

16 | *Examining Elephants in the Dark*

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What is an international organisation? In an ancient parable recounted in several religious traditions, a group of blind men encounter an elephant for the first time – I personally prefer the telling of this parable by the Sufi poet Rumi in his *Masnawi*, in which the men are sighted but encounter the elephant in a dark room, but will mostly refer to the better-known version. Each man touches a different part of the elephant: one touches its leg, another its trunk, the third its tusk, the fourth its tail, and the last its ear. Each argues forcefully that an elephant is a different thing, depending on which part they have touched: the first says the elephant is like a tree; the next that it is like a snake; the third that it is a kind of spear; the fourth a rope; the last a fan. The men are unable to reach agreement; in some versions of the story, they come to blows. The story's moral is usually taken to be that truth is not absolute, that each person's understanding is relative to their standpoint, and that an attitude of intellectual humility is necessary in order to learn from the perspectives of others.

This stimulating volume invites us to see international organisations anew, from fresh angles and in new lights. In particular, the editors are keen to expand the horizons of mainstream scholars of international organisations law, who are accustomed to viewing their subject-matter through lenses that focus narrowly on the relationships between international organisations and their members. Many of the chapters gathered here explicitly or implicitly reject a 'functionalist' approach to international organisations (though precisely what that means seems to vary somewhat from author to author); even the *doyen* of international organisations law, Jan Klabbers, disavows functionalism in its barest form, proposing a 'supra-functionalist' alternative in its stead.¹ The themes of the volume – expertise, structures, performances, and

¹ J. Klabbers, 'Inter-disciplinarity and the Law of International Organizations' in this volume, pp. 38–56.

capital – deliberately push at the boundaries of mainstream thinking in international law; many of the contributions manifest a growing interest in questions of materiality among legal scholars;² and several of the authors reflect on international organisations from outside the discipline. The volume goes a long way to remedy the imbalance that the editors perceive in mainstream studies of international organisations law, offering an abundance of new (in)sights from anthropology, political science, and history.

The editors of this volume draw a sharp distinction between *doing* international organisations law and *thinking* about international organisations. Mainstream international lawyers approach international organisations with pragmatic ends in mind: they see legal problems to be solved, and they deploy their legal toolkit accordingly. This ‘mono-disciplinary outlook’ and ethos has, in the editors’ view, led to an over-emphasis on ‘doing’ international organisations law at the expense of ‘thinking’ about international organisations.³ The solution the editors propose is ‘for the discipline to start seeing IO differently’.⁴ Yet the sequence could just as easily be reversed: what one sees will inevitably be shaped by what one thinks, how one imagines the world, what one expects to see. This concluding chapter begins with ‘ways of doing’ scholarship on international organisations and proceeds to reflect on the diverse ways of seeing and thinking suggested by the preceding chapters in this volume, before making some tentative suggestions about possible ways forward.

Ways of Doing

How should we do the study of international organisations?⁵ The blind men in the parable come at the elephant from different angles but share a single method of investigation – touch. In contrast, the

² H. Y. Kang and S. Kendall, ‘Legal Materiality’ in S. Stern, M. Del Mar, and B. Meyler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Law and Humanities* (Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 21 (ch. 2); J. Hohmann and D. Joyce (eds.), *International Law’s Objects* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

³ N. Mansouri and D. R. Quiroga-Villamarin, ‘Editorial Introduction: Seeing International Organizations Differently’ in this volume, pp. 3–15.

⁴ Mansouri and Quiroga-Villamarin, ‘Editorial Introduction’, pp. 3–15.

⁵ With apologies to I. Hacking, ‘How Should We Do the History of Statistics?’ in G. Burchill, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 181–195.

assortment of methodologies on display in this volume is striking. Each author makes a compelling case, sometimes implicitly but often explicitly, for *their* way of studying international organisations. Broadly, however, the approaches adopted here may be seen as resolving into two distinct ways of doing the study of international organisations.

The first approach is essentially deconstructivist, aiming to expose the blindspots and biases of international organisations, and perhaps also of those who study them. In general terms this approach is well established in international law scholarship,⁶ though more theorised versions remain rare, especially in international organisations law (before now). Chimni leads the way, recommending an expanded ‘external critique’ of the ‘biased design and unjust distributional outcomes’ of international organisations, together with an ‘internal critique’ that would show how they ‘subserve the interests of powerful states over time’.⁷ These forms of critique require digging past surface appearances, clearing away distracting epiphenomena, and unearthing the essential truth. Cutler engages in a similar exercise, showing how ‘resilience talk’ obscures ‘underlying socio-political-economic causes of poverty, insecurity, and inequality’ while ‘depoliticis[ing] and naturalis[ing] deep structural inequalities in the governance activities of international organisations and law’.⁸ Mansouri likewise takes up the critical project of uncovering ‘hidden power relations’, revealing how ostensibly ‘technical’ organisations embody certain hegemonic orders.⁹ Klabbers’ analysis of ‘functionalism’s limits’, showing how it distorts and obscures important aspects of the operations of

⁶ See, e.g., S. Marks, *The Riddle of All Constitutions: International Law, Democracy, and the Critique of Ideology* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁷ B. S. Chimni, ‘Critical Theory and International Organizations: The Need for an Integrated Approach’ in this volume, pp. 16–37. See also B. S. Chimni, ‘International Institutions Today: An Imperial Global State in the Making’ (2004) 15 *European Journal of International Law* 1; B. S. Chimni, ‘International Financial Institutions and International Law: A Third World Perspective’ in D. D. Bradlow and D. B. Hunter (eds.), *International Financial Institutions and International Law* (Kluwer Law International, 2010) ch. 2.

⁸ A. C. Cutler, ‘Deconstructing “Resilience Talk” in Global Governance: Toward a Critical Political Economy Approach’ in this volume, pp. 271–90.

⁹ N. Mansouri, ‘Laissez-Faire, State Capitalism, and the Making of International Organizations: The Dynamics of a Struggle’ in this volume, pp. 248–70.

international organisations, serves as a kind of critique of ideology, in effect if not in name.¹⁰

The second broad way of doing the study of international organisations suggested in other chapters is (re)constructivist. Rather than taking them apart with the aim of exposing the falsity or fetishism of international organisations, these scholars trace how they are constituted through heterogeneous practices and materials. Littoz-Monnet thus aims to show how expert knowledge is made in global governance;¹¹ Uribe traces the construction of ‘hidden hunger’ as a specific ‘object of governance’;¹² Soave seeks to account for the ‘legal production of the international judiciary’;¹³ Santer carefully recounts the transnational legal conflicts arising over maritime rescues in the Central Mediterranean;¹⁴ Quiroga-Villamarín reveals how the physical headquarters of organisations shape and constrain their expression of the international;¹⁵ Halme-Tuomisaari urges focussing on ‘the legal technicalities and practical materialities that define their operations’;¹⁶ and Clements describes reform in the International Criminal Court (ICC) as an ‘infinite institutional becoming’.¹⁷ As Van Den Meerssche argues in his account of shifting ‘cultural techniques’ of lawyering in

¹⁰ Klabbers, ‘Inter-disciplinarity and the Law of International Organizations’, pp. 38–56. Elsewhere, Klabbers more directly describes functionalism as an ideology: ‘Functionalism is best seen not as theory, but as ideology: a more or less coherent set of thoughts with little explanatory power but strong normative appeal, and working so as to legitimize the use of power.’ J. Klabbers, ‘Notes on the Ideology of International Organizations Law: The International Organization for Migration, State-Making, and the Market for Migration’ (2019) 32 *Leiden Journal of International Law* 383–400, 385.

¹¹ A. Littoz-Monnet, ‘Studying the Assembling of Expertise in Global Governance’ in this volume, pp. 59–80.

¹² J. Uribe, ‘Drawing the Contours of Hidden Hunger as an Object of Governance’ in this volume, pp. 101–20.

¹³ T. Soave, ‘The Puzzle of Freedom: Structure and Agency in International Adjudication’ in this volume, pp. 122–41.

¹⁴ K. Santer, ‘Reassembling Transnational Legal Conflicts across Global Institutions: Ethnographic Perspectives on Claims of Authority over the Mediterranean Sea’ in this volume, pp. 142–65.

¹⁵ D. Quiroga Villamarín, ‘Placeholders: An Archival Journey into the Interim Histories of International Organizations’ in this volume, pp. 166–84.

¹⁶ M. Halme-Tuomisaari, ‘Keeping Up Standards for a Better World: Anthropological Alternatives to the Study of International Organizations’ in this volume, pp. 208–26.

¹⁷ R. Clements, ‘Experts, Practices, Power: The Work of International Criminal Court Reform’ in this volume, pp. 81–100.

the World Bank, tracing the assemblages that make up international organisations offers an alternative form of critique, one that remains sensitive and responsive to ‘the changing politics of law’.¹⁸

The distinction between deconstructive and reconstructive ‘ways of doing’ outlined here is no doubt overdrawn. To be sure, many of the chapters in this volume can be read as straddling both modes. Clements’ attention to the ‘notions of efficiency and cost-effectiveness’ embedded in the ICC’s ‘organisation form’ resonates with Cutler’s deconstruction of ‘resilience talk’.¹⁹ Cutler in turn reminds us that ideology works to interpellate subjects as much as it inverts or distorts our image of reality.²⁰ Halme-Tuomisaari is concerned with uncovering the ‘inner logic’ of international organisations.²¹ Chimni’s ‘internal critique’ would include examining their ‘everyday practices or organisational culture’,²² while his interest in proposals for reform suggests a fundamentally reconstructive impulse at play.²³ Other authors would almost certainly resist being pigeon-holed into one or other approach, and fairly so.

Ways of Seeing

What then does this volume reveal about international organisations? What is glimpsed here that was not seen before? The authors of these chapters are more modest than the blind men in the parable. None claims exclusive (in)sight into the nature of international organisations; several explicitly deny the possibility of turning on the lights, opening one’s eyes, and seeing the elephant whole. One or two express mild misgivings about the overweening claims to special discernment by scholars in certain disciplines (not their own, of course). Instead,

¹⁸ D. Van Den Meerssche, ‘“The Critic Is Not the One Who Debunks, but the One Who Assembles”: On Professional Performances and Material Practice’ in this volume, pp. 227–46.

¹⁹ Clements, ‘Experts, Practices, Power’, pp. 81–100; Cutler, ‘Deconstructing “Resilience Talk” in Global Governance’, pp. 271–90.

²⁰ Cutler, ‘Deconstructing “Resilience Talk” in Global Governance’, pp. 271–90.

²¹ Halme-Tuomisaari, ‘Keeping Up Standards for a Better World’, pp. 208–26.

²² Chimni, ‘Critical Theory and International Organizations’, pp. 16–37.

²³ See generally G. F. Sinclair, ‘Between Salvation and Cynicism: TWAIL Perspectives on International Organizations’, in A. Anghie, B. P. Chimni, M. Fakhri, K. Mickelson, and V. Nesiah (eds.), *Research Handbook on Third World Approaches to International Law* (Edward Elgar, in press).

most of the chapters self-consciously focus on specific episodes, mechanisms, or aspects of international organisations. In doing so, they present a kaleidoscope of images that transform how we view these entities.

Indeed, the international organisations seen through the chapters in this volume are startlingly heterogeneous in their composition and activities. As the editors note, mainstream international legal scholars tend to focus on international organisations as such – assumed to be discrete, self-contained, coherent entities – and their members, which are mostly states. In contrast, the chapters in this volume describe entities that are teeming with life – actors and actions, objects and projects, practices and performances. From the varied perspectives of the authors gathered here, international organisations are channels for the circulation of people, data, and documents through multiple ‘crossing points’, ‘boundary sites’, and ‘material infrastructures’;²⁴ producers of policies, programmes, committees, and documents;²⁵ ‘socio-political machineries’ that generate diverse ‘governance objects’ through the manipulation and deployment of knowledge;²⁶ targets of reform, carried out by ‘a set of actors, arguments, and their tools’;²⁷ physical sites, buildings, and other infrastructures,²⁸ constituted by the ‘patterned practices’, ‘competent performances’, and relationships of a community of legal professionals;²⁹ embodying professional cultures expressed in ‘objects, rules-of-thumb, textual references and templates of analysis or documentation’;³⁰ instruments for transnational capitalist class interests;³¹ and more. As these chapters suggest, an international organisation will look very different depending on whether one is examining its (executive) head, its (operational) feet, or the (administrative) belly of the beast.

²⁴ Littoz-Monnet, ‘Studying the Assembling of Expertise in Global Governance’, pp. 59–80.

²⁵ Halme-Tuomisaari, ‘Keeping Up Standards for a Better World’, pp. 208–26.

²⁶ Uribe, ‘Drawing the Contours of Hidden Hunger as an Object of Governance’, pp. 101–20.

²⁷ Clements, ‘Experts, Practices, Power’, pp. 81–100.

²⁸ Quiroga Villamarin, ‘Placeholders’, pp. 166–84.

²⁹ Soave, ‘The Puzzle of Freedom’, pp. 122–41.

³⁰ Van Den Meerssche, ‘The Critic Is Not the One Who Debunks’, pp. 227–46.

³¹ Chimni, ‘Critical Theory and International Organizations’, pp. 16–37; Mansouri, ‘Laissez-Faire, State Capitalism, and the Making of International Organizations’, pp. 248–70; Cutler, ‘Deconstructing “Resilience Talk” in Global Governance’, pp. 271–90.

With such diverse makeups, it is perhaps unsurprising that many of the chapters also depict international organisations and their constituent entities as engaged in more or less continuous processes of struggle. To some, the principal antagonists are those actors already recognised by mainstream international lawyers – international organisations and their member states – though the struggles should be understood as taking place both between and within them.³² To others, more specific struggles warrant particular attention. International organisations like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund thus incarnate contestations between classes, within classes, or between capitalist states. Bodies such as the International Maritime Organisation, the International Organisation for Migration, and the European Union engage in transnational legal conflicts among themselves, with state agencies, and with non-governmental agencies regarding the governance of international borders.³³ The struggles to reform the ICC are played out through reiterative interpretive work on ‘legal materials’.³⁴ More concretely still, even the effort to obtain and maintain secure physical accommodations turns out to be an ongoing, uphill battle.³⁵ But what enables our authors to see such variety and turmoil in institutions that typically appear so flat and lifeless in legal texts?

Ways of Thinking

The blind men in the parable interpret their findings through mental models drawn from their prior experiences in the world. The one who touches the elephant’s leg and declares that the elephant is like a tree is only able to do so because he has some experience (and thus expectation) of what a tree feels like. Indeed, he has probably touched several trees, so he has a sense that there are different kinds of trees; even if this tree is not quite the same as the others he has experienced, it shares enough of the common properties of a tree – for example, its vertical orientation, girth, and rough surface – for it to be classed as such. Likewise, the man who touches the elephant’s ear must have some general sense of the possible range of forms and properties of a

³² Klabbers, ‘Inter-disciplinarity and the Law of International Organizations’, pp. 38–56.

³³ Santer, ‘Reassembling Transnational Legal Conflicts’, pp. 142–65.

³⁴ Clements, ‘Experts, Practices, Power’, pp. 81–100.

³⁵ Quiroga Villamarin, ‘Placeholders’, pp. 166–84.

fan, to be able to assert confidently that an elephant is like a fan. Their different ‘ways of seeing’ the elephant are intimately tied to their ‘ways of thinking’ about the world: how they classify and categorise objects; how they analogueise or distinguish between different instances or cases; what they are primed to ‘see’, and what their imaginations do not permit them to observe.

Our authors likewise employ a range of mental models – or, to extend the ocular metaphor, theoretical or interpretive lenses – that allow them to see different aspects of their objects of examination. With a wide-angle lens such as is provided by historical materialist or critical political economic terms of analysis, it is possible (in fact, one is almost compelled) to see how international organisations are implicated in broad, transhistorical patterns of domination, hegemony, and exploitation. The scholar who adopts a more microscopic lens, in contrast, will be likely to discover more of the unseen, everyday lives of international organisations.³⁶ An anthropologist’s sensibility will be attuned to pluralism in law as in culture; an historian will observe contingency and change; a scholar steeped in practice theory will find, well, practices. The variety of lenses being deployed here is impressive, taking inspiration from Marx, Bourdieu, Foucault, and Latour, among others. Each of these lenses has its limitations: to see one part of the elephant clearly is to see the rest only fuzzily, or not at all.

The most dominant mental model of all, of course, is that of the international organisation itself. With all their great diversity, all the authors in this collection seem to agree, more or less, on their object of study; certainly, none fundamentally questions the usefulness of international organisations as a category of analysis. Once one has been taught to see an elephant, it seems, it is difficult to forget or push the image out of one’s mind, even if one is told ‘don’t think of an elephant!’ And yet, there may be good reason to question whether all of the entities under investigation in this volume belong to the same species. Is the many-limbed (and many-trunked, and many-tailed...) United Nations really the same kind of thing as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons? Do the Universal Postal Union and the World Health Organisation belong in the same conceptual bucket as each other, the ICC, or the Appellate Body of the World Trade

³⁶ G. F. Sinclair, ‘Unseen and Everyday: International Secretariats under the Spotlight’ (2022) 116 *AJIL Unbound* 378.

Organisation? For all the attention to detail in practices, materiality, and processes found here, it may be surprising to find such consensus on an overarching concept that purports to unite them.

The division between macroscopic and microscopic views leads back to the distinction between deconstructivist and reconstructivist ways of doing the study of international organisations. The first element in each dyad imagines international organisations as real and complete entities, with capacity for sufficiently coherent will and action that they can be debunked or dismantled – or at least held responsible. The second imagines international organisations in the process of becoming or assemblage. This may at first blush seem less useful for accountability purposes, and therefore less appealing to a practising lawyer. But that judgement is probably premature; rather than undercut accountability, a more complex and fluid understanding of international organisations-in-the-making may eventually make possible a more precise schema of responsibility. These are early days as an exciting new wave of scholarship gathers: instead of closing down possibilities, why not catch the wave for a while and see where it takes us?

Ways Forward?

Ways of doing – ways of seeing – ways of thinking. Like the blind men in the parable, students of international organisations grasp at different parts of the objects of their study, observe distinct phenomena, and interpret their findings through diverse mental models. Indeed, all three are tightly interconnected and impossible to separate in practice. What, then, might the future hold for this flourishing field of scholarship and praxis? No one can say for sure, but here is a short wish list – as personal and idiosyncratic as any other – from a fellow dweller in the dark.

First, there is certainly room to push further in all of the directions pursued and advocated in these chapters, and to connect these with other streams of scholarship. Though a number of excellent ethnographic studies of international organisations have appeared,³⁷ much

³⁷ See, e.g., S. Block-Lieb and T. C. Halliday, *Global Lawmakers: International Organizations in the Crafting of World Markets* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); R. Niezen and M. Sapignoli (eds.), *Palaces of Hope: The Anthropology of Global Organizations* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); G. Sarfaty,

more is needed to understand their everyday, inner workings. Here, inspiration could be drawn from recent inquiries into, among other things, documents,³⁸ files,³⁹ and meetings⁴⁰ in other settings, as well as from the classic works of Max Weber, who is surprisingly little cited in this volume.⁴¹ The relations among international organisations, mentioned in passing in only a few chapters, is a subject of increasing study by international lawyers and international relations scholars,⁴² and could likewise offer opportunities for more focussed ethnographic and historical study. Rational choice and game-theoretic approaches, also under-represented here, might strengthen Marxian critiques of international organisations' role in entrenching the domination of powerful states.⁴³ Complementary ways of thinking about international organisations could be found in the academic discipline of public administration,⁴⁴ while

Values in Translation: Human Rights and the Culture of the World Bank (Stanford University Press, 2012).

³⁸ A. Riles, *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge* (University of Michigan Press, 2006); N. Mathur, *Paper Tiger: Law, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State in Himalayan India* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); R. H. R. Harper, *Inside the IMF: An Ethnography of Documents, Technology and Organisational Action* (Routledge, 1998).

³⁹ C. Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology* (Stanford University Press, 2008).

⁴⁰ J. Sandler and R. Thedvall (eds.), *Meeting Ethnography: Meetings as Key Technologies of Contemporary Governance, Development, and Resistance* (Routledge, 2017); H. Brown, A. Reed, and T. Yarrow, 'Introduction: Towards an Ethnography of Meeting' (2017) 23 *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10–26; Special Issue: Meetings: Ethnographies of Organizational Process, Bureaucracy, and Assembly (2017) *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 23: S1.

⁴¹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2 vols (G. Roth and C. Wittich eds., University of California Press, 1978).

⁴² See, e.g., L. Boisson de Chazournes, *Interactions between Regional and Universal Organizations: A Legal Perspective* (Brill, 2016); H. Gött, *The Law of Interactions between International Organizations: A Framework for Multi-institutional Labour Governance* (Springer, 2020); R. Biermann and J. A. Koops (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Inter-Organizational Relations in World Politics* (Palgrave, 2017).

⁴³ See, e.g., E. Benvenisti and G. W. Downs, 'The Empire's New Clothes: Political Economy and the Fragmentation of International Law' (2007) 60 *Stanford Law Review* 595.

⁴⁴ See, e.g., D. Stone and K. Moloney (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Global Policy and Transnational Administration* (Oxford University Press, 2019); M. W. Bauer, C. Knill, and S. Eckhard (eds.), *International Bureaucracy: Challenges and Lessons for Public Administration Research* (Palgrave

organisation studies might offer further critical and practice-oriented perspectives.⁴⁵

Second, more efforts to bridge the gaps between apparent dichotomies in the field, building on those made in this volume, would be welcome. Productive linkages could be sought between the microscopic views provided by practice-theoretic approaches and the more macroscopic, diachronic perspectives offered by exciting new histories of international organisations during the interwar period, during the Cold War, and in the era of decolonisation.⁴⁶ There is ample scope for studies connecting the materiality of international organisations to the affective lives of the people who work in them.⁴⁷ Similarly, scholarship that bridges – and thus helps to explain – the gulf between the high ideals expressed by international organisations and their involvement in projects of imperialist domination or capitalist exploitation seems as necessary as ever.

Macmillan, 2017); S. Kim, S. Ashley, and H. W. Lambright (eds.), *Public Administration in the Context of Global Governance* (Edward Elgar, 2014).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., B. Czarniawska, *A Theory of Organizing* (Edward Elgar, 2008); B. Czarniawska and G. Sevón (eds.), *Translating Organizational Change* (Walter de Gruyter, 1996).

⁴⁶ See, e.g., M. Alacevich, *Political Economy of the World Bank: The Early Years* (World Bank, 2008); M. Schmelzer, *The Hegemony of Growth: The OECD and the Making of the Economic Growth Paradigm* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); P. Clavin, *Securing the World Economy: The Reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920–1946* (Oxford University Press, 2013); M. Christian, S. Kott, and O. Matějka (eds.), *Planning in Cold War Europe: Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s–1970s)* (De Gruyter, 2018); K. Gram-Skjoldager, H. A. Ikonomidou, and T. Kahlert (eds.), *Organizing the 20th Century World: International Organizations and the Emergence of International Public Administration, 1920–1960s* (Bloomsbury, 2020); O. Aloni, *The League of Nations and the Protection of the Environment* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); D. Stinsky, *International Cooperation in Cold War Europe: The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1947–64* (Bloomsbury, 2021); E. Roehrlch, *Inspectors for Peace: A History of the International Atomic Energy Agency* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2022); E.-M. Muschik, *Building States: The United Nations, Development, and Decolonization, 1945–1965* (Columbia University Press, 2022).

⁴⁷ See, e.g., J. Billaud and J. K. Cowan, ‘The Bureaucratisation of Utopia: Ethics, Affects and Subjectivities in International Governance Processes’ (2020) 28 *Social Anthropology* 6–16; J. K. Cowan ‘“The Feeling of Pursuing an Ideal”: A League of Nations Civil Servant Reflects on his Work’ (2020) 28 *Social Anthropology* 17–34.

Third, a reflexive turn that accounts for the effects of scholarship on the practice of international organisations may be well overdue. There is something strange about the passivity of the elephant in the parable that opened this chapter. What are the chances that the elephant would not react in some way to all that prodding and poking of its ears, trunk, and tail? Similarly, scholarly probings of international organisations are more than likely to produce some kind of response, for better or for worse. This relationship between cause and effect can be seen most obviously in self-conscious efforts by international lawyers to promote new rules on decision-making in particular international organisations or to reform the law on responsibility, or to devise new mechanisms to hold them to account. But more subtle effects – though no less far-reaching – may arise from re-visioning international organisations, to take one example, as an actor in ‘global administrative bodies’ operating in a ‘global administrative space’.⁴⁸ Exploring these effects promises to offer a new way of connecting the ‘ways of seeing’ explored in this volume with the ‘ways of doing’ in international organisations.

⁴⁸ B. Kingsbury, N. Krisch, and R. B. Stewart, ‘The Emergence of Global Administrative Law’ (2005) 68 *Law and Contemporary Problems* 15–61, at 17, 18; B. Kingsbury and L. Casini, ‘Global Administrative Law Dimensions of International Organizations Law’ (2009) 6 *International Organizations Law Review* 319–358.