The Hard Case of the Would-be Religious: Hardy and the Church from Early Life to Later Years

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Abstract
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- Notes
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Childhood & Early Life. Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840, in Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, England, to Thomas and Jemima Hardy. His father worked as a stonemason and local builder while his mother was a homemaker. Young Hardy was educated by his mother until he was eight years old. He then gained admission at Mr. Last's Academy for Young Gentlemen where he learned Latin. “After a Journey” and “The Voice” were some of the finest English poems written that described death as a journey rather than a destination. Interestingly, though Hardy’s poetry was a reflection of his unsatisfactory personal life, he always presented his work in a controlled manner. Hardy's greatest dispute was with the dogma or beliefs of the church. Hardy had once wanted to become a minister but abandoned that idea when he could no longer afford to attend the university. Also, Hardy recollects the earlier ancient Greek tragedies by invoking the name of Aeschylus, the principal writer of Greek tragic drama, to close his work, not biblical or modern sagas, as we would have imagined a nineteenth-century writer to do. Hardy quite possibly sees religion abandoning the people, with dogmas that do not mesh with a modern society. In Tess, with few exceptions, Hardy's portrayal of the "traditionally" religious people is not particularly complimentary. Take the casual remarks by Angel's brothers, Felix ("all Church") and Cuthbert ("all