

A STORY ABOUT



KNOWLEDGE

A Story About Knowledge

A Learning Tool to Engage with Illustrated Storytelling in
Law and Global Studies

Arianna Porrone

Margherita Paola Poto

Illustrator: Valentina Russo (Mucho Amor)

A Story About Knowledge A Learning Tool to Engage with Illustrated Storytelling in Law and Global Studies

With a Story Inspired
by Arctic Indigenous Stories

Original Illustration by Valentina Russo (Mucho Amor)
(2020)

Project funded by:
Laura Bassi Scholarship (Editorial Assistance)

The Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Nor-
way



Department of Political Science, Communication and In-
ternational Relations, University of Macerata



Contents

- 7 *Summary*
- 9 *On the Authors*
- 13 **Unit I**
Introduction and Background
1.1. Introduction: What, Why, How?, 13 – 1.1.1. *What?*, 13 – 1.1.2 *Why Illustrated Storytelling?*, 13 – 1.1.3. *Why a Story?*, 14 – 1.1.4 *Why a Story About Knowledge?*, 15 – 1.1.5 *How?*, 16 – 1.2. The Story, 18
- 21 **Unit II**
Lessons
2.1. Creator and Trickster, 21 – 2.2. Bear, 24 – 2.3. Eagle, 27 – 2.4. Salmon, 31 – 2.5. Mole, 34
- 37 *Conclusion*
- 39 **Appendix I**
A Glossary
- 41 **Appendix II**
Inspiration Ideas to Expand Your Creativity
- 47 *Bibliography*

Summary

A Story About Knowledge. A Learning Tool (LT) to Engage with Illustrated Storytelling in Law and Global Studies

The purpose of this book is to provide junior and senior scholars in law and global studies with a LT that brings together conventional and unconventional teaching methods through illustrations and conveys a message to a broad audience, be it indigenous or non-indigenous. The story of this book is a story combining an illustrated and written story. First, Valentina Russo created her illustrated version by looking at the learning materials of the University of Arctic (UArctic, training module 4, 2020 on traditional knowledge by Gord Bruyere and Einar Bergland). Second, the authors of this book rewrote the story inspired by Valentina's illustration *A Story about Knowledge*. In their understanding and interpretation, the story focuses on knowledge search as an interactive process involving detachment, positionality, silence, and protection. One of the protagonists and problem-solvers of the story is the mole — without eyesight and yet with a great vision about where to search for and how to protect knowledge. The vision of the mole has also benefited thanks to the other animals' vain efforts of individual search, which are overseen by the trickster.

The authors are indebted to Val Napoleon and Rebecca Johnson, Indigenous Law Research Unit, University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, who trained them on indigenous law and methodology and gave them special permission to engage with the materials adopted in the conversation. The handbook is inspired by the learning material: Gender Inside Indige-

nous Law Toolkit, ILRU, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria. Furthermore, it is complemented by an illustrated silent book (forthcoming in 2021, illustrator: Valentina Russo; project developers: Arianna Porrone, Margherita Paola Poto, Valentina Russo), and is part of a wider project of a story of stories, containing narratives on the symbiotic relationship that governs communities and nature.

Readers are welcome to add their reflections, sensibly print one copy of the book if they wish, color, doodle, and apply other art journaling techniques of their choice. Colored pencils can become an indispensable complementary tool. Law and art are restoring therapies.

On the Authors

Arianna Porrone (Ph.D. student, University of Macerata, Italy) is a feminist storyteller, an adventurer, and a researcher at the Department of Political Science, Communication and International Relations, University of Macerata, Italy. Her main research interests include political ecology, environmental justice, the environmental humanities, and storytelling as a means and research methodology, as well as ecofeminisms and feminist critical theories. Her Ph.D. research focuses on understanding power and gender dynamics in knowledge creation within the current international environmental governance realm and aims at exploring ontological pluralism as a way forward able to reconcile human and more-than-human concerns.

Email contacts: aporrone@gmail.com; a.porrone@unimc.it

Margherita Paola Poto (Prof. Dr., University of Turin, Italy) is a mum, an ally of the Earth, and a researcher at the Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway (Romssa/Tromsø). Her research interests include ocean governance, climate change, and Indigenous law, comparative administrative law, environmental law and sustainability, and Arctic governance. She is particularly interested in the development of new methodological approaches to the field of law that encompass Indigenous methodologies, intra-comparative analysis, community, and gender-based research.

Email contacts: margherita.p.poto@uit.no; margherita.poto@unito.it



Illustration 1 Valentina Russo's CV

Valentina Russo Art and beautiful things are her passion. She has loved drawing, painting and sewing since she was a child and she has dedicated her studies to these activities. After a few experiences in different fields, she decided to start work-

ing on her personal project: spreading love and happiness all around the world with cute and colorful illustrations.

Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction: What, Why, How?

1.1.1. *What?*

This LT aims to bring together conventional and unconventional teaching methods using hermeneutics through dialogued participation of illustrations inspired by the learning materials in English of the University of Arctic (UArctic) training module (Module 4, 2020) on traditional knowledge by Gord Bruyere and Einar Bergland. Valentina Russo created her illustrated version of the story (n. 5 coloured art prototypes, 2020). Her table n. 1 *A story about knowledge* (black and white) guided the English version that is reported in this LT.

1.1.2. *Why Illustrated Storytelling?*

Storytelling was the most powerful practice for comforting, inspiring, remembering, warning, nurturing compassion, mourning, and becoming-with each other in their differences, hopes, and terrors.
(Haraway, 2016, p. 150)

The reason to engage with illustrations lies in the choice to have a greater insight into the narrative contained in storybooks that—when authentic and not grammatically sequenced—have the merit of (1) conveying a direct message, (2) offering different interpretations of a certain event, liberated from cultural assumptions, (3) exposing the reader to several tenses at the same time (Ellis, Brewster, 2002; Mourão, 2003) which gives a sense of circuitry and multidimensionality, (4) being adaptive, and

therefore not statically connected to certain events, interpretations, beliefs, and value-sets, and (5) being presumably less controversial than non-fictional narrative, and therefore more richly interpretable and shareable.

1.1.3. Why a Story?

This LT is designed to provoke readers to think otherwise. Drawing from Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) (Bozalek, 2011; Chambers, 2006), which contribute to decolonizing minds and research, this LT is designed to stimulate analysis, (self-)critical reflection, and to share and shape knowledge. It offers the possibility to question habits and practices and to act accordingly. It provides the opportunity to commit to (Okin, 1995) equal opportunities for all by (1) encouraging critical thinking, (2) interrogating notions of justice and injustice, (3) challenging dominant hegemonic discourses and cemented power relations, (4) questioning the neutral, “taken-for-granted” assumptions, and (5) confronting privilege and stereotypes.

Another fundamental source of our LT, beyond the PLA teachings, is the experience preciously handed down to us from the researchers of the Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU), Victoria, British Columbia, Canada (ILRU, 2021). The ontological set of values that indigenous methodology brings on the table of a scientific approach to law and social studies is rooted in the idea that a continuously informed consciousness is generated within the community of research participants, where the relation researcher-researched becomes irrelevant if not highly questionable, and where the ultimate goal is to explore how to change and improve the relational flow between participants and reality. In such a realization, numerous are the angles we draw insights from, all valid, and include ecofeminism, critical analysis, storytelling, and other multisensory experiences, such as visual and illustrated narratives.

Hence the inspiration to create our own illustrated story, as a tool to relate to our communities of students, colleagues, and friends.

Thinking critically is thinking creatively. This book raises questions stemming from several disciplines often marginalized by mainstream legal and global studies, such as feminist and indigenous research, post-colonialism and post-modernism, environmental humanities, and critical geography, among others. Storytelling contributes to these emerging disciplines by provoking reflexivity. Inducing readers to be open to a familiar but unknown world of animals and natural elements equips readers with the ability to be with the trouble (Haraway, 2016), to stay with it, and to understand the messy, creative, and complex modes of reality (Bailey et al., 1999). In the end, knowledge may appear in all her beauty and complexity—a process, relative to particular circumstances (time, place, culture, personal point of view), an inconsistent something made of many voices coming from many different places.

1.1.4. Why a Story About Knowledge?

The story that inspired the illustrations is chosen for its deep message that is relevant for junior and senior scholars in legal and global studies: it focuses on knowledge search as an interactive, situated, and porous process. One of the protagonists and problem-solvers of the story is the mole — without eyesight and yet with a great vision about where to search for and how to protect knowledge. The vision of the mole has also benefited hanks to the other animals' vain efforts of individual search, which are overseen by the trickster. Their rich and diversified local knowledge is based on the centrality of air, water, and earth.

1.1.5. How?

The project idea couples the need to overcome binary oppositions in the way knowledge is conceived and constructed in environmental and human rights law and, therefore, develops solid building blocks (on ontological pluralism, knowledge-creation, and co-creation) for new moral and legal orders. Furthermore, the project helps to reconceptualize knowledge critically and creatively through the stories and voices that come from the margins. Working on and with indigenous stories and storytelling builds from narrative inquiry and participatory research, which are at the core of our approach. Stories embody complex understanding and worldviews that can be collected, stored, and transmitted. Looking for meaning and interpretation in stories allows entrance into a collective continuum thinking, which means collecting communities' shared knowledge, reflecting on it, and connecting it to other knowledge systems to support sense-making and co-created responses. In this sense, the project builds a solid milestone in the exploration of knowledge as a living system.

This LT is part of a broader program initiated in 2018, which will develop in the years to come. In collaboration with indigenous and non-indigenous scholars from Canada (ILRU, UVic, BC) and Norway (UiT, Tromsø), the project team is developing educational toolbox ideas for students, scholars, and learners beyond academia.

This LT aims to support teaching in the field of law and global studies by suggesting some basic background, lessons, and activities to generate reflective spaces and discourses using illustrated storytelling. This LT can also be used as a self-reflective tool to assess research from the research design and to write background, theory, and methodology.

The book is structured into five lessons, each corresponding to a character in the story. Each animal can also represent one or more natural elements and guide individual and collective reflections.

- Creator and trickster | breath: leadership
- Bear | land: strength, solidity
- Eagle | air: justice
- Salmon | water and air: fluidity, connectivity
- Mole | (h)earth: intersectionality, different-ability

1.2 The Story

The Creator informed the trickster that one last creature was to be sent to the Earth and that this last creature, the human being, would be given the role of caretaker of creation.

Looking for, accessing, and caring for knowledge for survival were the ways the Creator decided to instill humility in the human being taking on such a role.

The trickster was assigned the task of finding a place to keep knowledge, to make knowledge difficult to come by, so that humans would remain humble in their custodial task. Following the Creators' commandment, the trickster summoned the animals of the Earth.

"Where should knowledge be looked for and kept?" the trickster asked.



The great bear said, "Knowledge can be found up to the mountain. There I will hide it so that my younger fellows stay humble in their task." Slowly but surely, she started her journey to the top of the mountains and returned without finding a place for knowledge.

It was then the turn of the great eagle, with great wings and much plumage, said: "I will carry knowledge up in the air, to the moon and the outer-space." Slowly but surely, the great eagle started her journey and returned without finding a place for knowledge.

¹ The symbol of the crotchet rest is used two times with different duration values to symbolize silence and rest. The narration has a break (selah, Salih). As Viktor Frankl puts it in his beautiful book *A man's search for meaning*: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." Commenting on it, Lori Gottlieb adds: "This is what we were talking about. The trick, I suppose, is to find that elusive 'space'" (Maybe you should talk to someone, Scribe: Melbourne. London, 2019, p. 289).

The strong salmon intervened: “Let me take it on my back down the watercourses to the sea and hide it on the seabed.” Slowly but surely, she started her journey to the depth of the oceans and returned without finding a place for knowledge.

All were silent, thinking ...



... until the mole spoke up.

Spending her life so close to the earth, without eyesight but with great vision, the mole said, “I know where you can look for, access, and care for knowledge. Only warm-hearted, curious, and humble human beings will be able to find it.”

The trickster asked: “Where, my sister?”

“At the center of the (H)Earth,” the mole replied. “At the center of the Heart(h).”

Reinterpreted by “A Story about Knowledge” from the University of the Arctic training module (Module 4) on traditional knowledge. Written by Gord Bruyere and Einar Bergland.

Unit 2

Lessons

2.1 Creator and Trickster

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to reflect on the role of leaders and decision makers, on the dynamics that they develop with the audience, on their communication skills, on the impacts of their decisions, and on the nature of their truth.

KEYWORDS: Creating – Guardian spirit – Cleverness – Decision – Responsibility

QUESTIONS:

- What are the qualities of the persons in leadership positions?
- (determination, wisdom, strength, goal-orientated attitude, common interest focus, integrity)
- What does it mean to be a good leader?
- (choosing trustworthy persons, preferring empathy over detachment, preferring strategy over caution, and delegating functions while maintaining full responsibility and accountability)
- How should an assistant leader respond to the request of the leader?
- (with seriousness, professionalism, humility, criticism)
- How is this process gendered?
- What are the obstacles that men and women encounter?
- Who is included and who is not included in decision-making processes?
- If a law does not accurately discipline the responsibilities of the leader, how would you suggest improving it?

- How does the leadership discourse translate in international law and relations?
- (sovereignty, fairness, free prior informed consent)
- What truth? Of whom? For whom?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

Think of a recent conversation you had with someone who gave you precise instructions to accomplish a task. Write down what you remember about what you were told and how you reacted to it. Note the emotions that your words produce in you today.

2.2. Bear



Illustration 2 Bear

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to reflect on the role of initiators, pioneers (e.g. Ruth Bader Ginsburg), the first in any field of legal and non-legal professions, and to reflect on their perceived failures, successes, and on their burden as way-leaders, as well as their bravery as risk-takers.

KEYWORDS: Exposure – Initiative – Risk – Failure – Success

QUESTIONS:

- What are the qualities of the pioneers?
- (visionary-thinking, courage, fearlessness, self-confidence, empathy, compassion)
- How is a pioneer perceived by the leaders?
- How do you perceive a pioneer in your field?
- How is the process of pioneering gendered?
- How is the perception of pioneering colonized?
- How does the certainty/flexibility of law discourage/encourage pioneering?
- Can you list some pioneers in your field of expertise?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

Make a list of victories, successes, and failures that the participants in your group experienced as pioneers (in a project, in school, anywhere). Write down your reflection on the perception you have about them today.

2.3. Eagle

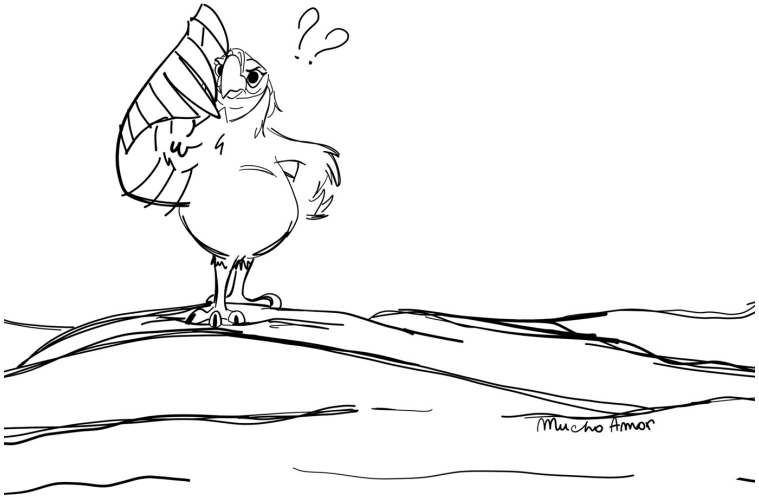


Illustration 3 Eagle

OBJECTIVE 1: The objective of this lesson is to reflect on who has the right to act, to “know,” and to speak, who has the power to worship some types of knowledge while erasing others, and what is necessary for another point of view to raise a voice.

KEYWORDS: Exposure – Risk – Determination – Justice – Privilege – Positionality

QUESTIONS:

- What does it mean to speak up for oneself? What does this take? What are some implications of speaking up?
- Is the Eagle’s voice representing/including/not including anyone? Whose Truth is it?
- Is it always possible or easy to speak up? Is there always space or condition to freely intervene?
- Is there a right time to speak up? Is there a right attitude?
- What does it mean to create space for “other” or halting voices? Who are these voices?
- Can you identify any gendered dynamics?
- What can a leader do to support such concrete or abstract space?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

Think about your Truth, your route. What would you do to safeguard it? Would you speak up in front of a leader? Would you sound off even when the soundtrack does not leave space for other melodies?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

In group, name one/some human rights defenders or environmental rights defenders. Discuss their role, origin and choices. What do they share with Eagle?

OBJECTIVE 2: The second objective of this lesson is to reflect on changing perspective, which does not mean escaping into dreams or irrational perspectives. Rather, it means changing the approach, looking at the world from a different viewpoint (from the moon perhaps), with a different logic, and with fresh methods of cognition and verification.¹

¹ “The images of lightness [...] should not fade away like dreams dissolved by the realities of present and future...” CALVINO I., *Lightness. Six*

QUESTIONS:

- What does it take to move the attention from what is there, solid, earthly, confirmed, or objective, to what is yet to be seen, unstable, airy, or potentially dangerous?
- How does one see? Where does one see from? What limits vision? What does one see for? Whom does one see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders?²
- Is there a right time to change perspective? Is there a right attitude?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

Think about a time-changing perspective that has prompted you to transform. How does it feel today?

Memos for the New Millennium, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1988.

² HARAWAY D. J., *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, «Feminist Studies», 14, 3, 1988, 575–599.

2.4. Salmon



Illustration 4 Salmon

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to reflect on the depth of our beings, our inner thoughts, the neurological, physiological, and spiritual power of water, fluidity (Zygmunt Bauman), vertical and horizontal thinking, and water connectivity.

KEYWORDS: Boundaries – Freedom – Direction – Fluidity – Reflexivity

QUESTIONS:

- Water is denser than air. How does this translate into the facility to navigate? Is it easier to go in-depth or to be as light as air?
- Does salmon belong to air or water? Or both?
- Is salmon a being or a state-of-mind?³
- How does salmon connect the natural elements to the living beings?
- Is the story of salmon gendered?
- How do water connectivity and legal connectivity relate to the story of salmon and your field of expertise?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

³ MUELLER M. L., *Being Salmon, Being Human: Encountering the Wild in Us and Us in the Wild*, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2017.

Take a deep breath. Take a sip of water. Reflect on how the two actions are interconnected. How are your thoughts connected to them? Draw your feelings.

2.5. Mole



Illustration 5 Mole

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to reflect on the role of those who find out the answers, solve conflicts and riddles (e.g. Oedipus and the Sphinx), win disputes, rescue and redeem, follow their instincts and emotions, and care for the Earth.

KEYWORDS: Boundaries – Determination – Intelligence – Vision – Collective Knowledge

QUESTIONS:

- Does reaching the heart of the problem always mean solving it?
- How is wisdom related to the senses?
- How is wisdom related to individual and collective efforts?
- What does the Earth teach the wisdom seekers?
- How does success relate to humility (from *humus*, “earth”)?

A REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:

Find a pot, or a patch of land, and plant a seed. Observe the process of your unfolding emotions.

Conclusion

One story, many endings! Be creative and choose the ending that you like best — if you want an ending!

Appendix I

A Glossary

Feel free to formulate definitions or attempt new ones, draw ideas from the following words, or add new words to the list.

- Environmental Human Rights
- Gender
- Global
- Human Rights
- Intersectionality
- Justice
- Law
- Margins
- Nature Rights Defenders
- Positionality

Appendix II

Inspiration Ideas to Expand Your Creativity

The following additional writing prompts are created for you as a suggestion to cultivate your thoughts and reflections around our story and apply its teachings to your personal experience. You can draw, doodle, color, play with and expand the writing prompts here suggested. By doing this exercise, you will develop a personal understanding of the story, and develop it as your own experience. In our vision, this part also represents an opportunity to further develop the Handbook, restructure it, dream of new venues and explore other possible uses and (who knows?) think about a follow-up or a sequel. Any suggestions for improvements are more than welcome!



Objectives

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS LESSON IS TO REFLECT ON THE ROLE OF INITIATORS/PIONEERS (E.G. RUTH BADER GINSBURG).

THE FIRST IN ANY FIELD OF LEGAL AND NON-LEGAL PROFESSIONS, AND TO REFLECT ON THEIR PERCEIVED FAILURES, SUCCESSSES, AND ON THEIR BURDEN AS WAY-LEADERS, AS WELL AS THEIR BRAVERY AS RISK-TAKERS.

????? QUESTIONS

① WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF THE PIONEERS? (VISIONARY—THINKING, COURAGE, FEARLESSNESS, SELF-CONFIDENCE, EMPATHY, COMPASSION)



② HOW IS A PIONEER PERCEIVED BY THE LEADERS?

③ HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE A PIONEER IN YOUR FIELD?

HOW IS THE PROCESS OF PIONEERING GENDERED?

4



5 HOW IS THE PERCEPTION OF PIONEERING COLONIZED?

HOW DOES THE CERTAINTY/FLEXIBILITY OF LAW DISCOURAGE/ENCOURAGE PIONEERING?

6

7 CAN YOU LIST SOME PIONEERS IN YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE?



Reflective ACTIVITY



Make a list

MAKE A LIST OF VICTORIES, SUCCESSSES, AND FAILURES THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCED AS PIONEERS (IN A PROJECT, IN SCHOOL, ANYWHERE). WRITE DOWN YOUR REFLECTION ON THE PERCEPTION YOU HAVE ABOUT THEM TODAY.

15 horizontal lines for writing, each starting with a small heart icon on the left side.



Bibliography

BAILEY C., WHITE C., PAIN R., *Evaluating Qualitative Research: Dealing with the Tension Between 'Science' and 'Creativity'*, «The Royal Geographical Society», 31, 2, 1999, 169-178.

BOZALEK V., *Acknowledging privilege through encounters with a difference: Participatory Learning and Action techniques for decolonizing methodologies in Southern contexts*, «International Journal of Social Research Methodology», 14, 6, 2011, 469-484.

CALVINO I., *Lightness. Six Memos for the New Millennium* by the Estate of Italo Calvino, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1988.

DE GREGORIO V., PAROLA G., PORRONE A., POTO M. P., TSIIOVALAS A., *Inclusion, Coexistence, and Resilience: The New Frontiers of Environmental Law Encoded in the Genes of Indigenous Law*, «Ius Publicum Network Review», 2, 2019, 1-21.

ELLIS G., BREWSTER J., *Tell it again! The new storytelling handbook for primary teachers*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow 2002.

FRANKL V. E., *A Man's Search for Meaning. The classic tribute to hope from the Holocaust*, Ebury Publishing, London (UK) 2015.

HARAWAY D. J., *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, «Feminist Studies», 14, 3, 1988, 575–599.

HARAWAY D. J., *Staying with the trouble. Making kin in the Chtulucene*, Duke University Press 2016.

GOTTLIEB L., *Maybe you should talk to someone*, Scribe, Melbourne, London 2019.

ILRU, Indigenous law research unit, available at the site: <http://ilru.ca/> [last accessed in March 2021].

LOSLEBEN K., PORRONE A., POTO M. P., *Virtual Roundtable on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Academia and 30 days of Reflection*, «Septentrio Reports», 2, 2021.

MOURÃO S., *Real books in the Primary Classroom*, Mary Glasgow Magazines, 2003.

MUELLER M. L., *Being Salmon, Being Human: Encountering the Wild in Us and Us in the Wild*, Chelsea Green Publishing Company 2017.

OKIN S. M., “Inequalities between the sexes in different cultural contexts”, in Nussbaum M., Glover J. (eds.) *Women, culture and development: A study of human capabilities*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1995, 274–297.

PORRONE A., POTO M. P., *An illustrated storybook of indigenous stories as a learning tool for scholars and communities*, «Septentrio», 3, 2019 at the Kjønnforskning NÅ!, available at the <https://septentrio.uit.no/index.php/SCS/article/view/5040> site [last accessed in February 2021].

PORRONE A., POTO M. P., *Storie che sanano ferite. Il sapere indigeno e il potere ristoratore del diritto*, FRIDA Unito, 2020 available at the site: http://frida.unito.it/wn_pages/contenuti.php/427_culture-produzione-culturale-e-artistica-filosofia/469_storie-che-sanano-ferite-il-sapere-indigeno-e-il-potere-ristoratore-del-diritto/ [last accessed in March 2021].