

What Woman Ought to Be and to Do: A Timeless Masterpiece of Female Empowerment

In the annals of American literature, Lydia Huntley Sigourney stands as a pioneering voice for women's rights and empowerment. Her groundbreaking essay collection, "What Woman Ought to Be and to Do," published in 1831, offers a profound and nuanced exploration of women's nature, education, and societal expectations. Through a series of eloquent and thought-provoking essays, Sigourney challenges prevailing gender norms and advocates for a more equitable and fulfilling life for women.



What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era (Women in Culture and Society) by Stephanie J. Shaw

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1264 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 365 pages
Lending : Enabled
X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



The Nature of Woman

Sigourney begins her work by delving into the essential nature of woman. She argues that women possess inherent strengths, virtues, and capabilities that distinguish them from men. Contrary to the prevalent view of women as inferior beings, Sigourney asserts their intellectual, moral, and spiritual equality. She extols the virtues of compassion, sensitivity, and resilience as uniquely feminine qualities that enrich human society.



The Importance of Education

Sigourney passionately advocates for the education of women as a crucial factor in their empowerment. She believes that women's minds are capable of great intellectual and creative achievement. Sigourney decries the limitations imposed on women's education, arguing that they have the right to pursue knowledge and develop their intellectual potential. She envisions a society where women are valued for their education and have equal access to opportunities for learning.

Societal Expectations

Sigourney confronts the societal expectations that restrict women's lives and aspirations. She challenges the prevailing notion that women's sole purpose is to serve as wives and mothers. While acknowledging the importance of these roles, Sigourney argues that women have the right to pursue careers, participate in public life, and exercise their own agency. She critiques the double standards that hold women to different expectations than men and calls for a more just and equitable society.

Responsibility to Society

Sigourney emphasizes the responsibility that women have to society and the world around them. She believes that women have a unique role to play in nurturing the moral and spiritual values of their communities. Sigourney encourages women to use their influence to promote social justice, alleviate suffering, and uplift those in need. She envisions women as agents of positive change, contributing to the well-being of society as a whole.

Legacy and Impact

"What Woman Ought to Be and to Do" has had a profound impact on generations of women and advocates for gender equality. Sigourney's eloquent prose and compelling arguments have inspired countless women to embrace their full potential and challenge societal limitations. Her work continues to resonate today, serving as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for women's rights and empowerment.

Lydia Sigourney's "What Woman Ought to Be and to Do" is a groundbreaking and timeless masterpiece that deserves its place among the classics of feminist literature. Through her insightful essays, Sigourney articulates a powerful vision of women's nature, education, societal expectations, and responsibility to society. Her work remains a source of inspiration and guidance for women who seek to live lives of purpose, fulfillment, and equality.



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