

how should a person be by sheila heti

****How Should a Person Be by Sheila Heti: Exploring Identity, Morality, and Authenticity****

how should a person be by sheila heti is more than just a question posed in a novel—it is a profound inquiry into the nature of existence, morality, and selfhood. Sheila Heti's book, **How Should a Person Be?**, is a unique blend of fiction, memoir, and philosophical reflection that challenges readers to rethink what it means to live authentically. This work delves into the struggles of defining oneself amid societal pressures, creative ambitions, and personal relationships, making it a compelling read for anyone interested in the complexities of identity and human behavior.

In this article, we will explore the themes and insights found in **How Should a Person Be?** by Sheila Heti, examining how the book navigates questions about individuality, ethics, and the pursuit of a meaningful life. We'll also touch upon why this novel resonates deeply with contemporary readers, and how its introspective style encourages us to reflect on our own journeys.

The Essence of **How Should a Person Be?** by Sheila Heti

At its core, **How Should a Person Be?** is an experimental novel that blurs the lines between fiction and reality. Sheila Heti writes herself as the protagonist, chronicling her experiences as a young artist living in Toronto, grappling with the question posed in the title. The book doesn't offer easy answers but invites readers into a candid conversation about what it means to be true to oneself in a world full of expectations.

The narrative unfolds through a series of dialogues, personal anecdotes, and reflections, creating an intimate atmosphere that feels like a direct conversation with the author. This approach makes the question "how should a person be" feel immediate and personal.

Identity and Self-Discovery

One of the most compelling elements of **How Should a Person Be?** is its exploration of identity. Sheila Heti confronts the challenge of discovering who she really is beneath social roles and external influences. The novel highlights the tension between conforming to societal norms and embracing one's unique voice and desires.

The book encourages readers to consider:

- How much of our identity is shaped by others' expectations?
- What does it mean to be authentic in a world that often rewards conformity?
- Can we ever fully know ourselves, or is identity always in flux?

These questions resonate deeply in today's culture, where social media and external validation often complicate self-perception.

The Role of Morality and Ethics

Another significant theme in **How Should a Person Be?** is the examination of morality. Sheila Heti explores how individuals navigate ethical dilemmas in everyday life, questioning what it means to live a good or “right” life. The protagonist’s interactions with friends, lovers, and herself reveal the complexities of balancing personal desires with moral responsibility.

The novel suggests that morality isn’t a fixed code but a continuous negotiation—an evolving conversation shaped by context, relationships, and introspection. This nuanced view encourages readers to think critically about their own ethical frameworks and the ways they impact their actions.

Stylistic Innovations and Narrative Techniques

Sheila Heti’s **How Should a Person Be?** is notable for its experimental style, which plays a significant role in how the themes are communicated. The book’s hybrid form—part novel, part diary, part philosophical essay—breaks away from traditional storytelling.

Blending Fiction and Reality

By inserting herself as a character, Heti blurs the boundaries between author and protagonist, reality and fiction. This meta-narrative technique invites readers to question the nature of storytelling itself and how narratives shape our understanding of identity.

This blending creates a conversational tone, making the philosophical questions feel less abstract and more grounded in real experience. It also reflects the fragmented, often messy process of figuring out “how a person should be.”

The Use of Dialogue and Introspection

Dialogue is a crucial tool in the novel. Through conversations with friends, especially the artist Margaux Williamson, Heti explores differing perspectives on art, relationships, and selfhood. These exchanges are raw and often unresolved, mirroring the uncertainty of the central question.

Alongside dialogue, the book features deep introspective passages where the protagonist reflects candidly on her fears, hopes, and contradictions. This intimate access to inner thoughts enhances the reader’s connection to the themes of the book.

Why **How Should a Person Be? Resonates Today**

In an age marked by rapid change, social media pressures, and a growing emphasis on individualism, **How Should a Person Be?** offers a timely meditation on what it means to live authentically. The book’s honesty about

doubt, insecurity, and the search for meaning makes it relatable for many readers.

Addressing Modern Anxieties About Selfhood

Many people today grapple with questions about identity and purpose. Heti's novel acknowledges that these questions don't have straightforward answers but insists that the process of inquiry itself is valuable. This perspective helps readers feel less isolated in their uncertainties.

Encouraging Creative and Personal Freedom

Heti advocates for embracing creativity and vulnerability as pathways to discovering one's true self. By portraying the protagonist's artistic struggles and personal revelations, the book inspires readers to pursue their passions without fear of judgment.

Lessons from **How Should a Person Be?** by Sheila Heti

While **How Should a Person Be?** may not provide a definitive answer to its titular question, it offers important insights that can guide readers in their own self-exploration.

- **Embrace Uncertainty:** Accepting that identity is fluid and complex can relieve the pressure to have everything figured out.
- **Value Authenticity:** Striving to be honest with oneself and others fosters deeper connections and personal growth.
- **Engage in Dialogue:** Conversations with diverse perspectives can challenge assumptions and broaden understanding.
- **Balance Morality and Desire:** Recognizing the nuances in ethical decisions encourages compassion and self-awareness.
- **Celebrate Creativity:** Creative expression is a vital part of exploring and articulating one's identity.

These lessons underscore the novel's message that being a person is an ongoing, dynamic process rather than a fixed state.

Further Exploration: Related Themes and Works

For readers intrigued by the themes in **How Should a Person Be?**, exploring related literature and concepts can deepen understanding.

Philosophical Context

The novel touches on existential and ethical philosophy, reminiscent of thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre who pondered questions of authenticity and moral choice. Engaging with existentialist philosophy can enrich one's appreciation of Heti's work.

Contemporary Feminist Literature

Heti's exploration of identity is also linked to feminist discourse on selfhood and agency. Books like Maggie Nelson's **The Argonauts** or Ottessa Moshfegh's **My Year of Rest and Relaxation** similarly examine personal identity in contemporary contexts.

Creative Nonfiction and Autofiction

How Should a Person Be? is part of a growing genre blending memoir and fiction. Exploring other autofiction works, such as Rachel Cusk's **Outline** trilogy or Karl Ove Knausgård's **My Struggle**, can offer additional perspectives on narrative experimentation.

Every reader's journey through **How Should a Person Be?** is unique, shaped by individual experiences and reflections. Sheila Heti's fearless inquiry invites us all to consider the question deeply and, perhaps, to live a little more honestly in response.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of Sheila Heti's 'How Should a Person Be?'

The central theme of 'How Should a Person Be?' revolves around identity, creativity, and the search for meaning in life, exploring how one should live authentically and creatively.

How does Sheila Heti blend fiction and memoir in 'How Should a Person Be?'

Sheila Heti combines elements of fiction and memoir by using real-life experiences and conversations while also incorporating fictionalized events and characters, creating a hybrid narrative that challenges traditional genre boundaries.

What role do the characters play in exploring the question 'How should a person be?'

The characters, many based on real people in Heti's life, serve as different perspectives and voices that wrestle with the title question, reflecting varied approaches to art, friendship, and personal growth.

How does the structure of the novel enhance its exploration of identity?

The novel's fragmented, diary-like structure allows for an intimate and immediate look into the protagonist's thoughts and interactions, mirroring the often nonlinear and complex journey of self-discovery.

Why is 'How Should a Person Be?' considered innovative in contemporary literature?

It is considered innovative because it blurs the lines between autobiography, fiction, and philosophical inquiry, offering a fresh narrative style that invites readers to engage deeply with existential questions.

How does Sheila Heti address the theme of artistic creation in the book?

Heti explores artistic creation through her own struggles with writing and through her characters' artistic pursuits, highlighting the challenges, doubts, and exhilarations involved in the creative process.

In what ways does 'How Should a Person Be?' discuss friendship and relationships?

The book delves into the complexities of friendship, portraying it as a vital yet sometimes challenging part of personal growth and self-understanding, emphasizing honesty, vulnerability, and support.

What impact has 'How Should a Person Be?' had on readers and critics?

The book has been praised for its originality and emotional honesty, resonating with readers who grapple with questions of identity and purpose, and influencing contemporary discussions about genre and narrative form.

Can 'How Should a Person Be?' be seen as a philosophical work?

Yes, the novel functions as a philosophical work by consistently questioning the nature of selfhood, morality, and the meaning of life through its narrative and dialogues, encouraging readers to reflect on their own existence.

Additional Resources

How Should a Person Be by Sheila Heti: A Thought-Provoking Exploration of Identity and Morality

how should a person be by sheila heti is more than just a provocative title; it encapsulates a profound inquiry into human nature, ethics, and selfhood as explored through the lens of contemporary literature. Sheila Heti, a Canadian author known for her innovative narrative style and philosophical undertones,

invites readers to engage with fundamental questions about what it means to live authentically and ethically in a complex world. This article delves into the thematic and stylistic elements of Heti's work, offering an analytical perspective that contextualizes her contributions within modern literary discourse and ethical philosophy.

Exploring the Core Themes of "How Should a Person Be"

At the heart of Heti's writing lies an interrogation of identity formation and the moral frameworks that shape human behavior. The phrase "how should a person be" serves as a foundational question that resonates throughout her oeuvre, particularly in her acclaimed novel **How Should a Person Be?** published in 2010. Although the book is semi-autobiographical, it transcends mere memoir to probe the tensions between societal expectations and individual desires.

The Search for Authenticity and Self-Understanding

One of the most significant themes in Heti's work is the quest for authenticity. The narrative follows a protagonist who wrestles with the dissonance between external perceptions and internal reality. This exploration aligns with broader philosophical debates on existentialism and self-identity, where the individual must navigate between imposed roles and genuine self-expression.

Heti's approach to this theme is notably experimental, blending dialogue, diary entries, and fictionalized interactions to mimic the fragmented nature of self-discovery. This stylistic choice underscores the complexity of defining "how a person should be," suggesting that identity is not a fixed or singular construct but rather a fluid and evolving process.

Morality and Ethical Ambiguity

Another critical aspect of Heti's inquiry involves the ethical dimensions of personal choices. The question of morality—what constitutes "being good" or "doing right"—is intricately woven into the narrative fabric. Unlike traditional moral tales that offer clear distinctions between right and wrong, Heti's work presents ambiguity and nuance.

Through her characters' flawed decisions and introspective dialogues, Heti challenges readers to reconsider simplistic moral binaries. This nuanced portrayal resonates with contemporary ethical theories such as virtue ethics and care ethics, which emphasize context, relationships, and the cultivation of character over rigid rule-following.

Stylistic Innovations and Narrative Techniques

Sheila Heti's distinctive narrative style is crucial to understanding how she approaches the central question of human behavior and identity. Her prose

often blurs the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction, inviting readers into a meta-literary experience that reflects on the act of storytelling itself.

Blurring Fact and Fiction

In **How Should a Person Be?**, Heti employs a hybrid form that combines autobiographical elements with fictionalized scenarios. This technique not only enriches the narrative but also serves as a commentary on the performative aspects of identity. By destabilizing the notion of an authorial "truth," Heti encourages readers to question the reliability of narrative and the construction of selfhood.

Dialogue as a Vehicle for Philosophical Inquiry

Dialogue plays a pivotal role in Heti's writing, functioning as a medium through which existential and ethical questions are debated and dissected. Characters engage in candid conversations that mirror real-life philosophical discussions, making the novel a dynamic space for intellectual exploration.

This dialogic style aligns with the tradition of philosophical novels, where the narrative becomes a forum for ideas rather than merely a story. It invites readers to participate actively in the inquiry, reflecting on their own beliefs about how a person should live.

Comparative Perspectives: Heti's Work in Context

To fully appreciate the significance of **How Should a Person Be?**, it is useful to position Sheila Heti's work alongside other contemporary authors who grapple with similar questions of identity and morality.

Comparison with Other Contemporary Writers

Authors such as Rachel Cusk and Maggie Nelson also explore autobiographical fiction and philosophical themes, but Heti's distinctive blend of humor, vulnerability, and experimental form sets her apart. While Cusk's work often emphasizes narrative control and detachment, Heti embraces uncertainty and spontaneity, reflecting the messy realities of human existence.

Similarly, Maggie Nelson's **The Argonauts** navigates identity and love with lyrical intensity, whereas Heti's approach is more conversational and playful, yet no less profound. These comparative insights highlight how **How Should a Person Be?** contributes a unique voice to ongoing literary conversations about selfhood.

Influence of Philosophical Traditions

Heti's exploration of ethics and identity is deeply informed by philosophical traditions, particularly existentialism and feminist ethics. The emphasis on authenticity echoes Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist notion that individuals must create their own essence through action. Meanwhile, the attention to relationality and context resonates with feminist thinkers like Carol Gilligan, who critique universalizing moral claims.

This philosophical grounding enriches Heti's literary work, making it a fertile site for interdisciplinary study that bridges literature and moral philosophy.

Reception and Impact: How Should a Person Be by Sheila Heti in Contemporary Literature

Since its publication, **How Should a Person Be?** has garnered critical acclaim and sparked extensive discussions among readers and scholars alike. Its innovative narrative style and thematic depth have solidified Sheila Heti's reputation as a leading voice in contemporary literature.

Critical Acclaim and Reader Engagement

Critics have praised Heti's candid exploration of personal and philosophical dilemmas, noting her ability to balance humor with serious inquiry. The novel's unconventional form has been described as both challenging and rewarding, demanding active engagement from its audience.

Readers often report a sense of intimacy and identification with the protagonist's struggles, which speaks to the universal relevance of the question "how should a person be." This emotional resonance contributes to the book's lasting impact and continued relevance.

Influence on Literary and Ethical Discussions

Beyond literary circles, Heti's work has influenced discussions in ethics, psychology, and cultural studies. Its interrogation of identity formation and moral ambiguity aligns with contemporary debates on authenticity, mental health, and social norms.

Educational institutions have incorporated **How Should a Person Be?** into curricula that explore narrative ethics and feminist literature, underscoring its significance as a multidisciplinary text.

Key Takeaways from Sheila Heti's Inquiry

While **How Should a Person Be?** does not provide definitive answers, it offers valuable insights into the complexities of human existence:

- **Identity is fluid:** Heti's work emphasizes that being a person is an ongoing process of negotiation between internal desires and external expectations.
- **Morality is nuanced:** Ethical living involves grappling with ambiguity and context rather than adhering to absolute rules.
- **Storytelling shapes selfhood:** Narrative form and style reflect the multiplicity of ways individuals understand and present themselves.
- **Engagement is active:** Readers are invited to participate in philosophical inquiry, blurring the line between author and audience.

These takeaways reinforce the enduring relevance of Heti's question and the literary work that embodies it.

As conversations about identity and ethics continue to evolve, *How Should a Person Be?* by Sheila Heti remains a vital touchstone for those seeking to understand the intricacies of being human in the modern world. Its blend of literary innovation and philosophical depth ensures that it will continue to inspire thought and dialogue for years to come.

[How Should A Person Be By Sheila Heti](#)

how should a person be by sheila het: **How Should a Person Be?** Sheila Heti, 2010 From the internationally acclaimed author of *The Middle Stories* and *Ticknor* comes a bold interrogation into the possibility of a beautiful life. *How Should a Person Be?* is a novel of many identities: an autobiography of the mind, a postmodern self-help book, and a fictionalized portrait of the artist as a young woman — of two such artists, in fact. For reasons multiple and mysterious, Sheila finds herself in a quandary of self-doubt, questioning how a person should be in the world. Inspired by her friend Margaux, a painter, and her seemingly untortured ability to live and create, Sheila casts Margaux as material, embarking on a series of recordings in which nothing is too personal, too ugly, or too banal to be turned into art. Along the way, Sheila confronts a cast of painters who are equally blocked in an age in which the blow job is the ultimate art form. She begins questioning her desire to be Important, her quest to be both a leader and a pupil, and her unwillingness to sacrifice herself. Searching, uncompromising and yet mordantly funny, *How Should a Person Be?* is a brilliant portrait of art-making and friendship from the psychic underground of Canada's most fiercely original writer.

how should a person be by sheila het: [The Self-Help Compulsion](#) Beth Blum, 2020-01-28 Samuel Beckett as a guru for business executives? James Joyce as a guide to living a good life? The notion of notoriously experimental authors sharing a shelf with self-help books might seem far-fetched, yet a hidden history of rivalry, influence, and imitation links these two worlds. In *The Self-Help Compulsion*, Beth Blum reveals the profound entanglement of modern literature and commercial advice from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Blum explores popular reading practices in which people turn to literature in search of practical advice alongside modern writers' rebukes of such instrumental purposes. As literary authors positioned themselves in opposition to people like Samuel Smiles and Dale Carnegie, readers turned to self-help for the promises of mobility, agency, and practical use that serious literature was reluctant to supply. Blum unearths a series of unlikely cases of the love-hate relationship between serious fiction and commercial advice, from Gustave Flaubert's mockery of early DIY culture to *Dear Abby*'s cutting diagnoses of Nathanael West and from Virginia Woolf's ambivalent polemics against

self-improvement to the ways that contemporary global authors such as Mohsin Hamid and Tash Aw explicitly draw on the self-help genre. She also traces the self-help industry's tendency to popularize, quote, and adapt literary wisdom and considers what it might have to teach today's university. Offering a new history of self-help's origins, appeal, and cultural and literary import around the world, this book reveals that self-help's most valuable secrets are not about getting rich or winning friends but about how and why people read.

how should a person be by sheila het: *Authorship's Wake* Philip Sayers, 2020-12-10

Authorship's Wake examines the aftermath of the 1960s critique of the author, epitomized by Roland Barthes's essay, "The Death of the Author." This critique has given rise to a body of writing that confounds generic distinctions separating the literary and the theoretical. Its archive consists of texts by writers who either directly participated in this critique, as Barthes did, or whose intellectual formation took place in its immediate aftermath. These writers include some who are known primarily as theorists (Judith Butler), others known primarily as novelists (Zadie Smith, David Foster Wallace), and yet others whose texts are difficult to categorize (the autofiction of Chris Kraus, Sheila Heti, and Ben Lerner; the autotheory of Maggie Nelson). These writers share not only a central motivating question – how to move beyond the critique of the author-subject – but also a way of answering it: by writing texts that merge theoretical concerns with literary discourse. *Authorship's Wake* traces the responses their work offers in relation to four themes: communication, intention, agency, and labor.

how should a person be by sheila het: Contemporary Novelists and the Aesthetics of

Twenty-First Century American Life Alexandra Kingston-Reese, 2020-01-01 *Contemporary Novelists and the Aesthetics of Twenty-First Century American Life* gives us a new way to view contemporary art novels, asking the key question: How do contemporary writers imagine aesthetic experience? Examining the works of some of the most popular names in contemporary fiction and art criticism, including Zadie Smith, Teju Cole, Siri Hustvedt, Ben Lerner, Rachel Kushner, and others, Alexandra Kingston-Reese finds that contemporary art novels are seeking to reconcile the negative feelings of contemporary life through a concerted critical realignment in understanding artistic sensibility, literary form, and the function of the aesthetic. Kingston-Reese reveals how contemporary writers refract and problematize aesthetic experience, illuminating an uneasiness with failure: firstly, about the failure of aesthetic experiences to solve and save; and secondly, the literary inability to articulate the emotional dissonance caused by aesthetic experiences now.

how should a person be by sheila het: *Contemporary Feminist Life-Writing* Jennifer

Cooke, 2020-04-08 *Contemporary Feminist Life-Writing* is the first volume to identify and analyse the 'new audacity' of recent feminist writings from life. Characterised by boldness in both style and content, willingness to explore difficult and disturbing experiences, the refusal of victimhood, and a lack of respect for traditional genre boundaries, new audacity writing takes risks with its author's and others' reputations, and even, on occasion, with the law. This book offers an examination and critical assessment of new audacity in works by Katherine Angel, Alison Bechdel, Marie Calloway, Virginie Despentes, Tracey Emin, Sheila Heti, Juliet Jacques, Chris Kraus, Jana Leo, Maggie Nelson, Vanessa Place, Paul Preciado, and Kate Zambreno. It analyses how they write about women's self-authorship, trans experiences, struggles with mental illness, sexual violence and rape, and the desire for sexual submission. It engages with recent feminist and gender scholarship, providing discussions of vulnerability, victimhood, authenticity, trauma, and affect.

how should a person be by sheila het: *Autobiography* Laura Marcus, 2018-07-19

Autobiography is one of the most popular of written forms. From Casanova to Benjamin Franklin to the Kardashians, individuals throughout history have recorded their own lives and experiences. These personal writings are central to the work of literary critics, philosophers, historians and psychologists, who have found in autobiographies from across the centuries not only an understanding of the ways in which lives have been lived, but the most fundamental accounts of what it means to be a self in the world. In this Very Short Introduction Laura Marcus defines what we mean by 'autobiography', and considers its relationship with similar literary forms such as

memoirs, journals, letters, diaries, and essays. Analysing the core themes in autobiographical writing, such as confession, conversion and testimony; romanticism and the journeying self; Marcus discusses the autobiographical consciousness (and the roles played by time, memory and identity), and considers the relationship between psychoanalysis and autobiography. Exploring the themes of self-portraiture and performance, Marcus also discusses the ways in which fiction and autobiography have shaped each other. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

how should a person be by sheila het: **The Sheila Heti Ebook Bundle** Sheila Heti, 2020-05-05 Now available in an exclusive ebook bundle, three books of fiction from Scotiabank Giller Prize finalist Sheila Heti. In *Ticknor*, her first novel, Sheila Heti has created a memorable new hero of Prufrockian dimension. George Ticknor is trying to reconcile his own failure with the success of his boyhood friend, the famous American historian William Prescott. Situated in the complicated and contradictory moments that make friendships both tenuous and difficult to relinquish, Ticknor's fixated thoughts about his and Prescott's dissimilar fates lead him through a litany of rationalizations and recriminations, a psychological maze that is paranoid and harrowing as well as ludicrous and absurd. The stories in *The Middle Stories* balance wisdom and innocence, joy and foreboding. A frog doles out sage advice to a plumber infatuated with a princess, a boy falls hopelessly in love with a monkey, and a man with a hat keeps apocalyptic thoughts at bay by resolving to follow a plan that he admits he won't stick to. Heti's stories are not what you expect, but why did you expect that anyway? Sheila Heti's critically acclaimed novel *How Should a Person Be?* is an unabashedly honest and hilarious tour through the unknowable pieces of one woman's heart and mind, an irresistible torn-from-life book about friendship, art, sex, and love. Part literary novel, part self-help manual, and part racy confessional, it is a fearless exploration into the way we live now by one of Canada's most exciting literary talents.

how should a person be by sheila het: *A History of Autofiction* Alexandra Effe, 2025-10-02 Mapping the largely neglected history of autofictional literature, and describing developments against socio-historical changes, cultural trends, and philosophical-psychological discussions around self and mind, this book both explores and historicizes autofiction's contemporary boom. Beginning with the genre's emergence in 18th-century England against changes in publishing culture and author concept, and then tracing forms and functions of autofictional literature up to the contemporary moment, *A History of Autofiction* highlights why select narrative strategies are abandoned, transformed, or repurposed; which forms, affordances, and effects of autofictional modes are persistent; and which were particular to a given period. With focus on salient authors and texts from anglophone autofiction around the world, and shining spotlights on insightful socio-historical and biographical contexts, Alexandra Effe foregrounds autofictional elements of works not previously considered for these dimensions and offers fresh perspectives on a range of canonical autofictional texts. interdisciplinary in approach, the book sheds light on autofictional phenomena through research in neuroscience, psychology and philosophy of mind while demonstrating that autofictional literature holds insights for cognitive science. Developing a cognitive-holistic approach to the triad of author, text, and reader, the book allows for a novel and more encompassing understanding of an important current cultural trend and of its diachronic development.

how should a person be by sheila het: *Girl on Girl* Sophie Gilbert, 2025-04-29 Named a most anticipated book of Spring by Washington Post, Harper's Bazaar, Marie Claire, Bustle, LitHub, Our Culture, Kirkus, AV Club and WNYC From Atlantic critic and Pulitzer Prize finalist Sophie Gilbert, a blazing critique of early aughts pop culture What happened to feminism in the twenty-first century? This question feels increasingly urgent in a moment of cultural and legislative backlash, when widespread uncertainty about the movement's power, focus, and currency threatens decades

of progress. Sophie Gilbert identifies an inflection point in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the energy of third-wave and “riot grrrl” feminism collapsed into a regressive period of hyper-objectification, sexualization, and infantilization. Mining the darker side of nostalgia, Gilbert trains her keen analytic eye on the most revealing cultural objects of the era, across music, film, television, fashion, tabloid journalism, and more. What she recounts is harrowing, from the leering gaze of the paparazzi to the gleeful cruelty of early reality TV and a burgeoning internet culture vicious toward women in the spotlight and damaging for those who weren’t. Gilbert tracks many of the period’s dominant themes back to the rise of internet porn, which gained widespread influence as it began to pervade our collective consciousness. The result is a devastating portrait of a time when a distinctly American blend of excess, materialism, and power worship collided with the culture’s reactionary, puritanical, and chauvinistic currents. Amid a collective reconsideration of the way women are treated in public, *Girl on Girl* is a blistering indictment of the matrix of misogyny that undergirded the cultural production of the early twenty-first century, and continues to shape our world today.

how should a person be by sheila heti: *The Routledge Companion to Theatre-Fiction* Graham Wolfe, 2023-11-14 Novelists have long been attracted to theatre. Some have pursued success on the stage, but many have sought to combine these worlds, entering theatre through their fiction, setting stages on their novels’ pages, and casting actors, directors, and playwrights as their protagonists. The Routledge Companion to Theatre-Fiction has convened an international community of scholars to explore the remarkable array of novelists from many eras and parts of the world who have created fiction from the stuff of theatre, asking what happens to theatre on the pages of novels, and what happens to novels when they collaborate with theatre. From J. W. Goethe to Louisa May Alcott, Mikhail Bulgakov, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Atwood, some of history’s most influential novelists have written theatre-fiction, and this Companion discusses many of these figures from new angles. But it also spotlights writers who have received less critical attention, such as Dorothy Leighton, Agustín de Rojas Villandrando, Ronald Firbank, Syed Mustafa Siraj, Li Yu, and Vicente Blasco Ibañez, bringing their work into conversation with a vital field. A valuable resource for students, scholars, and admirers of both theatre and novels, *The Routledge Companion to Theatre-Fiction* offers a wealth of new perspectives on topics of increasing critical concern, including intermediality, theatricality, antitheatricality, mimesis, diegesis, and performativity.

how should a person be by sheila heti: *The Digital Banal* Zara Dinnen, 2018-01-02 Contemporary culture is haunted by its media. Yet in their ubiquity, digital media have become increasingly banal, making it harder for us to register their novelty or the scope of the social changes they have wrought. What do we learn about our media environment when we look closely at the ways novelists and filmmakers narrate and depict banal use of everyday technologies? How do we encounter our own media use in scenes of waiting for e-mail, watching eBay bids, programming as work, and worrying about numbers of social media likes, friends, and followers? Zara Dinnen analyzes a range of prominent contemporary novels, films, and artworks to contend that we live in the condition of the “digital banal,” not noticing the affective and political novelty of our relationship to digital media. Authors like Jennifer Egan, Dave Eggers, Sheila Heti, Jonathan Lethem, Gary Shteyngart, Colson Whitehead, Mark Amerika, Ellen Ullman, and Danica Novgorodoff and films such as *The Social Network* and *Catfish* critique and reveal the ways in which digital labor isolates the individual; how the work of programming has become an operation of power; and the continuation of the “Californian ideology,” which has folded the radical into the rote and the imaginary into the mundane. The works of these writers and artists, Dinnen argues, also offer ways of resisting the more troubling aspects of the effects of new technologies, as well as timely methods for seeing the digital banal as a politics of suppression. Bridging the gap between literary studies and media studies, *The Digital Banal* recovers the shrouded disturbances that can help us recognize and antagonize our media environment.

how should a person be by sheila heti: *Knausgård and the Autofictional Novel* Claus Elholm Andersen, 2023-12-01 A probing, generative analysis of Knausgård’s *My Struggle*, with implications

for our understanding of the novel form more broadly in the twenty-first century. Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgård's six-volume, 3600-page autobiographical novel, *My Struggle*, has been widely hailed for its heroic exploration of selfhood, compulsive readability, and restless experimentation with form and genre. *Knausgård and the Autofictional Novel* explains why. Across four chapters, Claus Elholm Andersen shows how Knausgård confronts, challenges, and rejects the symbiotic relationship between novels and fiction, particularly via a technique of auto-fictionalization. The fifth chapter then explores the further breakdown of this relationship in autofiction by Sheila Heti, Rachel Cusk, and Ben Lerner, taking readers to what Lerner called the very edge of fiction.

how should a person be by sheila hetì: *Eros, Pleasure, Friendship, and The Good Life*

James J. Winchester, 2025-07-03 The book invites its readers to explore the role erotic love, pleasure, and friendship play in crafting a good life. These topics are enduring themes that captures the heart of human existence, and have been the focus of many works of philosophy and literature. However, there remains scope for further examination. This book offers a compelling case to expand the exploration beyond the preponderance of white, male canonical figures that have dominated the field, in order to include an array of scholars that more accurately capture the diversity of humanity. It does so by drawing on Greek, Asian, Africana, Continental, and Feminist thinkers, and exploring a myriad of literary works to illustrate and interrogate the theories.

how should a person be by sheila hetì: *The Narrowing* Alexandra Shaker, PhD, 2025-03-04

An exploration of the connection between anxiety and the body by a clinical psychologist, drawing from the latest research alongside historical and cultural insights, arguing that only through understanding anxiety's grasp on us can we transform it into resilience Most of us are intimately familiar with anxiety, and with its increasing hold on our minds, our hopes and plans, and our bodies. But how well do we really understand it, and what can we do to transform it into something new—into resilience, or courage, or creativity? In this extraordinary book, Dr. Alexandra Shaker, a clinical psychologist, takes us on a journey through the body—from brain to blood to heart to guts—to examine the connections between our emotional, psychological, and physical lives. She unravels what the body can teach us about anxiety, and what we can learn from our long cultural history of the anxious impulse. Melding psychology, neuroscience, history, and literature, she considers why—despite all the checklists and scientific advancements—we are still struggling to outrun our oldest terrors, and how a new approach focused on accepting anxiety as part of the human condition can help revolutionise our relationship with it.

how should a person be by sheila hetì: *The Market Logics of Contemporary Fiction* Paul

Crosthwaite, 2019-07-18 Contemporary British and American fiction is defined by financial markets' power over the global publishing industry and the global economy.

how should a person be by sheila hetì: *Reading the Contemporary Author* Alison Gibbons,

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