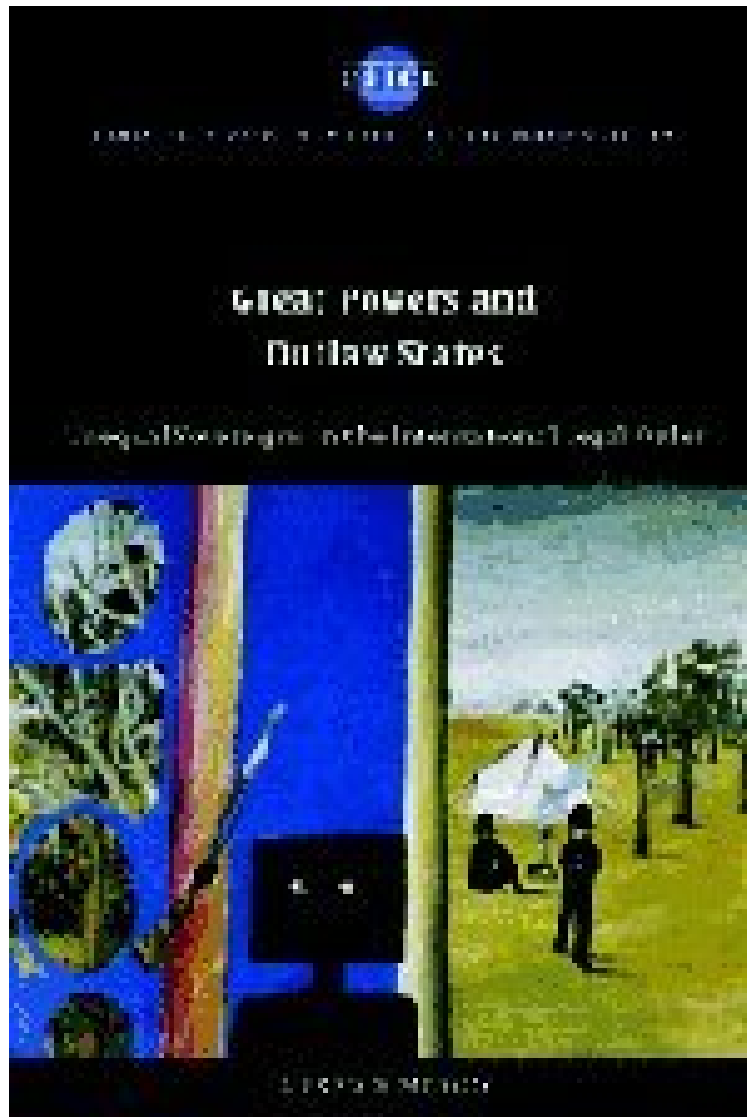


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(Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law)

Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order (Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law)

Gerry Simpson

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Gerry Simpson : Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order (Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International

Legal Order (Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law):

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By Zelenka
This is an important book which must be highly recommended. In a clear but sophisticated argument, it discusses how the formal sovereign equality of states since the Congress of Vienna has coexisted with the pragmatic acceptance by the so-called 'international community' of the special position in the international system of the so-called Great Powers. The tension between 'sovereign equality' and 'legalised hegemony' is drawn out impressively and usefully, though the underlying argument is a relative commonplace in the modern world. The author substantially deepens the value of the work by introducing a third component into the discussion, the 'outlaw state', and achieves a considerable success in convincing the reader of the accuracy and validity of his analysis. The work reaches back into history to ground its argument, and seems to establish an understanding of international relations that will be valuable long into the future. The argument is supported by a considerable apparatus of authorities, but these are used as legitimate support or illumination, not to give borrowed weight. The writer's own mind is the driving force and source in the book, and there is no sense of any make-weight use of extraneous material. The writing is startlingly and pleasingly clear, and the book's structure is plainly logical and elegant. To the non-lawyer, the book calls attention to the high quality of writing that is frequently found among academic lawyers. Few books on international law are intrinsically enjoyable yet this book would be likely to appeal to readers far beyond the legal domain, in international history, in the history of international relations or in policy studies. While this work will clearly influence debates among legal academics, it would be of great benefit if it were read by politicians, journalists, bar-room lawyers and the heaving ranks of do-gooders in the international policy sphere, since it disposes of many of the myths about sovereignty, and casts a cold and searching light on the modern sacred cow, the 'international community'.

From the Congress of Vienna to the "war on terrorism", the roles of "great powers and outlaw states" have had a major impact on international relations. Gerry Simpson describes the ways in which an international legal order based on "sovereign equality" has accommodated the great powers and regulated outlaw states since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Simpson also offers a way of understanding recent transformations in the global political order by recalling the lessons of the past--in particular, through the recent violent conflicts in Kosovo and Afghanistan.