



The Ship of State: Statecraft and Politics from Ancient Greece to Democratic America

Norma Thompson

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This provocative and illuminating book provides a new perspective on the development of political thought from Homer to Machiavelli, Tocqueville, and Gertrude Stein (who is introduced here, for the first time, as a writer of political significance). Providing nuanced readings of key texts by these and other thinkers, Norma Thompson locates a powerful theme: that the political health of organised political communities, from the ancient polis to the modern state, to contemporary democracy, requires a balance between masculine and feminine qualities. Although most critics view the Western tradition as a progression away from misogyny and toward rights for women, Thompson contends that the need for balance in the political community was well understood in earlier eras. Only now has it been almost entirely overlooked in our focus on surface indications of strict gender equality. Thompson argues that political rhetoric must once again promote the reconciliation of masculine and feminine forces in order to achieve effective politics and statecraft.

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