

3. Perceptions of the Landscapes

3. Historical and Current Perceptions of the Landscapes in the Wadden Sea Region

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3.1 Introduction

Any serious attempt to address the 'landscape heritage' of a region, whether large or small, assumes that a certain value is attributed to what is present there - to the ensemble of the perceivable elements of the 'surroundings'; elements that can, in fact, no longer be clearly distinguished according to whether they are natural or anthropogenic. This attribution of value occurs when, for example, certain elements of a landscape - of a space for living and learning - are considered 'worth protecting' or 'worth preserving'. Such assumptions and judgments are always proposed by individuals or social groups, and, depending on the circumstances, they may be realized politically through a sometimes controversial process of shaping of public opinion. And these assumptions and judgments are always in relation to historically contingent areas of conflict, determined by general economic, social, political and cultural developments. That is to say: On the one hand the perception of a landscape as a living-and-learning space is experienced by individuals primarily as a personal 'relationship' to that landscape; the landscape is decisively anchored in the life experience of the individual, and social groups and factions are brought together by identical or similar life experience, so that often its members achieve what appears to be a natural consensus on the nature, value and meaning of a landscape. On the other hand, the varying interests that arise from the 'life situations' of different social groups often lead to sharp differences over the 'correct' way to perceive a landscape and over the conclusions that are to be drawn from that perception. To some degree, however, it is through that historical process that such controversies contribute to the formation of more general, or rather dominating, conceptions and evaluations of landscape formations. They change on the basis of the often radical challenges that technological developments and their effects, for example, or social change represent for the collective consciousness.

This can be seen in the process, now several decades old, of the ecological valorization of the

Wadden Sea Area. It was substantially triggered by more or less 'catastrophic' damage to the so-called 'natural balance' in the shallow water areas of the southern North Sea; the public was shocked into perceiving the effects of our technologically advanced civilization as negative or even threatening. The effect of such shocks, such crises, is generated or influenced these days essentially through the reporting of events in the mass media. Over the last twenty or thirty years this has been true for the most effective of the 'warning signals from the Wadden Sea'- harmful materials and poisons in the sediments; algal blooms; seal deaths; accidents involving ships carrying chemicals or oil; the pollution of beaches with, for example, oil leaking from oil rigs or ships.

Thus, the population has developed a general awareness - differentiated according to social group and level - of the dangers threatening the natural processes in the Wadden Sea. This affected and still affects the interest that, for example, the users of this coastal landscape who are part of the tourist industry (hosts and guests alike) have in 'intact nature', whether imagined or real. Of course they form only one of the groups concerned with the condition of this border zone between land and sea, and it is important to note that even the image of 'intact nature' in the Wadden Sea Region is understood and valued very differently by the various social groups.

A crisis mentality about the Wadden Sea that was primarily ecologically driven led to convoluted and contentious political processes which resulted in protective measures for the shallow water areas of the southern North Sea between Esbjerg and Den Helder. The most effective but also the most controversial measure taken by Germany was the establishment of national parks on the Wadden Sea coast. Since then, an extensive campaign of educational and training activities aimed not only at tourists has succeeded in fostering in the wider population an awareness of the Wadden Sea as a 'nature space' worthy of protection. Over the course of only a few decades a substantial shift has taken place in public awareness of the Wadden Sea Region; it is now regarded as a sensitive 'near-natural landscape', potentially threatened by the effects of our lifestyle (determined, as it is, by technology and industry), and very much worth protecting. This shift in perception has had the attention and the endorsement of both politicians and media.

It is more or less the consensus that at least large parts of this, the only such extensive landscape in Central Europe apart from the Alps, have been shaped and used by humans for hundreds of years. Even ecologists can agree with the view that large sections of the Wadden Sea Region constitute a cultural landscape - and have done so since before the dykes. However, the idea that its peculiar character and quality as a cultural landscape could also be in certain ways endangered through modern-day processes pertaining to social 'progress' has entered into general public awareness only in recent years. Three developments are primarily to blame for generating the crisis situations in the Wadden Sea cultural landscape: the increased pace of so-called modernisation in agriculture; holiday and day-trip tourism, which has increased by leaps and bounds; and the placement of wind turbines in the coastal zone. All three factors appear to be responsible for massive encroachments on the landscape as it was inherited, from the transformation of the topography and the destruction of old landscape structures, through the profound changes in the cultural heritage of the settlement formations and constructed monuments, to the extensive alteration of the visual reference points and the dominant aesthetic elements of the landscape.

Once again we note a shift in the perception of the Wadden Sea Region. At this time there are still only isolated social groups that view the Wadden Sea coast (though from very different points of view and with strongly differing interests) as a charming, interesting and important cultural landscape, a sensitive 'cultural system' that is increasingly under threat. Most tourists, planners and even the committed naturalists have not yet developed a 'crisis mentality where cultural landscape is concerned'. But the controversies over the erection of wind turbines signal - even for managers and administrators who are primarily concerned with opportunities for economic development - a sensitisation toward what has been referred to as 'the landscape's limited capacity for withstanding aesthetic assault'.

Thus, over the last few decades we have experienced distinct changes in the perception of the Wadden Sea coast. It is not at all the case that these changes - and it is decisive to recognize this - relate only to the perceived landscape image. However much the visually perceptible may determine our idea of landscape, nonetheless in concrete experiences, in the situative

experience of 'environmental spaces' other factors enter in as well: the kind of 'feeling' for the qualities of the coast that someone experiences, diving into the surf off a North Sea island; the 'sensuous pleasure' taken in cycling or hiking through the marshes, the 'understanding' of the quality of the historical buildings experienced by someone wandering through a village, or what the sudden flight of a great gaggle of Brent geese might mean as 'sense event' - all of these experiences, while having a different tone and emphasis for different sensibilities, together determine the perception of the landscape space.

For these reasons it is important, in the context of a discussion of the characteristics and value of the 'landscape heritage', to agree on the bases for the perceptions of the landscape and cultural spaces. The first part of the essay that follows therefore offers a general and strongly theoretical treatment of the fundamental issues concerning the perception of the Wadden Sea coast as landscape. These issues cover everything from basic conceptual assumptions on landscape perception in general and the Wadden Sea coast in particular, to the different perspectives adopted by various social groups that either live in the Wadden Sea Area or make use of the space.

Current perceptions are always formed out of cultural tradition. The way a landscape is perceived is also always the result of the way the course of history expresses itself in culture and mentality. Just as we can recognize clear shifts in perceptions of the Wadden Sea coast in our time, so we can also establish or discern that the same sorts of changes occurred in earlier times. It is clear that, at least in modern times, several radical transformations in the dominant understanding of the Wadden Sea landscape have taken place. It is incumbent on us to regard our own understanding of the characteristics, meaning and value of the Wadden Sea landscape as the outcome of historical processes, by fostering awareness of these processes to the extent possible. The second half of the essay points to this dynamic, in a short outline of the history of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region.

The two sections of the essay together venture into new scholarly territory, and the essay therefore cannot be and should not be understood as more than a sketch which lays out a program for further study and which attempts to make a contribution to the discussion of the problems that attend a valuation of the landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region.

3.2 General perspectives

3.2 General perspectives on the perception of the coastal landscape

The expert opinion about the Wadden Sea Region presented here aims to heighten our awareness of the interconnections that are integral to perception. What is significant here are the situations in which objects and environments manifest themselves both aesthetically and semiotically. These contexts are historical (in the sense both of a history of the times and of a biography). Accordingly, individuals always have both a history of their own as well as a shared history. Cultural landscapes in fact only emerge as the result of the effects of these relationships. Cultural landscape is a lived product of relationships; a fluid transitional stage of nature in its regional manifestations and of a special order of cultural artifacts.

3.2.1 Details on perceptual space as coastal landscape

The definition of the coastal landscape in terms of its topology is problematic. The length of each topographical distance – to the extent that it is to be measured as an actual distance and is not merely intended to be measured as a fictitious straight line – depends on the scale; the larger the scale, the longer the distance measured. On a small-scale map, detailed topographical features tend to be straightened out somewhat, whereas the same feature on a larger-scale map shows up as a greater measured

distance between two points because even small curves in the contour of the coast can be taken into account.

'Coasts' are cultural constructs. They have always referred to some indeterminate space 'between' the land and the sea. In the case of the Wadden Sea Region this definitional problem is aggravated by the fact that, due to regular flooding, the eulittoral zone sometimes appears to be land and sometimes sea. However, this applies not only to the Wadden Sea area in its more narrow definition: due to fluctuations in the mean level of tides (amplified further by storm surges as well as by neap tides and spring tides) it also applies to the sublittoral zone (in the case of extremely low tides) and to the supralittoral zone (in the case of extremely high tides). At least in non-catastrophic cases, the epilittoral can be excluded.¹ Furthermore, in some sense the estuarine areas along the coast extend far inland because coastal phenomena still affect those areas. This peculiarity applies as far upriver as the effects of the tides can be observed (as far as dike-building extends inland). In the Dutch regions this covers extremely large areas which have been reduced on the ocean side only in the last 100 years by means of enormous hydraulic engineering works.

It may have been for these and other reasons that Friedrich Ratzel (1882) defined coastlines as seams. According to Ratzel, coastlines consist of sea and land:

„The greater the sea's share in the land, the stronger the effect this 'sea into the coast' has on the coastal inhabitants „², since „what one might call the 'mental-spiritual sea climate' of a sea that often reaches far inland, can sometimes be more difficult to grasp than the last traces of the physical sea climate.“³

For Ratzel 'human collaboration'⁴ is a social mirror of the general danger of living near and with the North Sea. Despite the use of modern technology this danger persists; this is particularly evident in the ongoing erosion resulting from the surf pounding the western coastlines of the North Sea islands. The 'topographical fragility' of the entire coastline culminates in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the islands. The fact of living under the constant threat of the loss of

Fig. 3.1:
Halligland with unprotected salt marshes and eroded cliffs.
Photo: T. Möller, appr. 1905 – archive of the curator of the Land Schleswig-Holstein



home and property is an open wound in the coastal inhabitants' sense of place.

For the purpose of defining the limits of the perceptual space we are calling 'coastal landscape', the following conclusion has been drawn: The coastal landscape of the Wadden Sea is considered – as is customary in the literature – to extend from Den Helder in the Netherlands to Esbjerg in Denmark. No exact measure can be given for the stretch between the sea and the mainland (extending north-south in the Netherlands, and in Denmark east-west). According to Ratzel, this is where we find the life-world space of the cultural landscape of the Wadden Sea coast, which may extend up to 20 km inland, but which cannot be clearly delineated.

This coastal belt, which remains rather more vague than precisely measurable, is heterogeneous in its micrological structure, due to formal differences in the legislative frameworks [of the respective countries]. Differences come into play as a result of living conditions that have evolved (among other things, these include differences in the patterns of cultural interpretation between the three affected countries). As the scale is enlarged, the differences in the smaller regional scale mentioned earlier become more evident. At the level of the regions, some sections of the coastline have formed into so-called 'landscapes' or 'counties'⁵ in a cultural-historical process (see especially Part B). We will not be able to deal with this type of differentiation in much detail; instead, we will only be able to follow a rather rough trail of evident differences in perception. Even with regard to the latter, in keeping with the purpose of this expert opinion, as stated earlier, only basic aspects can be dealt with.

3.2.2 General determinations concerning the perception of landscape and living space

What is generally referred to as 'nature' landscape is 'gathered' from the 'materials of nature' (the solid-material and the fleeting-phenomenological) and composed into a landscape. In the act of manifesting itself, nature becomes intrusive. This moment of subjective perception is significant when viewing the extensive tidal flats, which are protected under nature conservation measures as a 'natural' landscape⁶ and which therefore also influence thought concerning landscape categories.⁷

The process of perceiving a landscape cannot be segmented. Perception invariably produces

the character of a landscape in its totality.⁸ Individual aspects blend into a whole and given emotional value. Landscape thus becomes a mental and physical impression. Living conditions in their totality act on our sensibilities and our attentiveness to our surroundings. In the impression of a landscape the material conditions (mudflats, groynes, salicornia, etc.) and the fleeting modes through which these 'things' are perceived (wind, air temperature and humidity, light, etc.) fuse into a simultaneous-perceptive 'image'.

The evaluative act of perceiving takes place through the 'window' of the emotions, which themselves are in an indissoluble relationship with cognitive acts. In the act of experiencing landscape and nature, this results in a certain degree of speechlessness of expression. The linguistic capacity of Western intellectual cultures does not provide an adequate and generally accessible conceptual system with which to formulate comprehensible statements about subjective impressions, that is, about sensations. In the debate concerning (cultural) landscapes worthy of protection, including the structures and elements of such landscapes, it is therefore imperative that this tendency of the language to lag behind what is expressed be taken into consideration.

Association, memory and construction are fused in the (evaluative) perception of landscapes. This problem is accentuated in the modern media, which is socially highly differentiated, yet, in today's Western societies, more or less ubiquitous.⁹ Because memory is always bound up in the history of an individual's biography, memory is diffused and meanders into multiple areas of a society's knowledge store, for biography is always socialized. Since the work of remembering also provides the raw materials of and for societal construction, an 'exact' prognosis, aimed at determining certain perceptual patterns or preferences, remains an impossible undertaking. The project of determining structures and elements worth protecting in the cultural landscape along the Wadden Sea coast thus remains fraught with problems relating to the lack of clear definitions.

The experience of space and of landscapes is the expression of certain life practices. They are also always based on a certain relationship to nature (through work). For this reason human labor assumes special importance in the formation of preconditions for the perception of nature and landscape.¹⁰ Every experience is con-

textual, and is influenced from two directions: from that of the subject, and from that of the appearance of an environment. Baier writes:

„When one has finally entered the space, one does not 'see' it so much as withstand it. [...] A space does not depend primarily on its materials, but on the degree of being-in or the degree of vitality pertaining to the situation as a whole.“¹¹

Landscape in this sense is a space that comes into being only as a result of the presence of participating observers.¹² Which is to say, it is not present 'before' the subject. In investigating perception the issue of practical life in its local aspects is of paramount importance. This life practice is also the background of what is capable of being remembered. These variables come together in the concept of the 'situation'. Impressions impinge on us from live situations, which in themselves are vague entities. All perceptual acts are interwoven with the perceiving person in a highly delicate fashion that is also differentiated in terms of feelings. That is to say, perceptual acts are interwoven with a situation that is virtually overflowing with subjective significance. According to Hermann Schmitz, a situation exhibits three characteristic features:

- a. significance (of the facts of the matter, programs and problems),
- b. the internal diffuseness or chaotic manifoldness of significance and
- c. the coherence of a situation in its totality as a result of this significance.¹³

In the investigation of the perception of coastal landscapes the significance of situations becomes pivotal. Situations reside in the facts pertaining to the subject as well as in the facts pertaining to the object. On the side of the subject these contingent facts are based on the actual circumstances within which an individual perceives and experiences the Wadden Sea (e.g. whether during leisure time or in the pursuit of a trade, whether from a distance of 5 or 100 km). On the side of the object, the observer is confronted with the material circumstances of the perceptual act (e.g. through a particular rule governing access, which may apply to a nature reserve or a national park, and which thus facilitates or prevents a perceptual perspective).

A situation is characterized by manifoldness. In the situation of actual experience it is the subjective facts of the matter (those which, because they have affected only one person can be given expression only by that individual) which are of importance in the creation of significance. And yet, these facts can never be ful-

ly translated into the realm of communication-minded language. However, in public situations, those instances of signification which conform to the conventions of 'normal' speech enter into the language as concepts, and in this way 'format' a common language. In differentiating between impression and expression, it must be considered that it is especially the residues of what is unspeakable and what is unspoken (concerning biography and region) which remain virulent in the process of spatial socialization. Thus the unspeakable and the unspoken also affect individual pathways of perception.

The thematization of the perception of landscape in terms of situations provides one indisputable benefit for the assessment of issues relating to the protection of structures and elements of the cultural landscape of the Wadden Sea coast: the concept of situation allows the manifold and overlapping significative contexts which evolve in regional life practices to become the focus of attention. Next we shall consider general issues of perspective.

All human activity is shaped by perceptual perspectives. In the course of daily activity these perspectives are not only substantiated, they are also continually modified, expanded and refined. The types of perspective that are significant here do not derive solely from the fact-bound point of view from which something is observed. Nor do they derive solely from the personal situation, which lends a particular vitality to the overall situation we call the 'subject' – 'landscape environment'. The question of perspective is not limited to the perceiving subject. Perspectives are also based on modes of appearance, that is to say, on the way in which something presents itself, the conditions under which something is apprehended by the senses (conf. also Point 4). An impression can never be reduced to a small number of perspectives, let alone to a single perspective. In most cases impressions are so complex that the most diverse perspectives overlap in them. The following four examples outline perspectives that are of importance in the perception of the coastal landscape.

The perspective of the senses

Human beings have five senses: eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, a tongue for tasting, a nose for smelling, and the skin which provides a sense of touch. All the senses are integral to perception, and they play their part in the creation of 'chaotic-manifold' impressions. However, because of the intellectual culture that has shaped Western

society, these perceptual paths are not given equal acknowledgement.

The division of perception into sense-organ-specific currents and into families of sense data is overcome in phenomenology. A concept of perception whose objects are situations as chaotic-manifold entities is favored instead. The perspective of perception is therefore not restricted to the limited capacity of one sense or of individual senses. Instead, what is seen, heard, and so forth, is apprehended – in its quality as impression – as being integral to the act of perception, as a moment in a situation of vital experiencing in which the subject, with all his or her existential conditions, is present in the world.

The ideological perspective in the perception of nature and landscape

Every act of perception requires a thinker. Perception always undergoes a process of ideological filtering. By that we do not mean ideology in the more narrow sense of world views. The perception of landscape in particular is culturally impregnated. Georg Simmel regards landscape as a 'mental construct', one that is lifted from nature in the act of perception. „[...] through the human gaze, which divides, and then arranges that which has been divided into separate categories, nature is transformed into the respective individualized entity: 'landscape.'"¹⁴ Seen from this vantage point, landscape as a cultural product is a modern phenomenon. It has given rise to the capacity to perceive a thing in such a way „that the part of a whole becomes an independent whole."¹⁵

Original vs. technologically mediated encounters

Every experience of landscape is also the result of a perspective in the sense that it is an immediate bodily coexistence in a situationally vital nature. This also applies if the object being perceived is not part of the realm of nature in the more narrow sense, for example, an artifact in a cultural landscape (a windmill, or a section of a sea dyke). Therefore, in considering the conditions under which something is perceived what is relevant also is the issue of the degree of mediation between the subject and the object of study (the role of the mass media!).

A distinction is to be made between original sensory encounters and 'technical' encounters which are transmitted through the media. Today we are increasingly faced with representations

of reality that are transmitted through the mass media, and which are themselves experienced as reality. Nevertheless, technologically mediated experience is different from the vital experiencing of real events. Encounters in the real world often result in entirely new experiences because they do not necessarily correspond to the images and mental constructs related through the media. Only in the original encounter, in the encounter which takes place through the senses and through one's own skin, is the body's capacity for perception the only medium to the world. The surrounding space which is experienced then shows itself to be 'corporeal circumreality.'¹⁶

In this circumreality one is spatially oriented according to elementary orientational dimensions. In this way we tap into impressions that can be described as being the other of mediated information. The body's orientational space is structured in various ways. In every case it unfolds from within the confines of the body, as from the absolute experiential locus, and spreads out into the world. This is not one of the customary three-dimensional measures of a mathematical spatial concept. Rather it is the expression of pre-dimensional, surface-less (!) space. It is fundamental to every experience, yet is not taken into account by modern theories of space. Perception via print- or video-based media is broken up into separate stimuli and objects, whereas perception 'on location' benefits from this quality of aesthetic interwovenness that is present in actually existing full-sensory living space. This formal difference asserts its presence primarily in the realm of meanings which influence both actions and attitudes, as well as intuitive dispositions.

The perspective of distance

In the act of encountering, perspectives of distance are always at work. In this event the distinction between nearness (e.g. of beach and salt spray) and farness (of an apparently calm sea) is categorical. The impressions are structurally different, and therefore they each convey their own mental image (in the mind) of the sea. This relationship of difference applies to all objects and areas of experience, and it is therefore also significant in relation to the cultural artifacts of the coastal region.

Distance determines not only how precisely we perceive something, at a mundane level, it also determines how we are involved in an environment atmospherically and how it affects us, emotionally. In discourse concerning nature con-

ervation, the issue of distances is of fundamental anthropological significance when, in nature preserves and national parks, distances are enforced by means of restrictive regulations, and emotional sensitivities are thereby also affected. For the protection of structures and elements in cultural landscapes, too, the meaning of the relationship between nearness and farness is significant for the establishment of emotional relationships with what is encountered. For here, too, the atmosphere in which something manifests itself, in which it can develop an aura, and hence exert a specific effect on the approaching subject, is important.

The gaze into the distance sets up a bodily orientation that differs from measurable distances. What is measurable corresponds to the breadth of the space. When we say 'breadth' we generally mean the three-dimensional depth in space which is characterized by reversible orientations. Dimensional depth sets the absolute locus of bodily existence in relation to the spatial environment.¹⁷ Dimensional depth, however, can only be experienced as pre-dimensional width. And in bodily communication pre-dimensional width is found in non-reversible orientations. Nearness and farness are not precise distances in the dimensional sense of the spatial; rather, they provide indications as to farness and nearness in the sense of bodily communication. This is not a question of knowledge regarding an exact distance, but of an orientatedness in 'corporeal circumreality'.

3.2.3 Socio-cultural differences in the modes of perception – diversity of perspectives

The perceptual perspectives described above need to be supplemented at the purely pragmatic level of factual references. The following outlining of regionally significant socio-cultural differences must therefore be read as a concretization, which establishes no additional categories reaching beyond the remarks made under Point 2. They tend rather to unfold at right angles to those categories. References are established to particular regionally relevant groups. These groups are then also linked to specific realms of objects within the inventory of the cultural landscape, thus bringing into relief any connections to the issue of protection for cultural monuments.

The following groups can be identified, all of which play a decisive role in shaping the com-

munication of perceptual patterns in the Wadden Sea coastal region:

1. Farmers
2. Fishermen
3. Individuals working in the secondary or tertiary sectors (whose place of residence and place of work are identical or in the immediate vicinity, or at least within the same region)
4. Commuters working in the secondary or tertiary sector
5. Tourists

Re 1, Farmers

The group comprising farmers and individuals employed in agriculture can be roughly divided into those for whom farming is the main source of income and those for whom it represents a subsidiary income. Furthermore, in this coastal region, which was shaped by tidal flooding in medieval times and by land reclamation between the 16th and the 20th centuries, an economic differential is evident between large-scale farm operations ('polder barons') and farmers cultivating smaller areas.

Generally speaking, all agricultural activity is characterized by its relationship to the land (large-scale animal husbandry can be discounted here, especially since it is virtually non-existent in the area right along the coast). From an agricultural perspective the sea does not play a central role in the coastal region. That is true for the cultural artifacts related to the sea, as well. That is not to say, however, that the influence of the sea is of no relevance for the perceptual and evaluative categories in agriculture. To the contrary, there are a number of influences, especially natural ones which, in the cultural refraction affect daily activities even today, and which therefore make themselves felt in agriculturally influenced perceptual dispositions of the coastal region.

Among them is agriculture's unavoidable dependence on nature, which also finds expression in aspects of every-day life: (a) in the tides, (b) the storms, and (c) in the (always threatened) area immediately behind the sea dikes. While the tidal cycle has only an indirect influence on a cow's calving, it makes itself felt very strongly in the form of an awareness of nature as an integral part of daily life. Storms, however, and in particular hurricanes, represent a real danger with which (or despite which) the locals have to live. The attendant dangers do imperil house and home after all. The relationship to the natural environment of the sea is reflected in a work-

oriented mental and emotional attitude. This is particularly true for farmers whose farm houses are located directly behind a sea dike (the same applies to some degree to the land and farm buildings located behind the sea dikes in the tidal areas of the lower reaches of the great rivers).

Due to the spatial relations between the arable land lying below the mean sea level (former low-lying marshland, large expanses below mean sea level in the Netherlands) and the higher polders closer to the sea, the natural drainage regime has been changed. Without suitable land management technologies to achieve proper drainage, land use would not be feasible at all. Where conflicts arise with nature conservation interests, this historically deeply rooted pro-cultivation attitude toward nature comes to the fore, and applies an agriculturally defined pattern of interpretation and signification – important in cultural-landscape terms – to the relationship between humans and nature on the coast.¹⁸

Government-sponsored energy production from wind power represents a modern means of exploiting the coast's natural potential.¹⁹ Although the number of farmers deriving economic benefits is relatively small, this form of use is of some significance. The large-scale technological artifacts are visible from great distances, which means they collide with the perceptual preferences of others. In justifying and arguing for the use of wind power the beneficiaries draw their arguments from the discourse surrounding climate protection, thus communicating an exclusively ecological pattern of perception.

Generally speaking, the coast-related perceptual patterns in the realm of agriculture are 'functionalized' as a result of the complex (socio-economic) situation prevailing in agriculture incl. the areas of animal husbandry and plant cultivation. The economically restrictive standards imposed by the EU sharpen conflicting positions on the human relationship to nature, which in turn promotes the formation of sometimes contradictory perceptual preferences.

Level of structures and elements in the cultural landscape:

To this day cultural landscape structures and elements remain, which not only provide an understanding of the history of agriculture, but which also shed light on the divisions in the agriculture-oriented modes of perception,

shaped as they are by the imperatives of labor and production with and within the natural environment. This applies to the remains of old lines of inland dikes, dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, old sluice works, sluice harbors dating from the 18th century and drainage mills, mainly from the 19th century. This 'cultural landscape inventory' is under heavy pressure due to modernization. The remains of dikes make it difficult to cultivate fields efficiently with modern agricultural equipment. Sluice harbor locations (to the extent that they actually remain more or less within the historical settlement structure and retain their functionality as sluices) run counter to the objectives of modern communal policies aimed at fostering the development of existing settlements. The upkeep of old drainage mills is a major burden due to the high cost of restoration and maintenance.

Appropriate protective measures would appear advisable not only for the reasons mentioned thus far, but also because these artifacts (listed here by way of example) represent a layer in the genesis of a cultural landscape that is important for the understanding of an integrated regional developmental history. An understanding of such a history cannot rely on the mere presence of 'the things'. A successful policy of cultural heritage preservation requires practical measures accompanied by educational programs. This task must not be underestimated, because all the historical artifacts in a cultural landscape are exposed to commercial pressures that reduce objects to visual clichés and hence to mere sensations. The protection of structures and elements of the cultural landscape presents the need for a forward-looking cultural policy that engages an applied critique of images and their use.²⁰

Re 2, Fishermen

Even though the entire primary sector no longer plays an important role in terms of the economy and the labor market, it still presents itself in an important context when it comes to discussing the issue of the perception of the cultural landscape of the Wadden Sea coastline. It is true that the coastal fishing sector represents a niche economy of minimal importance which can in no way compete with the (comparatively) large scale of the agricultural sector. However, coastal fishing, by using the few remaining technological relics which have been preserved in spite of the pressure of modernization, does have a part to play in the creation and the passing on of

coast-related patterns of perception. This applies even to such nostalgically charming relics as pot fishing, which is still done using mudflat sleds, for subsidiary income. This (historical) Wadden Sea fishing practice in particular, of which mere vestiges survive as more of a social rather than an economic entity, is a typical example of the role played by fishing in the creation of the perceptions of the coast even today. This is the cliché mentioned above, of a certain form of fishing (in fact long gone) which transfigures a practice that rarely makes an appearance in the modern Wadden Sea coast picture any more, by linking it to history like a linguistic cliché. Much the same can be said for scoop-net fishing in the lower reaches of rivers, which is still practiced with traditional methods and using small boats, wherever the straightening and deepening of river channels has not wiped out the estuaries completely.

Prawn fishing differs somewhat in that, as a result of modernization measures, it uses mostly state-of-the-art technologies. For this reason it no longer fits seamlessly into the transfigured image of the Wadden Sea coast. In popular perception this disjuncture has been papered over for the time being, while the modern fishing fleet remains in a visibly functional relationship with the old port facilities (especially the sluice harbors). This means that the boats must remain in view, and continue to be moored in the old ports. The disjuncture is also tolerable because the general appearance and the (visible) technical equipment of modern fishing vessels is reminiscent of the traditional work processes on crabbing boats and can thus be integrated with the image of the 'cutter'.²¹

Level of structures and elements in the cultural landscape:

Apart from the sluice harbors mentioned earlier, a few other artifacts are in a functional relationship with fishing. Their preservation both safeguards and facilitates the possibility for reconstructing a coast-related economy and way of working with nature, which might otherwise fall victim to primarily touristic, 'event-based' (culture-industry) kitsch. The danger of idealization and nostalgia-mongering is greater in the case of coastal fishing than it is for some of the major forms of agricultural practice that have also fallen into disuse. On the western and eastern Frisian Islands the development of these vestiges of the original fisheries for the tourist industry is in full swing, in the form of image marketing.

The sluice harbor settlements, which have (led by Greetsiel) been prettified for mass tourism, derive a major part of their income from these distorted images. What was said above in relation to agriculture, regarding the need for a cultural policy that critiques images and their use, applies to the fishing sector with even greater urgency.

Preserving fishing-related artifacts and historic structural elements can ensure that work routines involving nature remain comprehensible to public perception. It would have the effect of countering the current unquestioning acceptance of abstract (industrial) practices in the processing of fish and prawns. Not the least effect of the resulting perception of contradictions is that it would provoke a critical questioning of current environmental issues (production of foodstuffs). Given this context of cultural use, what would seem to be most worth preserving, apart from sluice harbor facilities, are lighthouses and, within settlements originally defined by fishing, any drying kilns (provided they still exist).

Re 3, Individuals working in the secondary or tertiary sectors

Due to modern professional and work circumstances, those who work neither in agricultural nor in the fishing industry no longer have any practical connection with the structures of the cultural landscape, or with the artifacts visible within that landscape. For this reason they probably contribute in their own way to the transfiguration of perceivable. But in contrast to people from outside the region or to tourists, these individuals have a life history (and not infrequently a family history as well) which is linked to the development of the region, and which needs to be understood as integral to that process. This creates its own perceptual dynamic of meaning generation, which needs to be taken into account in the preservation and especially in the presentation of cultural monuments worthy of conservation.

Level of structures and elements in the cultural landscape:

Aside from the structures and elements mentioned earlier, entire forms of settlement, or preserved parts of settlements in specific locations are now up for consideration - areas whose permanence as historical settlements should be protected against modern development (at least examples of such, for each region). Especially



Fig. 3.2:
Eroded cliff and Wadden
area near Westerhever
Photo: L. Fischer

worthy of mention here are terps settlements or agricultural operations located within settlements.

Re 4, Commuters working in the secondary or tertiary sector

The comments under Point 3 are also pertinent to out-commuters, but they deserve greater emphasis in this context, since out-commuters are somewhat more removed from the developments in their 'own' regions. For out-commuters the regional living space possesses a different experiential quality than for 'pure' inhabitants. Earlier remarks regarding the 'being-in' within lived space are now revisited in the concrete life experience of the out-commuter, and they are expressed as a difference in quality compared with the life practice of farmers and fisher people, as well as with that of individuals pursuing modern professions while living and working in the region. This difference generates patterns of perception and signification which are divergent (in terms of life practice), through which and by means of which structures and objects in the cultural landscape are 'understood' and explained. This is why these social differences in perception deserve to be taken into consideration when the topic is the preservation of objects.

Re 5, Tourists

As a social group tourists' specific perspective plays a major role (in spite of the heterogeneity of the group). Characteristic of their particular mode of perception is the focus on leisure and recreation. What was stated earlier with regard

to the distance-difference relations in connection with the perceptual modes of inhabitants now presents itself in a structurally different light. This is because for tourists the region is neither living space nor working space. It is not perceived and experienced selectively according to recreational needs. From this perspective the region is seen or 're'-cognized through the templates of culturally circulating clichés.

Much of the tourist perspective mirrors media-generated productions, aimed at the tourist economy. This perceptual attitude is decisive when it comes to assessing tourists' perceptual attitude relative to the preservation of artifacts in a cultural landscape. The objective differentiation is considerable, corresponding to existing social differences. The cultural tourism of middle-class intellectuals generates its own set of perceptual preferences. On the other hand there is mass tourism, which is concentrated in the so-called sight-seeing centers. And then there is event-based tourism which operates on a massive scale, and which mainly consists of consumer events that largely bypass the inventory of the cultural landscape (an example here would be the coach tours organized as part of specialist events, like the so-called 'East Frisia Graduation').

The vacation on the West, East and North Frisian Islands²² (despite all the differences in the international comparison) is characterized by a diversity of expectations, demands and perceptual dispositions, which apart from the socio-economic and cultural differences between travellers is further differentiated in terms of the geographical origins of these holidaymakers. The

few existing studies merely graze this area, if they address it at all.

What is not only 'seen' but perceived, and how it is perceived through all the available senses is a matter of perceptual attitude: The consumption- and event-oriented approach to cultural landscape, which uses it as a local resource, differs categorically from the contemplative approach which allows the same environment to act on the perceiver in such a way that he or she is open to the atmospheric manifestation of architectural elements.

Decisions about the preservation of cultural landscape inventories as well as work on educational programs should be seen as integral elements of a complex process. The touristic perception of the coastal region is as multi-faceted as are the different ways tourism is practiced. These uses undergo constant change and ongoing differentiation. Tourism, as a powerful economic market, tends to take a neutral view on restoration, and then, only if it can be integrated into economic concepts. Conceptually, successful preservation programs can achieve more than the politically neutral interests of the tourism industry. On their basis the structures/inventories of a cultural landscape become subject to a cultural appropriation that is open to profound differences within the framework of a perceptual culture that is self- and object-related.

3.2.4 Significance of 'elemental nature' and 'cultural nature' for the appearance and perception of the landscape in the coastal region

The landscape in the coastal region is bound to nature in two ways. As a cultural landscape it is nature appropriated. When it appears with all its cultural artifacts, changing according to the situation, nature is experienced in a way that is specific to the space. A distinction can thus be made between an 'elemental' and a 'cultural' nature.

On the coast land and water touch each other. Due to their differing capacities for storing heat energy, large expanses of land and water create a special set of climatic circumstances. Minor differences, especially in day-time and night-time temperatures, result not only in more or less continuous winds but also in greater humidity in the coastal region. This in turn leads to a specific type of cloud formation which is characterized by rapid changes and which clearly distinguishes itself from cloud formation in, for example, peri-Alpine regions. The air is 'fresh' and carries the scent of the Wadden Sea. And finally, because the landscape is wide open (especially in contrast to urban landscapes, but also in contrast to peri-Alpine landscapes) the sun can be seen as it travels across the sky, casting shadows on the land. Depending on the sea-



Fig. 3.3:
Painting of Hallig Oland,
Schleswig-Holstein

3.3 History of the perceptions

son low-lying areas in the flat grasslands are often covered by broad sheets of fog.

Landscape always appears in atmospheres. Their constitutive power is not just the weather, however. Often it is the 'semi-permanent objects' that are responsible for the changing nature of the phenomenon. These are noises, scents, temperatures, wind, light and shadows, and so on. It is these very phenomenal events, these intangible aspects of the character of things, belonging to the cultural landscape as they do, which, in spite of their fleeting nature, help to constitute the peculiarity of a landscape's atmosphere. Schmitz calls these features, which cannot lay claim to object qualities, 'half-objects'.

„They differ from objects in two ways: in that they vanish and then reappear without there being any point in asking where they were in the meantime, and in that their effects can be felt and are affecting, although they are not the cause behind the influence they exert as much as they are the effect in themselves.“²³

In a way they act like the ground in the figure-ground relationship image. Thus they connect with the changing seasons and provide an almost limitless variety of 'phenomenal landscapes'.

For the question of the protection of certain existing spaces in the landscape, the result of all this is that those spaces where the cultural landscape manifests itself in a particular way deserve special protection. This approach lends significance not only to the artifacts in the cultural landscape which are worthy of preservation, but also to the openness of the landscape space as an 'surfaceless space'²⁴ - for the experience of the quality of vastness, a significance that for this very reason is given little weight in official nature conservation policy.

3.2.5 The Wadden Sea coast as 'living space' and as 'experiential space': internal and external perspective

The diversity of phenomenal events along the Wadden Sea coast encounters different sets of filters for internal and the external perception respectively. Where the cultural landscape, with its characteristic phenomenal multiplicity, has formed a spatial reference point for identification (in the sense of homeland), the experience of the landscape takes on a peculiar moderation, in terms of the emotional experience, which is specifically homeland-related. The perceptual

conditions are categorically different for 'outsiders to the region' (tourists are especially relevant here) than they are for the 'natives'. This is of course due to the difference in the relationship between the experience of the landscape and the socialization (into the landscape) for each of these groups. This difference is bound to lead to divergent evaluations and levels of appreciation. It can nevertheless be assumed that the characteristic of a landscape's appearance receives the attention of 'natives' and 'strangers' alike. This applies at least to more salient phenomenal events of the cultural landscape.

3.3 Outline of a history of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region

3.3.1 Early phase (until ca. 1600)

The Wadden Sea landscape, as it presents itself to us today in its most interesting elements, is a relatively young landscape from the point of view of the history and the morphology of the earth. This more or less flat transition zone between the open sea and the 'naturally' rising mainland, seems featureless at first glance, but is in fact quite varied. Its aspect, which is still undergoing slight changes even today, was only formed over the last two thousand years. And in the last thousand years humans have decisively intervened in the natural processes of landscape transformation through the practical use of the marshes, primarily by mining peat, building dikes, reinforcing riverbanks, foreshore development, etc. Human activity has been at least as influential as natural factors in forming the Wadden Sea area we know today, witness the consequences of increasingly intense storm surges and the permanent shifting of sands, silt banks and channel systems.

When we look into the past to reconstruct the history of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region, only the very latest history of this extremely altered coastal zone is available to us; for sources from which one might deduce or even infer manners of perceiving the Wadden Sea Region are (with few exceptions) no earlier than the 16th century.

It is therefore almost impossible to ascertain the way the Wadden Sea coast, lying between the open sea and the higher mainland, was perceived in the first centuries of permanent human settlement which interfered with the natural conditions of the area. Even the few isolated

clues that have been handed down, however, necessitate several distinctions right from the start, which define varying 'views' of the Wadden Sea Region.

The perception of a landscape is necessarily always determined by the relationship to the observed or experienced feature which is determined by the viewer's situation and life practice. Thus it must be stated that, from the very earliest useful records, there exists a fundamental difference between the view 'from the outside' and the view 'from the inside'. More concretely: over many centuries, for the few travelers who thought that the southern coast of the North Sea was worth visiting and describing, the essence of this landscape was very different from what it was for those who settled and used it and relied on it for their existence. A third important group of observers are those who, over several centuries, although they themselves lived outside the space in question, nonetheless had a direct material or strategic interest in it (the rulers and other foreign landowners and, later, various 'speculators').

The 'Natural History' of Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) offers an almost unique early record of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region. It was written when the marshy areas of West and East Friesland (and perhaps by then even those of the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein) had been settled, but not with any sort of permanency or with any protection, however small, in the form of dike-like structures to secure the land from the sea.

Gaius Plinius the Second had seen the edge of the West and East Friesian coastline with his own eyes, and described what he considered to be the most significant elements of the place. The famous citation is: „There twice in each period of a day and a night the ocean with its vast tide sweeps in a flood over a measureless expanse, covering up Nature's age-long controversy and the region disputed as belonging whether to the land or to the sea. There a miserable race occupies elevated patches of ground or platforms built up by hand above the level of the highest tide experienced, living in huts erected on the sites so chosen, and resembling sailors in ships when the water covers the surrounding land, but shipwrecked people when the tide has retired“²⁵

Two things would seem to be important for the history of the perception of the region. In the first place, the 'eternal battle of nature' which Pliny sees in the turn of the tide is an image for

a characteristic disturbance in the dominant mental concept of 'coast'. When 'one does not know whether this region belongs to the mainland or to the sea' the standard image of coast has blurred: the concept of a reliable line of demarcation between what is firm and what is liquid is partially deprived of meaning. Therefore, in the second place, in the mental processing of what is observed, one must look for a substitute construction, as it were (the concept of coast drifts into a concept of seafaring: the inhabitants are compared to 'seafarers' or 'shipwrecked people' because the accepted mental construct of coast does not include people not living on terra firma). In the image for the world of the Wadden Sea Region the concept of coast retreats, in a manner of speaking, toward the higher mainland with its clear line of demarcation, and the 'coast image' is replaced by the representational model 'ship on the sea', including that of a stranded ship, thrown up on the coast.

The shift in the mental concept of coast contained in Pliny's remarks on the Wadden Sea Region is not usually noted, any more than is the second shift contained in the text. For what Pliny attempts to grasp, in the image of the 'seafarer' or the 'shipwrecked person', is in fact not the fore mentioned daily blurring of the coastline which occurs at the turn of the tides, but rather his perception of spring tides and storm surges, which sometimes inundate the otherwise 'dry' land. The fact that he confuses the normal turn of the tides with the occasional excessively high floods which inundate the unprotected marsh and moorlands of the edge of the coast is indication enough; based on his concept of coast he is not actually able to distinguish between the regularly flooded portions of the Wadden area and the flat areas of the coastal lands which are only occasionally 'occupied' by the sea.

Pliny's metaphors model a pattern for the perception of the Wadden Sea Region which informed even more recent scholarly concepts like, for example, that of the geographer Hartmut Valentin in the 1950s, who proclaimed the „new coastal morphology“, a pattern on which popular characterizations of landscape draw, even today. For Valentin (often cited as representative of a characteristic concept of the coast) „the coast [is generally] the three-dimensional battleground between mainland, sea and the sky“²⁶ As with Pliny, the central metaphor in determining the 'frontier', which is taken to



Fig. 3.4:
Eiderstedt marsh landscape
with single farms
Photo: L. Fischer

be the task of coastal morphology, is the 'battle' between the various 'forces' of nature involved.

But a coastal region which has been especially affected by what may have been very drastic 'shifts in the frontier zone of mainland, sea and sky' (shifts which are experienced over a very short period of time, in some cases within a lifetime) is a landscape which must be seen as validating the battle metaphor. This is all the more valid when the 'shifts' are strongly influenced by the intervention of humans in the 'battle of natural forces'. This is why – as will be shown – it was so easy to ideologically style the existence of those who dwelt on the coast of the Wadden Sea, especially the Frisians, as a never-ending 'battle with the sea'.²⁷ Until this day the Wadden Sea has therefore remained the coastal zone in which society manifested its 'victory over nature' by having to 'wrench' dike-ready land from the sea time and again.

For the cultural history of a perception of the Wadden Sea Region we should consider two more aspects of Pliny's text: For one thing, Pliny gives the impression of a traveler who, as a member of the urban, educated elite of his time, feels alienated by the Wadden Sea coast, and who makes a point of distancing himself, almost with contempt, from the lifestyle of the inhabitants of this region as it presented itself in his time. Structurally, in observers of a comparable social standing, this perceptual model persisted for many centuries: to most of the elite who were setting the tone at any given time – arriving as they did from the cultural centers of their

respective countries, and taking in this landscape in the course of their travels – the Wadden Sea coast appeared to be a 'strange', dangerous transition zone between sea and land; and they saw the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the unprotected marshlands as 'primitive', and in fact quite wretched. Traces of this attitude and way of perceiving the area can be seen in 'folkloristic' 19th-century travelogues concerning the last remains of such unprotected coastal regions – the ones in the North Frisian Halligen islands.²⁸

Furthermore, of the Wadden Sea coastal area, Pliny describes only the marshes which were not protected by dikes at the time. This is probably because this area was interesting to him precisely because of its peculiar, alien character, while the islands, with their Geest cores, the sand bars and Geest ridges presumably corresponded rather more closely to standard notions of coast.

Now, the concentration of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region on the marshland areas is a further structural characteristic which makes itself felt, over the course of history, in viewers from quite different social and cultural spheres. Based on a few indicators in early sources one may conclude that, from the high Middle Ages onward, increasingly effective dike building around an ever greater area of marshland effected a decisive shift in 'attention': the areas which were gradually relatively well-secured, even against medium storm tides, could be used for what was soon a more intensified

agriculture with much greater success than could the open salt marshes or those areas which were at first shielded only by low summer dikes for fair-weather seasons.²⁹ As long as the dikes did not offer lasting protection against the direct influx of the sea, the perception of the area reflected an uncertainty as to whether the marshland 'belonged to the mainland or to the sea'. That is to say, the 'mental provocation' of a dominating image of the coast fixed the impression – at least among travelers and visitors from other places. With the progressive transformation of more marshland areas to 'secured' land which could be intensively used these coastal zones appeared remarkable from a different point of view: because of the extraordinary fertility of the lands now under cultivation.

The Danish chronicler Saxo Grammaticus, in his 'Gesta Danorum' in the early 13th century, supplies evidence as it were from the period of transition: already anticipating the successful building of dikes he points to the risk for the low-lying estates, noting that, if dikes were to break during a heavy storm tide, vast areas would be flooded. Therefore „nature made it almost impossible to decide“ whether one should reckon that the area belonged to the sea or to the land, „because it is sometimes navigable, and at other times it is suitable for ploughing“.³⁰ The formulations from Pliny's 'Natural History' are unmistakably at work, here, but the perceived characteristics of this coastal zone have changed, because the relatively effective securing of the land by means of dikes has already permitted the successful cultivation of grain.

The record shows that over the next two to three hundred years perceptions of the essential character of the marshlands – which drew almost all the attention in the Wadden Sea Region – shifted somewhat. The marshlands were now 'history-laden' (the events which took place there, whether wars, storm floods, dike-building activities, church or state matters could become part of written history and, more specifically, 'economically viable'.³¹ The returns which were obtained from these marshlands were soon so extraordinary, even compared with the fertile regions of the higher mainland, that they became the predominant characteristic of the region.

3.3.2 The Wadden Sea coast as 'area to be exploited and occupied' (ca.1600 – 1800)

The marshes as epitome of successful mastery over nature

Through the building of successful dikes and the development of drainage techniques as well as a more intensive agricultural exploitation, the Dutch coastal areas led this development. Dutch experts, immigrants, and later investors then enabled a similar process to take place in the German Wadden Sea Regions, especially the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein.³²

As early as the 17th century Europeans saw the exemplary cultivation of Holland's marshes as the epitome of the effective use of secured, fertile land. One of the predominant patterns of perception took its lesson from this success, and dominated the 'image' of the Wadden Sea Region for more than two hundred years.

The admiration which travelers expressed over the 'victory' of the Dutch over the sea – against whose violence the land was protected by dikes – was equal to their astonishment over the efficiency of the agricultural use of the area. Well into the 19th century, descriptions of the Dutch coastal lands typically represented the meticulous cultivation of the marshes as providing a model for human ingenuity and farmers' industry.³³

During his student years in Holland (1723–1725) the Swiss doctor, botanist and writer Albrecht von Haller, on a canal trip between Amsterdam and Leiden, noted the following, which can stand in for a broadly established view:

„The land itself is extremely pleasant. On both sides of its straight channels there are either broad fields occupied by well-fed cattle, or beautiful villages one next to the other, magnificent gardens, pleasing outworks. In this land no tree is out of line and no patch of earth, however small, goes unused. The cities are big, most of them fairly well fortified, laced with waterways, built in long, straight, clean streets. The inhabitants are many, busy, and wealthy. There is no more comely place to travel.“³⁴

The landscape was perceived to be a visible, readable sign of a profitable 'conquest' of nature: as limits were impressively set to the sea, so from the earth the greatest return was won, which expresses itself in the 'order' of the landscape image. In this way, too, the concept 'beautiful' applies unmistakably to a marshland whose

form gave evidence of its having been managed for human use.

The fact that this characterization of the coastal marshes was generally accepted as early as the beginning of the 17th century is shown in a citation (once again to be taken as an example) from Peter Saxen's description of the countryside around Eiderstedt: „A land which is level, low, in some places sandy, but everywhere fertile, well-populated, with good soil, pasture, grain and stock, a beautiful country...“³⁵ In the section 'On productivity' Sax, citing older supporting witnesses, emphasized that there were „everywhere beautiful meadows, scented with the sweet smell of flowers“, and „no rocks, no wasteland, no monstrous mountains' spoil the usefulness of the flatlands.“³⁶ Sax completed his image by indicating that there were „many orchards containing vines and many fruit trees on which there were apples, pears, cherries and plums.“³⁷ The 'beauty' of the landscape was determined solely by its potential for use by humanity. This perspective was common until well into the 19th century, when the marshes were perceived to be akin to 'Paradise'.³⁸

This view of the marshes as the most remarkable part of the Wadden Sea Region, lent authority by descriptions and travel literature, was developed and popularized by members of a cultural elite who perceived this landscape mostly as 'foreigners'. It is possible to conclude from the writings of an author like Peter Sax, who was an expert on the local geography and culture, that in this case a perception 'from inside' was complemented by the external characterization. The marshes were his home, and though he based his writings on 'foreign authorities'³⁹, even worked in exemplary fashion on a catalogue of the deficiencies of coastal marshes⁴⁰, he evidently managed to combine the perspectives of the foreign observer with those of the local residents. His description of the land details the enormous pains which were required to reclaim and cultivate the coastal marshes, and the high productivity of the land appears as a 'reward' for those efforts. In order to justify the high expense of dike-building, draining, and farming operations – sometimes ruinous in terms of finances and organization (every tiny patch of soil had to be intensively used). This central stance with respect to living space was the classic attitude of the marshland farmers, at least until the end of traditional cultivation



Fig. 3.5:
„...nach der Schnur“ Wöl-
bächer and Gruppen (drai-
nage channels) in the
Eiderstedter Marsh
Photo: L. Fischer

methods. It was an attitude which was contained in the traditional formulation: 'Every tree costs a few square meters of useful land'. The result of such a conception of 'worked landscape' was that the wealth of the marshland farmers was expressed not least in the luxury of being able to plant large stands of trees and gardens, even entire parks around their farms.⁴¹

The dominant image of the coastal marsh landscape, determined as it was by the use of the land, was in a sense translated into practice through large, speculative dike-building and settlement-founding operations, especially during the 17th and 18th centuries. Members of the feudal nobility, courtiers, provincial governments, patricians and businessmen, but also regional interest groups, invested in dike-building projects, and sometimes they recruited 'colonists' using the very admiring descriptions of the marshland areas which had been formulated in descriptions and travelogues.⁴²

Because of the land reclamation through dike-building projects – some of them planned, some pushed through by individual interest – people's attention, or at least that of the interested parties, directed itself strategically toward the Wadden area and salt marshes, as well as toward the tidal channels which possibly might need damming, lying directly before the existing dikes. In the history of the Wadden Sea Region such a perception of the foreshore and the tideway had already long been established, since the time when dike-building no longer served only for the protection of older, open marshlands which needed to be protected, but also for 'pushing back' the influx of the sea. Beginning in Holland

in the 16th century, however, dike building increasingly became an 'offensive' strategy to expand the area covered by productive marshland, and this was driven primarily by economic calculation.

The dike-building activities resulted in the integration of reclaimed areas, to the extent that they were permanent, in the secured agricultural marshland regions. That is to say, the strategic attentiveness directed toward parts of the Wadden region was in a certain way only a temporary and limited one. It was essentially limited to the circle of those who were directly and indirectly interested (the administrators and political and juridical supervisory authorities). Even though, in the 18th century, publications about dike-building operations presented the relevant points of view to a limited public⁴³, this particular 'perspective' on the Wadden Sea Region did not enter into the dominant pattern of perception.

However, generalizing broadly, one can say that between the 16th and the end of the 18th century, the Wadden Sea Region was seen primarily as a space for occupation and effective exploitation of natural resources. The secured marshes were seen as the epitome of the brilliant success of that 'task'. In this way the Wadden Sea coast became the most outstanding and marvelous evidence of the modern distinction between a 'beautiful nature' which could only be a shaped, cultivated, conquered one, and a revolting, ugly and worthless one which comprised all the remains of uncultivated nature: 'wasteland, desert, wilderness'.⁴⁴

The coastal space as 'metaphysical battleground'

When the coast marshes were celebrated as the most convincing model for human 'victory over nature', thought was also given to the risk associated with these measures – dike building, draining, settling, exploitation of the land. 'Victory' was considered to be in permanent jeopardy. Some travelers expressed their astonishment that the inhabitants could sleep soundly, and they found it unsettling that the cultivated and settled earth might lie below sea level in some places.⁴⁵ Admiration and latent fear were not infrequently combined, and in this blend we can see a foreshadowing of the aesthetics of the sublime⁴⁶, which, toward the end of the 18th century, prepared the way for a reinterpretation of the coastal landscape.

The locals were always conscious of the threat to the successful nature-conquering operations which they had carried out in the coastal marshes. The geographical descriptions of the landscape and historical works by resident or well-informed authors always underlined both: the incomparable 'magnificence' of the marshes, defined as they were by their use, and the threat to their security. It is for this reason that all relevant works contain records, and sometimes detailed descriptions of the severe storm surges, above all of the catastrophic 'centennial tides' which resulted in enormous destruction and property loss.⁴⁷

Pliny's old metaphor about the 'battle of nature' in the Wadden Sea Region, describing the literal back and forth of the 'battle' between land and sea, had long since been applied to the relationship between humans and the sea: the Wadden Sea Region, and in particular the border of the secured marshland, represented the arena for a continuous fight, in which the inhabitants, aiming to secure their existence, 'wrestled' with the unpredictable forces of nature. Over the course of the 18th century this fight came to be represented in more and more bellicose images. Dike building and land-securing were often described as strategic operations against an 'enemy'.⁴⁸

This rationalist interpretation of the relationship to nature on the Wadden Sea coast superseded another long-dominant one, which was based on a theological understanding of the world. The latter interpretation saw the cultivation of the coastland – and therefore also the aggressive protection measures taken against the sea – as [the fulfillment of] a divine task, at least indirectly, following the biblical maxim that man shall 'have dominion' over the Earth. The success of the measures for conquering nature depended therefore on the degree to which the work and the lifestyle 'was pleasing to God'. Accordingly, storm surges were regarded for centuries as 'God's punishment' for the inhabitants' failings.⁴⁹

In Germany this understanding of the confrontation between humans and the sea on the Wadden Sea coast was valid well into the 18th century. In Reformation Holland it was possible to give this kind of orthodox interpretation a rationalist tinge within a theological framework much earlier.⁵⁰ We will leave open the question of whether this early reinterpretation in the spirit of the enlightenment was connected, for a seafaring nation like Holland, to the role played

by its very much older metaphoric reference: the 'battle' of seafarers with the sea.^{51 52}

The fact that the Wadden Sea coast was increasingly seen as a battleground, as a war between human activity and the forces of nature, gradually dissolved the theological interpretative framework. But the 'battle' remained as it were a metaphysical one: the concrete measures taken against the sea represented a test of humankind itself relative to one of the most elemental forces of nature. In terms of the history of attitudes this was a way of laying the groundwork for the development that followed in the 19th century, when the coastal inhabitants – embodied in the 'generalized Frisians' – were styled as the heroes of the struggle against nature.

In the long dominant perception of the Wadden Sea Region – centered on the grand human work of marshland cultivation – an essential component shifted during the age of Enlightenment: by virtue of the fact that the awareness of the dangerous influence of the sea was represented by a secularized battle metaphor, the image of the coastal zone was for the first time completely saturated with the dialectic of the modern image of nature. In the image of the continuously repeated event which characterized the Wadden Sea coast, the program of 'beautiful nature' as one of a nature that was conquered and made compliant, comes to its full expression. For the 'magnificence' of the observable, livable landscape is defined as the result – always needing renewed proof – of a 'war against nature'.

3.3.3 Reinterpretation and divergences (ca. 1700 – 1900)

The intellectual re-evaluation of the coastal region

Even as early as the end of the 17th century, however, the sometimes enthusiastic praise of the Wadden Sea coast marshes was disputed. It was not the premise of the laudatory description which was disputed the impressive success of the securing [of the area], and the extraordinary, engineering and economic success of its use. Instead, a completely different manner of perceiving resulted in an highly divergent, and in fact contrary assessment of it. It was a view which was formulated by traveling members of Europe's cultural elites, who were primarily looking for whatever aesthetic thrill might be had from their experience of the regions they visited. In England and France it was mostly the members of the nobility – materially fairly secure, but politically largely without purpose; German travelers were also often the representatives of an educated middle-class. They were familiar with the recognized artworks of their time, as well as with the traditional ones, and looked at landscapes in large measure according to the compositional givens of visual art.⁵³

Such a perspective represented the state of fundamental remoteness in terms of their life practice from the observed, as enlightened 'purposelessness' of observation and, with increasing decisiveness, defined aesthetic perception as a function of the visual sense.⁵⁴ It could only lead to a harsh, even annihilating judgment concerning the qualities – as landscape – of the coastal



Fig. 3.6:
"Breathtaking sky" sheep in
the Eiderstedt foreland
Photo: Archive Ernst Payns,
Nordfriisk Instituut

marshes: monotonous, boring, unattractive, uniform, even 'ugly'.⁵⁵ The aesthetic denigration of the marsh landscape is still with us; one sees it in the often defensive claim that it has a 'unique charm'⁵⁶

At the end of the 18th century the inferiority of the coastal marshes, aesthetically speaking, had already become so encapsulated in formulas which were in currency among the cultural elites, that even people who had never seen the place condemned it. Nothing more was needed than a reference to what everyone knew to be true:

„Who would not rather spend time in the inspired disorder of a natural landscape than in the spiritless regularity of a French garden? Who would not prefer to wonder at the marvelous battle between fruitfulness and destruction in Sicily's meadows, to feast his eye on Scotland's wild cataracts and misty mountains, Ossian's grand nature, than to marvel in dead-level Holland at the dour victory of patience over the most defiant of all the elements? No-one will deny that better care is taken of the physical man in Batavia's meadows than under the treacherous crater of Vesuvius, and that understanding, which wants to grasp and categorize, finds far more satisfaction in a tidy market garden than in a wild natural landscape. But man needs more than to live and to feel comfortable, and also has a destiny beyond that of understanding the things which appear around him."⁵⁷

Friedrich Schiller's negative assessment of the aesthetic qualities of the marshlands to some degree reversed the enthusiastic praise which dominated under the nature-subjugating point of view: the most quintessential example of the rationalistically led practice of the appropriation of nature, the Dutch coastal marshland, supplied the clearest illustration of the aesthetic inferiority of such a landscape; and the intellectual elite explained its aesthetic inferiority as a deviation from the general destiny of humanity.

This denigration of the much admired marshes from the point of view of aesthetics was so common that the travelogues of the 19th century dripped with scorn for the aesthetic shortcomings of the landscape.⁵⁸ During the same historical phase, from the conclusion of the 18th century onward, however, a counter movement for aesthetic perception of the coast was formed. Somewhat later, this 'new aesthetic' of the image of the coast came to include the flat area of the Wadden Sea Region.

Conceptually this aesthetic was founded on a reappraisal of uncultivated, of savage and frightening nature, the very nature which had previously been considered repugnant, empty, and terrifying. To expose oneself to the experience of such a 'vast', potentially unconquerable nature was to trigger, in what was at first an extremely small cultural elite, very special, highly valued sensations: a stimulating blend of fear and desire, and finally a dissolution of a triggered fear through the awareness of being safe and of being sure of one's identity. As concerns the perception of the coast, this aesthetic of the sublime⁵⁹ related initially to the experience of the uncontrollable forces of the ocean on the one hand, and of its 'infinity' on the other.

In the visual arts the attempt was made to represent the experience of the sublime with respect to the limitless sea through changes in the classical composition of a painting. Once again the avant-garde was formed by the Dutch who, as early as the 17th century, strove for an 'opening up' of the image in their seascapes and coastal landscapes by emphasizing unbounded horizontals, and by lowering the line of the horizon, so that an 'overwhelming sky' filled the greater part of the painting. Such methods were radicalized in the German Romantic period especially, in order to allow limitlessness to become imaginable on the limited surface of the painting.⁶⁰ Because the compositional methods of such representations of the sea were now applied to the flat region of the Wadden Sea coast, even this landscape, which had been written off as so empty and boring, gained a place in the aesthetics of the sublime: the very unending breadth of this coastal region, the vastness of the vault of the sky and the 'radicality' of a space devoid of all lovely diversity, was increasingly understood as a challenging and enriching quality. From the end of the 19th century the achievements of a positive aesthetics of the Wadden Sea Region were first represented by an artistic avantgarde not least in 'artists' colonies' like Dangast or in meeting places like Sylt in their paintings. After a few short decades this aesthetic had become stereotypical for the common perception of the region. Today the images which support coastal tourism feed on these models of a 'special charm' in the perception of the Wadden Sea Region.⁶¹



Fig. 3.7:
Open salt marsh landscape
on the Hallig Habel
Photo: T. Möller, appr.
1905 – archive of the
curator of the State of
Schleswig-Holstein

Glorification in the coastal space

The positive aesthetic interpretation of the Wadden Sea coast has long been a favorite quotable set piece of the popular schemata of perception. But since the time when it was brought into play by what was then a tiny cultural elite, it has remained part of a 'view from the outside'. It is tied up with an attitude based on a remoteness from day-to-day dealings with the natural qualities of the Wadden Sea Region – whether the remoteness is that of tourists or of those who may have come to the region to escape from the cities, or whether it derives from the appropriation of the 'aesthetic view' through education and an intellectual focus. The aesthetic appreciation of the broad, flat coastal zone – the characteristics of the offshore islands are different in important nuances⁶² – still belongs to a mental appropriation on the part of 'outsiders'. But what was at first only an observational, contemplative interaction with the Wadden Sea Region has long since led also to practical, and in the end politically highly divisive results: the buying up of retreats and holiday houses by more or less wealthy outsiders transforms the aesthetic judgment effectively into an 'occupation' of the area. In some areas this influx has made the locals a minority. What came about in earlier centuries out of economic calculation – the appropriation of the potentially profitable coastal lands – today corresponds to the transformation of whole sections of the coast (rather than the tourist centers) into rest and recreation spaces

for more or less short-term visitors. This has given rise to a novel kind of competition in the ways of perceiving, and in the articulation of needs in the very regions of the Wadden Sea coast which are 'structurally weak', a competition which has practical consequences – for example, protests against certain agricultural practices.⁶³

Still, from the middle of the 19th century, that glorification mentioned several times became more and more significant for the locals' way of perceiving themselves and hence for the perception of their living space. In the wake of the Enlightenment's trends criticizing civilization, a popular agrarian romanticism generally celebrated the transfigured idyll of a 'poor, simple life' in a disappearing, premodern peasant lifestyle. The agrarian-romantic and culturally-critical 'discovery' of a deprived but supposedly authentic existence, particularly in the sparsest areas – heath land, moorland, inhospitable islands – led to a moral elevation of the inhabitants.⁶⁴ To what were mostly educated middle-class observers, the farmers' daily struggle appeared to be a constant opportunity for purification, for the promotion of 'inner values' and for proving one's worth.

These were the circumstances under which the old metaphor of the coastal dwellers' 'battle' with the sea was further developed. The object of a generous disregard for regional-ethnic differences 'the Frisian' was made to represent the embodiment of a type of humanity which had developed an almost soldier-like toughness in its

constant struggle with the forces of the sea. According to this perception Frisians represented the earthbound, almost elemental form of that 'victorious type' which was in fact secretly in keeping with the civilizing process under critique – the subjugation of nature.⁶⁵

It was not long before the characterization of the coastal dwellers – usually in the generic label 'Frisian' – as defiant resistance fighters in the existential struggle with the sea became extraordinarily popular. This myth-building was advanced by regional writers from the mid-19th century onward in Germany and, in the first third of the 20th century, it attained its broadest acceptance with a great number of sophisticated entertainment novels.⁶⁶ The Nazis made use of this by claiming an ideological connection between their land reclamation measures along the North Sea coast and the heroic history of the coastal dwellers.⁶⁷

Even the historical 'narrative' of the heroic battle of the Frisians against the sea was at its core an educated-urban-bourgeois reinterpretation of actual history. This interpretation gave the coastal dwellers a role which had not developed out of their own understanding of themselves. But precisely because this scenario presented itself as a 'true' understanding of witnessed history, it offered the people on the Wadden Sea coast a projection space in which the value of their identity was enhanced. In this way, the characterization of the marshland inhabitants, defined as Frisians, as the heroes of land reclamation and land-securing, continued to hold true, in a milder and 'adjusted' form in the consciousness of the people. For example when, recently, protesters against environmental protection measures – especially in connection with the proclamation of the national parks – used the slogan: 'God created the sea, the Frisian the coast', a self image was clearly adopted which was in fact 'imported' into the region.

At least in Germany, the use of the old metaphor – according to which the Wadden Sea Region must be regarded as a 'battleground' for the subjugation of natural forces – in the texts of picture books on the region, in tourism advertising and even in the inhabitants' self-schematization, has a more than subliminal meaning. For example, it explains why, for the widest circle of coastal people and beyond, the ecologically motivated idea of removing pre- and post-dike structures (which are problematic in terms of their effect on the water dynamics) is perceived as an attack on the fundamental principles of wisdom and self-image.

Split perception: different zones of the Wadden Sea space

The so-called bridge period, the political, social and cultural transformation phase in the history of central Europe between 1770 and 1820, brought yet another important change beyond the above-mentioned shifts and reinterpretations in the history of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region: attention was directed toward areas which had hitherto hardly come into view. This was especially true of the seaside of the islands off the coast, which is to say, for the stretches of sand and dune facing the open North Sea.

By the end of the 18th century, when the practice of bathing in the sea had become a well-established form of recreation for 'fine society' in southern England, in France, and along the Channel coastline in Belgium and Holland, and when medical practice, based on various health concepts, had begun promoting spending time by the seashore as a cure for body and soul⁶⁸, even the western, eastern and northern Frisian islands were included in the boom in seaside resort development. Norderney was the first of the German North Sea islands in 1797, followed by Wangerooge in 1804, and Spiekeroog in 1809; Wyk, on Föhr, opened in 1819.⁶⁹ The upper classes' enjoyment of bathing and cure-taking brought a new perspective to the islands on the edge of the Wadden Sea in line with the interest of well-heeled, educated travelers, in 'folk life'. The spare and generally wretched existence of the island dwellers (the 'golden age' having passed when the islanders served on foreign ships, and some of them made their fortunes as captains), the more than modest existence of the fishermen and smallholders on the Geest and heather flatlands became the picturesque background, in fact the backdrop for the guests' more or less luxurious sojourns.⁷⁰

With the early tourism which developed around the practice of bathing in the sea off the islands of the Wadden Sea Region a pattern for the perception developed which still has a strong effect on the mass-tourism attitudes of today: the space where the holiday makers spend their time, especially during traditional beach vacations, is experienced extremely selectively. The interest is focused – if one ignores the 'framing' imposed by the touristy infrastructure, the range of services and entertainment on offer – almost exclusively on the narrow strip right on the edge of the sea. This explains why today's dramatically overdeveloped structures and space impres-

sions in the tourist centers even on the North Sea coast, but more especially on the majority of the islands, have hardly had an effect on the holiday makers' 'anticipation' of this experiential space.

Because seaside tourism from the end of the 18th century focused attention on new centers in the Wadden Sea Region, it also caused a screening-out of vast areas: the inclination was to pay very little attention to the 'back side' of the islands, and even less attention was paid to the Wadden Sea itself and to the mainland marshes. They were mere 'thoroughfares'.

That began to change in the 1920s, here and there, through, amongst other things, the interest of artists in the flatlands near the coast, and in the heath land or mudflat areas on the islands. The representatives of this movement were first Emil Nolde, then the bridge painters in Dangast, Max Beckmann and Wenzel Hablik on Sylt island, as well as the graphic artists Alexander Eckener and Ingwer Paulsen in North Frisia.

This change of focus was not widespread until the 1960s. At that time the expanding tourist traffic started to include the mainland marshes, at first for individual tourists; then, from the late 70s onward, an expanding mass tourism which took in, for example, the East Frisian sluice harbors. In the course of all this a perception of the Wadden Sea area developed that followed the previously mentioned aestheticisation of the flat coastal landscape and the occasional enthusiastic descriptions of the 'peculiar charm' of the marshes.⁷¹ In this way the 'zoning' of the Wadden Sea Region was defined by the touristy perceptual schema, in that at least a few groups of tourists added the experience of the coastal marsh to that of the sea-related 'recreational strip' by the seaside. This space connected, and connects, the experience of a peculiar agrarian landscape with a decisive focus on the sea.

3.3.4 Competing syntheses in coastal perceptions (ca. 1900 – 2000)

The developments that have been described can support the view that, in the 20th century, tendencies appear which shifted centuries-old, highly differentiating selective perceptions of the Wadden Sea Region to a rather more complete experience. In this manner, the view of the region, which the fine arts (including photography)⁷² opened up after 1900, includes the seaside of the Wadden Sea islands as well as the Wadden hinterlands like the mainland marshes. This

view has been so widely popularized today that it has been possible to give the entire space the tag of 'Nolde's landscape' in innumerable picture books and photographic volumes. Thus it succeeds in gaining the effect of a 'beautiful', aesthetically pleasing image even from apparently uninteresting sections like the silt banks in the mudflats or the monotone agricultural areas.

A perception that attempts to unify the different zones within the Wadden Sea Region could be labeled an attempt at 'synthetisation'. An 'aesthetic-contemplative synthetisation' would therefore be the one transmitted via fine arts and photography, and later film and television. Later, from the 80s onward, a new 'touristy synthetisation' followed. It sketched out the coastal area, according to the stated objectives of a 'gentle tourism', as self-sufficient and self-contained life-world. The perception of a developed, regional unity of culture and social life is thereby supposed to supplement the – in a narrower sense – spatial overall impression.⁷³ However, the fact that, even in the Wadden Sea Region, so-called conformist tourism has remained a largely convenient postulate makes the truth of this synthetisation somewhat dubious.

Highly significant for the current, more general perception schemata giving access to the Wadden Sea Region, is 'ecological synthetisation', which in

Fig. 3.8:
Old marshes in
Westerhever/Eiderstedt
Photo: L. Fischer



3.4 Conclusion

the last few decades has facilitated the understanding of the region as an interconnected 'near-natural cultural landscape' with a very sensitive and complex ecological system, worthy of protection. It is true that the regulatory protective measures officially include the area outside of the sea dikes, which, for its part, excludes economic enclaves like the islands, shipping lanes, fishery areas in differing degrees; but the ecological point of view obliges one to see the Wadden Sea Region as an entity which in fact includes the marsh zones near the coast. The conflicts with the different users of the individual areas are preprogrammed. In the public perception, however, this 'ecological synthetisation' has assumed an important role within a short space of time. This can be ascertained through questionnaires answered by tourists and through the media coverage of events like the 'Pallas' disaster.⁷⁴

The massive confrontations in the coastal regions over the validity, legitimacy and breadth of the ecological synthetisation (which was once again brought in 'from outside') thus supply incontrovertible proof that, in spite of the avowedly holistic view – the Wadden Sea Region as a unit of natural processes that work together as a system and cannot be separated –, even this 'unification' is split up: it defines the area as coherent natural space, but until now it has not been possible to incorporate the dimensions of the equally well-differentiated cultural and experiential relationship.

Thus, in the 20th century, successfully established new ways of perceiving the Wadden Sea Region certainly contain tendencies which open up an integrating view of this cultural landscape. But at the same time, each of these synthetisations establishes a partial viewpoint, and these are in competition with each other. They unfold out of the differing interests and needs of the various social groups which, for their part, tend to come together to form coalitions of sometimes only short duration (tourists, for example). The new synthetisations suggested above, as meaning-and-perception schemata brought in from outside to the coastal area, have placed heavy cultural, political and economic pressure on the Wadden Sea zone. Against this pressure the traditional pattern of experience in the regions, themselves not at all homogeneous and conflict free, can scarcely hold firm, because their life-world foundations are being continuously eroded, the base in traditional areas of endeavor – agriculture, fisheries, coastal shipping, land reclamation and protection – is disap-

pearing. Cultural and political self-determination is diminished both politically and at the policy-making level. The earlier, relatively close cohesion of the population disintegrates.

It remains to be seen whether, using novel approaches, such as the 'integrated coastal management', it will be possible to develop truly integrated views of the Wadden Sea Region, views which can absorb the 'historical heritage' of the often overlapping, dynamic patterns of perception.

3.4 Conclusion

The outline for a short overview of the history of perception of the Wadden Sea Region is obliged to simplify and highlight ideas. To many of the historical phases, themes and lines of development that were touched on, scholarly discussion can already offer sophisticated and detailed contributions. However, there is still much to be determined from the various sources.

The most important insights from this short overview are as follows:

1. The perception of the Wadden Sea landscape has been and still is particularly heavily affected by the tension between a 'view from the outside' and a 'view from the inside'. In Central Europe the only landscape of which comparable statements can be made is that of the Alps. This difference, if it is not given enough consideration, leads almost necessarily to heated conflicts between different interest groups. This reveals itself too in the newer approaches to 'synthetisations' (that of the ecological, the touristy, the political-planning, and even the aesthetic-contemplative approach).
2. Over the course of history it should be recognized that the Wadden Sea Region has been seen in recent times primarily as a space for the 'battle between humans and nature'. The 'mastery over the forces of nature' seemed to be the most significant quality in this space. For this reason the marshes themselves were given a lot of attention, even though they were long perceived exclusively from the point of view of their utility. This attitude continues to hold form, even now that the economic and structural conditions for it are disappearing.
3. The dangers for the Wadden Sea Region tend to be seen differently now from the way they were seen centuries ago: no longer are the risks from natural factors (storm surges, and so on) regarded as the most threatening;

those are now the disturbances caused by human activity (environmental pollution, overexploitation, climate change, etc.). This shifts the perception of the Wadden Sea Region to one of 'at-risk area', a perception which has by no means been accepted by all.

4. It is increasingly difficult to establish the 'value' of the Wadden Sea Region based on the direct use of its natural resources. Hence, the latest of the 'alternative uses' (wind power) has generated new conflicts. The appeal to so-called indirect uses of the Wadden Sea Region (recreation and relaxation; preservation of its natural potential; spatial and structural balancing functions) represents an enormous challenge for the local population. The struggles to establish the right criteria for determining the value of this landscape can only be adequately understood with reference to its historical development.
5. The aesthetic 'appeal' of the Wadden Sea Region must still be defended against the dominant notions of the 'beauty and variety' of a natural and cultural space. Negative judgments like 'monotonous and boring' continue to form a substrate for this view. The 'influence of the sea' is also aesthetically decisive for a positive perception of this space. That the Wadden Sea coast, even as a coastal formation, appears strange in many ways, is a contributing factor. This idea still represents a 'mental provocation' which has not been completely resolved, for example from the ecological point of view.

It is mostly the national and regional differences which were sacrificed to the global view, which necessarily abbreviates and simplifies. It is not only the different national cultural contexts in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark which have led to sometimes considerable deviations from the lines sketched out in this text; in addition, within the Dutch and German Wadden Sea spaces, regional differences have developed which are not included in the 'mainstream' studied here. The historically developed national and regional differences in perception cannot be resolved through a political integration either, nor should they be.

It has been a question of tracing historical process with a few strokes. For we must become aware of the historicity and historical contingency of our ways of perceiving the Wadden Sea Region. And, above all, we must explore and work out the patterns - still effec-

tive, often disguised - that determine our experiences in this coastal space.

In all phases of the relatively short available history of the perception of the Wadden Sea Region there have been partial, conflicting, overlapping attitudes. There has always been a hierarchy of perceptions, as well. Which is the dominant one under what circumstances?

That should be considered, too, when special attention is focused - and not by accident once again 'from outside', and bound up with forms of the political and administrative regulatory processes - on the cultural and landscape heritage of the Wadden Sea Region.

Notes

- 1 See also Sindowski, K.-H. (19): Das ostfriesische Küstengebiet, Sammlung geologischer Führer, vol. 57. Berlin Stuttgart 1973 and Buchwald, K. (1990): Nordsee. Ein Lebensraum ohne Zukunft?, Göttingen, pp. 32ff.
- 2 Ratzel, F. (1882): Anthropogeographie. 1. Teil: Grundzüge der Anwendung der Erkunde auf die Geschichte, Leipzig 1899, p. 289.
- 3 Ibd., p. 303.
- 4 See ibd., p. 311.
- 5 For the East Frisian coastal area see van Lengen, H.: Bauernfreiheit und Häuptlingsherrlichkeit im Mittelalter. In: Behre, K.-E. / van Lengen, H. (ed. 1995): Ostfriesland. Geschichte und Gestalt einer Kulturlandschaft. Aurich, pp. 113-134.
- 6 Compare areas of the national parks in the Wadden Sea area of the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.
- 7 On cultural konstruktion of landscape see also Wenzel, J.(1991): Über die geregelte Handhabung von Bildern. In: Garten + Landschaft, vol. 3, pp. 19- 24.
- 8 See already Simmel, G.: Philosophie der Landschaft. In: Ders: Brücke und Tür. Essays des Philosophen zur Geschichte, Religion, Kunst und Gesellschaft. Ed. by Landmann, M. Stuttgart 1957, pp. 141-152.
- 9 Reck, H.U. (1994): Geschwindigkeit, Destruktion, Assoziation. In: Kunstforum International, vol. 128, pp. 84-105.
- 10 See Fischer, L.(1998), a.aO.
- 11 Baier, F. X. (2000): Der Raum. Kunstwissenschaftliche Bibliothek, issue 2, Köln, pp. 90f.
- 12 Ibd., p. 91.
- 13 See Schmitz, H. (1999): Der Spielraum der Gegenwart. Bonn, p. 47.
- 14 Simmel, G. (1913): Philosophie der Landschaft. In: M. Landmann (ed.): Georg Simmel. Brücke und Tür. Stuttgart 1957 (pp. 141-152), p. 142.
- 15 Ibd., p. 143.
- 16 See. Dürckheim 1932, ibd., p. 395.
- 17 See Schmitz 1967, p. 400.
- 18 See Natur- und Kulturlandschaftswandel - Perspektiven im Rheiderland; in: Grenzenlos, Die Identität der Landschaft in der Ems-Dollart-Region, Groningen 1993, pp. 46-54.
- 19 See also Hasse, J. (1999): Bildstörung. Windenergie und Landschaftsästhetik, Wahrnehmungsgeographische Studien zur Regionalentwicklung, vol. 18, Oldenburg.
- 20 See also in part. Pörksen, U. (1997): Weltmarkt der Bilder. Eine Philosophie der Visiotype, Stuttgart.
- 21 Concerning coastal fisheries see example German/Dutch border area Dollard, Stratingh G.A. / Venema, C. A. (1855): De Dollard. Groningen 1979 as well as Kirchhoff, J. (2000): Fischfang auf dem Wattengrund, Weener.
- 22 Concerning history of tourism on the East Frisian islands see Hasbargen, L. (1964): Die Ostfriesischen Inseln. Zur Wirtschaftsgeographie eines Fremdenverkehrsgebietes. Göttingen, Hannover.
- 23 Schmitz, Hermann 1994: Neue Grundlagen der Erkenntnistheorie. Bonn, p. 80.
- 24 Concerning conception of the openness of landscape space see in particular Hermann Schmitz (1967): System der Philosophie. Vol. III, 1st part. Der leibliche Raum. Bonn 1988, p. 393.
- 25 German translation in Friedrich Müller: Das Wasserwesen an der schleswig-holsteinischen Nordseeküste. First part: Die Halligen. Vol. 1, Berlin 1917, p.140.
- 26 Hartmut Valentin: Die Küsten der Erde. Beiträge zur allgemeinen und regionalen Küstenmorphologie. Gotha 1952, pp.14f.
- 27 See as an example the study by Harro Segeberg: Der Friese als 'Schimmelreiter'? - Zur Heroisierung der Marschenbewohner in Literatur und Film. In: Ludwig Fischer (ed.): Kulturlandschaft Nordseemarschen. Bredstedt/Westerhever 1997, pp.233-251.
- 28 More detailed Ludwig Fischer: Das Feste und das Flüssige. Zur Ideologie und Wahrnehmungsgeschichte des Wattenmeers und der Halligen. In: Bernd Busch/Larissa Förster (red.): Wasser. Bonn 2000, pp.624-652, esp.pp.639ff. (Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Schriftenreihe Forum vol.9)
- 29 For an overview on the history of diking see Thomas Steensen (ed.): Deichbau und Sturmfluten in den Frieslanden. Bredstedt 1992. Concerning Schleswig-Holstein: Hans Joachim Kühn: Die Anfänge des Deichbaus in Schleswig-Holstein. Heide 1992.
- 30 Cit. efter Peter Sax: Werke zur Geschichte Nordfrieslands und Dithmarschens. Bd. 1. St.Peter-Ording 1986, p. 144.
- 31 Compare the short description of the North Frisian islands by Peter Sax: Werke zur Geschichte Nordfrieslands und Dithmarschens vol.3. St.Peter-Ording 1984, pp.39ff.
- 32 There is, for example, the influence of the Dutch farmhouse-type Gulf-house upon the building in the German coastal marshes (see f ex Ludwig Fischer: Haubarge - Eine Bauernhausform hat abgewirtschaftet? Bredstedt 1982).
- 33 More detailed Ludwig Fischer: Die Ästhetisierung der Nordseemarschen als 'Landschaft'. In: L.F. (ed.): Kulturlandschaft Nordseemarschen. Bredstedt/Westerhever 1997, pp.201-232; esp. pp.208ff.
- 34 Ludwig Hirzel (ed.): Albrecht Hallers Tagebücher seiner Reisen nach Deutschland, Holland und England 1723-1727. Leipzig 1883, p.27.
- 35 Peter Sax [note 6], p.48.
- 36 Ibd., p.141.
- 37 Ibd.
- 38 Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 8], pp.218f
- 39 Cf. Dieter Lohmeier: Peter Sax und seine Quellen. In: Peter Sax [note 6], S.XV-XLV.
- 40 Ibd., pp.143ff.
- 41 See Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 8], pp.218ff.
- 42 An outstanding example is the interest of Dutch investors in rebuilding parts of the island of Strand, which was destroyed in 1634. See Fritz Karff: Nordstrand. Geschichte einer nordfriesischen Insel. Hamburg 1978, pp.221ff.
- 43 F.ex. Johann Nicolaus Tetens: Reisen in die Marschländer an der Nordsee zur Beobachtung des Deichbaus in Briefen. vol.1, Leipzig 1788.

- 44 See Rainer Beck: Die Abschaffung der 'Wildnis'. Landschaftsästhetik, bäuerliche Wirtschaft und Ökologie zu Beginn der Moderne. In: Werner Konold (ed.): Naturlandschaft - Kulturlandschaft. Die Veränderung der Landschaften nach der Nutzbarmachung durch den Menschen. Landsberg 1996, pp.27-44, esp.pp.28f.
- 45 Documented in Alain Corbin: Meereslust. Das Abendland und die Entdeckung der Küste 1750-1840. Berlin 1990, pp.53f.
- 46 This following Corbin, *ibid.*, p.54.
- 47 For the storm surges of 1634 see Boy Hinrichs a.o.: Flutkatastrophe 1634. Natur - Geschichte - Dichtung. Neumünster 1985. For the surges of 1717 Manfred Jakobowski-Tiessen: Sturmflut 1717. Die Bewältigung einer Naturkatastrophe in der Frühen Neuzeit. München 1992.
- 48 As an example Tetens, Reisen [note 19], p.109.
- 49 That can be seen in the legendary stories about the destruction of Rungholt 1362 (see Hans-Herbert Hennigsen: Rungholt. Der Weg in die Katastrophe. vol.1. Husum 1998; vol.2. Husum 2000) and the comments on the catastrophe at Nordstrand (see Karf, Nordstrand [note 18], pp.193ff). Explanation of the theological background in Hinrichs a.o. and Jakobowski-Tiessen [note 23].
- 50 Such differences discussed by Otto S.Knotterus: Die Angst vor dem Meer. Der Wandel kultureller Muster an der niederländischen und deutschen Nordseeküste (1500-1800). In: Fischer, Kulturlandschaft [note 9], pp.145-174.
- 51 As an overview Jean Delumeau: Angst im Abendland. Zur Geschichte kollektiver Ängste im Europa des 14. bis 18. Jahrhunderts. Reinbek 1985.
- 52 In this case, Corbins explanation ([note 21], pp.54f.), going back to Dutch marine painting of the 16th century, seems not to be convincing.
- 53 Corbins study [note 21] depends almost exclusively on the witnesses from this travelling cultural elite, so painting becomes of great importance.
- 54 The concept of 'landscape' has since the Renaissance been developed as a visual composition within a frame. See Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 9], pp.204f (with bibliographical notes).
- 55 More detailed Fischer, *ibid.*, pp.207f, 211ff. See even Corbin [note 21], pp.55f.
- 56 See Fischer, Ästhetisierung, [note 9], pp.216f.
- 57 Friedrich Schiller: Über das Erhabene. Stuttgart 1970, p.93.
- 58 Documents in Steffi Schmidt: Die Niederlande und die Niederländer im Urteil deutscher Reisenden. Eine Untersuchung deutscher Reisebeschreibungen von der Mitte des 17. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Siegburg 1963, pp.22ff.
- 59 For a short explanation of the aesthetics of the sublime concerning the coastal area see Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 9], pp.213ff.
- 60 Cf. Oskar Bätschmann: Entfernung der Natur. Landschaftsmalerei 1750-1920. Köln 1989, and Albrecht Koschorke: Die Geschichte des Horizonts. Grenze und Grenzüberschreitung in literarischen Landschaftsbildern. Frankfurt/M. 1990.
- 61 See Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 9], p.217.
- 62 An outline is given by Ludwig Fischer: 'Noldes Landschaft'? Wandel der Wahrnehmung. In: Thomas Steensen (ed.): Das große Nordfriesland-Buch. Hamburg 2000, pp.20-37, esp.pp. 28ff.
- 63 Very interesting remarks in Jürgen Hasse: Wahrnehmung und Bewertung der Marschenlandschaft in der Konkurrenz unterschiedlicher Interessen. In: Fischer, Kulturlandschaft [note 9], pp.175-188.
- 64 See Henning Eichberg: Stimmung über der Heide - Vom romantischen Blick zur Kolonisierung des Raumes. In: Götz Großklaus/Ernst Oldemeyer (ed.): Natur als Gegenwelt. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Natur. Karlsruhe 1983, pp.197-234.
- 65 More detailed, reading the film on Theodor Storms 'Schimmelreiter', Harro Segeberg: Der Friese als 'Schimmelreiter'? Zur Heroisierung der Marschenbewohner in Literatur und Film. In: Fischer, Kulturlandschaft [note 9], pp.233-251.
- 66 Confirming Nazi ideology, there were novels like Ferdinand Zaccchi: Volk an der See. Ein Nordseebuch von Trutz und Treue. München 1934, or Waldermar Augustiny: Die große Flut Hamburg 1943.
- 67 As an example, a document like Der Hermann Göring-Koog. Denkschrift anlässlich der Einweihung Ende Oktober 1935 (s.l.s.t.), p.18.
- 68 Details in Corbin, Meereslust [note 21], pp.83ff.
- 69 A popular overview is Jutta Kürzt: Badeleben an Nord- und Ostsee. Kleine Kulturgeschichte der Sommerfrische. Heide 1994.
- 70 One of the most famous texts is Heinrich Heine's 'Nord-seebilder' of sojourns on Norderney 1825/26.
- 71 See Fischer, Ästhetisierung [note 9], pp.218ff.
- 72 Almut Klingbeil: Die Bilder wechseln. Meeresbilder in Fotobüchern der 20er bis 40er Jahre. Hamburg 2000 (Diss. 1998).
- 73 There is a countless number of studies on concepts of 'gentle tourism'. To be mentioned here, concerning coastal areas: Jürgen Hasse/Frauke Schumacher: Sanfter Tourismus. Über ein konstruktives Verhältnis von Tourismus, Freizeit und Umweltschutz. Bunderhee 1990. Jochen Lamp/Hans Fricke (red.): Sanfter Tourismus - eine Chance für die Küste. Stuttgart 1989 (WWF-Tagungsbericht 3).
- 74 See Wolfgang Settekorn: Konstruktion und Vermittlung von Ereignissen in der deutschen Presse: zum Fall PALLAS. Hamburg 2001 (ms copy)