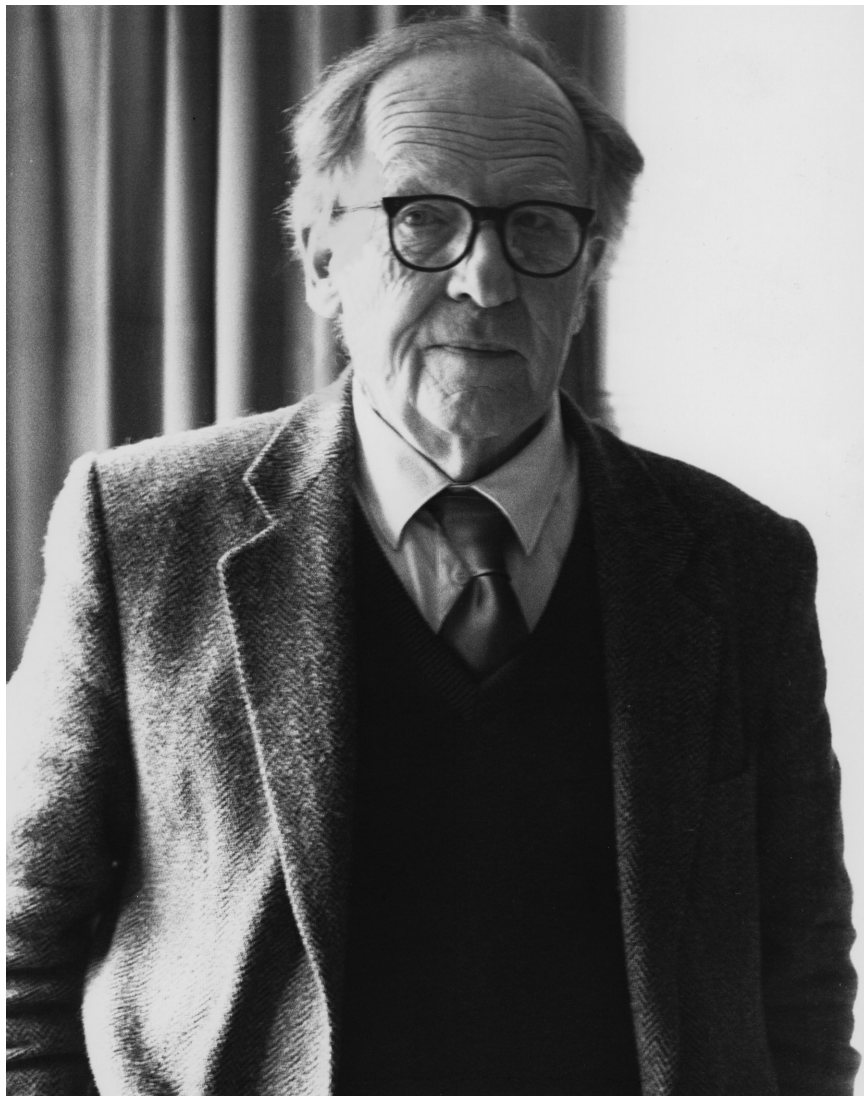

PATRICK GARDINER

Patrick Lancaster Gardiner 1922–1997

I

PATRICK LANCASTER GARDINER was born in London on 17 March 1922 to Alfred Clive Gardiner and Lilian Lancaster Gardiner, accomplished artists then living and working in Chelsea. Clive was a landscape and cityscape artist who later assumed the Principalship of Goldsmiths College; Lilian, who studied with Walter Sickert, became a successful portrait painter and was a considerable social presence in the London arts community. The Gardiners enjoyed an eclectic circle of friends who shared their attachment to the life of the mind and its aesthetic expression. The family home provided a lively domestic milieu for their two sons, Patrick and his younger brother Stephen, later distinguished equally as an architect and a writer on architecture and art. This circle was enhanced by the many political and literary associations of Clive's imposing father, the journalist and editor Alfred George Gardiner, better known simply as 'AGG'. AGG edited the *Daily News* from 1902 to 1919, when it was the major liberal daily in Britain (and the only prominent paper to declare its support for the Russian revolutionaries of 1917), wrote essays, commentaries and short stories, and took as much interest in cultural matters as political ones. Patrick Gardiner's childhood thus was spent in an environment that actively cultivated both the seriousness of purpose and the sensitivity to form that were to mark his work and character throughout his life.

Gardiner is best known and most widely esteemed for his work on the nature of historical explanation. This reputation as a specialist in the philosophy of history is certainly merited, but it is also incomplete and

Proceedings of the British Academy, **138**, 99–121.

somewhat misleading. It is incomplete because only one of Gardiner's three authored books and relatively few of his many articles and public lectures were concerned with the philosophy of history. It is misleading because it obscures the fact that historical explanation was only one arena in which Gardiner pursued the wider philosophical concern apparent in virtually all of his philosophical contributions, namely, the relation between 'personal' and 'impersonal' perspectives in various arenas of human activity. Philosophers sometimes refer to the 'limits of objectivity' in this or that subject area, and perhaps that phrase captures something of the problem informing and uniting Gardiner's work: how to delineate, in a given theoretical arena, the proper contributions of individual, first-personal or subjective points of view, as against those of more impersonal, objective or (sometimes) scientific ones.

That there exists a tension between first-personal and impersonal perspectives, and that it is important to achieve, where possible, some reconciliation between the two, are now familiar ideas in academic philosophy. Much of Gardiner's work, however, was ahead of its time in recognising the wider significance of this theme. By addressing the problem of the limits of objectivity in relation to a variety of philosophical issues, Gardiner presciently identified the source of a number of philosophical disputes well before they had properly developed. This was certainly the case in his treatment of historical explanation, and it is true too of his later treatment of the claims of the personal versus the impersonal in ethical life. The steadiness of this theme in Gardiner's writings will, however, be unobvious—even invisible—to anyone who does not actually read them. A catalogue of the titles or a glance through the abstracts of his published works does not reveal it. On the contrary, these easily suggest a philosopher of intellectually eclectic tastes contemplating a rather varied menu of theoretical issues—first occupied with Collingwood and Hempel on historical explanation (*The Nature of Historical Explanation,* 1952), then turning to the idealist and rather extravagant metaphysics of the German Idealists and especially Schopenhauer (*Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, 1969, and *Schopenhauer*, 1964), and later being charmed by the literary and artful armchair psychologies of Kierkegaard and Sartre (*Kierkegaard*, 1989). In all the books he published, however, Gardiner's readers will find him repeatedly targeting the relation between the claims of first-personal, experience-based conceptions of some subject and those of more impersonal and objective ones. This target, pursued from the start of his philosophical life to its conclusion more than half a century later, was not unrelated to his love of the arts and his highly discriminating

tastes in painting, poetry and music. After all, many of the best works of art—and particularly the best modernist works of visual and literary art which so intrigued Gardiner—maintain a precarious balance between two aims: on the one hand, the aim of portraying some subject faithfully and accurately and impersonally, and on the other hand, the aim of expressing the artist's (or some other subject's) highly specific, thoroughly personal and perhaps idiosyncratic manner of experiencing it. In any event, Gardiner's taste in philosophy more generally was not unlike his taste in works of art: he disliked sentimentality, ostentation and self-indulgence in all their forms, and yet admired works that bore the authentic stamp of the author's distinctive character and experiential point of view—so long as what they had to say could be held accountable to impersonal standards of intelligibility and truth.

Gardiner lived and was educated in his parents' Chelsea home until 1933, when he took up a place at Westminster School. Westminster proved to suit Gardiner perfectly as a second home, and the friends and interests he developed in his years there in some ways set the course for both his personal and intellectual future. Among Gardiner's contemporaries there were David Pears and Richard Wollheim, who in later years continued to count among his closest friends as well becoming valued philosophical colleagues. Another contemporary and associate at Westminster, if a less constant friend, was Hugh Lloyd-Jones, later to become Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. These talented young pupils made the most of the freedom Westminster then offered to cultivate their particular passions and to plough their own furrows, encouraged by the eccentric housemaster, John Bowle, to pursue thought and enquiry—and especially historical thought and enquiry—with courage and conviction, wherever it might lead. Gardiner was a serious student whose passion for literature and history was so intense that many of his peers and teachers assumed that one or the other of these would be his lifelong vocation. They were mistaken.

Gardiner matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, to read History in 1940, the same year in which Pears and Wollheim went up to Balliol. Just as they arrived, Oxford began offering shortened, two-year BA courses to conscriptable pupils, a category which included all three of the Westminster friends. Gardiner surprised his tutors by only taking a second in his Part I examinations at the end of his first year, but in his second and final year he won a first. Almost immediately after sitting their Final Honour Schools, Gardiner, Pears and Wollheim were called up, all into the Army. For the following three years Gardiner experienced a world for

which Westminster and Christ Church perhaps had done little to prepare him. He saw action in both North Africa and Italy as an officer in an armoured car regiment—although he could not drive (and never learned to). His war experiences affected him profoundly by all accounts. While he valued all he learned from them, certain memories remained deeply unsettling, particularly those of the Battle of Anzio, south of Rome, where Gardiner had been among the survivors of a long and unrelenting enemy bombardment. They endured many long days huddled together in a small, ruined farmhouse, most of them—including Gardiner—eventually so deprived of sleep that mere rational fear gave way to terrifying hallucinations. Gardiner returned to Anzio some thirty years later with his family, and there he sought out, and found, the farmhouse ruin to which he owed his life.

The intensity of the feelings provoked by Gardiner's first-hand encounter with the realities of war may account in part for his somewhat surprising concern, later in life, with certain political and social events in the world. Both before and during the war, Gardiner followed carefully the rise of National Socialism, using his command of German to read Hitler's speeches and to explore in other ways the extraordinary political culture of Nazi Germany. Gardiner was, as Sir Peter Strawson once remarked, 'the least fanatical of men'; in both his work and wider life he maintained a deeply sceptical attitude towards fanaticism in any form. Indeed, part of the subtlety and intellectual depth of Gardiner's philosophical work derives from his aversion to extremes and dogmatic absolutes: philosophical analysis, in Gardiner's hands, seldom yielded up statements that were both universal (or even highly general) and true. Instead Gardiner felt that the task of philosophical reflection was in no small part to expose the disconnections, the distinctions, the anomalies and the exceptions which less cautious and patient disciplines may overlook in their enthusiasm for theoretical generalities. Fanaticism and dogmatism of one kind or another can infect any organised endeavour, and throughout Gardiner's several decades at Oxford they touched the philosophical community often enough, as certain of his peers embraced first one local philosophical fashion and then another: Ayer's logical positivism captivated Oxford philosophy in the late 1930s and was still setting the tone on Gardiner's arrival in 1940; this enthusiasm gave way, in the later 1940s and early 1950s, to an equally intense one for Rylean behaviourism and other Wittgenstein-inspired passions, on the heels of which followed an almost reverential preoccupation with Austinian linguistic analysis in the 1960s and into the early 1970s; finally, in the last years before

Gardiner's retirement in 1989, arrived Oxford's decade-long enchantment with the American philosopher Donald Davidson and everything to do with the truth-conditional semantics he had inspired—a phase with which Gardiner, by then long accustomed to Oxford's vulnerability to passing infatuations, was much amused. As these parades marched by, Gardiner always stood to one side as an interested, if often gently critical, observer. The pursuit of utopian fantasies, the demagogy of individual personalities and the discovery of final solutions were, he saw, as likely to mislead in philosophy as in politics and public life. Gardiner remained conspicuously aloof from the fads and fashions of academia and charted his own course throughout his philosophical career.

II

Gardiner, Pears and Wollheim all returned to Oxford after they were demobbed in 1945. Gardiner's reading during the war had turned increasingly to philosophy—most often German philosophy—and he took the opportunity offered to wartime servicemen to pursue a second honours course. This time, to the surprise of some of his friends, he set himself to reading PPE, taking a first in 1947. During his second round as an undergraduate in Oxford, he became more involved with the philosophical set at Balliol than with colleagues in his own college; he not only continued his friendships with Pears and Wollheim but developed new ones which were to prove strong and long-lasting with the philosophers Marcus Dick and Brian McGuinness, and the novelist Francis King, with all of whom he shared digs at one time or another. The most powerful intellectual influence on Gardiner at this time, however, was arguably that of Isaiah Berlin, whose historically imbued conception of philosophy and scepticism about the pursuit of generalities were naturally in sympathy with Gardiner's own dispositions. Gardiner's admiration for Berlin's philosophical judgement was reciprocated, and in retrospect it seems likely that their conversations mattered more to the direction of the work of both than either recognised at the time. In the event, it became clear to Gardiner even before sitting his examinations that philosophy, rather than history, was his proper vocation. But history was not just left behind: his particular interest in the nature of historical explanation and method was firmly in place and, on completing his second BA (and still just 25 years of age), he took up the research which would later become his B.Litt. thesis (1950) and his first book, *The Nature of Historical Explanation*, published in the Oxford Philosophical Monographs series in 1952.

The Nature of Historical Explanation effectively confirmed the specificity and legitimacy of a new subject area for philosophy—what in due course came to be called the 'analytic philosophy of history'. Gardiner's innovative project was organised around incisive and careful critiques of two radically different accounts of what the historian is doing, or trying to do, in offering explanations of historical events, and of what he *ought* to be doing—what ought to be his standard-setting paradigm of explanation. Along the way, Gardiner takes note of a number of his contemporaries and predecessors from Wilhelm Dilthey to Karl Popper to Morton White, but his two principal targets were the logician and philosopher of science, Carl Hempel, and the former Wayneflete Professor of Metaphysics at Oxford, the idealist Robin George Collingwood. The choice of these two thinkers, representing versions of scientism and subjectivism respectively, showed an appreciation of the insights of both with a desire to avoid the errors of either. As Gardiner said of his subject,

> At one extreme lies the view that history is a branch of knowledge which is *sui generis*: at the other, there is the claim that it is, in some sense, a department of science or, at any rate, that it is capable of being transformed into such a department. Both of these views . . . lead to difficulties; yet both, I believe, are important. For the philosophers who say that history is *sui generis* are stressing those features of the methods, aims and subject-matter of the historian which lead us to discriminate between history and the natural sciences. And the philosophers who insist that history is 'really scientific' stress those features of the subject which lead us into regarding it as upon all fours with natural science. (32)

Hempel's 'The Function of General Laws in History' (*Journal of Philosophy*, 39 (1942) was published in the year Gardiner completed his first degree in history. Its point of departure was the structure of explanation in the natural sciences. An event in the natural world, according to Hempel's scheme, is explained if and only if the statement asserting its occurrence can be deduced from premises consisting of, first, a well-confirmed account of the instantial or determining conditions and, second, a set of well-confirmed universal hypotheses or covering laws. Explanations of this kind provide the paradigm, Hempel claimed, in terms of which explanations in other arenas may be both interpreted and evaluated. His article proceeded to assess historical explanations accordingly, insisting that 'only the establishment of concrete laws can fill the general [historical] thesis with scientific content, make it amenable to empirical tests, and confer upon it an explanatory function'. Unsurprisingly, history as it is actually practised comes off rather badly by Hempel's standards. The stuff of which historical events are made—wars, class upheaval, plagues, the rise

of religions and value systems, the emergence of new foreign policies and so forth—are poor candidates for 'well confirmed' descriptive statements of the kind envisaged as premises of the first kind, and the general laws required for the second premise of the deduction would have to be so complex that they could scarcely be formulated. Moreover, even if a law or laws could be stated, it seems most unlikely that they could be 'well confirmed', for the historian, after all, is in a poor position to conduct the requisite vindicatory (or falsifying) experiments, and the number of past cases he might be able to cite in favour of some generalisation will always fall short of what would be needed to establish it as law. These and other worries led Hempel to conclude that historians seldom succeed in offering 'explanations' proper at all, but rather something 'that might be called an *explanation sketch*' consisting of 'a more or less vague indication of the laws and initial conditions' which needs 'filling out in order to turn into a full-fledged explanation'. Hempel went on to add insult to injury by noting that the method of producing 'explanation sketches' also features prominently in many so-called explanations in psychoanalysis. Both history and psychoanalysis fall short of the requirements of the paradigm of scientific explanation, and hence fail to count as offering *genuine* explanations altogether. It is, moreover, the very nature of their objects of enquiry that dooms them to failure. The aspirations of historical explanation, as Hempel conceived of it, can seldom if ever be satisfied; historical 'explanation sketches' will at best point in the direction in which 'concrete empirical research may tend to confirm or to infirm historical statements'.

Gardiner's masterful response to Hempel did not abandon the basic idea that something like general rules lie at the heart of explanation. He agreed that the *explicans* of an historical explanation must contain not only a set of instantial conditions but general statements linking those conditions in a coherent and theoretically satisfying way to the historical *explicandum*. But Gardiner emphatically denied that generalisations that fail to count as universal hypotheses need, for that reason to fail as acceptable premises in a genuine and fully legitimate explanation: the requisite generalisations need not be 'laws' in the sense that term carries in natural science. Of course, once the notion of a law is sufficiently diluted, we must also abandon the idea of 'deducing' a conclusion from it in conjunction with an account of instantial conditions. Rather than counting as laws, the historian's generalisations are 'judgments' or 'assessments' which serve to link in a rationally coherent manner the details of the initial, determining conditions and those of the target event to be explained. In scientific explanation, Gardiner observed,

> there are prescribed tests in most sciences whereby it can be decided whether or not a particular event satisfies a precisely formulated law. On the level of common sense, although the margins are wider, the conditions under which a generalization may be expected to hold are less explicitly stated; we are not usually in doubt about the possible effects of bricks striking windows or billiard-balls colliding. Historical situations present a multitude of interrelated factors whose relevance or irrelevance to the events we wish to explain is difficult to determine. The more complex the events dealt with, the wider their spread in time and space, the greater are the calls made upon the historian's judgment. (98)

For Gardiner, the historian's judgements serve, as it were, as guiding threads weaving together the multifarious details of the determining conditions and those of the event or events to be explained; like the 'general or the statesman, [he] tends to assess rather than to conclude' (95). His assessments, moreover, present all that is needed for a complete *historical* explanation: they are not 'made or accepted, in default of something "better"' (95–6). In short, historical explanations are not failed scientific ones.

Gardiner was equally committed to denying, however, that historical understanding is a matter of grasping some unique event, revealed by personal insight or achieved by way of an intuitive, first-person act of imaginative experience. He rejected the absolute uniqueness of historical events: historians are not free to disregard general laws in their work of reconstruction, and they very often find their answers by referring to 'general laws of human responses to specified types of situation'. While it is a mistake to assimilate historical explanation to explanation in the physical sciences, it is equally misguided to suppose that history is, as Collingwood claimed, 'a self-contained world that must accordingly be interpreted by methods bearing little or no relation to those used in other branches of knowledge'. The 'methods' Collingwood (and his Italian predecessor, Benedetto Croce) had in view appeared to follow from the not-implausible view that human histories are concerned not with sequences of physical events but with 'processess of actions', which—in the idealist ontology—effectively consist in processes of *inner thought* as opposed to 'outer bodies and their movements'. Hence Collingwood's famous pronouncements that 'what the historian is looking for is these processes of thought' and that 'all History is the history of thought'. This characterisation of the historian's proper subject-matter can lead all too easily, as Gardiner observed, to the further idea that historians require some 'peculiar technique for looking at [the insides of historical events], analogous to the use by bacteriologists and astronomers

of microscopes and telescopes . . . . Thus a picture is presented which depicts the historian as a man who examines difficult, recalcitrant entities—thoughts and intentions, plans and mental process—by means of intuition in a re-enactment of past experience . . .' (47–8). Collingwood believed that one could know someone else's activity of thinking only if that same activity could be re-enacted in one's own mind. Hence properly executed historical investigation itself, in his view, was principally a matter of successfully executed imaginative re-enactments of the first-person experience of this or that historical agent.

Gardiner's systematic dissection of the various elisions and conflations comprising the Croce–Collingwood view of historical understanding was characteristically reasoned and judicious. He responded neither contemptuously nor dismissively to Collingwood's idealist convictions (as did so many of his colleagues), but gave as clear and fair a statement of them as he could muster before identifying the errors upon which they rested. In the course of dismantling the idealist structure Gardiner presented arguments which constituted an early exercise in the philosophy of action, sketching an account of actions as a category of event susceptible to different kinds of explanation on different levels. This account has been described by some as influenced by Ryle's reductive accounts of human action, but I do not see Gardiner being tempted far in the direction of logical behaviourism; he maintains throughout a sensible realism about psychological states such as motives, intentions and emotions. In fact, Gardiner's account of the relation between reasons and causes in the explanation of human actions has something in common with the theories of action presented decades later (by Davidson and his protégés) that have found so much favour with Oxford philosophers in recent years. As Gardiner summarised his position,

> The conflict supposed to exist between materialistic and idealistic interpretations of history is an illusory one. We are not confronted by two realms of causes intersecting or running across one another. What we are confronted by are various uses of the word 'explain'. To explain a person's action by giving the purpose it is designed to serve is not the same as to explain an action by referring to a physical event or situation which caused it. And explanations in terms of reasons given, plans or policies adopted, principles followed, are likewise distinct from causal explanations. . . . This is not, of course, to say that it is not possible to give a causal explanation of why it is that a person wants, intends, plans, or calculates something; such explanations, on the contrary, are frequently made. We can say that a boy wants to pass his examination because he has been promised a reward if he does so . . . and we can give explanations of a person's desires in physiological terms—his nervous or cerebral processes, for instance, or the behaviour of the ductless glands. . . . Such explanations are

> as important to the historian as to anyone else. All I have wished to stress is that to speak of a person's having, for example, a desire is not at all the same thing as to speak of his having a carbuncle on his toe or of his suffering from a disturbance of the nervous system, and that the interpretations or explanations containing the former kind of reference must make allowance for this distinction. (136–7)

Gardiner made this case in part by showing how confused was the picture of human action on which the idealist account rested—a picture that seemed sharply to distinguish between the 'inner' and 'outer' dimensions of a human action and that regarded the former (motives, intentions and so forth) as invisible causal forces. Indeed, Gardiner found it ironic that Collingwood should, after quite rightly insisting on a distinction between thoughts and the ordinary, physical furniture of the world, go on to characterise the explanatory role of these 'inner entities' as if they were physical objects and events which just happened to stand outside of space and time and could be neither seen nor touched nor heard.

Gardiner was to return some forty years later to Collingwood's idea of history as 're-enactment' and respond to it very differently and far more sympathetically. This was not because he had repudiated his substantive views about the explanation of action—he did not do that—but because, perhaps as a more seasoned and more charitable reader (and no longer directly influenced by Ryle), he realised that his earlier interpretation had failed to take into account Collingwood's rather metaphorical manner of expression and had imposed too literal an interpretation on his central claims. Gardiner's reconstruction of Collingwood forty years on portrayed his account of historical enquiry less as a piece of extravagant metaphysics than as an attempt at somewhat poetically phrased phenomenology— an attempt to describe what it is like, from a first-person perspective, for the actual historian to reconstruct a sequence of past events in a way that yields a meaningful narrative about human conduct. As Gardiner put it in 'Collingwood and Historical Understanding', written the year before his death,

> It seemed to some of [Collingwood's] early critics that . . . he was committed to a radical and ultimately unacceptable form of psycho-physical dualism. And to this was sometimes added the objection that awareness of the thought-side of an action which the re-enactment theory postulated required an intuitive capacity to apprehend the mind of an historical agent that transcended ordinary modes of cognition. I admit that I was amongst those who then held such a view. . . . [But] Collingwood need only be regarded as drawing attention to a type of understanding that is already familiar enough at the level of everyday experience. . . . If so, his conception of *Verstehen* as re-enactment could be seen

> to entail no untoward consequences from an epistemological standpoint. On the contrary, he might be credited instead with giving it a more down-to-earth meaning and edge than ones favoured by some of its earlier idealist exponents. (112–13)

Gardiner charitably does not excuse his own earlier interpretation of Collingwood by citing, as he might, careless comments by the latter describing human motives and intentions as, for instance, 'hidden entities, lying within human actions as the kernel lies within a nut . . .'. It was entirely typical of Gardiner's personal character that he should have no hesitation in acknowledging some error on his own part, however justified, or that he would make a concerted effort to put that error to rights. As well as being 'the least fanatical of men', Gardiner was widely appreciated as being among the most driven by a concern for truth and the least driven by vanity or personal pride.

III

The decade or so following Gardiner's departure from Westminster was, in retrospect, one of extraordinary activity and changes for him: going up to Oxford and completing his first degree in history in just two years, in the following three years serving as a soldier at war, returning to Oxford to complete a further BA two years later, and finally moving on to write and submit what would be his first book—all the while maintaining an active correspondence and contact with family and friends, writing and publishing numerous poems (which he declined to have collected), drawing and painting and, in 1949, taking up his first academic post at Wadham College, Oxford. Brian McGuinness recalls that at the time of Gardiner's appointment at Wadham 'everyone wanted him around', not only because he was so nice and so intelligent but 'for general cultural reasons'. Maurice Bowra, the iconoclastic and exuberant Warden of Wadham, was particularly pleased with Gardiner's appointment, and a strong, if unlikely, friendship developed between him and the reserved young lecturer. At about this same time Gardiner's circles both of friends and philosophical colleagues began to widen beyond the Westminster 'Gang of Three' (Gardiner, Pears and Wollheim), and he began teaching undergraduates. One particularly quick young pupil, Bernard Williams, attended his class on the philosophy of history, marking the beginning of a life-long friendship. (Forty-seven years later, Williams would deliver the address at Gardiner's memorial service.)

The new graduate college of St Antony's was founded at this time principally for the study of recent and diplomatic history, and in 1952 Gardiner became a fellow there. With no undergraduate philosophers for him to tutor, his time at St Antony's was exceptionally unconstrained: one friend remarked that he had 'no idea at all what on earth Patrick did there'. It seems likely that Gardiner was amply occupied in a variety of ways, however. For a time he was engaged to the bright and beautiful Roxannne Boxer, a budding journalist and writer whom some felt certain would be Gardiner's life companion. But he broke off the engagement for reasons he kept to himself; soon after, Boxer married and moved to the Middle East. A subsequent friendship with Rachel Toulmin likewise failed to develop into a lasting attachment; she travelled to Italy on holiday with Frances Lloyd-Jones and there met and promptly married an Italian. It was also while Gardiner was at St Antony's that he first made the acquaintance of the young John Bayley and his striking fiancée, Iris Murdoch, both of whom became Gardiner's life-long—if not consistently close—friends. Gardiner's friendship with Isaiah Berlin likewise deepened during these years. Perhaps made more confident by his secure position within the university, Gardiner now began writing at a fairly furious rate and published a number of articles and reviews, having his say not only in professional journals within his subject, as a young tutor must do now, but in various popular and academic venues ranging from the *New Statesman* to the *English Historical Review* to *New Literary History*. Gardiner's years at St Antony's were certainly not wasted ones.

The most important personal event of this period was undoubtedly his introduction to Kathleen Susan Booth, known to all since her childhood as Susan. When they met in 1954, Susan, twelve years Gardiner's junior, was a talented pianist and somewhat reticent but brilliant undergraduate from Lancashire, then reading Ancient History at Manchester University. Her father, Herbert Booth, was an accounting clerk in the Railway Offices with little formal education, but he was a gifted pianist, possessed of an intellectual disposition, a passion for literature, and other talents which he cultivated by attending night school as an adult, where in due course he earned his A-levels. Susan Booth was her father's first child by his beloved first wife, who had died of cancer when Susan was fourteen and her brother, Richard, was just three. Her father was determined that his children would enjoy the academic opportunities he had himself been denied, and at no small sacrifice he ensured that Susan had piano lessons and was privately educated at St Anne's, a boarding school for girls near Windermere. Susan was just 20 when her university tutors

offered her an opportunity to attend for a summer 'study period' at Cumberland Lodge, the hunting lodge at Windsor Great Park that the Queen Mother had transformed into an educational trust. That same summer Patrick Gardiner found himself accompanying some Oxford students to Cumberland Lodge for similar purposes, and it was in this romantic and high-minded setting that the two began their life together. They married a year later in 1955, after Susan completed her MA at Manchester.

Gardiner remained at St Antony's for three years after his marriage, setting up house with Susan just around the corner at Number 22, Winchester Road. These were both very happy and exceptionally challenging years for the young couple. Susan, who though possessed of great intelligence and taste, was exceedingly modest about her abilities, found Oxford's extraordinary culture both stimulating and intimidating. She never forgot her first introduction to certain of Gardiner's philosophical colleagues, including Stuart Hampshire, Freddie Ayer and Geoffrey and Mary Warnock, at a drinks party at 'Corpus' (Corpus Christi College). In conversation, the Warnocks assumed, or seemed to assume, that everyone present was some kind of philosopher, and they put various inquisitory questions to Gardiner's new young wife that, while not leaving her wholly speechless, did nothing to encourage her to return very soon to other gatherings of that kind. St Antony's College, by contrast, provided for both of the Gardiners an exceptionally informal and congenial environment that Susan greatly enjoyed. Women were welcome to dine on many occasions, and the lively presence at college events of John Bayley and Iris Murdoch (married about a year after the Gardiners) did much to encourage the idea that the life of the mind could be enjoyed, and shared, by men and women alike.

There were, however, pressures as well. Patrick was still establishing himself in the philosophical community at Oxford and was intensely occupied with the activities that so often follow the publication of a successful book. The Gardiners' first daughter, Josephine, was born in 1956; it was an event in which both parents delighted but for which neither was particularly well prepared. Susan, herself motherless and with no relatives nor even family friends at hand, found herself parenting, as she once put it, 'by luck and guesswork'. Her husband's natural inclination was to take a backseat (or even to step out of the carriage altogether) when it came to the practicalities of domestic life, which was not always the most helpful approach. Nevertheless, both remembered their early years of marriage as happy ones. In 1958 they moved to a delightful flat on the

first floor of Fairfield House, a spacious Victorian mansion with magnificent gardens on Pullen's Lane in Headington. (When they moved to Wytham Village a few years later, they handed the Fairfield House flat on to David Pears, who moved into it with his beautiful young bride, Anne Drew.) Josephine's younger sister, Vanessa, was born in Fairfield House in 1960. Gardiner and his wife both thought their accommodation delightful and very suitable for a young family, but it had its eccentricities. Immediately after Vanessa's birth, Gardiner's mother, Lilian, dispatched a maternity nurse from London to Fairfield to 'help out'. On the nurse's arrival, she announced that she would first deal with 'Cook' and put in her orders for the kitchen, and then see to Susan and baby. Susan, still confined to bed, gently broke the news that 'Cook' did not exist at Fairfield, and that indeed she, Susan, would be doing the cooking—if any were done at all. The next morning found the maternity nurse departing on the first train to Paddington Station.

In that same year Gardiner was offered the Fellowship in Philosophy at Magdalen College, a post he was to occupy for the next thirty years. The Magdalen fellowship was Gardiner's first experience as a full-time tutorial fellow with all the responsibilities that then attached to that role, including fifteen or more hours each week of undergraduate tutorials for students reading either Greats or PPE or one of the various other philosophy joint schools. Gardiner's colleagues heard few complaints: he was always interested not only in teaching, but in the pupils he taught, and they in turn responded well to his sensitive and serious—but never humourless—tutorial manner. A number of former pupils recall Gardiner as more available and sympathetic than many other Oxford dons, and there is no doubt that he assigned great importance to his responsibilities as a tutor. Gardiner would scarcely have understood the now-common notion that undergraduate tutorial teaching is a burden, unrelated to the 'higher' aims of research and publication. On the contrary, he took his *raison d'être* as a philosopher to be in part constituted by the difficult task of rendering his subject both engaging and intelligible to young minds. He was intensely (and unjustifiably) self-critical about his tutorial efforts as much as about his other professional achievements, but this habit of imposing high standards on himself, seems not to have spoilt the fun of his tutorials nor to have detracted from their value. The pupils who worked most closely with him recall Gardiner's virtues as a tutor in terms that echo Bernard Williams's account of his virtues as a friend: 'He did not talk up or talk down to what one told him; he accepted that the unlikely would probably have happened; and in considering someone else's situation, he had an

unusual ability not to be thinking, even covertly or by implication, about himself. His great charm, his sensitivity, and his capacity to find things funny, were there for others, not instruments of his will or his inclinations.' As one of Gardiner's former pupils myself, I would add that his evaluations of philosophical ideas and their expression were always thoughtful, insightful and carefully considered. Gardiner never spoke to impress or to intimidate or to fill a silence: he spoke when he had something to say that needed saying. For this and other reasons his opinions often commanded closer attention and greater respect than the pronouncements of certain of his more flamboyant (and self-satisfied) contemporaries.

As a senior member of college, Gardiner was loyal and willing, and served conscientiously in various administrative offices at Magdalen, including the office of Dean of Degrees and the Vice-Presidency. Administration and management were not, however, among his natural talents; while he commanded both affection and respect from his colleagues, few considered him suitable for any post carrying great responsibilities of that kind. On one occasion following the resignation of a college President, some well-meaning colleagues nominated Gardiner as an internal candidate to succeed to the post. A long discussion in the governing body ensued, from which Gardiner had of course to be excluded, concluding with the almost-inevitable decision to seek a candidate elsewhere. This was an unfortunate episode that caused Gardiner—never invulnerable to the emotion of embarrassment—some unhappiness. For the most part, however, his relations with his colleagues at Magdalen were exceptionally congenial: he was not an easy man to dislike.

Gardiner counted himself particularly fortunate in his philosophical colleagues at Magdalen throughout his many years as a fellow. When he was first appointed, Gilbert Ryle—Gardiner's sometime supervisor and friend—was Wayneflete Professor. Geoffrey Warnock was the other tutorial fellow in philosophy, having replaced J. L. Austin in 1953 when the latter moved to the Professorship at Corpus Christi College. This too was a piece of luck for Gardiner, and not only because he liked Warnock. Austin's popularity and influence in Oxford had almost reached the status of a zealous and evangelical cult: Austin did not have students so much as disciples. He also conspicuously enjoyed the authority he wielded and did nothing to discourage the mixture of fear and envy with which he was regarded by many colleagues. Few personalities could have been less like Gardiner in disposition or less agreeable to him as a model of philosophical practice, and it was no loss to either man that they avoided becoming college colleagues. Instead Gardiner's first ten, very happy years at

Magdalen found him at table and in committee with two respected and familiar colleagues who were also, from a philosophical point of view, challenging without being cantankerous. In 1968, Peter Strawson succeeded Ryle to the Wayneflete Chair, and he and Gardiner soon became good friends as well as compatible colleagues. When Warnock retired in 1970 his fellowship went to a young philosopher, Ralph Walker, who shared Gardiner's interest in philosophical history and the history of ideas as well as his appreciation of the German rationalists. Walker's great personal integrity and intellectual seriousness, as much as his philosophical tastes, won Gardiner's respect and affection. Susan Gardiner, too, greatly liked her husband's new colleague. Magdalen, unlike St Antony's, did not often welcome women, let alone wives, into college; Susan generally shared rather less in her husband's day-to-day university activities after his move there, but both she and her husband counted Walker as much a personal friend as a professional colleague. Following his move to Magdalen, Gardiner was welcomed into 'Freddie's Group'—an invitation-only Tuesday-evening dinner/discussion group initiated by A. J. Ayer which counted among its members luminaries such as Stuart Hampshire, Peter Stawson and Ayer himself as well as certain of Gardiner's longstanding friends, including Isaiah Berlin, Bernard Williams, Brian McGuinness and David Pears. Freddie's Group was for many years a provocative source of new ideas and a venue in which to reconsider old ones, but on the whole it was a forum for pursuing the mainstream, contemporary concerns of Oxford philosophy—often topics in epistemology, metaphysics and the philosophy of language. The Group was perhaps particularly useful to Gardiner as a way of being regularly engaged with and keeping informed about such concerns while in his own work he was otherwise occupied with less fashionable ones. Among these, of course, was the philosophy of history: Gardiner put a great deal of energy and effort into editing *Theories of History* in 1959 as well as *The Philosophy of History* in 1974. Moreover, his specific and unusual expertise in two other, then-peripheral subject areas, philosophical aesthetics and post-Kantian German philosophy, meant that he was regularly responsible for the university's public lectures in both. Aesthetics and German philosophy both featured among the optional papers on the PPE syllabus; the demand for teaching in these areas was fairly limited, but they interested a sufficient number of undergraduates (and graduates) to make necessary a regular offering of related public lectures. For many years Gardiner was the only member of the sub-faculty capable of giving informed lectures of any kind in philosophical aesthetics, and he is credited with single-handedly

keeping this topic alive in Oxford during three long decades when almost no one else was prepared to protect its place on the syllabus, let alone to teach it. (Iris Murdoch was the only other philosopher in Oxford at that time to take an active interest in aesthetics, and her interest was almost solely confined to the relations between art and morality; moreover, her approach was regarded by many of her colleagues as eccentric and 'insufficiently analytical'—which no one had reason to say of Gardiner.) Had Gardiner not offered to lecture on and tutor in aesthetics (both for Schools and for the B.Phil.) it is very likely that it would have not been taught at all. Only a few years before Gardiner retired from his tutorial fellowship in 1989, philosophical aesthetics began to enjoy a dramatic revival both within and outside Oxford; after many long years of delivering his university lectures to an audience of only four or five students (and sometimes fewer) Gardiner saw the numbers attending them double, and then triple and then quadruple. He was surprised and, while never given to even the most impersonal boast, he was very evidently pleased. Today, some sixty to seventy undergraduates each year sit the 'Philosophy of Art and Criticism' paper in Final Honour Schools, and nearly as many attend the related public lectures. But for Gardiner, however, that paper would probably have disappeared from the Oxford syllabus altogether.

Unfortunately, the importance of Gardiner's lectures was not matched by his enthusiasm for lecturing: although he fulfilled his remit capably and always very eloquently, he disliked—even dreaded—all kinds of public performance, and quietly suffered through the terms in which he was required for weekly appearances 'on stage' at the Examination Schools. Susan Gardiner, sharing her husband's aversion to any public spotlight, was sympathetic to his anxieties and did her best to bolster his spirits and confidence, but she recalled that the day or two preceding a lecture would invariably find Gardiner in a nervous gloom, writing and rewriting the material he was to deliver and often despairing of meeting his own, too demanding standards. The evening after the final lecture of the term had been dispatched, by contrast, was an occasion for celebration within the Gardiner household. As Susan remarked, 'The end of a term of lectures was like the beginning of a new life.' Gardiner's dislike for lecturing was shared by Isaiah Berlin, who advised him to 'never look anyone in the audience in the eye, but fix your gaze on the far left-hand corner where no-one's look will catch you either by chance or design'—a strategy they both relied upon throughout their lecturing careers. Berlin and Gardiner also collaborated to satisfy part of the lectures requirement

by co-teaching several series of graduate seminars on topics in the history of ideas and the philosophy of history. By all reports, Berlin and Gardiner worked wonderfully as a duet when leading these seminars, as much because of as despite their very different styles, with Berlin's breathless and famously wordy soliloquies set off and punctuated by Gardiner's laconic but carefully targeted observations. Berlin appreciated the soundness of Gardiner's philosophical judgement in other contexts, too. He often consulted him about his work in progress and trusted Gardiner to deliver the right verdict on arguments or claims about which he himself felt uneasy or uncertain. Berlin eventually named Gardiner as one of his principal literary executors, a role which, following Gardiner's illness later in life, fell solely to Henry Hardy.

IV

Perhaps the greatest pleasure that philosophical activity afforded to Gardiner was to read and read again some text of complexity and depth that he felt he did not properly understand, and then patiently, and often very privately, to set about the task of making sense of it and to record what he took that sense to be. This pleasure led him (as it led Berlin) to attend to and learn from a number of thinkers whom others tended to ignore or dismiss as having little or nothing to offer to contemporary philosophy—figures such as Vico, Condorcet, Comte, Pascal, Schelling, Hegel and of course Collingwood, as well as two on whom Gardiner wrote full-length books: Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard. *Schopenhauer* appeared in 1963, just five years after Gardiner became a fellow of Magdalen and just three years after the unexpected death, at the age of 49, of J. L. Austin. It was not the best-timed of publications and it attracted little attention in the first instance, receiving only a handful of reviews. Two of the reviews questioned Gardiner's motives for writing the book at all: why would a respected analytical philosopher at Oxford devote so much time and effort to interpreting an obscure, long-dead German metaphysician, and particularly one known almost solely for his extravagantly gloomy portrayal of Reality as meaningless, chaotic and conflicted? The answer offered by the then-anonymous reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement* was extraordinarily hostile, as was her review as a whole; she attacked Gardiner's personal integrity as much as his text, and did so in terms so contemptuous that any author, let alone one as diffident as Gardiner, would have found them distressing. Even Richard

Taylor's review in the *Journal of Philosophy*, while acknowledging the book's judiciousness and its author's admirable scholarship, suggested that Gardiner had set out simply to 'write a book about something or other that is presumed to have fairly widespread interest'. ('There are Pelican books on other great philosophers; why not one on Schopenhauer too?') Anyone acquainted with Gardiner knew that these suggestions were not merely unwarranted but absurd: no one was more certain to be guided in his work by personal conviction and purpose than Patrick Gardiner; his intellectual sincerity and natural integrity rendered him conspicuously oblivious to considerations of professional expediency or reputation. Despite its inauspicious first appearance, however, Gardiner's *Schopenhauer* is recognised by many today as still the best full-length study of *The World as Will and Idea* ever published in English: it is a text most tutors will recommend to students embarking on a study of Schopenhauer (and those who do not, should). Moreover, scholars still turn to Gardiner's book for illuminating and clear-headed suggestions about various of Schopenhauer's more obscure notions: it is particularly insightful about the problems associated, for instance, with Schopenhauer's determinism and his notion of a fixed, 'empirical character', with the 'Platonic Ideas' perceived through works of art and with the mysterious notion of 'Will' itself. The only competitor to *Schopenhauer* when it appeared was an able but very general and rather breathless survey text by Father Copleston. Gardiner's study was followed by two others: the first written by the philosopher D. W. Hamlyn and the second by the writer and journalist, Brian Magee. Hamlyn's effort was so unsympathetic to Schopenhauer as to appear deliberately obtuse, while some of Magee's commentary tended to err on the side of excessive charity. Gardiner's *Schopenhauer*, by contrast, was based on a patient mastery of the literature (in both English and German), was biased by neither contempt nor devotion, and was sensitively and lucidly expressed. More than that, it represents a real achievement in two other ways. First, without failing to be critical where appropriate, it makes the best possible sense of Schopenhauer's failed attempt to provide an 'objective metaphysics' of reality as it is in itself, independent of our experience of it; Gardiner acknowledges the intuitive attractions of Schopenhauer's vision of the libidinous 'Will' where deserved, brings out its non-accidental affinities with Spinoza's notion of Being as conceived *sub specie aeternitatis*, and draws attention to the influence it exercised on Freud. Second, and perhaps more importantly, Gardiner's book demonstrates the ways in which Schopenhauer's contributions as a phenomenologist—that is, his

descriptions from the first-person, subjective point of view of different aspects of ethical, aesthetic and spiritual experience—are triumphs of armchair psychology on a philosophical par with the similar contributions of Hume, whom Schopenhauer greatly admired. Schopenhauer's 'Grand System' of German metaphysics—his attempt to explain the nature of human experience from an objective, mind-independent point of view—was clearly unsustainable. That notwithstanding, Gardiner makes it plain that as a phenomenologist of certain aspects of human experience Schopenhauer still has much to offer philosophers working in any tradition. In this respect Gardiner's book set the agenda for contemporary 'analytic' Schopenhauer scholars such as Julian Young, Christopher Janaway and John Atwell.

Gardiner's last book was a study of Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish existentialist—another philosopher whose contributions to the phenomenology of value had been largely neglected by the analytic tradition Although Gardiner's *Kierkegaard* did not appear until 1988, he had been preparing the way for it for over two decades, reading and writing about related issues of morality, authenticity and self-knowledge in both Kierkegaard and Sartre. This work appeared principally in lectures, including 'Sartre on Character and Self-Knowledge' (the August Comte Memorial Lecture at the London School of Economics in 1975) and, earlier, his masterful 'Error, Faith and Self-Deception' (delivered at a meeting of the Aristotelian Society in 1970). Gardiner first explicitly addressed Kierkegaard's moral phenomenology in his Dawes Hicks Lecture for the British Academy in 1968, titled 'Kierkegaard's Two Ways'. He there focused, as he did to some extent in his later book, on Kierkegaard's two volumes titled *Either/Or* (1842) which set out, through pseudonymous authors, two antithetical frameworks of value: the 'aesthetic' (ascribed to a young amoralist identified simply as 'A') and the 'ethical' (ascribed to an older man said to be a judge). As Gardiner himself summarised each:

> Aestheticism as exhibited in A's loosely related assortment of papers is seen to take on a lively variety of forms and guises; among other things, it is held to find expression in the characters of legendary figures like Don Juan and Faust, and it is also illustrated by an account in diary form of a step-by-step seduction. By contrast the position of the ethicist is set out in two somewhat prosaic letters which are addressed by the Judge to A and which include detailed critical analyses of the younger man's motives and psychological prospects. . . . Whereas the aestheticist typically allows himself to be swayed by what he conceives to be the unalterable constituents of his natural disposition, the ethically orientated individual is prone to look at himself in an altogether different light. Both his motivation and behaviour are responsive to a self-image 'in likeness to

> which he has to form himself', his particular aptitudes and propensities being seen as subject to the control of his own will.

In Gardiner's British Academy lecture, as later in his book, he skilfully explores Kierkegaard's subtle analyses and insights into the value and disvalue of both positions and shows how they relate to certain alternatives presented in contemporary (analytic) moral philosophy. *Kierkegaard* also directly confronts the tension between the convictions born of personal, inward experience—including the convictions of spiritual faith—and those deriving from objective, impersonal investigation. In this context Gardiner deftly explores Kierkegaard's idea that questions of 'truth' may arise in two radically different ways, either by asking whether one's beliefs correctly target a 'genuine' object (whether they correspond to reality), or by asking whether one's attitude towards or conception of some object—genuine or otherwise—is 'truthful' (that is, authentic and ingenuous) or self-deluding. In Kierkegaard's words, 'When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed to . . . an object to which the knower is related. . . . If only the object to which he is related is [true], the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship [to the object].'

Reading Gardiner's study of Kierkegaard one discovers a thinker who, much like Gardiner, was preoccupied with the difficulty, both in theory and in life, of negotiating the competing claims of object and subject: on the one side, the claims of a mind-independent, objective reality—for instance, the reality represented in the descriptions of our best physical sciences—in which all phenomena, including human actions, are determined by causal laws and, on the other side, the reality of the experiencing subject, much of which eludes 'objective' representation altogether, and within which each of us is a free, self-forming and morally accountable agent who acts on his own reasons and pursues his own ends. In this respect, Gardiner's *Kierkegaard* is a study of one thinker's attempt, at a very different time and place, to articulate the central philosophical and psychological concerns implicit in Gardiner's work throughout his life.

In 1985 Patrick Gardiner was appointed a Fellow of the British Academy. Four years later he retired from his tutorial fellowship and became an Emeritus Fellow of Magdalen. Gardiner did not, however, ever retire from philosophy: he continued working and writing, as he had for over thirty years, in his first-floor study overlooking the magnificent, rambling gardens surrounding the Dower House, the beautiful, gently

derelict home in Wytham that he shared with his wife, Susan, and in which they raised their two children, Josephine and Vanessa. Gardiner never gave any sign of being particularly satisfied with his own accomplishments, but he was evidently very proud of those of his daughters. At the time of his death, Josephine was an accomplished journalist; she has now embarked on a second career as a developmental psychologist. Vanessa and her partner Alex Lowry are both painters who, showing great determination, have made successful lives for themselves, and for their daughter Jessie, as independent artists. Gardiner's marriage also brought him great happiness. He and Susan shared tastes in art, music, books and people; they both loved Italy, loathed ostentation and deceit, and were utterly indifferent to money and social ambition. Together they created, at the Dower House and in its enchanting gardens, a decorous, delicate and thoroughly unmodernised world in which one tended to feel oddly transported out of time, beyond reach of anything common or ugly or banal. Many guests, having visited the Dower House once, found themselves drawn to return time and again, with or without invitation, but never without good reason: for there they could reliably find unaffected human warmth, quiet English wit, good humour and conversation that was as intelligent as it was sincere. Although the Gardiners were in many ways intensely private, they had a great many friends—typically, friends they held in common—to whom they were deeply loyal and who reciprocated their commitment. There has never been a home, as one remarked, where the fires of friendship have burnt more fiercely.

The nature of this memoir has required that it tell the story of a single individual, rather than a couple. In some ways, however, this falsifies the life it records: Gardiner's philosophical achievements, as much as his personal happiness, were sustained, encouraged and occasionally rescued through his wife's deep love for him. The very intensity of this attachment, the closeness of their lives, created its own difficulties but their common generosity of spirit and capacity to delight in life's adventures and absurdities finally ensured that they passed their lives together not only as companions but as equals. The form of their alliance in some ways mirrored Gardiner's approach to philosophy: they lived in their own way and by their own time, according to their own standards, giving their all to whatever and whomever they loved and saw to be of value.

Patrick Gardiner died on 24 June 1997 after patiently enduring his doctors' various attempts to defeat a recurring illness. His wife followed him in 2006.

A. E. DENHAM
St Anne's College, Oxford

Note. I am grateful for the generous assistance of a number of Patrick Gardiner's friends, colleagues and family members. My greatest debt is to his late widow, Susan Gardiner. Josephine Gardiner also provided invaluable help. Professors David Pears and Ralph Walker and the late Professor Sir Peter Strawson all kindly submitted to interviews. Professor Brian McGuinness not only contributed to my research but helped me to avoid various errors and inaccuracies. I owe thanks to Patricia Williams for searching out the text of the memorial address written by her husband, Professor Bernard Williams. Henry Hardy and Francis King patiently answered a number of questions in correspondence, as did Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist of Magdalen College, and Judith Curthoys, Archivist of Christ Church. Peter Snow and Alan Bell of the Bodleian Library provided invaluable advice on research procedure. Professor Richard Dagger read the entire typescript and, with characteristic patience and tact, corrected several of its infelicities.