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**The Transformation Of American Culture In Stephen King's
*From A Buick 8***

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Abstract: *Technology is a fast growing demon in this modern world, which tries to control the whole world with its power. The present generation is on the side of fascination with deadly things are the main reason for this terrible change. The novel From A Buick 8 portrays Stephen King's vintage ghost- car, the 1953 Buick Roadmaster that scrutinizes a strange modern kind of haunting. It examines the American individual and collective identity in terms of relationships with cars and that examines an alternate history of the automobiles. It reveals the destructive and terrible power of these mechanized beasts. The paper highlights the changes that take place in American culture and society in the form of technology and how this new beast destroyed the spiritual thoughts of every American individual.*

Key Words: *American Psyche, Automobiles, Strange changes, Culture, Technology, Terror and supernatural car.*

The paper brings out the connection of technology with American culture through the novel *From a Buick 8* (2002) by Stephen Edwin King, a prolific, prominent and popular author of horror fiction. Basically, King's horror stories focus on the hunting house, ghost, and death, monstrous and terrific power that men possess. But this modern haunting novel *From a Buick 8* is distinctive from the King's preceding creation. The novel highlights and mirrors the American's fascination with deadly things that provides nothing but terror. It is not made of flesh or bone. It is made of steel, iron, and chrome. This work has given a new dimensional care to create such appearance that they have headlights for eyes, snarling grilles for mouths, and wheels for legs which is both of the worlds and disconnects from it. It symbolizes the past, shows the fears of the present, and asserts a portion for the future. It is indeed ghost but not typical of the ghosts that haunt modern-day fiction, television, or a film. King's ghost cars hike frightening questions: who's driving whom? Are we in control of technology or is technology in control of us? Ultimately, King's spectral automobiles show the current American fear of spiritual loss in the face of technological advancement.

It must be accepted that cars have power. It is very difficult to measure its power by horsepower alone but also by the images they display in American Culture. For the clear description, it is necessary to get into the first decade of the twentieth century when the motion picture was invented, cars have has its unique place and left a lasting mark in film, photographs, and advertisements, and on the American Psyche. This information conveys the intimate connection between American and its automobiles.

As a contemporary author, King questions the grandeur of America's automobiles and explores their influence on our individual and collective consciousness through the novel *From a Buick 8*. The automobile, King suggests, has forged an unassailable link in the chain of our identity, our history, and our future. Like it or not our cars have become a part of who we are. And King through his ghostly vintage car reminds us that the advance of technology holds both great promise and great danger as well. It is evident that the technological advancement is not new to the world which is a main state of terror in recent development.

The imitation lives we see on TV and in the movies whisper the idea that human existence consists of revelations and abrupt changes of heart; by the time we have reached full adulthood ... we have on some level come to accept. Such things may happen from time to time, but I think that for the most part, it's a lie. Life's changes come slowly. (From a Buick 8 307)

King's *From a Buick 8* delves our apex of fear, which the technology is careening out of control. Cars, cell phones, computers and other technological gadgets have burrowed into the fabric of our lives which was once a less complicated thing for mankind. King adapts the traditional ghost story to reflect the changing world around us and the pervasive sense of technology out of control. His ghost, in fact, becomes technological constructs with apocalyptic overtones.

The novel *From a Buick 8*, published in the 21st century is King's treatment of control over technology. In it, members of the state police in Pennsylvania's Troop D come into possession of an abandoned vintage '53 Buick Roadmaster which soon proves to have otherworldly powers. Troop D is largely spared from the gruesome violent deaths inherent in these 21st-century warriors connected the dots and respect the Road master's obvious power. King's new ghost car in *From a Buick 8* is a powerful force that must be respected and revered not harnessed, controlled, and destroyed. The locus of control clearly lies with the Buick and coexistence is the only option for King's police force.

King's Buick Roadmaster focuses the flip side of a technological ghost twenty years in the making. The ghostly Buick Roadmaster shows off the destruction of humanity. They cannot escape from the power of this ghost. The best course of action they can do is not to disturb it and if they do the whole humankind has to face the related consequences. This ghost is too real and speaks a truth which is too powerful to ignore. The technology cannot be avoided and it is to be respected but it is dangerously close to careening out of our immediate control.

From a Buick 8 represents not only the King's coming of age story for his vintage ghost cars but also the general comments on modern technology. King purposely pits his ghostly Buick Roadmaster against a group of characters which epitomizes the apex of authority and control of state troopers. Instead of proclaiming one side stronger than the other, King's 21st-century novel puts his human characters on an even playing field with his spectral technological construct.

Responding to a routine call Pennsylvania State Troopers Curtis Wilcox and Ennis Rafferty arrive to find what they believe is a mint-condition 53 Buick Roadmaster was disregarded at a local gas station. The workings of the car which was driven into the station and abandoned by a mysterious man confront certain logical explanation. It has an engine and contains a battery with no cables, an empty radiator, an ignition key that is nothing more than a long piece of metal, dashboard controls that are fake, an exhaust system made of glass, and no glove compartment (39-40). Buick's light shows not only symbolize its power of uneasiness but portend a power beyond mankind's control. In this case, it represents a technological ghost from the past which has emerged into the present as an issue and threat to mankind. It could be considered as a dangerous storm which is not in control.

Wilcox soon becomes preoccupied with the Buick and quickly claims guardianship over it. It is important to note that Wilcox is aware of his obsession which limits the control it might otherwise have over him. It is equally important to point out that Wilcox's guardianship over the

Buick is a more mature guardianship. Wilcox understands and respects the car's power and also he is aware of the psychological spell which the car possesses. He and other members of Troop D fall under a temporary spell when in direct contact with the Buick, it is never long-lasting and they are always aware of its power. King gives his characters credit for understanding and acknowledging the psychological hold technology has over them.

Wilcox dies as a result of his protection of the Buick. He assumed his role willingly with the hope of unravelling the car's mystery and understanding its power. Without this understanding, he knows that the Buick can destroy not only Troop D but possibly the world as well. Unfortunately, after years of safeguarding the Buick Wilcox is killed while stopping a truck in the line of duty and he never solves the mystery of the Buick's power. However his teenage son Ned soon shows up at Troop D to volunteer and more importantly to learn about his father. As he is told the story of the Buick it becomes clear that Wilcox and the rest of Troop D have kept the Buick's really a secret. They have chosen to watch, guard it, and coexist with it in order better to grasp its destructive ability. The Buick's representation is clear and King's decision to keep his characters safe from lasting psychological harm offers hope in the face of our collective fear of technology which has driven crazy.

With his hunted Buick King takes a more rational and mature look at our interaction with technological inventions. The 1980s technological explosion of computers and endless computerized gadgetry has defined our way of life. We are more rational and less reactive to this age of technology that is undeniable here to stay but now it leads to forced and unnatural state of coexistence. According to King Americans are no longer exhibiting the raw and reactive fear of two decades ago as shown by the respect the law enforcement officers of Troop D give the Buick but the fear remains and is entrapped within the American psyche.

More than anything King's haunted Buick is referred throughout the story as a possible conduit into another world that represents the dangerous precipice of contemporary technology. King remind us that we don't know the full power of the technological beasts we have created.

King's ghost cars speak volumes about contemporary American society. King's ghost cars are technological constructs underlies the undeniable presence of technology in our physical world and our collective psyche. The birth of the automobile literally changed the American landscape covering the green grass with the black tar of technology and our reliance on our vehicles and technology, in general, has produced a society which is technologically advanced and individually independent.

King's ghost cars capture the essence of our changing relationship with technology from the hormonal excitement of journeying into new dimensions to a cautious reserve highlighting the deliberate coexistence. King himself expresses the dubious nature of the final destination.

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