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# Comparative Study of the Strange Obsession and Insatiable

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**ABSTRACT:** This comparative study examines the thematic and narrative similarities and differences between the films \*Strange Obsession\* and \*Insatiable\*, both of which explore the complexities of human desire, obsession, and psychological turmoil. The analysis delves into how each film portrays its protagonists' compulsions and the consequences of their actions, with a focus on character development, cinematography, and narrative structure. By comparing the distinct approaches each film takes toward similar themes, this study highlights the varying cinematic techniques used to convey the darker aspects of human nature, ultimately providing a nuanced understanding of obsession and its impact on the human psyche.

## I. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shobhaa Dé, voted by Reader's Digest as one of 'India's Most Trusted People and by Daily News and Analysis as one of the '50 Most Powerful Women in India, is a bestselling author and a popular social commentator. Her works, both fiction and non-fiction, have been featured in comparative literature courses at universities in India and abroad.

Her writing has been translated into many languages including Hindi, Marathi, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish, among others. Shobhaa lives in Mumbai with her family.

Her writing has been translated into many languages including Hindi, Marathi, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish, among others. Shobhaa lives in Mumbai with her family. Shobhaa De is a conspicuous Indian creator, columnist, and socialite, known for her artless and strong composing fashion. Born on January 7, 1948, in Mumbai, she at first sought after a career in news coverage and modelling some time recently turning to fiction. De is regularly respected as a pioneer in Indian well known fiction, especially famous for her books that dig into the lives of urban first class and investigate subjects of sexuality, control, and social elements. Her make a big appearance novel, "Socialite Nights," distributed in 1989, gathered critical consideration and set up her notoriety as a brave and provocative author.

Over the a long time, De has created various top rated books, counting "Starry Evenings," "Sisters," and "Sultry Days," each reflecting her sharp perceptions of modern Indian society. In expansion to her fiction, she is a productive columnist and commentator on social and political issues, regularly blending talks about with her frank sees. De's composing is characterised by its mind, humorous edge, and unashamed investigation of unthinkable subjects, making her one of the most powerful voices in Indian writing and media.

## II. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STRANGE OBSESSION AND INSATIABLE

Shobhaa De's novels, "The Strange Obsession" and "Insatiable," both offer gripping narratives centred on intense human desires, yet their plots unfold in distinct realms of personal and social landscapes.

"The Strange Obsession," published in 1992, is a psychological drama that plunges into the dark recesses of human obsession. The plot revolves around Amrita, a stunning and self-assured young woman who finds herself the object of Meenakshi's intense infatuation. Meenakshi, an ambitious and enigmatic character, becomes obsessively involved in Amrita's life, manipulating circumstances to ensure that she is always at the center of Amrita's existence. The narrative explores the terrifying grip of Meenakshi's obsession, detailing how it escalates from mere fascination to dangerous fixation. As Meenakshi's control over Amrita grows, the latter's life spirals into chaos, revealing the destructive potential of unrestrained desire. The novel delves deeply into the psychological aspects of both women, examining how power and possession can distort human relationships. The plot's intensity is heightened by its intimate focus on the characters' inner lives, making it a compelling exploration of obsession and control.



In contrast, "Insatiable," released in 2013, presents a broader and glitzier narrative set against the backdrop of the high-stakes world of fashion and high society. The protagonist, Reggie, is a successful model and socialite whose life epitomises glamour and ambition. The plot follows Reggie's journey through the dazzling yet ruthless world of fashion, where her every move is scrutinised, and every success is hard-won. Unlike "The Strange Obsession," where the conflict is deeply personal, "Insatiable" explores the external pressures and societal expectations that shape Reggie's life. Her insatiable desire for success and recognition drives the narrative, revealing the sacrifices and moral compromises she must make to stay on top. The plot weaves through various episodes of Reggie's life, portraying her interactions with a host of characters who embody the superficial and competitive nature of the society she inhabits. Through Reggie's eyes, the novel critiques the vacuous pursuit of fame and the often hollow victories that come with it. The story's momentum is sustained by its fast-paced and satirical tone, providing a sharp contrast to the brooding intensity of "The Strange Obsession."

While both novels share themes of desire and the pursuit of fulfilment, their plots differ significantly in scope and focus. "The Strange Obsession" is an intimate psychological thriller that zeroes in on the toxic dynamics between two individuals, making the reader a witness to the harrowing descent into obsession. The plot's power lies in its ability to convey the claustrophobic and all-consuming nature of Meenakshi's fixation on Amrita. On the other hand, "Insatiable" casts a wider net, capturing the frenetic energy and superficial glamour of high society. Its plot is driven by external conflicts and societal pressures, offering a broader critique of the lengths to which people go to achieve success and the often empty nature of such achievements. The juxtaposition of the personal and psychological in "The Strange Obsession" with the social and satirical in "Insatiable" showcases Shobhaa De's versatility as a writer and her keen insight into different facets of human desire and ambition. Both novels, through their distinct plots, provide rich and provocative examinations of the complexities of human relationships and the relentless pursuit of personal goals. In the course of comparing "The Strange Obsession" by Shobhaa De and "Insatiable" by Meg Cabot, one will undoubtedly need to look at a number of thematic elements and aspects of character development and narrative styles associated with both books. Despite the fact that these two novels have been written by authors belonging to different cultural heritages and oriented towards dissimilar target readers, they still attempt to unknot one of the mysterious human emotions and relationships that make up a large part of human life. Therefore, they turn out to be interesting subjects for comparative analysis.

"The Strange Obsession" is a book that understands the dark and abstract features of longing and its obsession. Shobhaa De is a major Indian writer who relates the story about Amrita, a young woman who has got the love in her life, and the lover turns out to be someone who doesn't want to let her go. Set against the dazzling backdrop of Mumbai, this novel brings out the pressures of city life and hard-won battles of women in post-modern India. The story is intense and powerful, drawing readers into a world where the boundaries between love and obsession become blurred. The novel deals with issues of identity, power, and the psychological effects of obsession.

And then, there's "Insatiable" by Meg Cabot, the queen of teen chick-lit. The story revolves around the protagonist, Meena Harper, a soap opera writer who has the unequivocal ability to see the death among the people. Her life turns dramatically when she gets mixed with a vampire, Lucien Antonescu, and his world. Cabot's novel is set in contemporary New York and is a marriage of the gothic romance, humour, and the supernatural. It deals with love, identity, and the eternal battle between good and evil but maintains an overall light-hearted, humorous tone.

One key area common in the two books is that of character development. Character development in "The Strange Obsession" includes that of Amrita; it was a complex one, undergoing the same social pressures and personal dilemmas women face in India. It chronicles her psychological disintegration from a convinced, self-directed woman to an obsessed person. On the contrary, Meena Harper in "Insatiable" is a very relatable, and comically-inclined protagonist. Her appended ability to foresee people's deaths is what makes her character have a rather unique twist. Thereby, she is more than just the prototype heroine in romance. In Meena, Cabot presents one acceptance of one's uniqueness and the acceptance of herself.

One more difference—and this is critical to the flavour of the book—the narrative style of De and Cabot. De's writing, in "The Strange Obsession", is very intense and very descriptive. She really allows one to feel the tension and apprehension and feel one's way into this seriously dark, sinister world of obsession. Her vivid-nosed portrayal of Mumbai adds to the atmospheric quality of the novel, making the city nearly a character in its own right. In contrast, Cabot's "Insatiable" is marked by her wit and conversational tone. The book is relatively cheerful, though the plot is very fast, humorous, and of irresistible interest at the same time. Cabot can therefore take the edge of the darker themes with her humour and make her storytelling have a real quirky charm.



The themes in both novels revolve around obsession, though the angle of argument differs. \*The Strange Obsession\* probes the destructive nature of such an obsession, which is capable of engulfing and destroying lives. It explores in detail how such a psychosis can affect not only the obsessed but also the object of his obsession and draws a thin line between love and madness. In \*Insatiable\*, obsession is shown from the point of view of supernatural romance. In this book, Meena and Lucien's obsession is strong and at the same time balanced against the humour and fantasy in the plot. It talks about the parasitic hold that the paranormal and forbidden love hold over most readers. In the final analysis, the two books, \*The Strange Obsession\* and \*Insatiable\*, give rich contrasting views on the issue of obsession. While Shobha De's novel is an inside, psychological investigation set amidst the vivid and challenging milieu of Mumbai, Meg Cabot's book lightens up into a more humorous take on supernatural romance in modern-day New York. These novels, with touches of distinctly different characters and styles of narration, push the reader into thinking about the complications of human emotions and relationships.

### III. INSATIABLE

'Anything worth doing, transcends borders. Should I do nothing at all...?'

-Geetanjali Shree, Tomb of Sand

PERHAPS THE 'CONVERSATION' WITH MYSELF BEGAN IN TAIPUR IN

2022. At the fifteenth edition of the iconic Jaipur Literature Festival

(ILF), I found myself looking for Anuradha in the lit-fest crowds, rushing from one session to the next. Anuradha, the little girl who got lost in the melee decades ago but continues to show up in my dreams to remind me that she's still very much alive. I just have to look much harder. I have been searching for Anuradha for more than seventy years. No luck so far.

Does she even exist? Did she ever exist? Have I invented Anuradha? And who is Anuradha, you may ask.

I was born under the Anuradha nakshatra, and my parents named me after it—as per the tradition in Saraswat Brahmin homes. And then, Tatyā, my father's despotic brother, decided the name was too long.

'How will her full name sound later in life? Anuradha Rajadhyaksha?

Change it to something shorter. Call her Shobha, and pray she brings some "shobha" to your family. Now that you have a third daughter and fourth child let us at least name her correctly,' he had said.

My parents promptly obeyed. Nobody challenged Tatyā. Least of all a brother who was twenty-two years younger — my father, Govind Hari.

Maybe Tatyā killed Anuradha there and then without knowing it. When the story was narrated to me, I was around five years old. I burst into tears.

I cried and cried. I hated my very pleb-sounding name—Shobha! I begged my parents to start calling me Anuradha. But it was too late. Shobha stuck!

I preferred Anuradha; it was classy and classical. I felt Anuradha. I still feel Anuradha. I want to be Anuradha. Only Anuradha.

After my session at the festival, as I was escorted to the book-signing tent, the voice spoke to me again. But softly. I was reminded about a commitment I had made as I inched closer and closer to a landmark birthday in January 2023. A book was expected. It had to be written. I had no idea what to write. Zero. I was sure about what I didn't want to write: '75 Life Lessons'. At heart, I remain a vagabond, a loafer, a gypsy, a voyeur. I have no wisdom' to impart. No gyaan. I feel within what I have always felt—I remain an easily excitable, capricious, unruly, rebellious, uncontrollably impetuous, joyously immature schoolgirl constantly in search of 'newness', adventure, discoveries. But, frankly, one thing was clear and shouting for attention: I one hundred per cent wanted to mark my seventy-fifth with a book. Call it ego, vanity, a childish, attention-seeking need to declare, 'Hey! It's my special birthday! I may have finally grown up!' In Japan, when a person turns sixty, they don a big red hat to celebrate a second childhood. I was closing in on my third! A red hat alone seemed inadequate. A red cape? Why not?

So here's my book! Indulge me and I promise not to be three things-profound, pedantic and pretentious. Qualities I abhor! Instead, how about being authentic? Chatty and chatpata? Conversational and conspiratorial, as I jump from memories of food and friendships, family and fabulousness? Textures and colours and snacky tidbits from my life.

This is my personal food court, folks, and you are all invited! The masala mix is my very own recipe with a bit of mirch, khatta-meetha elements and dollops of spice to tease the palate. Tongue pe lagaam rakho? Never!



I take food far more seriously than I take people. Food speaks to me in a language of unfiltered, uncensored love. Food fidelity counts! It remains the most passionate and enduring affair in my life, with negligible collateral damage. My heart, mind and stomach are in a committed relationship with all things edible ...

Being a compulsive people-watcher, I love to spy on the unsuspecting enjoying their meals. How, when, where and what someone eats tells you as much as the person's janam kundali. It reveals habits, upbringing, attitudes, sensitivities, preferences, fetishes, cravings, hang-ups, obsessions ... You are warned! I am watching!

Friendships must be built on a solid foundation of alcohol, sarcasm, inappropriateness and shenanigans ...

- Anonymous

What if I had written this book while sipping wine, not chaas? Would it have been different or same-same? Right now, I'm sipping chilled chaas, not chilled Dog Point (my all-time favourite Sauvignon Blanc, accidentally discovered by Avantikka and me in Dubai, after escaping from a dry Sharjah Lit Fest), and staring crossly at a rapidly wilting chrysanthemum—a beauty I had bought for two hundred rupees from my neighbourhood florist, who gives me a discount (I'm really cheap and love discounts) because he used to be Mr De's stockist for orchids and anthuriums years ago. It's a good feeling to retain sentimental relationships that have nothing to do with 'matlab'. The chrysanthemum had seductively beckoned me when I was at his shop surveying dozens of liliams cooling off in blue plastic buckets. I was debating whether to buy unopened liliam buds or go for button daisies that resembled pretty nipples when the chrysanthemums caught my eye and I grabbed one.

My subsequent disappointment was because the flower was sulking and not doing what it's supposed to do, according to Japanese legend—keep unfolding its beautiful petals, layer by layer.

After getting it home, I had done my best by placing it in a cut-glass bud vase. More importantly, I had added last evening's leftover white wine, and some sugar to keep up the bloom's spirit, given the beastly heat.

But there it is now ... baleful and pouty, despite the place of honour given to it on my dining table, right next to my most favourite possession—a plastic desk calendar I cannot live without.

My entire life is tabulated on the leaves of such calendars. It even bears records of menstrual cycles—mine, when I was still menstruating—and now my daughters'. If I've not created an entry, then sorry, it doesn't exist, whatever it is. One quick look at the leaves before going to bed tells me how my life is going to pan out over the next few months. Blank leaves

suggesting a certain waywardness and caprice—I could be anywhere, go anywhere, do as I please.

The plastic desk calendar is my security blanket. It's my walking stick, my crutch. Without it, I'm disoriented and irritable. Why don't you use the Notes app in your phone, Mother?' the children ask, perplexed by my dependence on the ugly, brown, box-like thing which accompanies me on all my travels, including weekend getaways. How will they understand what I feel about my calendar? They aren't used to the idea of physical calendars or diaries. And I am addicted to both.

I only trust what I write down myself. If the writing ain't mine, please ignore whatever you read. My devotion to the calendar borders on the manic. Withdrawal happens if I open my suitcase in some exotic destination and discover I've left the calendar behind. My vacay is ruined right there and then! If people text about something I have to attend/complete/start/reject, instant panic sets in. I feel flustered and start to stammer, apologising profusely for not being able to commit one way or the other till my return, when I'll reunite with the blessed calendar! 'That's pretty pathetic, Mother, my children comment, rolling their eyes. I am adept at ignoring the eye rolls. Roll away, I say!

The plastic desk calendar works just fine for me as it has done for years.

I happily acknowledge the dependency. It's my drug, this plastic calendar.

Come September, and I get withdrawal symptoms. I have to place the order for next year's calendar with the local stationery dukaan. My eyes light up expectantly when it arrives. Wow! What does next year look like?

Busy? Great! What's so amazing about voice notes and memos stored in the iPhone? It's just a device! It can be misplaced or stolen. Then what?

Who'll steal my ugly desk calendar, huh? And, excuse me, it's not just an object. It is my lifeline.

No calendar: No focus. No structure. No schedule. No discipline. No life. One big blank.

Hi I start flipping through the hectic schedule scribbled on the leaves.



The year is already looking overcrowded with multiple commitments. I'm starting to feel 'extra', like Priyanka Chopra or Kim Kardashian. Wow!

How am I going to manage my time in 2022 without messing up? Of course, I prioritize! But I need serious pruning if I am to keep pace with all that I have to honour.

Flipping through this little calendar, I'm suddenly struck by inspiration. Of course ... the structure of my book is right in front of me.

And so the book starts writing itself, month by month, following the same rhythm noted in the calendar. The narrative comes to life in my mind as snippets and reflections of a year in my life. Connecting all of it is food—delicious, glorious khaana, definitely some peena, and all the emotions that go into stirring the memory pot, the flavours and aromas shared with family and friends as we speed through 2022, gaining experiences and definitely gaining kilos while consoling ourselves. This is a personal ode to food, family and friendship—my way of expressing gratitude to all the ingredients that have added so much zest to my seventy-five years.

#### IV. STRANGE OBSESSION

"Unusual Fixation" by Shobhaa De is a holding mental thriller that dives into the dull domains of fanatical cherish and its annihilating results. The novel centres around Amrita, a youthful, excellent, and yearning lady who moves to Mumbai with dreams of getting to be a fruitful show. Her life takes an unforeseen turn when she experiences Meenakshi, an puzzling and capable lady whose interest with Amrita rapidly raises into an all-consuming obsession.

Amrita's travel starts with energy and trust as she navigates the bustling world of design and modelling. In any case, her way crosses with Meenakshi, who gets to be charmed with her. At first, Meenakshi's consideration appears complimenting and generous, but it before long gets to be apparent that her intrigued in Amrita is distant from conventional. Meenakshi is not fair captivated by Amrita's excellence and charm; she is decided to have her, both physically and emotionally. Meenakshi's fixation shows in progressively meddling and controlling behaviour.

She controls circumstances to separate Amrita from her companions and family, guaranteeing that she remains the central figure in Amrita's life. Meenakshi's dominance is not simply enthusiastic but amplifies to a vile mental control. She applies her control through a combination of charm, traumatising, and mental diversions, clearing out Amrita in a state of perplexity and helplessness.

The novel takes the peruser through the nerve racking impacts of Meenakshi's fixation on Amrita's life. Amrita finds herself caught in a nightmarish relationship where her independence and sense of self are continually beneath attack. The mental pressure heightens as Meenakshi's possessiveness turns progressively threatening, coming full circle in acts of physical viciousness and passionate manhandle. The once dynamic and certain Amrita is diminished to a shadow of her previous self, battling to recover her character and freedom.

De's depiction of Meenakshi is complex and layered. She is not a one-dimensional lowlife but a profoundly disturbed person whose fixation is established in her claim frailties and mental issues. This complexity includes profundity to the story, making the peruser consider the inspirations behind such dangerous behaviour. Meenakshi's character serves as a stark update of how cherish, when turned by fixation, can gotten to be a damaging force.

"Strange Fixation" is too a commentary on the helplessness of ladies in a patriarchal society.

Amrita's trial is compounded by the need of back and understanding from those around her.

Her battle against Meenakshi's control is not fair a individual fight but too a battle against societal standards that regularly reject or weaken the encounters of women. The novel's seriously mental center is coordinated by De's reminiscent composing fashion, which disappearing thing else into heritage rapture. enchant is of fanatical love.

In rundown, "Interesting Fixation" is a effective investigation of the damaging nature of fixation and the mental dread it can dispense on its casualties. Through the nerve racking. travel of Amrita and the complex depiction of Meenakshi, Shobhaa De makes a chilling story that remains with the peruser long after the last page. The novel is a stark update of the lean line between adore and fixation and the destroying affect when that line is crossed.



## **V. CONTEMPORARY INDIAN LITERATURE**

Contemporary Indian literature is a dynamic and multifaceted field that mirrors the complex social, cultural, and political landscape of modern India. Spanning a range of genres, languages, and themes, it captures the diverse experiences and aspirations of India's population, reflecting the country's rapid changes and enduring traditions. This body of work is marked by its engagement with global literary trends while remaining deeply rooted in regional and national contexts.

One of the defining characteristics of contemporary Indian literature is its linguistic diversity. India is home to numerous languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu, Urdu, and English, among others. Each language brings its unique cultural and literary traditions to the table, enriching the overall tapestry of Indian literature. Authors writing in regional languages often explore local histories, folklore, and social issues, providing a counterpoint to the more globally-oriented narratives found in English-language literature. For instance, writers like Mahasweta Devi, who wrote in Bengali, addressed the plight of marginalised communities and tribal peoples, blending social activism with literary expression.

English-language literature in India has gained significant international recognition, with authors such as Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, and Jhumpa Lahiri achieving global acclaim. Rushdie's "Midnight's Children" is often credited with bringing Indian English literature to the forefront of the global literary scene, blending magical realism with historical fiction to tell the story of India's post-independence generation. Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things," which won the Booker Prize, is another landmark work that explores themes of family, caste, and forbidden love against the backdrop of Kerala's lush landscape.

Contemporary Indian literature often grapples with the themes of identity and hybridity. As India has undergone significant socio-economic transformations, including globalisation and urbanisation, writers have delved into the complexities of modern Indian identity. The diasporic experience is a recurrent theme, with authors like Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni exploring the tensions between tradition and modernity, and the cultural negotiations of Indian immigrants in the West. These narratives provide a nuanced perspective on the immigrant experience, highlighting issues of cultural displacement, nostalgia, and the quest for belonging.

Social and political issues are also central to contemporary Indian literature. The country's ongoing struggles with caste discrimination, gender inequality, communal violence, and corruption find powerful expression in the works of many writers. Dalit literature, written by authors from historically marginalised castes, has emerged as a significant and influential genre. Writers like Bama, Om Prakash Valmiki, and Arjun Dangle use their works to challenge caste oppression and advocate for social justice, providing a voice to those who have been silenced for centuries.

Gender and sexuality are prominent themes as well, with a growing number of female and LGBTQ+ authors challenging patriarchal norms and exploring the complexities of gender identity and sexual orientation. Authors like Shobha De, who writes about urban women's lives and their sexual liberation, and Ismat Chughtai, whose works address female desire and homosexual relationships, have pushed the boundaries of traditional narratives. Contemporary authors like Anjum Hasan and Arundhati Subramaniam continue this trend, offering fresh perspectives on women's experiences in modern India.

The intersection of tradition and modernity is another prevalent theme. Many writers grapple with the tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing contemporary values. This is evident in the works of Vikram Seth, whose novel "A Suitable Boy" portrays the clash between tradition and change in post-independence India, and Anita Desai, who often explores the inner lives of individuals caught between old customs and new realities.

Regional literature continues to thrive, with authors bringing to light the specificities of local cultures and issues. For instance, Tamil writer Perumal Murugan's works offer a poignant look at rural life and caste dynamics, while Malayalam author M. T. Vasudevan Nair's stories often delve into the intricacies of human relationships and regional history. These regional narratives are crucial in preserving and promoting India's linguistic and cultural diversity.

In addition to fiction, contemporary Indian poetry has also seen a resurgence, with poets like Jeet Thayil and Arundhati Subramaniam gaining prominence. Their works often reflect the urban experience, personal introspection, and social critique, blending traditional forms with modern sensibilities.



The digital age has further expanded the horizons of Indian literature, with new platforms for publishing and storytelling emerging. Online literary magazines, social media, and digital self-publishing have democratized the literary landscape, allowing a wider range of voices to be heard.

In summary, contemporary Indian literature is a vibrant and evolving field that captures the multiplicity of Indian experiences. It bridges the gap between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern, providing a rich and varied literary landscape that continues to grow and innovate. Through its diverse voices and themes, it offers profound insights into the human condition and the complex reality of contemporary India.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The comparative study of "Strange Obsession" and "Insatiable" by Shobha De reveals the author's nuanced approach to themes of obsession, desire, and societal norms. Through interviews with the author and readers, as well as references to critical studies and theoretical frameworks, this appendix underscores the complexity and impact of De's literary contributions. The reference books listed provide further avenues for exploring the intricate layers of meaning in De's work and situate her novels within the broader landscape of Indian English literature.

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