships and the impact of these changes on women. Bucur examines marriage, divorce, and single parenthood trends and how these changes have affected women’s social and economic status. She provides a nuanced analysis of how a range of factors, including culture, race, class, and sexuality, shapes women’s experiences of family life.

Bucur’s emphasis on intersectionality is another standout feature of the book. She recognizes that women’s experiences are shaped by factors beyond their gender, such as race, class, and sexuality. By exploring how these intersecting identities have impacted women’s lives, she effectively challenges any simplistic understanding of women’s experiences and the significance of gender as a category of analysis.

_The Century of Women_ is an engaging and thought-provoking read. Bucur’s interdisciplinary approach, coupled with her emphasis on intersectionality, provides a rich and nuanced exploration of how women have transformed the world over the last century. Her analysis of women’s contributions to social and political movements and their changing roles in the global economy is particularly illuminating. I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in women’s rights, gender equality, or social justice more broadly.