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Origins and Meanings of Words for 'Islands' in North-West Europe

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Abstract: This paper proposes the notion that words mirror ideas, perspectives and world-views. Etymologies and meanings of general words for 'islands' in a number of languages in North and West Europe are then discussed. Here, islands are shown to be etymologically constituted by the interplay between land and water, and which of these two is emphasized varies. In the third section, a number of Swedish island words are surveyed, in an attempt to illuminate the principle of linguistic relativity. Finally, the implications of these findings for island studies are discussed. Keywords: archipelago, etymology, island, island studies, language, linguistic relativity, oppositions, snow, Swedish © 2009 Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Island Words, Island Worlds: The

1. Introduction

2. Island Words in Germanic Languages

3. Island Words in Celtic Languages

4. Island Words in Finnish

5. Island Words in Swedish

6. Conclusion

Notes

References