

Having developed his main theoretical ideas, in later chapters of the *Origin* Darwin addresses particular phenomena, especially those that pose problems for his theory. This passage (Chapter 7, pp. 224-235) is from his chapter on instincts, which features a long and careful discussion of how bees construct honeycomb. In this passage we see a different side of Darwin's intellectual powers- his ability to immerse himself obsessively in tiny empirical details.

This obsessiveness is captured by Nicholas Vines' setting, which derives its musical materials and structure from the geometry of honeycomb construction. The piece presents regular changes in time signature, a reflection of the organization of a honeycomb lattice in a repeated structure involving two displaced layers. The piece also has a particular harmonic event of two seconds duration every twelve seconds, suggesting the internal regularity of the honeycomb structure. Within this meticulous geometric framework, the tone of the piece is one of ecstatic immersion, reflecting both Darwin's obsessive immersion in his work and the frantic activity of the bees themselves. Vines write that "waxing and waning tremolo and trills mimic" the "score of individuals" Darwin describes at work on the comb, and the piece ends with a "final ecstatic heraldry" for the scientific conclusion Darwin reaches at the end of the passage.