In or On? Island Words, Island Worlds: II

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Abstract: The first part of the paper examines uses and meanings of the orientational metaphors 'in', 'on', 'out' and 'off'. In the discussed languages in North Western Europe there are general principles of metaphoric entailment and underlying image schemas that guide the choice of positional metaphor: islands you are normally 'on', and mainlands 'in'. The second part of the paper examines cases where this use is debated or contested. The author finds that these contestations seem to be fuelled by the different relations between subject and object that positional metaphors entail. Expressions with 'in' highlight belonging and collective identity, enlarge objects by conceptualizing them as encompassing containers, and reduce subjects to a part of the object. Expressions with 'on' highlight individuality and agency, reduce the object, and enlarge the subject by placing it above the object. Such differing entailments of positional metaphors may influence how islands are positioned and understood.

Keywords: conceptual metaphors; islands; island studies; language; North West Europe; orientational metaphors; positional metaphors

Introduction

> In terms of most language use most of the time, tropes are the great and little pre-patterns that variously channel, influence, and determine how the speaker interrelates elements of language to each other and interrelates language itself and the rest of the world (Friedrich, 1991: 54).

This article examines aspects of the relation between island words and island worlds. An earlier article had looked at etymologies of words for 'island' in various European languages, from the viewpoint that words mirror ideas, perspectives and world-views, and that at least some of the different meanings ascribed to islands may thus be inscribed in island-words (Ronström, 2009). The study shows how the notion of 'island' is constituted by differences, and how linguistic representations of islands make them different, albeit in similar ways. General words for 'island' derive either from words for water, or for some type of land formation; the pejorative connotations that some island-related words carry– such as 'isolate', 'insulate' or 'insular/insularity'–may be of fairly recent origin. An overview of a number of North-Western European languages gave some support to the much debated principle of linguistic relativity: while people in places with many islands have many words for islands, continental people have few island-words. A survey of island-words used in Sweden, a country with a large number of islands, suggests that the choice of words–out of a whole range of words for different types of islands–in practice depends on such factors as formation, material, outlook, size, history, distance, function, economy, perspective, and politics (Ronström, 2009).

This subsequent article discusses another thread out of the same skein, words denoting position and direction in relation to islands and continents, such as 'in', 'on', and 'in to', "out to'. The idea developed while collecting and organizing material for the first study. I was struck by immanent sensitivity and underlying politics of some prepositions denoting position and how they can be used to mark differences, belongings, and identities. While the inhabitants of Gotland, Sweden's largest island, talk about themselves as <u>on</u> Gotland, as if underlining their difference and their islandness, tourists may refer to themselves as <u>in</u> Gotland, to the annoyance of many islanders: The difference between 'in' or 'on' is for some reason important. The televised regional weather forecast first presents the weather <u>in</u> the east-coast counties of Sweden before switching to "<u>out on</u> Gotland", which may trigger sarcastic comments from islanders. People from the rural parts of the island regularly ask why townspeople <u>in</u> its capital, Visby, always consider going <u>out</u> of town, <u>out</u> to the countryside, to be much further than for the rural islanders to go the same distance <u>in</u> to town. Russian speakers were once accustomed to say '*na Ukraine'*, "<u>on</u> the Ukraine", perhaps because it is also '*na okraine'*, "in the outskirts", from which the name Ukraine is believed to have derived. Among Ukrainians today this practice is considered offensive, to be replaced with '*v Ukraine'*, "<u>in</u> the Ukraine".[1]

What follows is a discussion of the results of inquiries about similar cases of friction between grammar and politics, cases that might give insight into the relations between island words and island worlds. The work is part of a wider project on islands and forms of 'islandness', with a special focus on how islands are represented and understood. The idea is that one of the ways that islands are set off as different from other types of inhabited places is how they are positioned in a discursive order by certain orientational metaphorical constructions.

Conceptual Metaphors

Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 3) argue that metaphor is not simply a matter of language, "a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish", but a mode of thought, a conceptual construction active in understanding and shaping the way we think and act. Their reasoning builds on the following assumptions:

- – Human concepts are grounded in our experience, they are results of "the kind of beings we are and the way we interact with our physical and cultural environment" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 39, 119).

- – The way we think and organize our thinking in conceptual systems, "in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (*ibid.:* 3).

- – Metaphors partially structure our everyday concepts. This structure is reflected in our literal language, and in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions (*ibid.:* 5, 46, 106).

- - Since metaphorical expressions are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way, studies of the use of metaphor lead to insights about how we think and act (*ibid.:* 7).

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1 E-mail from Olga Shadura, 8 January 2011. Also Ronström (2009: 176).

'Metaphor' commonly means saying one thing while intending another.[2] In what follows I will take off from Lakoff's and Johnson's definition of metaphor as a mapping from some source domain to some target domain,[3] its essence being "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 5, 36).

Orientational Metaphors

What interests me here is a class of metaphors that "organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another." Lakoff & Johnson call these *orientational or spatialization* metaphors: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 14). Orientational metaphors give abstract concepts a concrete spatial orientation, as in 'more is up - less is down', 'good is up - bad is down' and 'rational is up - emotional is down'. What Lakoff & Johnson suggest is that "fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors",[4] and that these are "rooted in physical and cultural experience" and therefore not randomly assigned. They also suggest that the concepts that occur in metaphorical definitions are those that correspond to natural kinds of experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 118); and that rather than being an isolated and random case, a metaphor like 'happy is up' defines a coherent system (*ibid.* 1980: 17f). In some cases, they argue, "spatialization is so essential a part of a concept that it is difficult for us to imagine any alternative metaphor that might structure the concept" (*ibid.*). All this leads to the idea that their structure emerges from our constant interaction with the physical environment, they are "concepts that we live by in the most fundamental way" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 57).

What I suggest in this article is a reading of expressions like "on the island", "out on the island", "into town" along the lines of Lakoff's & Johnson's work. That is, not as a matter of language alone, nor as isolated or random examples, but as part of a coherent system of orientational metaphors that at least partially shape the way we think about and interact with places like islands. What interests me is how orientational metaphors can be used analytically as a means to provide insight into how islands have been understood and experienced. Therefore, to begin with, I will tread the path laid out by Lakoff & Johnson and reason in a rather generalized mode, grounding my reflections in common knowledge, as well as personal experiences and proficiency in Scandinavian languages and English.

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[2] Other classical definitions include "an interaction between different fields of association" (Black, 1962, first formulated by Richards in 1936; see Jarvis, 2001); "a spark between latent and manifest denotations" (Lacan, 2002); "a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another by being spoken of as if it were the same" (Friedrich, 1991: 39); and "implicitly and novelly equating things that are just different enough" (Goodman, 1978, cited in Friedrich 1991: 39).

3 Quinn (1991: 57) explains the difference between source and target domain: "Target domains are best thought of as "abstract" conceptual domains, often of the internal mental or emotional world, sometimes of the social world, occasionally unseen and unknown domains of the physical world as, for example, the world of molecular action. Source domains are familiar ones, most often the physical world, they are easy to think with, in the sense that the thinker can readily conceptualize the relations among elements in such domains and changes in these relations that result when these elements are set in motion conceptually."

[4] Hannerz (1983: 150) discusses how much cultural research has been framed by orientational metaphors that position cultural phenomena either as underlying or overarching the studied manifest world.

In...

First, consider 'in'. In the terminology of Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 29), 'in' is a container metaphor grounded in basic bodily experience:

> "We are physical beings, bounded and set off from the rest of the world by the surface of our skins, and we experience the rest of the world as outside us. Each of us is a container, with a bounding surface and an in-out orientation. We project our own in-out orientation onto other physical objects that are bounded by surfaces. Thus we also view them as containers with an inside and an outside".

'In' is a powerful metaphor that entails a bounded entity, a container you can enter into, become enclosed by or embedded in, like a room, a house, a cave, a tunnel or a big bed; or immersed into, like a pool or tub of water. We tend to impose insides and outsides on substances like water and bounded objects like books or stones. We tend to conceptualize larger and less obviously bounded objects as containers by enclosing them into our visual field and imposing a bounded surface or a borderline that we can pass to enter – we are 'in' streets, towns, meadows and even 'in' trees. Many kinds of human collectives and administrative units are marked off as containers, with a natural boundary, a defined territory, an inside and an outside and some kind of membership status. You are 'in' a family, commune, county, country, nation, and a state.

Things we are 'in' seem to entail a number of things, like a bounded object, a borderline and an entry point that can be passed. Logically, such objects are perceived of as larger than the entering subject. 'In' is thus principally a quantifying metaphor that foregrounds the encompassing object as larger than the encompassed subject. And in the human realm quantity easily becomes a quality. Because things that take up large space are considered more important than things that take up small space, conceptualizing things as large make them more important. Thereby places you are 'in' can get marked as bigger and more important than places you are 'on', like islands.

Also, by entering into something, subjects are transformed to a part of the larger object, as in the room, the family or the nation. Sitting in a chair implies a different relation between subject and object than sitting on a chair, and perhaps a larger chair, an armchair or a Morris chair that you can be enclosed in. What is important is that 'in' in such cases not only describes, but also produces, a relation between object and subject in terms of position and size, and thereby also in terms of importance.

Wherever you can be 'in', you can also be 'out', 'outside', 'locked out from', 'foreclosed'. When such abstract entities as a country, a society, a nation or a culture are conceptualized as containers their membership, community and identity becomes spatialized, which make the implications of the metaphor especially evident. Whenever membership is required it can also be denied. Foreigners can be 'thrown out', immigrants can become exposed to "integration" policies, citizens can be projected as "outcasts" and subject to legal and political measures as living "outside society". There are of course also cases where 'out' is neutral or on the positive side, but in cases where 'in' is the normal, 'outside' seem to become a deviation that requires

action, such as campaigns to include or exclude foreigners, extradition, or even ethnic or religious cleansing.

Orientational metaphors like 'in' and 'out' connect systematically and coherently to a certain way of conceptualizing the world. Cooper & Ross (1975) suggest that a culture's view of its prototypical member determines an orientation of concepts within our conceptual system. They call this the "ME-FIRST orientation: UP, FRONT, ACTIVE, GOOD, HERE, and NOW, are all oriented toward the canonical person; DOWN, BACKWARD, PASSIVE, BAD, THERE, and THEN, are all oriented away from the canonical person" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:132; upper cases in original). This, I suggest, can be metaphorically extended also to a "we-first" orientation that positions spaces that are "ours" closer to us than other spaces. If so, we can tentatively claim that places we are 'in', and move 'out' from, are typically more up, front, active, good, here and now, while places that we go 'out' to are typically more down, backward, passive, bad, there, and then.

If the body of the individual, or the collective body of the group, is the canonical prototype that determines the orientation, it is the enclosing/encompassing object that is focussed. You go 'in to' town and you dwell 'in the house'. In such cases, 'in' entails closeness, a place near and perhaps dear, warm, encompassing, like the arms of a caring mother.

But then, you also go out to places like the countryside, the sea, the island. You can be 'far out', in 'outer space', or in the Outer Hebrides. An excursion in Swedish is *'utflykt'*, literally an 'out-getaway' or 'outing', abroad is *'utomlands'*, "an outside of-land". To be 'out there' entails an ongoing, indefinite and incomplete movement or condition, like a dominant-septime chord or a semi-colon. To 'come in', 'inside', 'in to the harbour', 'in to town', entails a more definite and complete state of being, like the finishing tonic chord, or a full stop. In many cases 'out to' indicates a direction away from the near, the here and now, to the distant, there and then, as in "outpost" or "outstation".

In cases like those above it seems that 'in' and 'out' produce a spatial hierarchy, where 'in' is the central, as in 'in town' or 'in to the shore', while 'out' marks the peripheral, as in 'out to the countryside', 'out on the sea', or 'out on the island'. Islanders regularly note the peculiar difference in perspective on distances that this produces. To mainlanders it always seems longer (more inconvenient, more expensive) to travel out to the island, than for islanders to travel in to the mainland.

... or On?

Now consider 'on', a spatial, orientational metaphor that strikes quite another chord. In Scandinavian languages, to be *'på stan'* ('on the town') is a quite different position from being *'i stan'*, ('in the town'), as different as being 'on' and 'in the mountain', or 'on' and 'in the sea'. The changing of preposition signals a new meaning, a new orientation, and it does so by activating another metaphor. To be 'on' seems to imply a subject that is positioned on top of something else. Imagine a human body in a upright position, with both feet 'on the ground' as the prototype: you are 'on the floor', 'on the road', or perhaps fiddling 'on the roof'. If 'in' entails a reduction of the subject to an aspect of the encompassing object, 'on' instead seem to foreground the subject as over and above, principally distanced and separate from the object.

The subject is central. The object becomes in a way subordinated. It is a position that does not entail notions of inclusion, nor of community or membership.

The island, the hill, and the mountain, belong to the prototypical kind of geographical phenomena you are 'on'. Size and sight are crucial factors. You approach as from a distance to a clearly bounded piece of land, of a size possible to overview. While glades, valleys, or marshes, are places you enter into, islands, hills and mountains, like moors and heaths, are set off from the surroundings in a way that does not at once delimit the visual field. When such pieces of land come in the plural, the metaphor changes, as do sight and size, and you are encompassed 'in the mountains', 'in the hills', 'in the archipelago'. Also, if the space or area is large enough, you might become encompassed, as 'in a desert', or 'in a forest'.

Things you can be 'on' you can also be 'off'. Like 'out', 'off' can entail a peripheral, distant or inferior position, as in 'offside', 'offshore', 'offbeat', or as in 'off' when you disagree, are down, or set aside. But importantly in this context, to be 'off' seems to imply more of an individual position, and less of social exclusion than 'out', which makes 'off' a less relevant position for legal or political action: integration policies presuppose and produce the exclusion that they are designed to repeal. To be 'off' is a less socially and politically charged position, neither 'in' nor 'out'.

Universals

So far I have followed quite closely in the steps of Lakoff & Johnson, on a path leading to a kind of abstract, reflexive reasoning with universal and generalist pretensions. Taken together, these general reflections seem to support the idea that at least part of the peculiar remoteness and peripherality that are so often ascribed to islands are both reflected and produced by the orientational metaphors that are employed.

Although allowing for cultural and linguistic differences, Lakoff & Johnson do not aim to explore cultural or cognitive diversity. Rather the opposite, they explore the latent systematic uniformity of human thought behind the perplexing manifest linguistic diversity. This, as anthropologist James Fernandez remarks, is a road that leaves many researchers of culture uncomfortable:

> "The search by the cognitive linguists for universals of mental operations–such things as principles of metaphoric entailment or underlying image schemas that determine metaphoric choice–also enters where most anthropologists are cautious to thread" (Fernandez, 1991: 9).

And most ethnologists, we should add.

Admittedly, there is something appealing about Lakoff's and Johnson's approach, which helps to explain the impact their work has had on a couple of generations of students of cognition, linguistics and culture. The style and tone is open and inviting, the reasoning easy to follow, apprehend, and not least to appreciate. Readers are invited to reflect over their own way of thinking and speaking, and to add examples from their own experience. But, however insightful and thought-provoking, it is important to remember that Lakoff's and Johnson's work is conceived in English, written in English, and grounded in an all-English data base.

Their method has been described as an "introspective inspection of the figurative content and schematic organization of purposefully selected (and sometimes denatured) utterances within that language" (Fernandez, *ibid.).*

A common criticism of Lakoff's and Johnson's strand of cognitive linguistics is that it is too general and non-specific, perhaps at best a starting point for further and more empirically based research.[5] While some argue against the idea of common underlying conceptual image schemas, others hold that even if there are such universal schemas, there may be substantial variations within a language, or culture. As several of my informants have remarked, even if there are, in languages like Icelandic, Finnish, Danish, and English, a number of broad "rules" that can be used as a general guidance to the right positional metaphor, there are also a great many "exceptions" that have to be learnt one by one, which makes positional metaphors and suffixes a notoriously difficult aspects of these languages.

Also, it is reasonable to believe that in any given language there is a certain economy, limiting the number of available prepositions or suffixes to choose from. Furthermore, there may be influences from older ways with words, or from other languages. In some cases the use of positional metaphors may depend on long forgotten historical circumstances. The linguist Sirkka Paikkala points out that many Finnish place-names are metonymical. What were originally names for lakes, or islands, have over time been transferred to small farms, and on to villages, towns or counties, preserving their original inflexion and positional metaphor.[6] In short, whatever intentions you may have, and whatever the entailments these prepositions and suffixes may carry, in practice the choice may be habitual, random, or audial (meaning words that sound best together).

Another kind of critique is based on differences between languages. As noted, the expressions discussed by Lakoff & Johnson are all in English. On what grounds can the conclusions drawn from reflections over utterances in English be extended to other languages? In English you are 'at work', while in Swedish you are *'på jobbet'* ('on work'). In English you go 'to school', in Danish you are *'på skolen'* ('on school'). In such cases, are translations at all possible?

So, even if we accept the idea that there may be certain underlying principles that determine metaphoric choice, clearly a more empirically based approach is needed to proceed beyond claims of an English-based universality. And, since my interest here is not so much the universal schemas behind 'in' or 'on', as how people productively make use of the differences in metaphoric entailment to position themselves socially, politically, culturally, and not least, geographically, I will continue not only to look for the general "rules", but also for the exceptions, instances where rules are disputed or overruled.

In parts of North-West Europe, countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Estonia, language has become a hot political issue. To a growing extent unconventional use of language may cause friction, especially if immigrants are involved. Since language is commonly

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[5]   Fernandez   (1991).   Also   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Lakoff.   Pinker   (2006): http://pinker.wjh.harvard.edu/articles/media/2006_09_30_thenewrepublic.html.
[6] E-mail from Sirkka Paikkala, 24 January 2011.

understood as a set of rules or even laws that should be obeyed, in principle, violations should be corrected, perhaps also symbolically punished or "fined", in Sweden and Denmark for example by not employing or leasing apartments to non-native speakers. While one type of such violations can be explained simply by linguistic ignorance or mistake, another and more interesting type is when certain language conventions are deliberately contested, resisted or rejected. What follows is discussion of a number of such instances collected from my own part of the world, North Western Europe.

The idea is that whenever battles are waged over words, values are played out and negotiated. If the friction caused by unconventional language use is a starting point, a kind of "punctum" insisting in analytical attention (Barthes, 1981), it is the possible differences in values and worldviews behind the friction that interest me. Clearly, to be able to discuss such values and worldviews, I will have to risk a perhaps all too generalist discussion of "principles of metaphoric entailments or underlying image schemas that determine metaphoric choice" (Fernandez, 1991: 9). But, such principles are not intended as conclusions to arrive at, but as clues to why some positional metaphors are contested, and to what kind of values that are being fought about etc. Again, the idea is simply to use certain cases of friction between grammar and politics to provide insight into the relations between island words and island worlds.

Uses of 'in' and 'on' in some European Languages

In my own language, Swedish, as in other Scandinavian languages, most of the general observations discussed above apply. You are normally *på*, 'on', islands and peninsulas, but *i*, 'in' larger landmasses and continents, even if they are islands. Thus you are 'on Gotland, 'on Madagascar', 'on Greenland', but 'in Australia'. While you are 'on' single islands, you can at the same time be 'in' a group of islands or an archipelago. Countries, counties, provinces, communes and cities, you are normally 'in', which entails not only position/location, but also notions of community, and membership, perhaps requiring some kind of entrance ticket, like a passport or a visa. While you in Scandinavian languages are 'in' Indonesia and Japan', since these are archipelagic states, you are 'on' islands like Java and Kyushu.

As in most analytical languages, the use of prepositions such as 'in' and 'on' in Scandinavian languages can be quite a challenge for learners.[7] You are 'on Skrova', a small island situated 'in Lofoten', Norway, since Lofoten is a group of islands. But, if you are out fishing in the same area, you are 'on Lofoten'.[8] You are 'in' Øygarden, a group of islands outside Bergen, Norway,[9] but the Faroe Islands, another archipelagic place, you are 'on'. Åland, a very large group of islands, you are 'on', but the county Åland and the many small communes in the county you are 'in'. Brändö and other communes in the same county that consist of several islands you are 'in' if you want to highlight the administrative unit, but 'on' if you want to

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7 Gotlanders say 'in Visby' (the town), but *'på Hemse'*, "on Hemse", a municipality in the middle of the island. "Lau", a parish in eastern Gotland, you are in, but in neighbouring parish När you are 'on, *'på När'*. You are also *'på Ljugarn'*, a seaside resort, while you are 'in Ardre', the parish in which the resort is situated. Ulf Palmenfelt, Gotland University, personal communication.
8 E-mail from Stein-Roar Mathisen, 22 February 2011.
9 E-mail from Torunn Selberg, 7 April 2011.

highlight the main island.[10] An exception is Kökar, a commune of islands in the south part of the Åland archipelago. It is generally "on Kökar", although there is no island by that name. The linguist Mikael Reuter thinks that this use points to Kökar being perceived as a 'kingdom of islands' rather than a commune,[11] an argument along the lines of Lakoff & Johnson. In these cases, being 'on' invokes other metaphorical entailments than being 'in'. The systematicity of orientational conceptual metaphors allow us "to focus on one aspect of a concept" while keeping us "from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor". (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 10)

An instructive case is Kimito/Kemiönsaari, the largest coastal island in Finland. In 2009 a number of small communes on the island and some smaller nearby islands were merged into the new larger '*Kimitoöns kommun*', 'Kimito island-commune', which led to a debate about which preposition to use. When the island is addressed you should use the normal 'on', but when the commune is addressed you should say 'in', writes Mikael Reuter in a leading Finnish newspaper. "Of course you can say also 'in the Kimito-island commune'", but oddities like "the commune Kimito-island" or "Kimito-island commune" should be avoided he adds, apparently because of conflicting entailments of the positional metaphors.[12]

These different entailments can be productively used to communicate nuances of meaning. '*I stan'*, 'in town', denotes the general location, while '*på stan'*, 'on town', often even '*ute på stan'*, 'out on town', denotes a more specific type of action, perhaps walking, shopping or sightseeing. Sometimes the choice of preposition becomes politically hot. In Swedish it is currently not politically correct to say 'on Cuba', or 'on Iceland', when referring to the state, since it is considered diminishing, placing Cuba and Iceland in a second rank among nations. In his book about Cuba, Swedish journalist Thomas Gustafsson Reinius (2006: 32) writes:

> When you are on the main island all distances are so great that you never get the feeling of being on an island. To say that you are on Cuba is common in Swedish, but nevertheless wrong if you speak about the country. You are in a country, but on an island.

In the perspective of Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 10), this kind of sensitivity can be described as an effect of "highlighting and hiding":

> The very systematicity that allows us to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another … will necessarily hide other aspects of the concept. In allowing us to focus on one aspect of a concept …, a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor.

In cases like this the conceptual metaphor 'on' seems to hide important connotations that come with 'in', such as a society you can be a member of and belong to, size, importance, and

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10 E-mail from Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, 12 January 2011.
11 www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=sv&s=2886.
12 Reuters rutor, 15 October 2008, www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?l=sv&s=2886.

compatibility with other nations/states. In Swedish, size and political/economical importance is often implied. While island nations like Britain and Japan are always 'in', and while Ireland, Cuba, and Iceland can be 'in' if you refer to nation/state and 'on' if you refer to nature and geography, still Greenland, Malta, and the Faroe Islands are always 'on'.

In Norwegian it is common to say 'in' about places in valleys, while 'on' is used about more mountainous places, '*på Geilo, 'på Finse'*, which supports the idea of a general underlying schema. Towns you are normally 'in', but some towns in the inland, like Lillehammer, Hamar, and Gjøvik, situated around Mjösa, Norways largest lake, belong to those you traditionally are 'on'. The Norwegian linguist Hans Olav Enger finds that placenames with 'on' are often derived from farms, and that these are more common in the inland than along the coast. Sandnes, a rather small and new town in south-west Norway is one of those places that you are traditionally 'on'. This however is controversial. Proponents of 'in Sandnes' holds that it is arrogant people from nearby and much larger Stavanger that uses 'on'. [13]

Also in Icelandic, you are generally 'in' nations/states, but 'on' islands. Still you are '*í Færeyjum*' (in the Faroe islands), Vestmannaeyjum, Grímsey, and other inhabited Icelandic islands. Nobody actually lives on Surtsey, but every summer researchers are 'on' Surtsey to work. Some places come with both, you can be '*í/á Englandi*', (in/on England) and '*í/á Suðurey í Færeyjum'* (*in/on Suðurey in the Faroe Islands). Towns and villages you are normally 'in', except for Akureyri, Hofsósi, Kópaskeri and many other small towns that you are 'on', which can be quite puzzling to many students of Icelandic. From the countryside you go in to town, '*inn í Reykjavík*', or '*suður í Reykjavíkur*' ('south in to Reykjavik'), and from town you go out to the country, the islands, the sea: '*út á land; út til eyjanna, út á hafið'*."[14]

Finnish and Estonian are synthetic or agglutinating languages, in which the same kinds of differences are constructed by the use of suffixes. Inneshive, or inner locative case, which corresponds to 'in', is expressed by the suffix -ssa/ssä, '*Helsingissa*', 'in Helsinki'. Adessive, or outer locative case, corresponding to 'on', is expressed by –lla, '*Tamperella'*: "on Tampere". Big islands are usually 'in', '*Gotlannissa'*, and small islands you are 'on', '*Ahvenanmaalla*', "on Åland". Large, distant places and "many smaller islands somewhere beyond the horizon" are often 'on'. Many Finnish islands, especially in eastern Finland, can be either/or.[15]

The general rule is to use innessive, 'in', for islands that also are nations/states, '*Kuubassa'*, 'in Cuba", but it is also customary to use adessive, "*Kyproksella*", 'on Cyprus'. The Finnish Language Board recommends that no differentiation should be needed between the place/island and the administrative area, both 'in' and 'on' places like Cyprus, Malta, and Martinique, should be accepted,[16] which perhaps is a reflection of the sometimes heated debate about the status of some island states in other languages.

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13 Hans Olav Enger, e-mail 7 April 2011; Åse Wetås, e-mail 28 May 2011.
14 E-mail from Steingrímur Þórðarson, 11 January 2011.
15 E-mail from Sirkka Paikkala, 24 January 2011.
16 The recommendation was published 10 September.2000. www.kotus.fi/index.phtml?s=2354

In Estonian, the innessive or "in-case", expressed with the suffix '–s', is used for all kinds of objects that can be conceived as containers, and objects that are bounded, delimited, including social and political entities. Adessive, "on-case", with the suffix '–l', is used for many kinds of events and objects, and for objects conceived as a surface or elevation. While adessive can denote "a general presence or a being on top of", innessive denotes a position inside something.[17] Some words, like 'vanker', (carriage or wagon), come with both cases, depending on what the speaker wants to express. The linguist Raimo Raag writes that while '*vankril'* denotes more of a general position, or a position on top of, 'vankris' denotes being inside the wagon. "The choice of case thus depends on how the speaker perceive the word '*vanker'* – as a delimited, closed space (inner locative case), or as a surface with low walls (outer local case)." (Raag, 1997:267)

Most places are constructed with innesive, "in-case". Among the exceptions are islands, which you normally are 'on', 'saarel'. 'Saar', together with 'maa', 'land', belong to the words that comes with 'on-case', thus it is on '*Saaremaa'*, and also on '*Inglismaa'*, England, and '*Saksamaa'*, Germany. Still you are 'in' a number of islands, like Muhu and Kassari. Some islands have both possibilities, like Piirisaar in the south part of lake Peipus. In the same way as with '*vanker'* this can be used to express subtle nuances. While '*Ruhnul'* would denote a general 'on Ruhnu', a small island in the gulf of Riga, '*Ruhnus'*, 'in Ruhnu" denotes more of "a position in the village, among the people".[18]

Also in English, the general patterns described above apply. Nations/states are conceptualized as containers that you are 'in', while islands, as hills, mountains and moors, are conceptualized as surfaces and/or elevations that you are 'on'. The difference that Scandinavian officials often make between place and nation is not common in standard British English. The geographer Stephen Royle writes that "it is always 'in Ireland' never 'on'". However, he continues, "these are not rules, this is English, we don't do rules, this is common usage."[19]

In Irish, however, one is 'in' islands, ('i', 'in' before a vowel, 'sa', 'san' with the article). Thus you are 'in Árainn' ('Inishmore', the largest of the Aran Islands), '*sa Bhlascaod', 'san Oileán'* (the Great Blasket Island). The folklorist Diarmud O'Giollain writes that the inhabitants of many of the Irish-speaking off-shore islands refer to the mainland as 'Éire' or 'Ireland', a place you are always 'in', 'in Éirinn'.[20] He notes that in the past, "anyone saying 'in Ireland' or 'the country' meant the whole island, but often the speaker really had the Irish Republic in mind. The political correctness that has followed on from the Good Friday Agreement now often

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17 E-mail from Raimo Raag, 10 February 2011. Also, Raag (1997: 263-267).
18 E-mail from Olof and Lea Stroh, 20 December 2010.
19 E-mail from Stephen A. Royle, 17 December 2010 and 18 December 2010.
20 E mail from Diarmud O'Giollain, 27 April 2011. O'Giollain gives an interesting example of the use of the positional metaphors 'up to' and 'down to' in Irish: "My late father, who was from Co. Sligo in the North West of Ireland, always referred to 'going down to Sligo', although our family always lived much further south. You hear it commonly enough in the Northern half of Ireland, although I think cartography is changing that to thinking in terms of 'up' (the top of the page, and thus the North) and 'down'. I think it comes from the old understanding of the North of Ireland as '*Íochtar na hÉireann'*, literally the lower part of Ireland, and the South as '*Uachtar na hÉireann'*, the upper part. I think that one can explain it in terms of the sun, at its highest point in the South, and, after setting in the West, continues its journey 'down' to the North."

leads careful speakers in the Republic to say '(on) the island of Ireland' or '(on) the island' to indicate sensitivity to Unionists' in Northern Ireland (who argue that their country is the United Kingdom, or just Britain)." O'Giollain also points out that the term 'British Isles' is politically sensitive, as it is seen by many Irish people as a colonial term: "A relatively well established British usage that drives Northern Irish nationalists into fits of apoplexy is the refer to 'the mainland' or 'the British Mainland' when the island of Britain as opposed to Northern Ireland is meant. Occasionally this usage even opposes all of Ireland to 'the mainland'.[21]

In practice, there are a fair number of places where English speakers tend not to "do rules", places where people have developed a collective sensitivity to the use of orientational metaphors. Anne Craine, politician and officer in the Isle of Man government, writes:

> [Manx people] tend to say in the Isle of Man because we have a sense of belonging within it. To say "I live on the Isle of Man" would imply that I was not belonging here or a part of the Island. Manx people also have a way of referring to our geographical neighbour England as 'across', as in 'across the water'. To refer to it as 'the mainland' would simply mark you out as being from off island.[22]

Another Manx informant, Barbara Howell, writes:

> "Most people would say they live 'in' the Isle of Man because they feel part of the community.(…) In practice, people speak so quickly that it is not noticeable whether they have said in or on and you just hear the 'n' sound.*[23]*

Folklorist Adam Grydehøj writes that 'on' the Isle of Wight seems most prevalent, although some people speak about being 'in'.[24] During her PhD fieldwork there, Joanna Turke found that visitors and incomers have a tendency to refer to staying or living 'on' the Isle of Wight. However, she also noticed that she herself more recently has adopted 'in':

> "I have a sense that 'generational islanders' and settled incomers may slant towards 'in' as they feel embedded in the community, they are living in an environment they consider to be home rather than the more transitory sense of island living that visitors and newcomers may have. It may also be that those who feel embedded do not need to emphasize the Island's smallness compared to the mainland (implicit in using the term 'on').

Joanna Turke writes that 'mainland' is used by islanders when people do not want to be specific about the place they are referring to and that "some people jokingly refer to the mainland as 'the North Island' (as in New Zealand). Those who travel to places on the

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21 E mail from Diarmud O'Giollain, 27 April 2011. The Good Friday (or Belfast) Agreement was signed in Spring 1998 and came into force on 2 December 1999. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfast_Agreement
22 E-mail from Anne Craine, 28 January 2011.
23 E-mail from Barbara Howell, 1 February 2011.
24 E-mail from Adam Grydehøj, 7 April 2011.

mainland with any regularity tend to refer to the place by name only, i.e. 'when I was in Chichester or London'. Otherwise going 'over there' is used, or 'over to Portsmouth'…"[25]

Shetland you are definitely 'in' writes Adam Grydehøj. Shetlanders, he found during his fieldwork there, "are ultra-sensitive" to how Shetland is named.

> "The Shetland Isles" will get you a dirty look, but "the Shetlands" is regarded as absolutely unforgivable. I've heard it pointed out that the "-land" in Shetland means that the place should be considered as a unified whole and that no one would ever say "I'm going to the Finlands." Thus, some Shetlanders hold, it's OK to say "the Orkneys". (…) From an etymological perspective, the various islands in Shetland don't seem to be treated differently depending on their suffixes. So, you can be either "in" or "on" Bressay, Whalsay, Uyea, Burra, Fair Isle, Foula, Vaila, etc. (all of which, historically, ended in the word "island"), but you can also be either "in" or "on" Fetlar, Unst, and Yell. The exceptions are Out Skerries and "Mainland". The latter of these is almost never actually referred to as a single entity but is split up into Northmavine, North Mainland (which can sometimes encompass Northmavine as well), the Westside, Central Mainland, and South Mainland -- All of these are "in" places.[26]

In Jersey, the Société Jersiaise explains that "people usually say "*in* Jersey" and "*in* the Island": saying "*on* Jersey" or "*on* the Island" is considered the mark of an outsider." They also find that the use of *in* may be influenced by the Jèrriais: "*en Jèrri*". For comparison, correct usage in French is "*à Jersey*".[27] Ethnomusicologist Henry Johnson, who comes from Jersey, recalls:

> Until about 10 years ago, I never really differentiated 'in Jersey' as being unique to Jersey (and some other islands), but it was only after I started writing scholarly articles about Jersey that some editors changed 'in Jersey' to 'on Jersey'. (…) From my perspective as an islander, 'in Jersey' is very natural. 'On Jersey' still feels uncomfortable and when I think about it, it gives me a sense that I don't really belong there, while 'in Jersey' offers me a feeling that I am an insider. When I'm in Jersey, I feel that I'm there. If I say 'on Jersey', there's a feeling that I don't belong and that my time there might be transitory or I'm referring to the island from a distance (as an outsider).[28]

Discussion

One lesson to be learnt from this survey is that, in spite of the differences between the discussed languages of North-West Europe, there seem to be at least some common understandings of which kind of phenomena you are 'in' and 'on' respectively. With Irish as

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25 Joanna Turke, 18 March 2011.
26 E-mails from Adam Grydehøj, 7 April 2011 and 16 May 2011.
27 http://members.societe-jersiaise.org/sdllj/jerseyenglish.html)
28 E-mail from Henry Johnson, 14 February 2011.

the exception, islands belong to those you are principally 'on', and mainlands to those you are normally 'in'.

Also, it seems clear that there are in all these languages some general principles of metaphoric entailment and underlying image schemas that determine or at least guide the choice of positional metaphor. Words with '-land' is an instructive case.[29] In Swedish you are normally 'in' a 'land', whether this is a smaller unit such as *Småland* (literally "small lands' a county in south Sweden), or in larger ones, such as Finland, *Estland* (Estonia) or *Tyskland* (Germany). Is-lands, like Gotland, Öland, Åland, Helgoland, and Shetland, you are however 'on'. That one general "rule" or principle is overruled by another that considers the kind of object you have in mind points to the existence of an underlying conceptual image schema concerning such objects. That Scandinavian languages have much in common with English is no surprise, but it is notable that also very different languages, such as Finnish, and Estonian, arrive at the same kind of metaphoric entailments, with the help of suffixes instead of prepositions. Taken together, these findings seem to support Lakoff's and Johnson's general idea, that positional metaphors in the discussed languages (with Irish as a possible exception) "are tied to metaphorical concepts in a systematic way" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:7). How far this can be stretched is interesting, but beyond the scope of this paper.[30]

Another lesson is of course that "rule", or principle, may be a word too strong. The variation is great, the exceptions many, due to habit, custom, language "economy", grammar, sound, or simply chance. Of special interest in the context of this paper are cases where the variation indicates a certain political sensitivity towards the choice of positional metaphor, cases where the use of 'in' or 'on' is debated, negotiated, or contested.

Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, folklorist originating from Åland, reflects over a certain difference in perspective between islanders (and coastal dwellers) and 'inlanders': "This idea, that it would be somewhat claustrophobic to live in the middle of a continent, like in Nebraska or Kansas in the USA, I have heard from many islanders." She suggests that a reason may be that being 'on' a place can entail an aspect of freedom, while being 'in' is associated to '*in-stängd'*, Swedish for 'trapped'.[31] Islanders who feel themselves enclosed or trapped in the inland and mainlanders who feel isolated and disconnected on islands, are old and widespread motives in narratives about misplaced, or displaced, people. These motives are clearly supported and maybe even generated by the choice of metaphor.

Neither being included into something, nor being above or on top of something, are neutral positions. I suggest that this, at least partly, is what produces the sensitivity that islanders may show towards non-islanders using the "wrong" orientational metaphor. Another plausible

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29 'Land', or "*lond*', from Indo-European '*lendh'*, via proto-Germanic *'landom*' originally denoted "a definite portion of the earth's surface owned by an individual or home of a nation". Later on, it took on other meanings, as synonyms to both 'earth' and 'country'. www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=inslular&searchmode=none.

30 There are other ways of expressing position. So, in Latin, the preposition 'in' can denote both position and direction. '*In Germania'* is 'in Germany', and *'in Germaniam'* is 'to Germany'. The Latin 'in' is also used to denote both 'on' and 'in': 'in Sicilia' is 'on/in Sicily'. The difference in position is thus not marked in Latin. (Email from Hedda Gunäng, 5 January 2011.) Other Romance languages bear traces of a similar use.

[31] E-mail from Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch, 7 March 2011.

explanation is of course a common irritation towards people that "speak wrong". As noted above, the tolerance towards linguistic deviations seems decreasing in many places in North Western Europe. But in the cases I have discussed I suggest that it is the difference in position indicated by the choice of positional metaphor that is the main cause behind the friction.

When some islanders prefer to be 'on' the island, and when they, like Gotlanders, object to some outsiders'/mainlanders' use of 'in', it may be because of what the 'on'-metaphor entails: foregrounding and enlarging the individual subject, while backgrounding and diminishing the object, the island. Conversely, what the informants from places like Jersey, the Isle of Man, Shetland and Norwegian Sandnes, underline is the sense of identity and belonging in a society that comes with 'in'. In these cases, I suggest, it is the enlargement of the society that 'in' entails that is the crucial point. Insisting on being 'in Jersey', 'in the Isle of Man', or 'in the Ukraine', is a way of rejecting the downsizing of the place, the society, the island, that comes with 'on', and a way of insisting on being on a par with other, albeit larger, more populated, central or otherwise more important societies.

Downsizing and miniaturization are common techniques to take control over the presented "other" in places like exhibitions, museums, souvenir shops and theme parks.[32] Control is achieved by time and space compression, reduction of complexity, and increase of overview and comprehension. In a study on longing, Susan Stewart writes that:

> "the miniature offers a world clearly limited in space but frozen and thereby particularized and generalised in time. (…) It is necessary that Lilliput be an island. The miniature world remains perfect and uncontaminated by the grotesque so long as it absolute boundaries are maintained."[33]

"As the past is more knowable than the present because it is over", islands "feel knowable by virtue of being circumscribed and containable" (Lowenthal, 2004: 3). "Islands appeal to us because they are the most enclosed of all landforms", and that "as the actual scale of things has tended to gigantism, the appreciation of the diminutive has increased enormously" (Gillis, 2004: 150). "The smallness of islands is a function of the bigness of mainlands", Gillis continues, thus islands are "small places" not so much because they are small, but because we "do our best to reduce islands to human scale regardless of their actual physical size. And because it is surrounded by water, an island is like a framed picture, appearing to its viewer as small but at the same time all the more comprehensible" (*ibid*.: 151)

Islands like Gotland, Saaremaa, Åland, as Jersey and Isle of Man, are good examples. Regardless of their sizes they and other islands in North Western Europe are notoriously downsized and framed as "small places", a set of Lilliputs uncontaminated by the grotesque (as

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32 Reinius Gustafsson (2005, 2007).
33 Stewart (1993: 8), quoted in Gillis (2004: 152). Following Stewart, ethnologist Lizette Gradén Kansas notes the common fascination of the miniature in her study of Swedishness in Lindsborg and how downsizing makes things graspable or tangible. Values are enhanced and amplified by the format: in the miniature, the picture of a domesticated and comprehensible existence is condensed. "When time is frozen in a miniature, it is implied that all change and motion belong outside of it" (Gradén, 2002: 66, 79, my translation).

in motorways, sky-scrapers, and endless suburbs), which helps to explain why being 'on' islands seem to come naturally for many outsiders/mainlanders.

Conclusion

We have seen that 'in' and 'on' are orientational metaphors that can entail different relations between subject and object. In many expressions with 'in', objects seem to be enlarged by being conceptualized as encompassing containers, while the subject that is encompassed is reduced to a part of the object, as 'in town' or 'in the mainland'. This "inbuilt" part-whole relationship makes expressions with 'in' especially suitable for highlighting belonging, place or group identity, as in "I'm in", "in society", and, conversely, in expressions like "outcast", "thrown out of the country" and "outward journey".

Nevertheless, objects you are 'on' seem to reduce or diminish the object, while the subject is being enlarged and placed above the object, as in 'on the island' or 'on the mountain'. The common metaphoric image 'more is better", or its spatial correlate, 'higher is better', can be of importance to some constructions with 'on'. Being on top of something implies being uplifted, higher, thus more important - the classical position of the master, the boss, the chief, and the winner. 'On' does not seem to entail belonging or a collective identity, but rather individuality and agency, which is highlighted in expressions like "I'm on", "go on", "have the drop on somebody", and, conversely, in expressions like "I feel off" or "drop off".

The idea from which this essay started was the immanent sensitivity and underlying politics of some prepositions denoting position and how they can be used to mark differences, belongings, and identities. The idea with which it ends is that more than "just words", 'in' or 'on' (and their equivalents in different languages) are "metaphors we live by" that organize and shape the way we act and think in a way that help us understand what we are talking about. The sensitivity, in some cases even friction, is, I suggest, caused and fuelled by the entailments that is implied by the choice of metaphor. Such differing entailments of positional metaphors may influence how islands are positioned and understood.

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