

On Dec 29, 2008, at 10:06 PM, Mike Traynor wrote:

I just finished reading Steven Thompson's 417 page tome entitled "Bodies in Motion" published by Aero Design, which is a thinly disguised facet of Andy Goldfine's motorcycle gear empire. It is comprised of 209 pages of Thompson's theorem on why one man cannot get enough motorcycle saddle time, and another man proffers to avoid such machinery all together. Then it finishes up with another 206 pages of scientific statistics and graphs to support Thompson's suspicion that a major factor in machine selection is divined by the amount and type of vibration that the engine emits. While he does not scientifically display the varying types of sound he does note that it too is a harbinger of which machine will be preferred by various segments of two wheel sound or noise pursuant and how that in turn affects the culture of the rider. Thompson's name may sound familiar as he has previously penned articles in Cycle World, Cycle Guide, Road Test and Car and Driver.

If you read Pirsig's iconic "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" back in the 70's, I mean you actually read all of it, then you will not only delight in Thompson's opinions and conclusions but you will understand what he is saying. I did read all of Pirsig's book but if the truth were to be known, it took me weeks to complete it as I struggled to really understand what the blue blazes he was talking about. Thompson's book is not nearly that hazy but it has been a slow read for me as I genuinely would like to know why I, and so many of my riding associates, are so addicted to riding a motorcycle in all kinds of weather and under what can sometimes be referred to as "lacking in good judgment" situations. I have had more than one close friend wonder aloud why I would rather ride my motorcycle great distances through sometimes dangerous weather when I could have just as easily flown or driven a car to my destination. Perhaps foolishly, I have tried to explain the intrinsic elevation of my inner self derived from every ride, but especially so in particularly inclement weather. I say "foolishly" because not only did I get the "deer in the headlights look" but I honestly have not known the real "why" myself. Until now I could define the what, but not the why. After reading this I came to better understand my welcome addiction to 2 wheels.

To the degree that I now have a better grasp on this internal awareness, that is what Thompson is attempting to help the reader do in "Bodies in Motion", evaluate, educate and articulate the riding experience outcomes to those who have and have not ridden. While a full understanding of the rationale of why we ride will not bring about world peace or end global hunger, it is a fascinating read and if you have a scholarly bent and ride extensively, you will be intrigued by the author's suppositions and conclusions. It's a great book to pass dull winter days with. A surprise is also in store for you when you read Andy G's in depth "Forward" which seeks to frame this piece of writing as an answer many of us have wondered about for years. You can purchase it from Aerostich at www.aerostich.com.

Just in case my description does not invoke an impassioned interest in reading the book, that may actually be quite an endorsement because Pirsig's "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" was originally rejected by 121 publishers before it made it to press, and then went on to sell millions of copies in 27 languages, and was described by the press as "the most widely read philosophy book, ever".

I hope you find "Bodies in Motion" as thought provoking as I did.

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