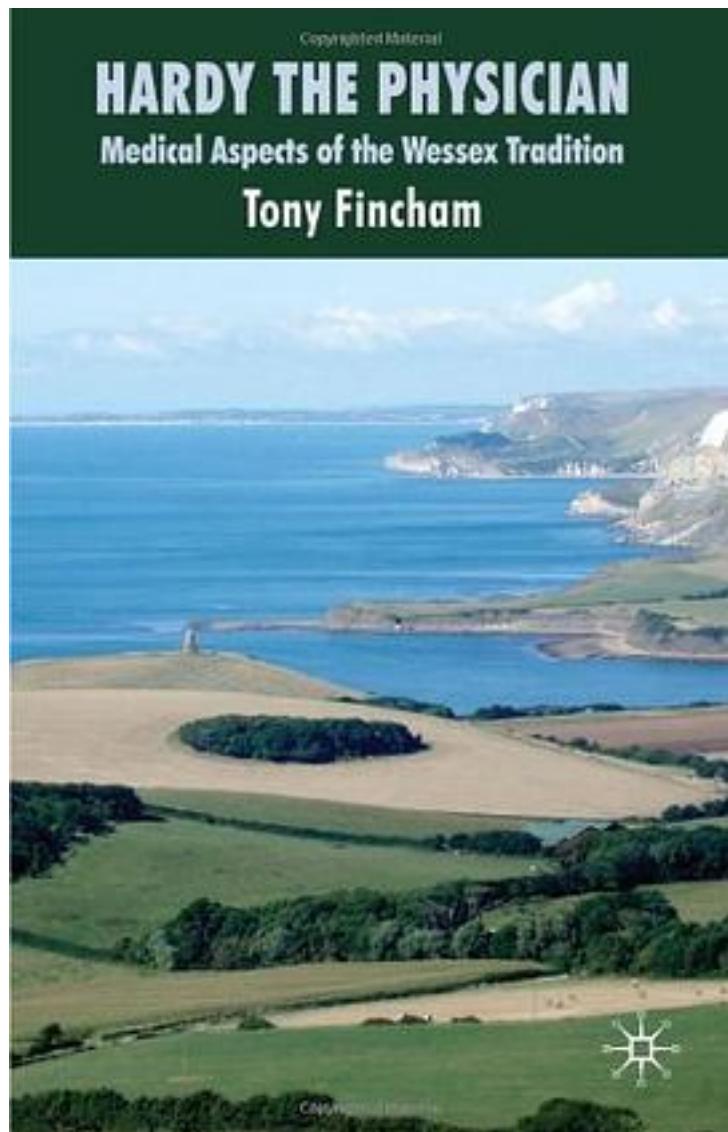


# Hardy the Physician



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Hardy the Physician offers a medical interpretation of Thomas Hardy's life and works, using all available sources to explore his understanding of the human condition, both physical and psychological, in sickness and in health. The book contains a detailed investigation of Hardy and his two wives' personal experience of illness, focusing particularly on Emma Hardy's mental health. Parallel to this is an in-depth examination of the medical experiences of Hardy's fictional characters and the life and loves of his own General Practitioner, Edred Fitzpiers. The text foregrounds Hardy's keen sensitivity to the psychosomatic - he was indeed 'a Freudian before Freud' - but also shows how, as the 'man who used to notice things', he displays a shrewd understanding of physical illness, well in advance of his time. Hardy the Physician demonstrates how Hardy's invariably holistic approach illustrates the limitations of scientific medicine - how medicine, by adopting a wholly scientific route, has in many ways thrown out the baby with the bathwater.

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目录:

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