International law scholars debate when international law matters to states, how it matters, and whether we can improve compliance. One of the few areas of agreement is that fairly robust levels of compliance can be achieved by tapping into states' concerns with their reputation. The logic is intuitively appealing: a state that violates international law develops a bad reputation, which leads other states to exclude the violator from future cooperative opportunities. Anticipating a loss of future gains, states will often comply with international rules that are not in their immediate interests. The level of compliance that reputation can sustain depends, however, on how the government decision makers value the possibility of being excluded from future cooperative agreements. This Article examines how governments internalize reputational costs to the “state” and how audiences evaluate the predictive value of violating governments’ actions. The Article concludes that international law’s current approach to reputation is counterproductive, because it treats reputation as an error term that makes rationalists’ claims invariably correct.