The Indigenous traveller to metropolitan Europe has been viewed as a figure caught between contradictory but not wholly incompatible discourses of scientific categorisation and Romantic idealization, and their attendant stereotypes. But their visits also provoked reflexive questions: what can be learnt from travel between cultures? Is knowledge translatable? Exactly how might people move between worlds? Focusing on anecdotal accounts of the 1772-76 visits to London of Mai from the Society Islands and of an Inuit family from Labrador, Smith argues that these figures present a nuanced and shared awareness of the limits of intercultural translatability.

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