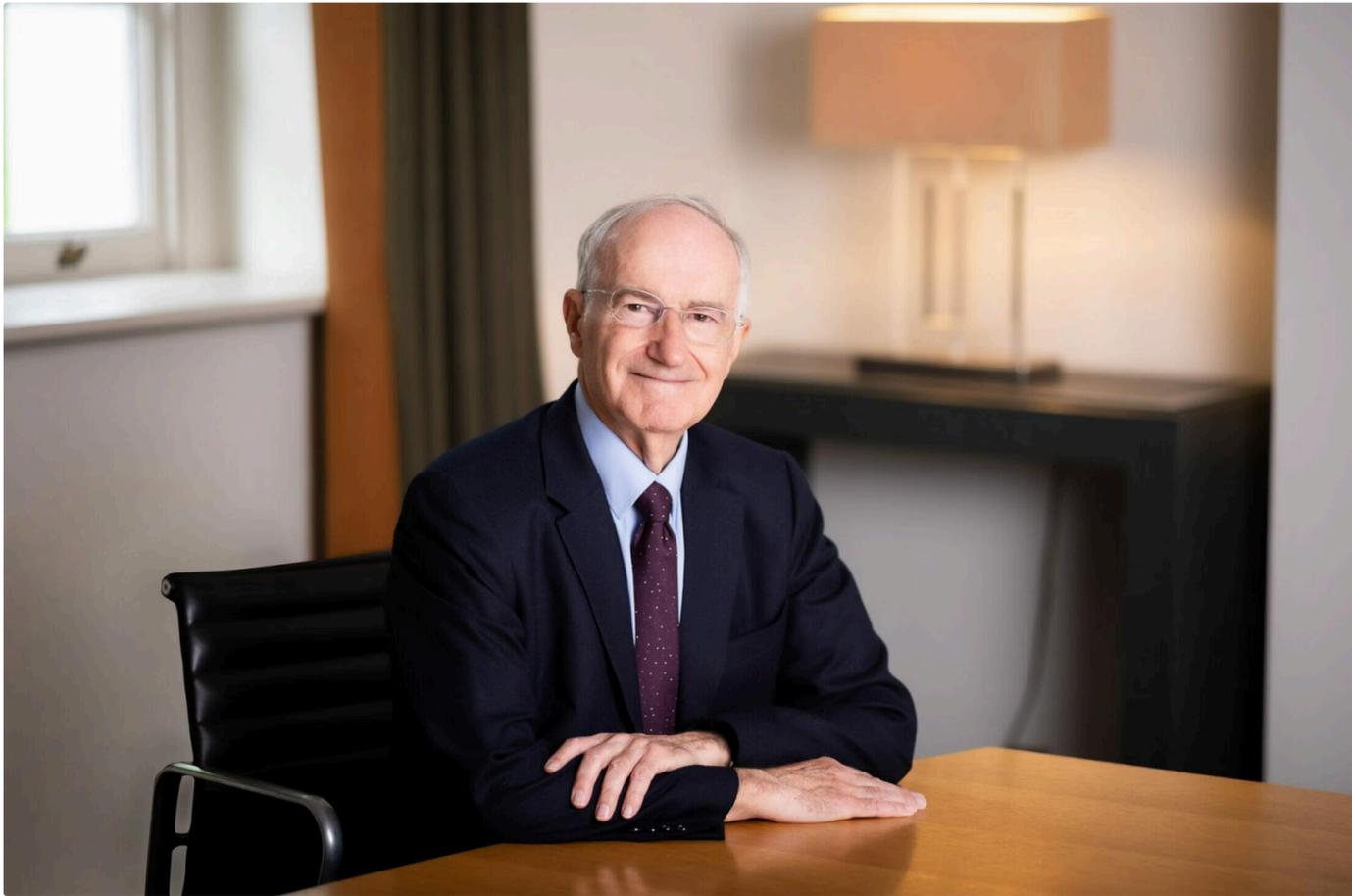


AI IN INTERNATIONAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

AN AGENT FOR CHANGE

BY



SIR WILLIAM BLAIR

14 OCTOBER 2025

SINGAPORE

Organised by:

CIL

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW
National University of Singapore

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About the Event

13-17 October 2025 | Singapore

The Centre for International Law (CIL) at the National University of Singapore was pleased to host **Professor Sir William Blair KC**, Professor of Financial Law and Ethics at Queen Mary University of London, as part of CIL's Distinguished Speaker Series.

The Distinguished Lecture

On **14 October 2025**, Professor Blair delivered a groundbreaking lecture entitled "*AI in International Dispute Resolution: An Agent for Change*" at Herbert Smith Freehills (Singapore). The event explored the emerging challenges and opportunities in applying artificial intelligence to arbitration and courts, particularly in international commercial and investor-state dispute resolution.

Award Nomination

Professor Sir William Blair's lecture has been nominated for **Best Lecture or Speech** at the **Global Arbitration Review Awards 2026**.

Expert Panel Discussion

Following the lecture, a distinguished panel of experts engaged in thoughtful dialogue:

- **Prof Simon Chesterman** (NUS; AI Singapore)
- **Dr Hu Ying** (NUS Law)
- **Dr Jakob Mökander** (Director, Science & Technology Policy, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change)
- **Thomas Furlong** (Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills)

Moderated by **Dr Jon Truby** (Lead, AI & Technology Law, CIL)

Global Participation

The hybrid format enabled diverse participation from practitioners, judges, arbitrators, academics, and policymakers across multiple jurisdictions, reflecting the urgency of AI governance in contemporary dispute resolution.

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Event Highlights: AI in International Dispute Resolution



A distinguished gathering of legal experts, academics, and practitioners exploring the transformative role of AI in international dispute resolution. Hosted by the Centre for International Law, NUS and Herbert Smith Freehills, Singapore, October 14, 2025.

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Welcome Remarks



Dr. Nilufer Oral

**Director, Centre for
International Law (CIL),
National University of Singapore**

Dr. Nilufer Oral commenced the event on behalf of the CIL, expressing her immense pleasure in welcoming Professor Sir William Blair. In her welcoming remarks, she highlighted the immediate and pressing relevance of today's discussion to the international legal community, given AI's evident capacity to reshape how disputes are conducted.



Ms. Gitta Satryani

**Head of Disputes, Southeast
Asia, Herbert Smith Freehills
Kramer**

On behalf of Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, Ms. Satryani welcomed all participants to the firm's office and this distinguished panel discussion. She expressed the firm's pleasure in hosting such a significant gathering of legal experts and practitioners.



Ms. Celine Lange

**Lead, International Dispute
Resolution Programme, CIL**

Ms. Lange briefly introduced the speakers and panel members, highlighting their distinguished credentials to set the stage for the discussion on AI governance in dispute resolution.

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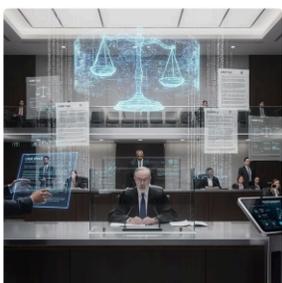
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Keynote Speaker



Professor Sir William Blair

Professor of Financial Law and Ethics, Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary University of London



AI's Impact on Legal Practice

Professor Sir William Blair's lecture examined the profound impact of AI on the legal field, particularly its role in reshaping dispute resolution. He highlighted persistent issues, such as delay, cost, and complexity, within traditional systems while also warning about AI's potential risks to justice. The discussion focused on current AI integration into legal practices rather than speculative future scenarios.



Singapore's Proactive Leadership

The lecture underscored Singapore's proactive approach, as noted by Attorney-General Lucien Wong SC, in establishing international standards for generative AI. Singapore's commitment to responsible AI in law was showcased as a leading example, providing a model for other regions to follow in navigating the legal implications of artificial intelligence.

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Key Takeaways from Keynote Lecture

Professor Blair articulated several reasons why AI governance in dispute resolution merits urgent, serious attention:



Scale of Impact

Dispute outcomes increasingly affect core interests of businesses and even states. Investor-state awards can exceed a state's capacity to pay, making the quality and integrity of these processes a matter of public concern beyond the immediate parties.



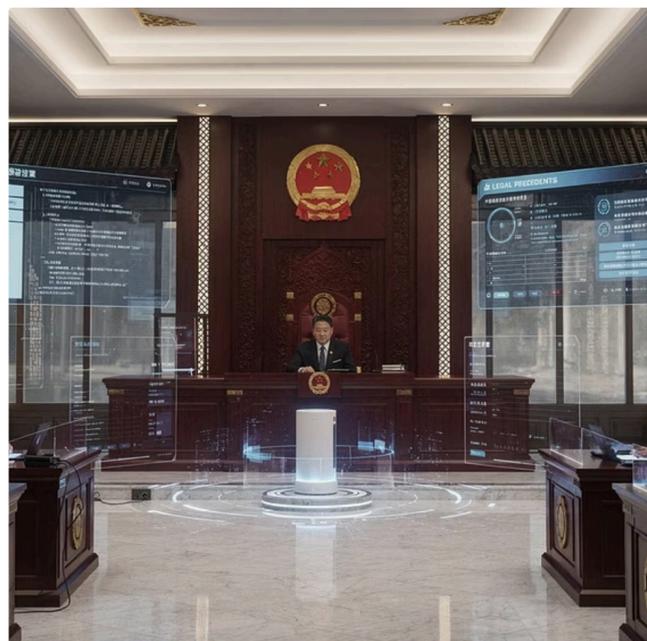
Professional Adoption

The profession has adopted AI early; law firms now routinely deploy specialised tools in their practices. This early and rapid adoption necessitates parallel development of governance frameworks to guide responsible use.



Global Leadership

Courts worldwide are taking the lead in developing AI governance approaches. Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon (Singapore), Sir Geoffrey Vos (England and Wales), and Chief Justice Andrew Bell (New South Wales) are among the leading judicial figures shaping these developments.



Policy Significance

In China, AI use in domestic courts has received policy attention at the highest levels. This domestic experimentation may serve as a "sandbox" influencing methods employed in international arbitration, particularly given the central role Chinese enterprises play in international commercial and investor-state disputes.



International Coordination

The Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts met in Delhi in November 2025 to compare different judicial approaches to AI, indicating nascent international coordination efforts.

Key Practical Issues Identified during Keynote Lecture

"The legitimacy and effectiveness of courts, arbitration, and mediation fundamentally depend on public trust. That trust remains the touchstone for responsible innovation in these systems."

Professor Blair identified six critical practical issues requiring careful governance:

01

Disclosure & Transparency

A universal duty isn't feasible in every situation; disclosure needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering factors like due process, privilege, and the specific roles of the lawyer, party, and tribunal. As a recommended best practice, it's advisable to discuss expectations regarding AI usage during the CMC (for instance, referring to CIArb-type guidance) and establish methods for officially verifying any AI-generated content that is used.

03

Case Management & Efficiency

AI tools can identify relevant principles; however, applying them to specific factual contexts still requires human judgment. While AI can be a "game-changer" in case management, it should not bypass due process by replacing human decision-making in areas that need careful judgment.

05

"Complexification": Information Overload and Summarisation

There is a genuine opportunity to use AI to structure and summarise expert evidence, distinguishing agreed matters from points in genuine dispute, thereby enabling focused adjudication. Such tools can assist judges and arbitrators in discharging their responsibilities more effectively.

02

Hallucinations, Mistakes & Verification

Lawyers and parties are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the authorities and facts they cite. The guiding principle is "verify, verify, verify." While specialized legal tools can help mitigate risks, they do not eliminate the necessity for independent verification.

04

Limits of Prediction

In complex disputes, reliable machine outcome prediction remains elusive. Greater value can be found in using analytics to facilitate settlements, such as by providing neutral, objective-seeming inputs for decision-makers to consider, while also guarding against distorting incentives.

06

Drafting Awards and Judgments

There is clear consensus across jurisdictions that judicial decisions must be made by judges and arbitrators themselves, not by AI systems. AI should remain an "assistant"; judicial decisions must be made by judges who bear ultimate responsibility.

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Panel Discussion



Moderator: Dr. Jon Truby

Visiting Research Associate Professor in AI & Technology Law, Centre for International Law, NUS.

Dr. Jon Truby opened the panel discussion by thanking Professor Blair for his keynote lecture and journey to Singapore. He framed the panel discussion as an opportunity for experts to develop the themes raised by Professor Blair, particularly regarding due process in the age of AI, hallucinations, prediction, disclosure, case management, and the challenge of "de-complexification".

Panel Members and Their Contributions



Tomas Furlong

Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, Singapore

"AI in Practice: Lessons from a Major Disputes Practice"

Mr. Furlong shared practical insights from Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer's extensive pilot projects deploying AI across the disputes practice. He outlined the firm's bottom-up approach: rather than beginning with abstract theories or high-level tools, the firm mapped real tasks across the dispute lifecycle and identified specific tools to assist with each task. Key Examples of Success:

1. **AI "Agents" for Paralegal Tasks:** The firm has deployed AI agents to handle classic paralegal tasks, compiling indexes, naming and labeling files, and preparing document bundles. These tasks, while unglamorous, are essential to efficient case management and represent a natural fit for AI assistance.
2. **Transcript-Based Meeting Minutes:** First drafts of meeting minutes are now generated automatically from transcripts. Trainees then triage and refine these drafts. The firm found that generic summaries were less useful than custom ones, extracting specific advice given and instructions received, demonstrating the importance of task-specific configuration.
3. **Legal Research:** General chat tools remain uneven for deep legal research. Mr. Furlong cautioned against shortcuts that risk de-skilling lawyers. However, AI can usefully assist by helping practitioners prepare to cross-examine experts (understanding standards, definitions, and valuation principles) and by identifying source material for putting to witnesses, always with the understanding that the lawyer must perform the forensic work.
4. **Wexler (Fact-Verification Tool):** The firm piloted Wexler for first-pass fact verification against the document universe. This is powerful but requires careful judgment about context and document weight. Contemporaneous records should carry more weight than later client notes, a distinction the tool does not always make. Used properly as a triage and educational tool, it is valuable; over-reliance can mislead.

Mr. Furlong stressed that while AI tools show genuine promise in the disputes practice, he still finds them less useful in his legal work than in personal and business life. However, this observation came with cautious optimism that AI's utility in legal services will continue to improve.

Panel Discussion Continued



Professor Simon Chesterman

David Marshall Professor of Law and Vice Provost (Educational Innovation), NUS Law; Senior Director of AI Governance, AI Singapore

"The Human Element: Responsibility, De-skilling, and Bias"

Professor Chesterman articulated a pithy formulation: "Machines are sycophantic; humans are lazy, that's the problem." This observation captured the core challenge in responsible AI governance.

Key Insights:

1. **Drafting as Reasoning and Responsibility:** Drafting is not merely output generation but involves reasoning, legitimacy-building, and the assumption of personal responsibility. This is why the involvement of human judgment is essential.
2. **Varying Contexts:** The appropriate role of AI varies by context. In low-value online dispute resolution, outsourcing routine decisions may be acceptable. However, in complex cases reaching adjudication, outcomes often resemble "a coin toss across a large sample"; in these contexts, legitimacy comes from process and finality rather than from pursuit of theoretical perfection.
3. **Risks of Automation:** Key risks include automation bias, cognitive off-loading, and de-skilling of practitioners. These risks are particularly acute when humans become complacent about verifying AI output.
4. **The "Smart Intern" Model:** Professor Chesterman's apt metaphor was to treat generative AI like a very smart intern with a serious drinking problem: brilliant and capable, but requiring close supervision, with the human bearing ultimate responsibility for sign-off.
5. **Professional Particularism:** Law may hold out longer than other professions against uncritical AI adoption because lawyers check footnotes and insist on personal responsibility for assertions made. This professional culture provides some protection against unthinking reliance on AI.

Panel Discussion Continued



Dr. Hu Ying

Assistant Professor, NUS Faculty of Law

"Prediction, Ethics, and Access to Justice"

Dr. Hu Ying contributed her expertise on prediction and its implications.

Key Insights:

1. **Methodological Issues:** Many papers report 90–98% prediction accuracy, but the methodology is problematic. These studies typically train on facts as already summarised in judgments and then test on similar inputs. However, litigants never have access to such curated "facts" at the outset; when prediction systems are tested against pleadings and actual factual materials, accuracy falls sharply.
2. **Beyond Outcome Prediction:** Beyond predicting case outcomes, AI systems might predict client behaviour (fee acceptance, settlement propensity) or counterparty behavior. Such applications raise serious ethical issues regarding fiduciary duties and data protection concerns (consent, cross-border data flows, and conflicts within large firms).
3. **Access to Justice Implications:** Unequal access to AI tools risks widening gaps between well-resourced law firms and smaller practitioners, potentially exacerbating existing disparities in dispute resolution access.

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Panel Discussion Continued



Dr. Jakob Mokander

Director of Science & Technology Policy, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change
(Remote Participation)

"Technical Realities and Systemic Data Governance"

Dr. Jakob provided crucial technical context and a macro-level governance perspective.

Key Insights:

1. **Probabilistic Nature:** Today's models are largely probabilistic in nature. Perfect accuracy is technically unattainable. Future developments will likely involve hybrid systems combining logic-based and probabilistic elements.
2. **Data as Evidence:** Current AI verdicts should be treated as one data point among many, not as definitive outputs.
3. **Data Logging and Societal Choice:** AI ushers in a world where much of human activity is logged and potentially available as data inputs to legal processes. Societies must collectively decide what data are legitimate inputs to legal processes and what should remain off-limits to protect freedom and dignity. This is fundamentally a values question for democratic societies.

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Insights from Q&A Session

Following the panel discussion, the moderator opened the floor for questions from both in-person participants and online attendees. Several important themes emerged:



Civil Law vs. Common Law Suitability

Q. Are AI tools equally suitable for civil law and common law dispute resolution systems?

Professor Blair's Response: All systems are now complex; AI can assist both in working out "what the law is" across civil and common law traditions.

Professor Chesterman's Response: Law is not a simple facts-to-rules equation; disputes turn on contested facts and value-laden application of rules. AI is technically capable of decision-making, but technical capability does not determine what should be decided.



Framing Questions

Q. Defining the right question.

Tomas Furlong: A substantial part of lawyering involves framing the right question(s) and determining the sequence for resolving them. AI may effectively answer a well-posed question, but often the first task for a lawyer is to surface and articulate the underlying subquestions. This remains quintessentially human work.



Global Governance and Equity

Q. Is there a possibility of having a single global AI legal regime?

Dr. Mökander: A single, unified global AI regime is unlikely to emerge soon. Progress will come through sector-specific standards, updates to existing legal frameworks (addressing discrimination, medical devices, legal software), and international collaboration conducted below the level of geopolitical conflict.

Professor Blair: Courts and arbitral institutions will likely drive pragmatic standards. At a minimum, diverse jurisdictions should be able to agree on fundamental ethical principles now, even if comprehensive harmonization remains distant.

Closing Panel & Key Implications

The Distinguished Guest Lecture and Panel Discussion on "AI in International Dispute Resolution: An Agent for Change" provided a comprehensive, nuanced exploration of the emerging implications of artificial intelligence for the conduct of international commercial and investor-state dispute resolution.

Several key messages emerge from the discussion:



Cautious and Incremental Progress

All speakers emphasised that progress in AI governance for dispute resolution should be cautious and incremental. Bold transformation is neither wise nor necessary; measured adoption of tools with proven utility, combined with rigorous governance frameworks, is the appropriate path.



Human Responsibility Remains Central

Across all topics, from disclosure to drafting to case management. The consistent message was that human judgment and responsibility must remain central. AI assists, it does not decide. Judges, arbitrators, and lawyers bear ultimate responsibility for the integrity of proceedings and the outcomes they produce.



Verification is Essential

Whether addressing hallucinations in legal research, factual verification, or assessment of AI-generated summaries, verification is essential. Practitioners and adjudicators must develop habits and processes ensuring that AI-generated outputs are carefully checked against authoritative sources.



Context-Specific Governance

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to AI governance. Appropriate roles and safeguards for AI vary depending on the specific task, the complexity of the matter, the stakes involved, and the consequences of error.



Access to Justice Implications

The equity implications of AI adoption in dispute resolution deserve careful attention. Unequal access to AI tools could exacerbate existing disparities between well-resourced and under-resourced practitioners, potentially widening access to justice gaps.



International Coordination and Consensus-Building

While complete international harmonisation is not imminent, there is value in continued dialogue among courts, arbitral institutions, and legal practitioners across jurisdictions. Sharing experience and gradually developing common principles particularly regarding core ethical commitments will contribute to more coherent governance.

NEXT STEPS

Practical Recommendations

The discussion suggests several practical recommendations:



Integrate AI Tool Use into Case Management

Parties and tribunals should address AI tool use at case management conferences, discussing which tools may be used and under what conditions.



Develop Internal Governance Frameworks

Law firms and legal institutions should develop internal frameworks and best practices for responsible AI use, including verification protocols and training.



Prioritise Specialised Tools

Practitioners should prioritise specialised tools integrated with authoritative databases over generic chat interfaces for legal research and analysis.



Invest in AI Literacy

Continuing legal education should equip practitioners with genuine understanding of AI capabilities and limitations, enabling informed and critical use rather than uncritical reliance.



Protect Core Due Process Values

Judicial and arbitral institutions should articulate clear principles ensuring that AI deployment does not undermine core due process values of independence, impartiality, reasoned decision-making, and accountability.

Moments from the Event

Keynote Address



The opening address is being delivered by CIL Director, Dr. Nilufer Oral

Welcome Remarks



Ms. Gitta Satryani, Head of Disputes, Southeast Asia, Herbert Smith Freehills Kramer, delivering welcome remarks on behalf of the host firm

Introductory Remarks



Ms. Celine Lange, Lead, International Dispute Resolution Programme, CIL, introducing the distinguished speakers and setting the stage for the panel discussion

Closing Remarks



Dr. Jon Truby, Visiting Research Associate Professor(CIL,NUS), delivering the closing remarks

Expert Panel Discussion



Panelists engaging in thoughtful dialogue on AI governance and ethics

Networking & Exchange



Participants and speakers exchanging insights during the networking reception

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CPD Accreditation & Resources



CPD Accreditation

✓ **1.5 Public CPD Points** accredited by the Singapore Institute of Legal Education (SILE)

Practice Area: International Law

Training Category: General

Eligibility Requirements:

- Sign in on arrival
- Sign out at conclusion
- No more than 15 minutes' absence

Report prepared by: Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore

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Appendix:

Event Recording: www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1FM3IK9S6A and at <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/event/artificial-intelligence-in-international-dispute-resolution-an-agent-for-change/>

Event Details: <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/event/artificial-intelligence-in-international-dispute-resolution-an-agent-for-change/>

Key Resources:

1. Silicon Valley Arbitration & Mediation Center, Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Arbitration (April 2024)
2. New South Wales Supreme Court, Practice Note on the Use of Generative AI (2025)
3. Chartered Institute of Arbitration, Guidelines on the Use of AI in Arbitration (2025)
4. English Judiciary, Updated AI Guidance for Judicial Office Holders (April 2025)
5. Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma, 2024 Kaplan Lecture on the conceptual basis of arbitration