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## Obituary: Prof. Gérard Jorland

Marlon Salomon<sup>1</sup>

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This past August 22, the historiography of the sciences lost one of its most essential and discreet representatives. French philosopher and historian of sciences Gérard Jorland (1946-2018) died in Paris at age 71. He was a researcher at the CNRS and a professor at the Center for Historical Research at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris.

Gérard Jorland became internationally known with the publication of his *La Science dans la philosophie. Les recherches épistémologiques d'Alexandre Koyré*, published by the traditional and prestigious “*Bibliothèques des idées*” of Gallimard. This book, launched in early 1981, was a version of his doctoral thesis (*Doctorat d'État*), defended in May 1978 at the Sorbonne, under the guidance of Yvon Belaval. In addition to a rigorous, systematic and exhaustive study of Alexandre Koyré's work, Gérard Jorland reconstituted in this book the presuppositions and philosophical references that propelled and guided the French philosopher of Russian origin in his research. It was not directly in Husserl that one had to identify such philosophical presuppositions, but in the “Göttingen circle” gathered around Adolf Reinach. Phenomenology, in Koyré, was first and foremost a method (not a philosophy or metaphysics) of intuition of the essences. I said systematically and exhaustively: for the first time, Koyré's trajectory was indeed known before Koyré as the famous historian of science. Gérard Jorland had access to and researched the personal archives of the author of the book *From the closed world to the infinite universe*. These Archives would become public only years later, with the death of Mme. Koyré. Jorland used to remember with good humor the research and readings of these documents, then made in Mme. Koyré's apartment, which often interrupted him at his work, offering him a coffee and already engaging in a conversation.

Alexandre Koyré was not for Gérard Jorland a historiographical and philosophical monument of the twentieth century. He used to insist that it was necessary to think “with” Alexandre Koyré, to show how his way of thinking could still be extremely productive today. He did so in 1995 in *Les paradoxes du capital*, a fascinating study of the problem of the transformation of values into production price in the history of economic science, particularly in the long passage devoted to Marx's analysis. Erudite and profound work around very complex and even technical literature, it was responsible for the renovation of the image of Marx as an economist.

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<sup>1</sup> Marlon Salomon [Orcid: 0000-0002-2446-2141] is a Professor in the Faculty of History at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (Federal University of Goiás). Address: Av. Esperança, s/n, Campus Samambaia – Goiânia – GO, 74.690-900, Brazil. E-mail: marlonsalomon@ufg.br

More recently, in 2010, Gérard Jorland published *Une société à soigner. Hygiène et salubrité publiques en France au XIXe siècle*, an investigation into the birth and affirmation of hygiene. For him, the nineteenth century was that of public hygiene, of the “social clinic”. This history begins at the end of the eighteenth century, with the constitution of Lavoisier’s “episteme”, which marks the opening of a field for hygienist thinking and practice, which was not a discipline, but a connected set of disciplines, and extended to the early twentieth century, when the French parliament turned hygienist ideas into laws. The history of the sciences, for Gérard Jorland, was a philosophical history and not a social explanation of the sciences. Public hygiene acted upon and transformed the society throughout the nineteenth century and was not determined or woven by it. Distancing himself from contemporary social studies, Jorland showed in this book that sciences are not an effect of the social, but a fundamental factor in the development and transformation of contemporary societies. The recognition of the excellence of this work was immediate: in 2010 he was awarded the prize for the best history book (*Grand Prix de Rendez-Vous de l’Histoire*) and best philosophy book of the year (*Prix Gagner*).

Throughout his career, Gérard Jorland published and organized other books (an intellectual biography of Marc Ferro, for example), and wrote numerous articles and book chapters. He also stood out for his editorial work. In recent years, he worked on a project that interrelated the history of scientific thinking and aesthetic thinking.

When I talked to him a few years ago about the project we were developing for a new journal dedicated to the historiography of science, he was immediately enthusiastic and willing to cooperate with us. Gérard Jorland was an extraordinarily gentle and considerate man, as will inevitably attested by all those who have had the pleasure of knowing him. With his death, *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science* loses, more than a member of its Editorial Board, one of its first-time collaborators and supporters. Furthermore, the historiography of the sciences indeed loses one of its exemplary masters.

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