



On the discontinuity of the future by other means: Reviewing the foresight world of Richard Slaughter



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ABSTRACT

Richard Slaughter has made pioneering contributions to futures research. These contributions have been both procedural and substantive. This review seeks to appreciate some of the progress that his work has brought to the field through a review of two of Slaughter's most recent books *The Biggest Wake-up Call in History* (2010) and *To See with Fresh Eyes* (2012). This paper traces how Slaughter's intellectual wake-up built up over time. It highlights a set of fundamental tools, ideas and ideals that spring from Slaughter's work over decades and is synthesised in these two books. This appraisal becomes an "augmented review" by also taking into account his book blurb material and peer-reviewed journal work. This review draws on this evidence to analyse and profile the multi-disciplinary resonance of these references and to illustrate the broader intellectual impact. In addition a bibliometric analysis offers a way beyond the two books and performs an out-of-sample assessment of the way Slaughter has continued to develop the foresight agenda.

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1. Introduction

Perhaps historians are interested in their field because they believe that there is a future for the past. This might explain their commitment to researching things long gone. They hope to give new life to history, not as a static one-version story, but as an unfolding agenda.

Likewise, futurists may cling to their trade in the belief that there will be a lot of history in the future. That is to say, that it is useful to anticipate things to come since that will make a difference. Yet, it is worth keeping in mind that novelty is a break with what was and often with what was foretold. So, historians and futurists may also want invest in history in the making.

Richard Slaughter has a long record of accomplishment in the broad field known as foresight studies or futures research. He is a writer and practitioner in theoretical and applied foresight, for which he has won several prizes. He has also served the futures community in a variety of roles, from President of the World Futures Studies Federation to board member of several academic journals. For many years Slaughter has engaged with the critical challenges that are fundamentally shaping our times. Through his work we are urged to not take the past or the future as given entities. These are not predetermined, unmoveable abstract objects; instead, they are taken to be mouldable to soft expectations and hard choices. Slaughter's work as a futurist raises a number of productive questions. If continuity is doomed, what are the continuities in discontinuity? If forecasting is dead, is there a place for prophecy? If the path taken by a futurist is to be instructive is it through shaping the culture of forward thinking in which researchers and practitioners operate?

This paper reviews and sets in context Richard Slaughter's role in contributing to the consolidation and evolution of futures studies as a responsible, holistic and flexible research agenda. This is no easy task, but ultimately it is a rewarding one. For Slaughter engaging with the future is not a purely conceptual matter, but a passionate commitment to make the world a more sustainable and fairer place to live. For him the future is not a straight line, or even a curve, but a many splintered thing that should be approached from many sides. Finally, we learn that understanding and dealing with big crises means also to challenge and undermine oneself.

This review essay can only provide a brief and selected appraisal of Richard Slaughter's ideas about futures research and the pressing challenges of the Anthropocene. These two concerns constitute the pillars of Slaughter's two recent collections of papers, namely *The Biggest Wake-up Call in History* (2010) and *To See with Fresh Eyes* (2012).¹ The methodology for this review consists of surveying the key features of these books by means of what we would call an "augmented review". That is, by touching upon a few selected facets of both volumes but in a way that enhances our analytical degrees of freedom. This is done through recourse to further "intrinsic" materials (peripheral content) and "extrinsic" materials (scientometric data). In particular, this review uses the non-substantive content in these sources (namely the books' blurb and the author's own notes, forewords, and the like) and the bibliometric fingerprints surrounding his journal papers (those included in the books but also those published afterwards). These two adjacent sources provide extra perspective on what otherwise would be a traditional review.

This review is organised as follows: It starts by tracing Slaughter's formative experiences and intellectual influences as revealed by the introductory and other ancillary parts of both the 2010 and 2012 volumes. It then surveys his concrete contributions to advancing foresight methods and the study of the substantial matter of climate change. The review goes on to offer some finer-grained assessments of the "integral" approach that Slaughter advocates. It then offers a picture of Slaughter's intellectual production and reception through a reasoned interpretation of bibliometric indicators. The review ends with some final remarks.

2. Starting points: moments of inner discontinuity

Slaughter grew up in post-war England. According to him, this peaceful scenery nevertheless provided a starting point for his restless intellectual journey. He would be taken to open and flat areas adjacent to Portsmouth's popular seafront, ideal for children to play and picnic. In this steady, settled landscape, the green field appeared to have been always there; later, to his great surprise, he learned that it once looked radically different. In a previous incarnation it had been bursting with wildlife and crisscrossed by a chaotic network of waterways.

For Slaughter it was disturbing to realise "that a familiar place had a long and very different past." (Slaughter 2012, p. 1) In fact, the present was unlike the past; the familiar had been unfamiliar. What was close now had been distant once. The path to the present could be strange and mysterious, thus imperfectly intelligible. Historical insight is a source for wonder and an assumption smasher, that is, a starting point for learning. The lack of personal knowledge had to be compensated by imagination. In other words, some of the tools for unlocking the past may be similar to those needed to make the future open to human comprehension. As one reads from his Introduction of *To See With Fresh Eyes*, he recounts how the "shock of discovering" can be instrumental to changing perspective and is an art that can be exercised.

Slaughter refers to a few such eye-opening instances of interior discontinuity in which "your inner world shifts upon hidden axes" (Slaughter, 2012, p. 1). Such a sensation of having assumptions taken out from under your feet can make you feel frightened, dazzled and disoriented for a moment but the intellectual effects are enduring. As Slaughter (2012, p. 4),

¹ References, pages and figures apply to the 2013 electronic (or ePub) versions of the books. Small discrepancies may exist with the original editions of both books.

remarks, “human and cultural interiors” are important variables. Preconceptions are the first restrictions to be relaxed before a more robust vision of the future(s) can be developed.

Another such experience happened to him when reading *A Runaway World?* a 1967 book by British social anthropologist Edmond Leach. In his clear, straightforward style this celebrated scientist and commentator was able to convey the contrast between a world changing at galloping speed and the slowness of the adaptation of social habits. As noted by his biographer (Tambiah, 2002), Leach emphasised human interconnectedness and environmental uncertainty and espoused a philosophy he referred to as “evolutionary humanism”, i.e. “a total attitude to the human situation” (quoted in Tambiah, 2002, p. 380). This struck a chord with Slaughter (2012, p. 2); he was impressed by the image of a “dynamic world of powerful forces and emerging structural dilemmas”. He was not the only one. Decades later, when Anthony Giddens (2011, p. xxxi) was justifying why he borrowed the title of Leach’s book for one of his own, he declared that it captured “the feeling many of us have, living at a time of rapid change.”

Yes, the green fields by the sea of his childhood were “non-natural”. Human agency had the power to transform the environment. But change can also mean non-progress, crisis and decay. A non-intermediated contact with environmental gloom and doom came to him in the 1970s. Bermuda, a supposedly sub-tropical paradise where he went to teach, was in fact an overcrowded, politically fractious, unsustainable territory that he came to regard “as a microcosm of the world system” (as he writes in a comment to his 1975 original piece on his experience, reprinted in Slaughter, 2012, p. 3). Even lush nature does not guarantee protection from dystopia, it is just another zone of precariousness in which modernisation went wrong. No island is insulated; no archipelagos can escape the broader broken economic and technological order. Individualism and industrialisation became, not ingredients for social development, but “the ‘civilizational trap’ that humanity had constructed for itself.” (Slaughter, 2012, p. 6).

Sure enough these were the times of resource-pessimism such as the Club of Rome discussion of planetary limits, techno-dystopian concepts like Lewis Mumford’s “Megatechnics” and cultural-optimist perspectives like those of E.F. Schumacher. As Slaughter moves on and enters the 1980s he enrolls in his doctoral studies, a sense of “global emergency” stayed with him (Slaughter, 2012, p. 6). And there are echoes of it in early Slaughterian thought. See for instance the critique of the “nuclear state” as an example of blind instrumental rationality and the need for a higher level of consciousness (a *Futures* paper originally published in 1987; see also a paper on “cultural reconstruction” from 1989, both reprinted in his 2012 book).

With these ruminations the first part of the 2012 book is over (entitled “Early perspectives”). The thread of the book’s journey moves on to dealing with methodological issues, concrete applications that comprise Part II of the book in five papers published between 1996 and 2003. Seven more recent case studies or thought pieces (written between 2004 and 2011) make up Part III. In Parts II and III there are at first explorations of the “critical” approach; and then the “integral” thinking to futures studies takes over as mode of understanding the future. As the 2012 book changes gear, so does this review.

3. How to survey a couple of self-surveying works

As Slaughter reveals in the front-sleeve notes of his Australia-printed book, *The Biggest Wake-up Call in History*, the volume “was turned down by several commercial publishers.” The subtitle of the 2012 book, *To See With Fresh Eyes: Integral Futures and the Global Emergency*, indicates how his methodology is necessarily linked to a normative imperative. As Slaughter (2012, p. 9) states, the 2010 book offers an overview of the emerging “Integral Futures” methodologies he supports.

The futurist is no disinterested observer. The way to study the future is linked to the urge to change course in time. Value judgements and analytical assumptions are intimately related. Slaughter (2010, p. xvi) conceives the book as a testing ground for an “Integral perspective” that is useful because “it is perhaps most able to provide a panoramic and in-depth view of the human and civilisational prospects confronting us.” This book, like the 2012 one, is a survey and a self-reflection: “an attempt to apply what I’ve learned over some three decades of futures and foresight work.” (Slaughter, 2010, p. xv)

A salient intellectual feature is clear enough. Slaughter is no naïve believer in the powers of science and technology to fix humanity’s problems (“While many continue to be entranced by the latest technological wonders – currently the emergence of iPads and 3D televisions – it seems clear that the keys to our future lie elsewhere.” (Slaughter, 2010, p. xv)). And such scepticism about technocratic fixes is also an epistemic scepticism. Earlier critics, sociologists and economist alike, railed against the Club of Rome’s “Messianic faith” and “computer fetishism” in formal modelling and systems dynamics (Freeman, 1973, pp. 8–9). Thus, and to paraphrase Chris Freeman, we do not have “Slaughter with a computer”. The numeracy of “scenario technicians” (Slaughter, 2010, p. 4) is no substitute for considerations of “power, depth and inclusiveness” that futures studies needs to develop (Slaughter, 2010, p. xvi). No, perhaps in the end there are no “keys to our future” laying anywhere simply waiting to be picked up.

Moreover, there are signs of some conceptual engineering also taking place. Slaughter’s changes in emphasis enfranchise a mode of inquiry less imprisoned by passive-causal attitudes and more oriented towards positive-active stances. In this regard, the deflection of the notion of “collapse” and the embrace of the notion of “descent” (from high industrialisation) is non-trivial. It rejects paralysis and encourages the introduction of an extra variable: the possibility of discretion in the relationship with the environment. This enables a shift “away from fatalism and despair, in part by providing many more opportunities for intervention and choice.” (Slaughter, 2010, p. 7) The dynamics of denial has many guises, one being techno-fantasy and hubris (glorification of the global) another being nostalgia for an idealized past (demonising of the global and the

modern. An integral futures approach stands in contrast and is predicated on self-examination and inner renewal (Judge, 2010). Urgency and non-defeatism are the answer:

“... we have arrived at a make or break time in history and that, from here on in, everything we do matters.” (Slaughter, 2010, p. ix)?

An apt illustration is the striking contrast, in less than a decade, between the “Peak Oil” scare and the age of low-cost/high-abundance shale-oil. Indeed most foresight-relevant concepts, such as resource reserves/endowments, have a techno-economic nature rather than a geo-physical one (a point made early one by Freeman (1973, p. 11)).² Constraints are moveable, transition strategies are possible. Timing and direction matter. Adaptation and human creativity indeed seem less limited than other resources.

Hence, the point is not so much prophecy in itself, but the stimulus it produces. Slaughter’s focus is beyond empiricist foresight. Slaughter tries to offer a promising opening to a mobilised mode of inner and anticipatory apprehension. Hence the metaphor: “waking up”, that is, “enhancing awareness.” As Slaughter understands it, inspiration is part of a futurist’s trade. It follows that self-wakening is the continuity in discontinuity. To quote the author at length:

“Overall, the benefits of ‘waking up’ in such ways to the challenge to civilisation are, I believe, highly significant. It’s not possible to guarantee that we can avoid the costs of past mistakes, oversights and missed opportunities. On the other hand, I reject the view that our children and theirs are necessarily condemned to fall all the way to the depths of a new dark age within a ruined and debased world. How far we do descend, and in what manner, are perhaps the central issues and trade-offs of our time. Early and effective action will certainly moderate the process. Late and ineffective action will exacerbate it. The act of faith and belief inherent in this work is that humanity still has time to rise to the occasion and take the opportunity offered to renegotiate the terms of its tenancy on, and relationship with, this small and fragile world that we call home.” (Slaughter, 2010, p. 8)

4. The anticipation and governance of mega-risks: the integral turn

The gist of Slaughter’s message in his 2010 book is that humanity faces a problem: “a world unfit for life, including humans, and unable either to sustain civilisation or the rich ecology upon which it depends.” (p. 5) Part I of the book considers several aspects of this dire challenge. Part II introduces the “Integral” framework as an appropriate grammar for referencing alternative permutations of the possible. Part III refers to an actual search for solutions.

To do justice to the 347 pages of the 2010 book and to the 371 pages of the 2012 vol would require at least a tenth of the total – well beyond the space available for this review. Instead, the aim is to be synthetic by bringing into the mix non-substantive material that add leverage to the analysis (see Martin, 2016). But, first, it is necessary to take a deeper look at one particular segment of the 2010 book, the one on integral theory.

Often the emergence of a new analytical approach gets distilled by an exemplary, “paradigmatic” statement. Chapter 6 of the *Biggest Wake Up Call in History* provides such an example. Slaughter (2010, p. 131) starts Chapter 6 by noting that quantitative forecasting, like the Club of Rome endeavour, was pivotal but that their predictions of collapse and overshooting greatly exaggerated the “end of history”. Thus, reframing the issues of resource depletion and climate change is key. Overcoming the rationalist-modernist project by doubling it down is not the way.

Slaughter argues that addiction to technical progress and faith in economic incentives are not the bases for a transformative, long-run corrective and self-sustained answer. His method to achieve emancipation is based on the three procedural steps that comprise the “integral method” (Slaughter 2010):

- Perspectives on the world that are given by ways of knowing along two axes *individual-collective* and *interior-exterior*, i.e. this yields the structure of a four-quadrant scanning device to which the work by Wilber (1995) has so crucially contributed;
- Then, distinct levels of complexity (in the sense of deeper and more sophisticated thinking) through which reality is observed, namely *pre-conventional*, *conventional*, *post-conventional*, and *integral*, provide a variety of context-sensitive bases for seeking solutions within each of the four-quadrants;
- Finally, value tiers filter and point to operational possibilities, from the most authoritarian and exploitative (e.g. egocentric, ethnocentric) to the most systemic and ecological (e.g. planetcentric, kosmocentric) with intermediate levels in-between (i.e. sociocentric, worldcentric).

Slaughter proposes multi-dimensional “integral maps” and “meta-scanning” as a complex but pragmatic approach to “wicked problems” such as the global planetary crisis (Slaughter, 2010, p. 139). His “higher solutions” to big dilemmas involve economic, governance but also spiritual levels of engagement. In contrast, end-of-pipe, technological and partisan “solutions” are responses located at lower levels of generality and consciousness in this framework. Scanning, in spite of its

² This is not to say that innovation in analytical forecasting methodologies is not useful (for instance, see Farmer and Lafond, 2016). However dealing with a novelty-intense future requires developing new and socially creative “ways to live and act with non-knowing the future” (Miller, 2011, p. 24).

popularity, is not enough. Self-inquiry and social interests are necessary ingredients. Thus, for Slaughter, critical thinking and participatory processes are core to developing foresight and identifying desirable transformative variations of the present.

Recent evidence indeed shows that the climate crisis is severe and that Slaughter's agenda is spot on. A 2016 summary of "acts of god" by the re-insurer [Munich-Re \(2016\)](#) shows that the world average financial losses from natural disasters is around \$130bn per year (the equivalent to the GDP of a smaller European country disappearing every year). For 2015 alone Munich-Re counted over 1000 loss-relevant events that led to well over 20,000 fatalities, substantially more than the previous year. About 94% of the catastrophes in 2015 were weather-related events, probably the consequence of structural climate oscillations.

Poorer countries were least resilient to damage. What is more, even within developing countries damages tend to affect the most vulnerable. As another long-run study shows, specific social sectors (households, poorer classes, women, etc.) suffer more than other sectors, such as production and infrastructure ([Bello, Ortiz, & Samaniego, 2015](#)). From 1972 to 2010 the incidence of damages from natural disasters in Latin American and Caribbean countries was social 49.5, production 34.1, and infrastructure 16.4 %.

Precarity is further exacerbated by human-choices that compound risks. Undesired disasters, such as built-environment failures, oil spills or toy poisoning, remain a salient phenomenon. Much risk management is linear and non-reflexive, it does not account for complexity. Arguably, industrial hazards are growing in number and are more unequal in terms of social impacts than natural catastrophes ([Sellers & Melling, 2011](#)).

Other disruptions are not strictly accidents. Data on military and security phenomena show that self-inflicted human damage is also on the increase: armed conflicts in 2014 were at 40, the highest number since 1999; 11 of these conflicts were defined as wars given their high number of casualties; the number of battle-related deaths of around 100,000 in 2014 rose to its most severe in the post-1989 period ([Pettersson & Wallensteen, 2015](#)). Working at a lower threshold of mass violence the [Small Arms Survey \(2015\)](#) estimated a total of violent deaths of 508,000 worldwide per year during 2007–12.

Contemporary relevant shocks transcend boundaries. And novel shocks are driven by structural underlying changes both in nature and societies. This happens in a context of heightened mobility, of heavier technological dependence, and a more urbanised and asymmetrical world ([OECD, 2011](#)).

What does it all mean for futures inquiries? In this context of wild cards and creeping change, foresight becomes a holistic and anticipatory answer to sense-breaking events and developments (see [Cunha, Clegg, & Kamoche, 2006](#); [Könnölä, Salo, Cagnin, Carabias, & Vilkkumaa, 2012](#); see also [Slaughter, 2012, p. 263](#)). Foresight is a part of the knowledge arsenal that informs efforts to cope with larger radical ecological and societal challenges in the era of the Anthropocene ([Beck, Lopes-Bento, & Schenker-Wicki, 2016](#); [McNiea, Parris, & Sarewitz, 2016](#); see also [Slaughter, 2012, p. 293](#)). But, since the causes and impacts are distributed, futures literacy is important part of the generative process of pre-adaptation and resilience ([Rhisiart, Miller, & Brooks, 2015](#)); see also [Slaughter, 2012, p. 315](#)).

All in all, Slaughter's project encourages a non-passive perspective for a plural world in peril. There is a relationship between the "integral turn" and the engagement with mega-crisis since big challenges require big intellectual and emotional tools. He refuses despair and urges that action is possible, even on the verge of massive catastrophe. But the "prophetic" overtones are modulated by a systematic approach to the future. As he argues in a recent review paper of his own: "Strategic foresight is the ability to create and maintain a continuous high-quality, coherent and functional forward view and to use the insights arising in useful organizational ways." ([Slaughter, 2012, p. 240](#)). This definition, written just before the 2010 book and reprinted in his following book, appeared originally as the lead article of a special issue in the *Foresight* journal devoted to evaluate the "state of play in the futures field" ([Slaughter, 2009](#)).

Slaughter has engaged with pressing challenges of his time, often bringing his unconventional ideas to the conventional academic context. His journal articles provide an indication of his academic reach, even as he insists that his recent books are "work in progress, and I fully expect to return to these issues in due course." (2012, p. 10) Next section gives an account of his trajectory and offers a glimpse of how he has, in fact, kept pushing the agenda.

5. Footprints on a foresight path

Using Scopus we identify 70 documents published by Slaughter between 1986 and 2015.³ He has published consistently, on average over two papers per year, leaving no year blank. Most were written alone (only 7 co-authored papers, not repeating co-authors) and published mostly in outlets related to his trade. The journal *Futures* (with 45 papers) and *Foresight* (11) comprise no less than 80% of his total output. Nearly 75% of his journal references also came from these two journals, underlining how these sources have been central to his work.

The disciplinary distribution of his output is comprised of roughly 46.8% social sciences and humanities, 41.3% business and decision-making studies, 9.5% economics, with a small residual of other areas (engineering and psychology).

Scopus picks up a total of 423 within-period citations, excluding self-citations. An average of 6 citations for every paper he

³ A journal paper review is carried out here and the Scopus database employed to identify Slaughter's relevant articles and citations. Scopus is arguably the largest available database of searchable research information ([Bearzot, 2016](#)). Other databases can be used, but their coverage are not superior Scopus for the purposes of this paper ([Meyer et al., 2014](#)). These databases underestimate the phenomena they intend to cover; for instance, Scopus does not include the journal *World Future Review* where Slaughter's work may have impacted.

wrote. Appropriately enough for a futurist, citations took-off after that mythical year 2000. After this breakthrough the upward trend has persisted. Recently, moreover, Slaughter’s research impact expanded greatly (Fig. 1). Citations in the last decade comprise no less than 79% of the total citation stock.

Slaughter “h-index” is 13, since he has at least 13 papers with least 13 citations. This h-index is somehow an underestimation, however, since there are three papers in total having 13 citations each. Thus, there are 15 papers scoring 13 citations or more. Of these 15 papers 10 were published in *Futures*. Table 1 features the top third of these most-cited 15 papers; these five papers which account for 31.2% of all citations in the period.

Where have the citations to his work been appearing? In 2010 (the year with the most citations, 56) citations were overwhelmingly in *Futures*. In 2015 the 53 citations to his work were more distributed across different journals, namely: *Futures* (10), *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* (7), *Foresight* (5) and *Journal of Futures Studies* (5). This means there is evidence of increasing academic outreach; Slaughter’s impact cannot be represented as ghettoised to a few and narrow outlets.

What about papers in *To See With Fresh Eyes*? There are four texts published by Slaughter that are not included in that last of his books covered here. “Defending the future: Introductory overview of a special issue of *On the Horizon* on responses to *The Biggest Wake-up Call in History*” (*On the Horizon*, 2013), “Descent pathways” (with J. Floyd, *Foresight*, 2014), “The denial of limits and interior aspects of descent” (*Foresight*, 2014), and “The global emergency – Perspectives, overviews, responses” (*Futures*, 2015).

In the first of these papers he reviews the comments made regarding his 2010 book in a special issue of the journal. Slaughter (2013, p. 170) confesses: “I actually find negative images of futures powerfully motivating. Perhaps I subconsciously attempted to demonstrate that in this book.” It is noteworthy, perhaps, that the comments on his book that Slaughter decides to highlight accentuate the optimistic: they refer to ideas being an “infinite resource”, that “effective communication about global issues” may be attained, that there are “signals of awakening”, etc. (Slaughter, 2013, p. 171, own emphasis on the authors who participated in the special issue to comment his book).

In the papers of 2014 he underlines that an “understanding and a commitment to early action are among the most productive investments available to societies vulnerable to the systemic threats outlined here” (Floyd and Slaughter, 2014, p. 485) and offers concrete clues as to how to dismantle the “denial machine” (Slaughter, 2014, p. 427).

Interestingly, Slaughter’s (2015) last paper of the 1986–2015 period offers a substantive argumentative summary of others’ works. The paper surveys key six relevant and high-quality books published between 2012 and 2013 that he considers to be good sources to advance “futures knowledge”. Slaughter (2015, p. 85) advances two main points: denial is “unlikely to remain effective for much longer” and prevailing structures are bound to be “revised and re-visited”. “Overall”, he adds, “these works describe a world in genuine systemic crisis. Human societies and the economies upon which they depend are on a ‘collision course’ with the ‘primary economy’ of the natural world.” This is yet another contribution of his, an attempt to coordinate disparate recent contributions in order to take store and enhance the process of search for different solutions for society.

So much we learn, from Slaughter’s work and his favourite sources. Embracing complexity is not fetishising it. He reads “big books” in order to be challenged and he wants to network together these inputs to produce useful insights; he develops an Integral perspective because it suits the many-sided challenges of his time; he proceeds less as a bringer of revelation and more like a dynamic cartographer of the melting icebergs ahead; Slaughter is on the lookout for choices and paths. Foresight is to escape perplexity and act upon the “true global emergency”; it is not for doom mongering or profiteering.

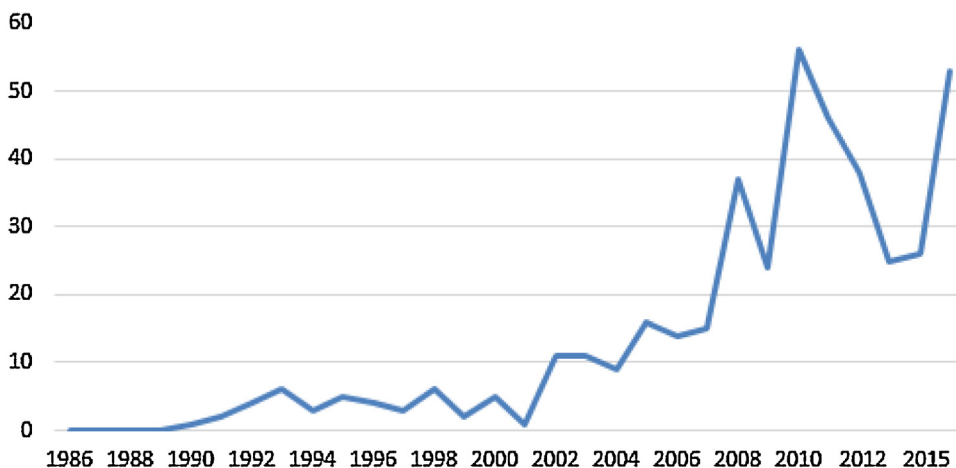


Fig. 1. Yearly citations to the work of Richard Slaughter.

Source: elaboration on Scopus.

Table 1
Most cited papers by Richard Slaughter.

Title of the article	Year	Journal	Citations
"What difference does 'integral' make?"	2008	<i>Futures</i>	34
"A new framework for environmental scanning"	1999	<i>Foresight</i>	31
"Futures studies: From individual to social capacity"	1996	<i>Futures</i>	24
"Integral Futures Methodologies"	2008	<i>Futures</i>	22
"Futures studies as an intellectual and applied discipline"	1998	<i>American Behavioral Scientist</i>	21

Note: within-period citations only. Source: elaboration on Scopus.

6. Conclusions

Slaughter's books, and his subsequent work, provide a comprehensive and revealing window on his most abiding concerns: how to develop and do integral foresight that he believes will help humanity come to grips with the most pressing contemporary challenges. His contributions are rich – methodologically, disciplinarily, topically – and this survey did not intend to be exhaustive. In fact the best service this review can do is to encourage readers to read Slaughter themselves.

Slaughter is a practitioner, an innovator and a futures community organiser. In order to map and monitor his nature and evolution as a futurist this review deployed an unconventional methodology: an *augmented survey*. Following Slaughter's own urging to his readers, this review took a "meta" approach, attempting to read between the trends. To gain distance and perspective on his work evidence was collected from Prefaces, Introductions, Acknowledgements and other texts around the main body of his work. Bibliometric indicators too were used to systematically scan the outputs and outcomes of his intellectual trajectory. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative records it is evident that Slaughter has made a multifaceted contribution to his fields of interest. He has been a very active and influential member of the foresight research community.

Richard Slaughter tells us that we live in a peculiar continuity now, which is *post-discontinuity*. Prophecy only counts for anything if it is a call to *action*. This is because prophecy only counts if it is designed to undermine itself. That is why we could contend that Slaughter's example helps to instil futures studies with "critical pragmatism". Other planks of a developing futures approach are Sardar's (2015) insistence that navigating "post-normal times" requires the production of new definitions and Miller's (2015) argument that building anticipatory learning capabilities is a way to decolonise the future from unimaginative defensive rear-mirror closed-source prejudices.

Opening-up is best advocated by example. Through his work Slaughter is never just talking to futurists, he is communicating *through futurists* to all those concerned. He believes in democratising futures knowledge. Plurality is part of the transition. And this is a sound, teachable message. In his own words:

"What is increasingly clear, . . . , is that 'the future' is no longer the province of specialists. Rather, it has become – or very soon will be – the 'core business' of everyone and of all human societies." (Slaughter, 2010, p. 5)

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