

This is a book with an agenda, not an argument. The cover picture shows a yellow star superimposed on a mushroom cloud, misleadingly implying that the atomic bomb was responsible for the Holocaust. By the end of this book, you could be forgiven for concluding — just as wrongly — that Jewish physicists should be blamed for creating the weapon of mass destruction that ignited the Cold War. As indicated by the title of the first chapter, 'Neutrons and Nazis', Fraser opportunistically links together topics that have little causal connection. The programmes to develop

a bomb and exterminate the Jewish population evolved at around the same time, but this does not mean that they were, as the dust jacket puts it, "locked in a grisly race".

Fraser singles out Jews for near-exclusive attention, but soliciting sympathy in this way is a risky strategy. The Nazi persecution was, of course, appalling — and I write as someone whose relatives died in the camps at Auschwitz and Theresienstadt — but Jews were not the only victims during the Second World War. As just one obvious example, although this book celebrates

Jewish contributions to atomic research, it fails to mention the inhabitants of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the two Japanese cities devastated by US bombs after the German surrender. Winston Churchill memorably declared that history is written by the victors, but *The Quantum Exodus* converts the Manhattan project into a Jewish saga. □

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA FARA

Patricia Fara is the Senior Tutor of Clare College, University of Cambridge, Trinity Lane, Cambridge CB2 1TL, UK. Her latest book is *Science: A Four Thousand Year History* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2009).

Moore things to do with string

EXHIBITION

Sometime in the 1930s, sculptor Henry Moore took a stroll through London's Science Museum: "I was fascinated by the mathematical models I saw there," he said. The models in question — each an array of stretched strings — were made by Fabre de Lagrange, in Paris in 1872, as illustrations of 'descriptive geometry'.

The inspiration that Moore took from these remarkable objects into his own work is now explored in an exhibition, *Intersections: Henry Moore and Stringed Surfaces*, running jointly at the Royal Society and the Science Museum in London, in collaboration with the Henry Moore Foundation and Cambridge's Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences.

Descriptive geometry was an eighteenth-century invention of the French mathematician Gaspard Monge, who illustrated his work on ruled surfaces using strings stretched over a curved frame. His pupil Théodore Olivier expanded the technique using moveable frames to access a wider variety of geometrical shapes — such as the curves formed in three dimensions by the intersection of two ruled surfaces, which caught the eye of Moore.

The mathematical developments of the late nineteenth century had already found expression in the arts. As co-curator Barry Phipps notes in the exhibition catalogue, "writers such as H. G. Wells and artists like Marcel Duchamp were fascinated with non-Euclidean geometry and the idea of a spatial fourth dimension"; by the 1930s surrealist Man Ray, constructivist Naum Gabo and sculptor Barbara Hepworth were also taking inspiration from mathematical models. But for Moore, "it wasn't the scientific



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study of these models but the ability to look through the strings as with a bird cage and see one form within the other which excited me."

From 1937, Moore incorporated stretched strings in numerous works, which still also show his distinctive style for the representation of forms such as heads or figures. *Mother and child* was a strong theme for Moore, and is represented too in this collection by his *Mother and Child 1938*, in lead and yellow string and standing 11.9 cm

tall (LH 186; reproduced here by permission of the Henry Moore Foundation). □

ALISON WRIGHT

Intersections: Henry Moore and Stringed Surfaces runs until 20 June 2012 at the Royal Society, 6–9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG (by appointment, telephone 020 7451 2606) and at the Science Museum, Exhibition Road, South Kensington, London SW7 2DD, UK.