

Anti-review to an anti-review

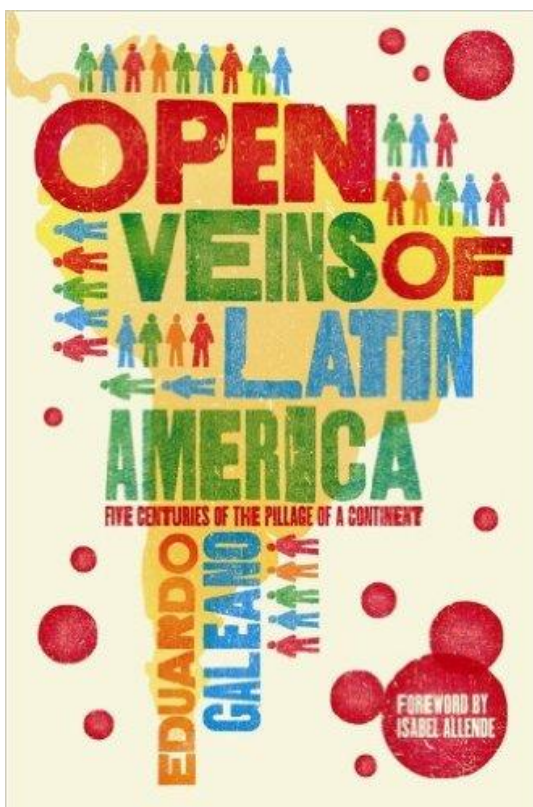
Richard Smith

Hi Darío, I like your innovative anti-review because it's only a page long, visual, enigmatic and invites the reader to go and write their own story. I also don't like it, for the same reasons: "That's not a proper review!", I unconsciously harumphed, just as many readers of our special issue have probably been harumphing all the way through, if they've been reading in linear fashion and are still with us – and both of these things are rather unlikely I feel! (Having rediscovered it in my dormant lexical store, I rather like the word 'harumph!' Maybe we should have called our special issue *Harumph!*).

Back to your review – one page is an accessible length for a review, and the large picture of the book cover and enigmatically large number 6 also encouraged me to read it. But you didn't entice me into the book itself and instead encouraged me to go and write my own story. If I was one of the editors or authors of that book I might feel a bit short-changed – but, then again, they didn't pay us, 'twas we who spotted their book (they didn't send it to us), and we owe them absolutely nothing! I've read some of the stories in the book and quite enjoyed them – and maybe precisely because you don't summarise what's there some people *will* want to go and read it. That's interesting, and paradoxical!

So, your review makes me think – 'What's the point of a review?'

A book I did want to go and finally read – because I've heard so much about it and because of your enigmatic reference to Eduardo Galeano at the end was *Open Veins of Latin America*, and in fact I ordered it as a result of reading your review of the other book! So that's where your review led me, and to Isabel Allende's moving preface to it, [available for free on Amazon!](#) Ironic that we got here, isn't it? ;)



Considering we've come so far and so self-indulgently away from the original book under review (harumph!) – *Teacher Stories: Stories from the Edges of Language Teaching* – can I refer our beloved reader to another book I would have liked us to review (it landed in our, well, my, lap a couple of weeks ago) but which – as the tolling bell of our 31 December 2016 deadline loomed – we didn't have time to review 'properly'. The innovative way it was produced seems relevant to the theme of our special issue though, and it is ... (fanfare sound effect!) ...



Learner Development Working Papers: Different Cases, Different Interests, edited by Andy Barfield and Aiko Minematsu (2014) for JALT Learner Development SIG in Tokyo, print version published in 2016.

