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The Discourse of Body Politic in Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan

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This paper aims to analyze the occurrences of the metaphors of body politic and political disease in the treatise *Leviathan*, written by one of the most influential political theorist from the seventeenth century, Thomas Hobbes. The concept of the state as a body politic, the analogy between the afflictions of the body and the “afflictions” of the state, the actions of the political actors seen as “physicians” of the said state had witnessed widespread use in early modern English political thought, in support of a wide range of political outlooks, from John Fortescue’s “constitutionalism” to more absolutist templates proposed by the likes of Stephen Gardiner and Edward Forset. In the first half of the seventeenth century, serious changes occurred both in political philosophy and medicine, with respect to the traditional view of the body of man. These changes had in turn echoes in political thought, influencing both the language employed and the substance of the new political templates, and one such treatise where the mingling of the new and old body politic occurs is Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*.