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# Bodies in Motion

## Evolution and Experience in Motorcycling

by Steven L. Thompson  
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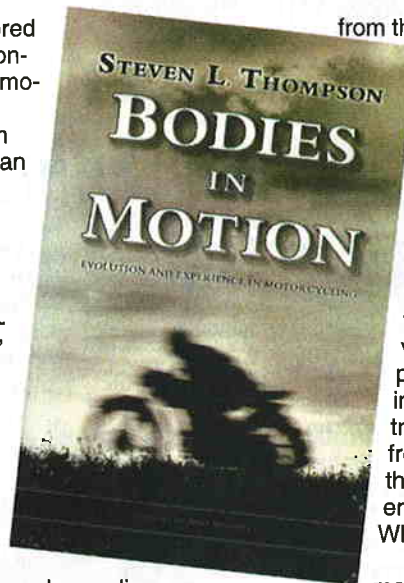
**“W**hy” we ride is a question most motorcyclists have been asked ... if not by others, then by themselves. Whatever answer comes up, it’s usually a variation of “because I like it!” But ... why? That’s the question that has bugged Steven L. Thompson for years.

Thompson, whose resume lists stints on the editorial staffs of “Cycle Guide,” “Cycle World,” “Car and Driver,” “Road Test,” “AOPA Pilot,” “AutoWeek,” and “Technology and Culture,” plus six published novels, has made a career of thinking about how and why we put our bodies in motion. In his newest book—certainly one of the most ambitious examinations of man and machine relations ever attempted—he makes some bold, even astounding assertions. Then he backs them up with well-reasoned, extensively researched, copiously footnoted, oftentimes eloquent prose.

This is not an easy book. But like “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,”

another book that explored the psychological relationship between man and motorcycle—albeit from a wholly different direction—“Bodies in Motion” is an edifying read.

The basic premise of “Bodies in Motion” is simple: “... we ride primarily for physical—or more precisely, psycho-biological—reasons ...” Thompson traces our attraction for the particular “automobility” that draws certain humans to motorcycles all the way back to our primordial ancestors cavorting through the treetops. The narrative can be as dizzying as swinging from vine to vine, too. Thompson fast-forwards through the eons,



from the times that man forgot to modern times—to future times—like referencing Woody Allen’s classic comedy about times to come, “Sleeper,” and its “Orgasmatron,” which automatically induces ... well, you know. Somehow, Thompson makes a perfectly logical connection from that fanciful device to our own endorphin-producing machines, pointing out that “... the Orgasmatron is no different in principle from any artificial stimulant ... that we make or use to generate pleasure for ourselves.” What fun!

Fun, in fact, is what ultimately motivates our choice of motivation. But why different people feel different vibes from different bikes is an

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