
Judith B. Barnett

URI, barnettj@uri.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/lib_ts_pubs

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Terms of Use
This article is made available under the terms and conditions applicable towards Open Access Policy Articles, as set forth in our Terms of Use.

Citation/Publisher Attribution

This Book Review is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in Technical Services Department Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

Tracing the evolutionary history of locomotion from single celled animals to humans, Wilkinson (Zoology, Univ. of Cambridge) demonstrates how the need to move has shaped the living world. His broad definition of locomotion includes the dispersal of seeds and pollen by plants and closing of Venus flytrap leaves, and the use of muscle contractions by sponges and jellyfish to move in the marine environment. The survival of any creature depends upon locomotion and the physical laws that govern it. The author describes human gait in comparison to that of chimpanzees, explains why humans cannot fly, and discusses the evolution of the backbone which makes swimming efficient. Wilkinson’s Ph.D. research on the subject of pterodactyl flight gives him insight into the evolutionary path from dinosaurs to birds. He concludes with a discussion of the deleterious effects of both cars and mass transit on the human ability to walk. VERDICT: Illustrated with drawings and photographs, this book is aimed at undergraduates and the general reader with some background in biology. While Wallace Arthur's “Evolving Animals : the Story of our Kingdom” (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014) is wider in scope, this work deeply investigates the importance of locomotion to all life forms. A 15 page bibliography and index are included.