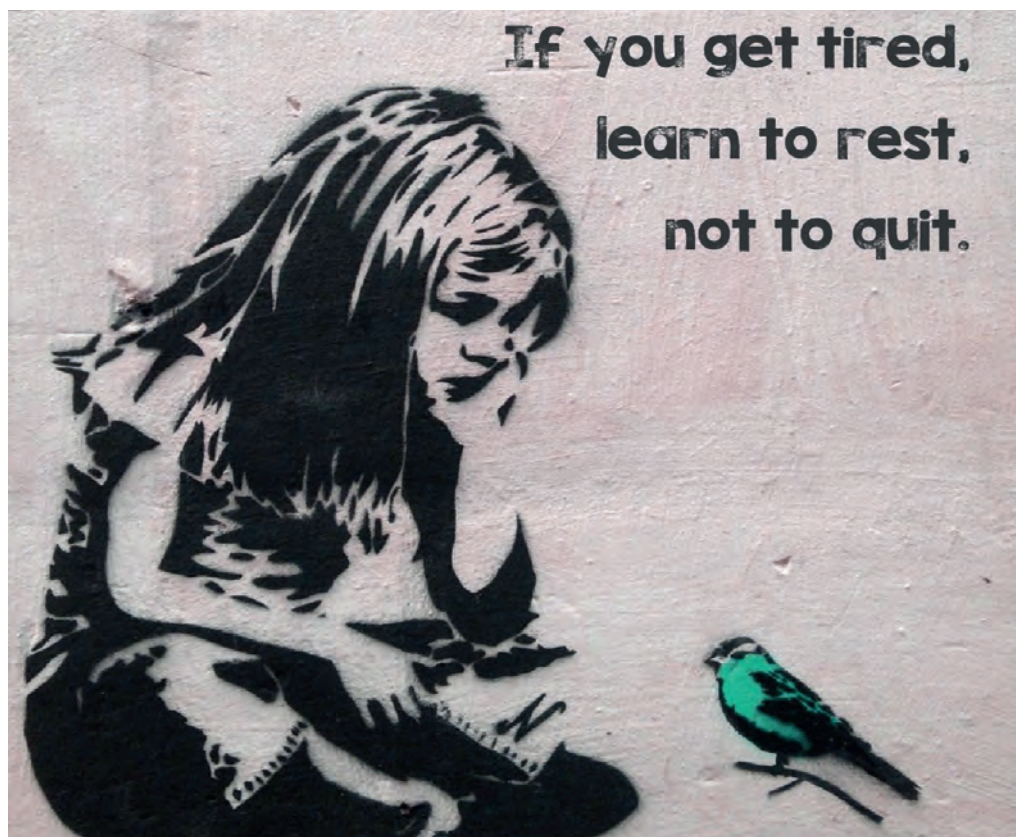


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BIOGRAPHICAL DATA AND SELECTED CONCEPTUAL INFLUENCES OF WOLFGANG LUTHE:

HOW CATHARSIS OF PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL TENSION SYMPTOMS FOUND ITS WAY INTO AUTOGENIC THERAPY

BJÖRN HUSMANN

Abstract¹: The physician Dr. Wolfgang Luthe (1922-1985) has significantly influenced the international understanding of Autogenic Training (AT), but his life in Germany before his emigration to Canada has so far hardly been investigated. Therefore, his participation and experiences in World War II or his membership in the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) for instance are more or less unknown. Also, the organization of his medical studies or when and how exactly he came into contact with AT or its founder Johannes Heinrich Schultz. It is known that Schultz promoted Luthe with regard to AT and especially its international dissemination from the late 1950s on. What has received less attention is that there were some important practical and conceptual differences in this process, which will be addressed in this article as well as the aforementioned topics. Subsequently, the approaches developed by Luthe such as autogenic abreaction, verbalization and neutralization or additional cathartic exercises as well as his concept of autogenic therapy are briefly outlined, which are quite widespread internationally, but often little known in German-speaking countries. Finally, audio recordings are presented in which Luthe himself illustrates some of the previously described aspects.

Keywords: History, autogenic training, biography of Wolfgang Luthe, Nazi era, international dissemination of AT, autogenic abreaction, autogenic neutralization, autogenic therapy, autogenics

Preliminary note²

Dr. Wolfgang Luthe is an important protagonist concerning the Autogenic Training (AT), who worked increasingly close with J. H. Schultz from

1957 to 1970. He played an important role in the international dissemination of AT. In addition, extensions in the direction of autogenic therapy, which have had a decisive influence on the understanding and practise of AT, es-

¹ Date of receipt: January 10th 2023 / Revision: June 9th 2023

² This article is the extended and revised English version of Husmann (2022a), first published in German in *Entspannungsverfahren* 39/2022. This text was also basis of the same-named lecture at the 35th Sylt Week of Relaxation Therapy. Many thanks to Judith Wren (London, Chairperson of BAS, 2014-2021) and to Dr. Gilles Michaux for proofreading.

pecially in Great Britain, Japan, Canada and the USA, can be traced back to him. In these countries, AT after Schultz sometimes seems like a kind of outdated version. In this sense, Luthe spoke of Schultz's AT as its "orthodox version" [►Audio], Rivera (2017, p. 29ff) calling it "autogenics 1.0" as opposed to Luthe's form. Luthe viewed the functional principle of AT as passive acceptance of the formulas and less as autohypnosis, as Schultz did. He also extended it by its approach of autogenic neutralization. Therefore, Rivera labels autogenic therapy according to Luthe as "autogenics 2.0" (ibid.)³.

Despite Luthe's significant importance for the AT, his biography has rarely been mentioned, and first attempts to retrace his private and professional life only been published on the occasion of AT's 100th anniversary (Husmann, 2020c). As one reaction the British Autogenic Society (BAS) revised the historical information on its homepage. It is not surprising that Luthe's life during the Nazi era was not explicitly mentioned there⁴. After all, corresponding accusations against Schultz, who was not a Member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) (Husmann, 2015), had caused some damage to the reputation of AT at that time, especially in the Anglo-American world (Wren, 2018).

However, the publication mentioned above has had no impact on the websites of the International Committee for the Coordination of Clinical Application and Teaching of Autogenic Training (ICAT) nor the International Society of Autogenic Training and Psychotherapy (ISATAP), although their acting president had contributed some important biographical references at that time (see bibliography). This may be due to the language barrier.

But another very gratifying outcome of the historical analysis herein described was the intensification of some collegial contacts. As a result, documents could be investigated and clues condensed, which allowed the clarification of some previously unanswered questions:

- How did the beginning of Luthe's professional vita look like (doctoral studies, clinical practise etc.)?
- How exactly did Luthe come into contact with AT and J. H. Schultz?
- How did Schultz and Luthe cooperate? How did they differ?
- How and why did Luthe develop his own conception of the AT?

In addition to the biographical data supplementing the publication from 2020, these questions build up the core of the present article. Overall, it will become evident how differently AT can be conceived and practised.

³ He understands his own variation of AT as a form of meditation, which he combines with "autogenic reconstruction", and refers to as "autogenics 3.0" (ibid.).

⁴ Currently the BAS has no more references to the history of the AT on their homepage (cf. Footnote 32).

Childhood and adolescence

In 1921⁵ Elfriede Jenny Adele Brand (*1894 in Lübeck)⁶ and the self-employed cereal merchant⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Richard Luthe (*1891 in Magdeburg, † in Travemünde) married in Lübeck⁶. In 1922 on October 27th their son Wolfgang was born in Pansdorf⁵, a small village with about 3,500 inhabitants located about 5 km from the coast of the Baltic Sea and 13 km from Lübeck. Luthe's grandfathers were captain and export merchant, respectively⁷. No further information could be found on his brother Hans⁸.

Luthe grew up in Pansdorf, Travemünde⁹ and Lübeck. He went to the elementary school St. Gertrud¹¹. Already in 1933 he became a member of the "Deutsche Jungvolk"¹⁰, the Nazi organization for boys aged 10-14. Personal albums of him from 1929-1944¹¹ give some impression of his life during this period. Crayon drawings from his time in elementary school show scenes typical of his age. They reflect what went through the mind of young Wolfgang at that time: flying kites, city scenes with streetcars and automobiles, a parade in historical costumes. He also perceived the emerging National Social-

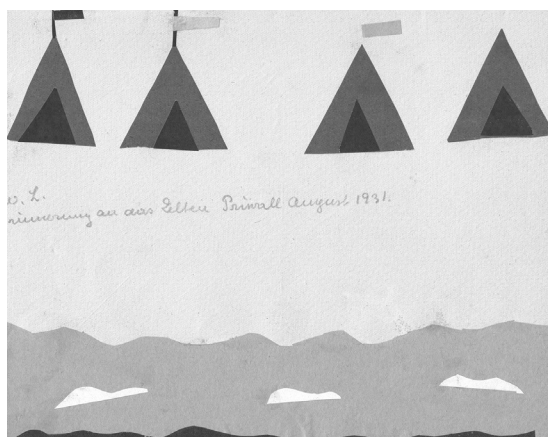


Fig. 1: Drawing of Wolfgang Luthe with eight years, 1930; collage of a tent camp with nine years, August 1931 (from the estate).

⁵ Register office Ratekau

⁶ Register office Hamburg-Altona

⁷ University Archive Hamburg, Best. 201c Abtlg. 3: Matriculation cards from 1942-1945, from 1945 and from 1951

⁸ First name according to personal information from Kaori Kyuragi Luthe.

⁹ BArch R 9361-IX Index/26811656

¹⁰ State Archive Hamburg, Sig. 80251 KAT

¹¹ Part of these and other documents belonging to the estate of Wolfgang Luthe were sent to me by Kaori Kyuragi Luthe, whom I kindly like to thank for.

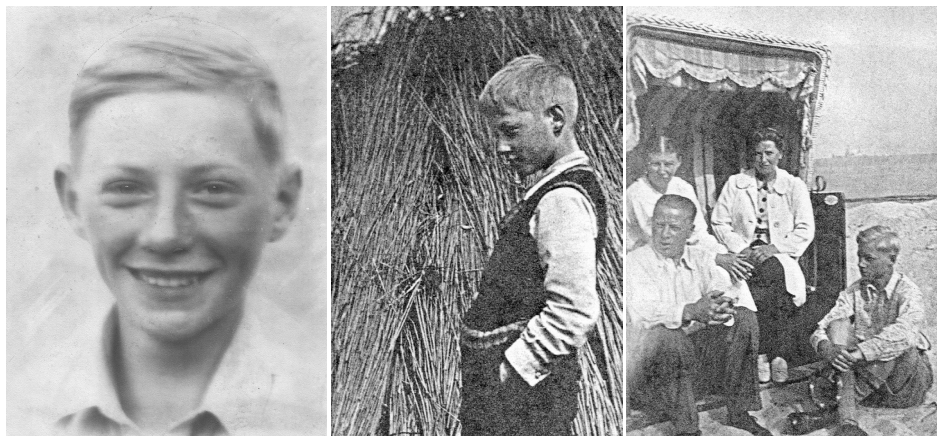


Fig. 2: Wolfgang Luthe around 1930/31 and with his parents and his brother around 1935/36 (from the estate).

ism from a child's point of view. For example, he crayoned a red flag with a swastika in 1930, under which he wrote: "Hitler flags everywhere" (► Fig. 1). A year later he collaged a tent camp, in which he had participated. He also collected many stamps and letters ("by airship Hindenburg [...] to Wolfgang Luthe") as well as postcards, including one from 1933 showing Hitler at the groundbreaking ceremony for a new highway and many from the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. One postcard came from his father from the German Collectors' Show 1937 in Hamburg, which shows an official propaganda portrait of Adolf Hitler on the front. On its reverse we find a large collector's stamp "Strength through Joy" ["Kraft durch Freude"] with the following text

underneath: "Dear Wölfi [i.e. nickname for "Wolfgang"; author's note], now I am sorry that you are not with me (...) Heil Hitler [lit. hail Hitler; author's note] Daddy". There are also pictures of ships in bottles, one he received for "diligent cooperation in the school competition 'National community = community of destiny'" ["Volksgemeinschaft = Schicksalsgemeinschaft"]. Furthermore, the estate included quite a few photos of him, his family (► Fig. 2), his friends and many sailing boats.

At the age of 15 he entered the Hitler Youth [Ger.: "Hitler Jugend" (HJ)] and became an "Oberscharführer"¹⁰ [Rank, corresponds approximately to upper squad leader]¹². At the age of 16 he got his motorcycle license¹¹ (► Fig. 3). He went to the

¹² A corresponding document was found in Luthe's estate. Also included was an article about shooting practise with the Hitler Youth (HJ) in English – suggesting that Luthe or maybe someone else had sorted it into the albums –, as well as other English Nazi propaganda posters and a photo of Mussolini also subtitled in English.



Fig. 3: Luthe probably 1937/38 (from the estate)

“German High School of Lübeck” and graduated in 1940⁷. In the same year on April 29th, he applied for membership in the NSDAP, and was admitted on September 1st with the membership number 7 745 162 (► Fig. 4)⁹. This was identically noted on his registration card at the University of Hamburg (“Munich no. 7745162”), on which was also indicated that he had been an “SS man” since September 1st 1940 (► Fig. 11)⁷. For this, however, no evidence could be found in the German Federal Archives yet¹³.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Name: | Luthe | Wolfgang |
| o | | |
| Beruf: | geborene: | |
| geb.-Datum: | 27.10.22. | geb.-Ort: Pansdorf |
| Nr.: | 7 745 162 | Aufn.: 1.9.40. |
| Aufnahme beantragt am: | 29.4.40. | |
| Wiederaufn. beantragt am: | | genehm.: |
| Austritt: | | |
| Beföhrd: | | |
| Ausfluß: | | |
| Aufgehoben: | | |

Fig. 4: NSDAP Gau card [“Gaukarte”] of Wolfgang Luthe⁹

War time

From October 1st until November 30th 1940 Luthe completed his Labour Service [“Reichsarbeitsdienst”]⁷, where he probably completed his basic military training. On December 2nd 1940 he was conscripted (► Fig. 5)¹¹ and came to the 3rd Company of the Tank Destroyer Replacement Division 20¹⁴, to be subsequently transferred to the Tank Destroyer Division 30 on December 15th 1940¹⁵. There he was allocated to the staff company’s intelligence platoon from January 8th 1941 on¹⁶. That unit was part of the 30th Infantry Division of the 10th Army Corps of the Wehrmacht, which besides had previously been involved in the occupation of Paris (Tessin, 1976). From 1940-1941 it was stationed in the Netherlands (Luthe: “Occupation Wehrmacht”¹⁰) and afterwards par-

¹³ It cannot be ruled out that Luthe made this statement in order to be allowed to study medicine.

¹⁴ Identification tag: -740-, 3./P. (E.)20 (German Federal Archive/BA-Sig. B563/ZK L-1020/395)

¹⁵ BA-Sig. 44520, p. 140, p. 145 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

¹⁶ BA-Sig. B563/44523, p. 27, p. 43 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

B. Husmann: Biographical data and selected conceptual influences of Wolfgang Luthe

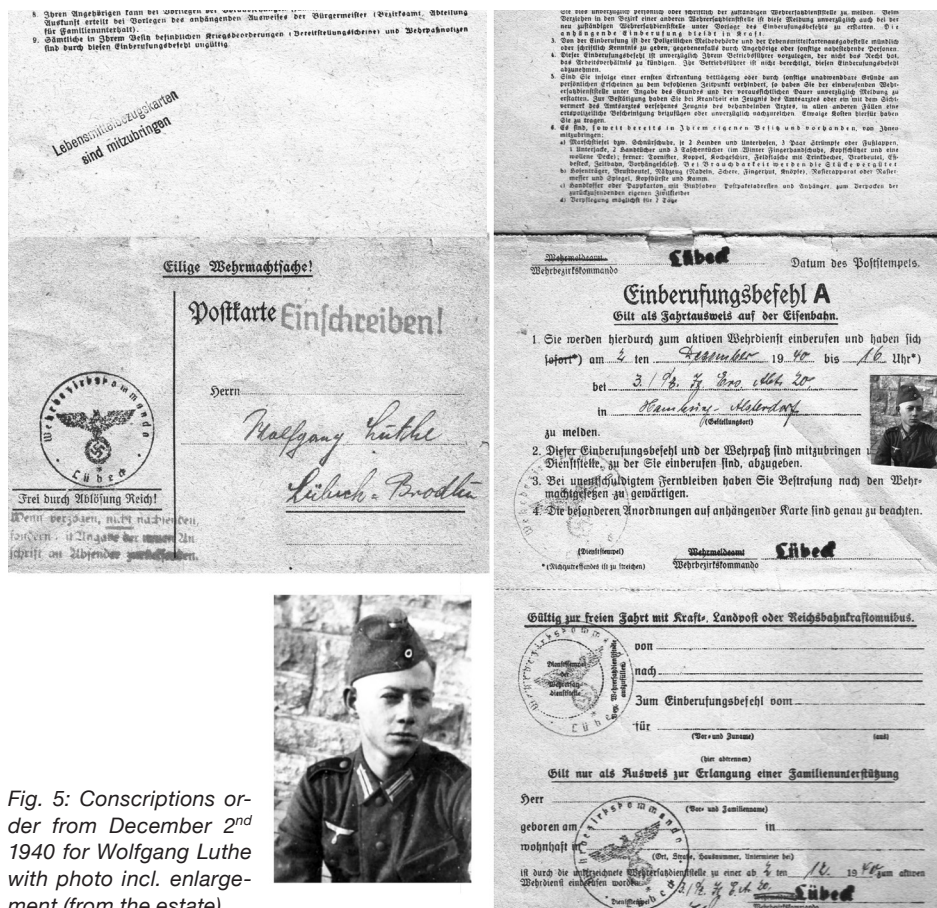


Fig. 5: Conscriptions order from December 2nd 1940 for Wolfgang Luthe with photo incl. enlargement (from the estate).

ticipated in the invasion of the Soviet Union (Luthe: “Wehrmacht Campaign”¹⁰).

In 1942, the division was surrounded by Soviet military units for more than a year in the small town of Demyansk, about 100 km southeast of Novgorod in present-day Russia – the so-called “Demyansk Pocket”

[Ger.: “Kessel von Demjansk”]¹⁷. Contrary to the military opinion of the commanders on the ground pleading for a retreat, Hitler ordered to hold the position and accepted the encirclement of about 100,000 soldiers. For several months, they could only receive makeshift supplies by airplanes (► Fig. 8). At the beginning of 1943,

¹⁷ See also “Kesselschlacht von Demjansk”, “Demjansk” and “30. Infanterie-Division (Wehrmacht)” at Wikipedia/German version (last access: April 13th 2020)



Fig. 6: Wolfgang Luthe, probably 1941 (from the estate).



Fig. 7: Wolfgang Luthe probably 1941 in winter equipment of the Wehrmacht (together with an unknown soldier; from the estate)

other German military units broke through the siege ring of the Soviet army, so that a retreat became possible. In the so-called “Demyansk Pocket-Battle” [“Kesselschlacht von Demjansk”], the surrounding areas

were destroyed. The inhabitants were killed to a large extent. At least 20,000 prisoners of war are believed to have died in a local camp. How many German soldiers died there is not exactly known, only that about 60,000 were



Bundesarchiv, Bild 101-003-3445-33
Foto: Ulrich 1/104/1042 Winter

Fig. 8: Demyansk; Air transport with Junkers Ju 52 (German Federal Archive image 1011-003-3445-33)



Fig. 10: So-called „Demyansk shield“ (from the estate)

on he joined the convalescent company of tank destroyer replacement

division 20 stationed in Hamburg-Harburg on January 29th 1943²⁰. On June 2nd 1943, he was finally transferred to the “3rd Company Student Section (Medical)” stationed in Hamburg²¹. On the soldier’s card there is another hospital stay indicated because of “angina” from October 21th to November 10th 1943 in Niendorf at the Baltic Sea¹⁹. From December 8th 1944 on, Luthe started working in a war hospital²² whose exact location could not yet be determined²³.

On one photo album from Luthe’s estate the “Demyansk shield 1942” is impressed on (► Fig. 10)²⁴. On the first page Luthe’s conscriptions order is inserted (► Fig. 5). On many other pages maps of the USSR are pasted or NS-propaganda articles from soldiers’ newspapers²⁵. On the photos in this album, you can find soldierly everyday scenes, like Luthe as a motorcycle messenger (► Fig. 6) with steel helmet and gun at the appeal or in a military winter suit (► Fig. 7).

In contrast, the album from 1943/44 shows easygoing pictures with friends on an alpine winter vaca-

²⁰ BA-Sig. B563/44523, p. 123, p. 223 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

²¹ BA-Sig. B563/44523, p. 123, p. 223, BA-Sig. B563/17957, S. 104, B563/ZK-L-1020/395 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

²² German Federal Archive, information from 10th March 2020

²³ Rivera writes that Luthe was “junior medical officer on the eastern front” (<https://www.psicoter.es/actualidad/wolfgang-luthe-biografia-corta>, last access: January 28th 2022).

²⁴ It was edited by Hitler in April 1943 and given to all soldiers who were trapped during the so-called “Demyansk Pocket” (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kesselschlacht_von_Demjansk, accessed April 13th 2020).

²⁵ In this Nazi military propaganda, prisoner numbers were praised or shot-up war equipment was called “booty”. Against the background of Russia’s current imperial ambitions and the war against Ukraine, these documents from 1942/43 evoke very current associations.

1943. Apparently, he could attend lectures from January 29th to June 2nd 1943, when he was stationed in the convalescent company near Hamburg²⁶. It would also have been geographically feasible for him to attend lectures as a member of the “3rd Company Student Section (Medical)” in Hamburg²⁷ from June 10th 1943 onwards. However, the “Hamburg fire-storm” (“Operation Gomorrah”) from July 24th to August 3rd 1943 had destroyed large areas of the city. What Luthe’s medical studies looked like at that time in Hamburg or from December 1944 to May 1945 in the war hospital, could also not be elucidated.

Post war period

In winter semester 1945/46, Luthe stated that his preferred study subject and degree were “surgery” with “state examination”, and that his professional target was to “continue studies in the expressive sciences”⁷. From summer semester 1946 to winter semester 1947/48 he transferred to the medical faculty of the University of Kiel²⁸. In his estate was a copy of his study book from Kiel dated June 3rd 1946, which allows an, albeit

incomplete, reconstruction of his studies. In the winter semester 1946/47, as a regular medical student, he attended “introductions to characterology” and “exercises in psychological diagnostics”, in the summer semester 1947 “psychology of mental abilities and functions”, “talent and aptitude testing”, “physiognomic and psychological analyses”, “psychiatric and neurologic clinic” and the “neurological examination course”. These courses were followed in autumn 1947 by “introduction to psychology”, “psychological practical course for advanced students”, “psychological basics of education”, “psychology of the mass of society” and “forensic psychiatry”.

In 1948²⁹, he went back to the University of Hamburg⁷. In his estate a certificate from the Hamburg school board dated December 1st 1953 could be found. It proves that Luthe attended the following courses in winter semester 1947/48 as a guest student in Hamburg: “psychology of personality”, “the higher personal forms of experience”, “the biological basics of psychology”, “graphology 2, kinetic graphology”, “graphological interpretation exercises”, and “interpretation of Kant’s critique of pure reason”. In

²⁶ BA-Sig. B563/44523, p. 123, p. 223 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

²⁷ BA-Sig. B563/ 17957, p. 104 und B563/ZK L-1020/395 (German Federal Archive, information from March 10th 2020)

²⁸ State archive of Schleswig-Holstein, but according to information from there he was not noted in the university’s book of departures; address in Kiel first Metzgerstr. 64 I, in winter semester 1946/47 Hansastr. 24, both near campus

²⁹ Address in October 1948: Hamburg-Blankenese, Elbterrasse 5/7, 1951 Hamburg, Abendrothsweg 28, i.e. near University Hospital Hamburg Eppendorf (University Archive Hamburg).

the summer semester of 1948, he attended again as a guest student “the forming factors in personal appearance”, “cultural psychology”, “exercises in experimental psychology”, “basic questions and limits of existential philosophy”, “graphology 1, eidetic graphology”, “psychology for physicians”, and “psychiatry and psychopathology of childhood”.

In 1948, Luthe graduated there with “state examination, Promotion”⁷. Although no doctoral documents of this year could be found in the university archive, a copy indicating the subject of his doctoral thesis was discovered in his estate. This certificate of the University of Hamburg about Luthe’s doctoral graduation in medicine from July 6th 1948 mentions “Experimental investigation of handgrip pressure” as subject of his treatise, which was evaluated as “good” (►Fig. 12).

A letter from his estate, dated September 28th 1951, written by Prof. Dr. Arthur Theodor Jores, a psychosomatically oriented physician and full professor at the second University Medical Clinic in Hamburg-Eppendorf as well as rector of the University of Hamburg, says:

“Dr. Luthe has constructed a special apparatus which makes it possible to show writing and handgrip pressure as well as the difference curve be-

Universität Hamburg

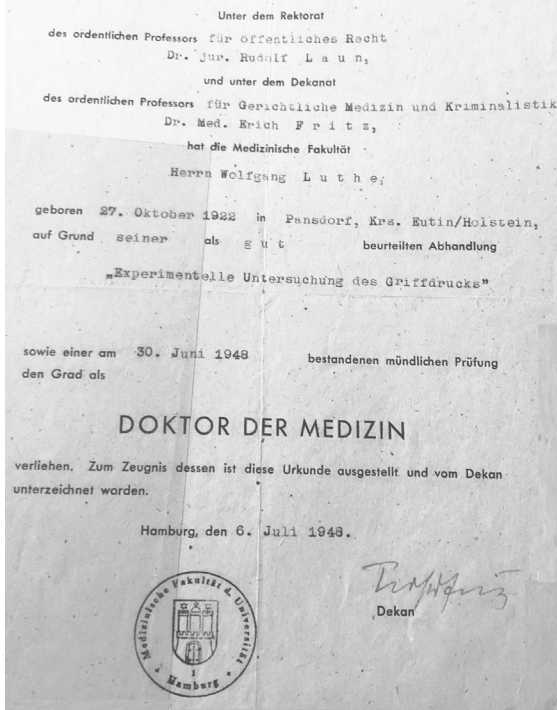


Fig. 12: Luthe's doctoral certificate (from the estate)

tween the two electronically. With the help of this apparatus, a larger series study was carried out, as well as some smaller works, such as the influence of glutamic acid, oxygen deficiency, and ACTH on writing and handgrip pressure”.

This would have gained “a new aspect” to “a number of important questions of body-soul relations as well as special graphological problems”. Luthe had already published on this and had been at “various con-



Fig. 13: Dr. med. Wolfgang Luthe (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed.)

gresses, also outside Germany, e.g., at the psychologists' congress in Paris in 1950 and in Stockholm in 1951, where his presentations also met with great interest and brought him further requests for lectures".

On October 28th 1948 in Hamburg-Blankenese, Luthe married Dr. phil. Alma Elisabeth Heberling, doctor of philosophy and library assistant from Düsseldorf (* February 24th 1921 in Berlin, † May 23th 1980 in Hamburg). Six months later, two twin sons were born on February 25th 1949. A daugh-

ter followed on February 22nd 1950 and another son on May 14th 1951⁶.

In 1949, Luthe worked at the Section of Internal Medicine in the Hamburg University Hospital (Luthe, 1980, p. 4). According to his own statements, he was assistant physician ["ass. Arzt"]¹⁰ in 1950. The aforementioned statement by Jores gives information on Luthe's clinical work. From January 1st 1950 he was partly employed as an "obligatory assistant" for five months and as "freelance scientific assistant". In this latter function he was "entrusted with a special task" and carried out "scientific investigations on the subject of body-soul relations" – probably by the aforementioned "apparatus". The financing of these investigations was "made possible by a scholarship".

In his questionnaire for the denazification procedure, Luthe stated on July 7th 1950 his HJ membership as well as his activity for the Labour Service ["Reichsarbeitsdienst"], but did not mention a NSDAP or SS membership and also denied further memberships in other NS organizations¹⁰. He was classified as cleared ("Category 5") on July 13th 1950 only six days after submitting his questionnaire¹⁰. The swiftness of the procedure might rely on the fact that it took place after the Act on the Completion of Denazification of May 13th 1950³⁰.

³⁰ This law was tantamount to an amnesty of all denazification procedures that had not been processed at that time (regarding the Hamburg school system, see Lorent, 2016; Szodrzynski, 2014).

From 1951 on, Luthe worked at a station of the Hamburg University Hospital for asthma patients (Luthe, 1980, p. 4). In April 1951, he applied again to be enrolled as “Dr. med.” at the University of Hamburg (Faculty of Philosophy, study of psychology)⁷ and stated that he wished to complete his psychology studies with a doctorate or state examination³¹. The already mentioned document from the Hamburg school board from his estate shows that in the summer semester of 1951 Luthe had been enlisted as a regular psychology student at the University of Hamburg and had visited the following courses: “introduction to social psychology”, “investigations into the psychology of today’s youth”, “theory of school”, “psychopathological borderline areas”, “instruction in handling German tests”, “exercise on selected questions in educational psychology”, “basic questions in profession pedagogy”, “sociology at a glance”, and a “colloquium on topics in sociology”.

First approach to AT, first encounter with J. H. Schultz, first publications on AT

On the websites of BAS³², ICAT³³, ISATAP³⁴ or that of its currently acting president Rivera³⁸, there are still no concrete details about where and when Schultz and Luthe met or from what time on Luthe started to use AT in his practise. Crowther (2001, p. 139)³⁵ stated that Schultz and Luthe met as early as 1940, but without citing a source for this.

A recently discovered transcript of a lecture by Luthe from 1979³⁵, which he seemed to have corrected personally and sent back to the publisher, clarifies the reasons and circumstances of their first encounter:

“[...] about 30 years ago when I was a young intern at the University of Hamburg Department of Internal Medicine, I happened to go into a room where two colleagues were discussing something that I didn’t understand. I finally understood that one of them had been in Berlin and participated in a workshop with a certain Professor Schultz and they were talking about exercising and one of them started to show the other one something which I watched. I listened and tried to figure it out and I was told that

³¹ No references to a corresponding doctorate in psychology were found.

³² <https://www.autogenic-therapy.org.uk/our-societys-roots/> (last access: January 28th 2022); in the meantime, the BAS page has been updated and does not contain any information about the history of AT anymore (<https://britishautogenicsociety.org.uk>, last access: January 5th 2023)

³³ <https://icat.world/> (last access: January 5th 2023)

³⁴ <https://isatap.com/About> (last access: January 5th 2023)

³⁵ I received this document thankfully from Ruth T. Naylor, PhD, Director/Trustee of BAS (2017-2021), after that American Autogenic Society (AAS).

this was a form of medical treatment for a variety of disorders, and I didn't go for it. I thought well, it didn't sound very solid, and didn't make much sense to me, and that was the end of my first encounter with autogenic therapy. That was 1949.

About two years later I was confronted with a different situation, also at the University of Hamburg, where I was working at a transitory period on a ward with asthmatic patients – chronic asthmatic patients, and the main treatment in this ward consisted of autogenic training which is the basic method of autogenic therapy. Here the patients were practicing, under the guidance of experienced doctors, mental exercises which helped them to reduce medication significantly within less than one week, and which in the end in three to four weeks brought results that were unheard of. The result level of improvement over longer terms was at about the 85% level and in many instances the people who had been under medical treatment for many years were able to take care of themselves and to manage their own problem – their bronchial asthma – successfully without any further medication. At this point the results, which were well-documented and researched, were impressive enough that the State Insurance Agency, which was responsible for over 95% of these cases which were extremely costly to them, agreed for the first time in medical history in Germany to pay for this form of treat-

ment which was considered psychotherapy in medicine. In itself this was a historical period, a historical fact for the further development of psychosomatic medicine in Germany in particular and in Europe from there on.

When I saw how the technique worked with this difficult group of patients I really got interested and I took the opportunity to take another workshop with Professor Schultz in Lindau to learn the technique myself, and I then gradually started studying the background and implications, the clinical findings and everything else I could find in the area of autogenic therapy" (Luthe, 1980, p. 4f).

Luthe's allegedly first AT publications were mentioned by Schultz in the preface to the 13th edition of his book "The autogenic training", which he wrote in 1969 (Schultz, 1976, p. VII f), a literature survey of about 2,000 articles on AT (dated 1955)³⁶, an article entitled "The Autogenic Training in the conservative therapy of haemorrhoids" (Luthe, 1957), and an article with the title "Experimental investigations on the influence of Autogenic Training on breathing. 1st statement: frequency and amplitude change from normal-healthy persons" (Luthe, 1958a). Both articles appeared in the *Journal of Psychotherapy and Medical Psychology*, of which Schultz was member of the editorial board (Husmann, 2015, p. 94). Another article titled "psychotherapeutic progress monitoring by projective tests in au-

³⁶ This literature survey could not be found so far, as it might have been only informally made.

togenic training” (Luthe, 1958b) appeared in the context of the Lindau Week in a book written by Ernst Speer.

The estate contains a certificate by Ernst Kretschmer, psychiatrist and full professor at the University of Tübingen and director of the University neurological clinic Tübingen/Neckar, dated July 25th 1957, which indicates that Luthe had “trained in the clinical handling of the double track psychotherapeutic method (focused analytic therapy and graduated active hypnosis [►Audio]) developed by” Kretschmer from May to July 1957 at Tübingen. In addition, he had learned “various hypnosis techniques” in order to “gain an insight into psychophysiologicaly oriented combination therapy” and had made “some investigations into psychophysiological changes in vegetative regulation in autogenic training”³⁷.

Photos including Luthe (► Fig. 14) and Schultz, book receipts and programme excerpts from the estate shows that he attended the 7th Lindau Psychotherapy Week in May 1957, prior to his studies in Tübingen. Other photos suggest that he attended the 15th International Congress of Psychology in Brussels from July 28th to 3rd of August 1957 after his stay in Tübingen.



Fig. 14: Luthe with W. Kretschmer junior at the Lindau Week 1951 (from the estate)

Emigration and further scientific career

Tudhope & Draper (2023, p. 60)^{37b} write that Luthe had emigrated to Canada “in the mid-1940s”. According to Rivera, Luthe emigrated to Canada in 1945³⁸. However, based on the aforementioned research, it seems more unlikely that he emigrated before 1952. Because in 1951 he still worked at the Hamburg University Hospital, attended AT courses by Schultz and studied psychology⁷. Moreover, Luthe did not have a clear-

³⁷ Probably in connection with the aforementioned article by Luthe (1958a).

^{37b} I received a copy of this source thankfully from Judith Wren (London, BAS Chairperson, 2014-2021).

³⁸ <https://www.psicoter.es/actualidad/wolfgang-luthe-biografia-corta> (last access: January 5th 2023)



Fig. 15: Dr. med. Wolfgang Luthe (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed.)

ance certificate regarding freedom of travel before his denazification procedure was completed in July 1950. Hamburg telephone and address books contained no entry for Luthe until 1951. The 1952 yellow pages listed him under the heading “physicians” (“Luthe Wolfg. Dulsberg-Süd 11”³⁹; a note in his Hamburg university file gives the same address as “Dulsberg 11”⁷). In the following three years there were no more entries in

the Hamburg telephone directories⁴⁰. Furthermore, there is an entry in Luthe’s university file from January 1953 stating that his academic achievements during the summer semester in 1951 should at first not be taken into account because of unpaid university fees. The related dunning procedure had been discontinued due to the fact that he “had emigrated to Canada”⁴¹.

Furthermore the estate included a document written in French that was presumably part of Luthe’s Canadian Curriculum Vitae. It says that after his medical graduation in Hamburg, Luthe was continuously engaged in experimental physiology, psychology, internal medicine, psychiatry and psychophysiology and that he was assistant professor of psychophysiology at the Université de Montréal from 1952 to 1958 (see also Schultz & Luthe, 1969, p. I). Another reference corroborating this is the certificate quoted above that Kretschmer sent to Luthe by addressing him as “Dr. Wolfgang Luthe, Professeur en Psychophysologie de l’Université de Montréal/Canada”.

As far as the reasons for the emigration are concerned, there is a reference in the certificate from Jores (see

³⁹ <http://agora.sub.uni-hamburg.de/subhh-adress/digbib/asearch> (last access: November 16th 2019)

⁴⁰ Files relating to Luthe’s license to practise or professional work in Hamburg are unfortunately no longer archived at the Hamburg Medical Association nor the Medical Register of the Hamburg Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians because of the ‘right to be forgotten’ of the current data protection regulations in Europe.

⁴¹ In December 1953 it was added that the fees had now been “paid in full” (University Archive Hamburg, Best. 201c Abtlg. 3: Matriculation cards from 1951).

above) that might be revealing. In the letter ending, Jores expresses his regret that Luthe's "work begun at my clinic cannot be continued", since he no longer saw "any possibility of giving Dr. Luthe a basis for existence". In light of the fact that Luthe married in 1948 and four children were born 1949-1951, the expiration of the scholarship and a consequential loss of professional perspectives might have been a reasons for the family's emigration to Canada⁴².

After their emigration, Luthe soon started his clinical activity in Montreal⁴³ (Luthe, 1962, p. 17). In addition, he lectured at the Université de Montréal and at the McGill University, where he was involved in postgraduate training programmes in psychology and psychiatry³⁸. He also became a member of the International Institute of Stress founded by Hans



Fig. 16: Department of psychosomatic medicine, Kyushu University (<https://www.cephal.med.kyushu-u.ac.jp/about/history.html>)

Selye³⁸. He travelled several times to Japan, where he founded the Oskar Vogt Institute around 1970 together with Prof. Yujiro Ikemi at Kyushu University in Fukuoka⁴⁴. He became its scientific director as well as a visiting professor at the medical faculty there⁴⁵. In Japan he met his second wife Kaori Kyuragi⁴⁴.

⁴² According to Kaori Kyuragi Luthe's personal communication, his first wife and children went to Canada with him, where another child was born. After the separation, his first wife went back to Germany. The marriage certificate at the registry office in Hamburg has a note that she died in Hamburg on May 23th 1980.

⁴³ The 1957 telephone directory of Montreal in Quebec, Canada, first contains an entry "Luthe Wolfgang M.D. physician & surgeon 4933 Piedmont" (http://more.stevemorse.org/montreal_en.html, last access: January 28th 2020). Schultz mentions Luthe's address in Montreal for the first time in the spring of 1960 (Schultz, 1976, p. XIII). Photos of various certificates, kindly sent to me by Kaori Kyuragi Luthe, prove the clinical work as well: Membership of the "Medical Council of Canada" (November 24th 1959) and of the "Collegium Medicorum et Chirurgorum Provincia Quebecensis" (December 1st 1959), "Fellow of the American Association of the Advancement of Science" (February 17th 1965) and "Member of the college of physicians and surgeons of British Columbia (special register to practise psychophysiology)" (October 22th 1982).

⁴⁴ Personal information from Prof. Hitoshi Kasai (Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shizuoka-University, Japan)

⁴⁵ Information about Luthe's functions at the Japanese Oskar Vogt Institute can be found in: The Oskar Vogt Institute, Faculty of Medicine, Kyushu University (1970). In a publication, Luthe (1986, p. 89) wrote that he had been "scientific director of the Oskar Vogt Institute, University of Düsseldorf". However, according to the Cécile & Oskar Vogt Institute for Neuroscience at the

Luthe's training centre for AT at Lac des Deux Montagnes near Montreal was also visited by international students – including the founders of the British Association for Autogenic Training and Therapy (BAFATT, which became BAS in 1999³²), Malcolm Carruthers and Vera Diamond, as well as Luis de Rivera, founder of the Asociación Española de Psicoterapia³⁸ (see also Tudhope & Draper, 2023, p. 58ff).

In 1979, Luthe moved to Vancouver in British Columbia where he continued his publication work as well as his clinical work at the Simon Fraser University³⁸. He founded the “Autogenic Therapy Information Centre” in North Vancouver⁴⁶ and pursued his “passion since childhood”, namely sailing³⁸.

International dissemination of AT and differences between Schultz and Luthe

In 1958, Schultz held a lecture at the 4th International Psychotherapy Congress in Barcelona (Husmann, 2022b,

p. 100) and Luthe produced “an English translation pragmatically condensed for USA” (Schultz, 1976, p. XIII) of “The Autogenic Training” in Montreal at the same year (Schultz, 1964, p. 162). In 1959, their first joint article titled “Autogenic Training. A psychophysiological approach to psychotherapy” was published in English by Grune & Stratton, which continued to publish many of Luthe's subsequent publications (cf. Luthe, 1970a, p. 201f).

In 1961 Luthe lectured on AT in front of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis in St. Louis (USA; Luthe, 1962). On June 5th 1961, at the 3rd World Congress of Psychiatry in Montreal, he co-founded the International Committee for the Coordination of Clinical Application and Teaching of Autogenic Training (ICAT) and became its first president⁴⁷, Schultz becoming an honorary member (Luthe, 1961b; Husmann, 2022b, p. 102f). Luthe's estate included a photo which was probably taken on that occasion (► Fig. 17, the caption is unfortunately partially covered).

University of Düsseldorf from October 2nd 2019 and according to the University Archives Düsseldorf from October 7th 2019, this is not true.

⁴⁶ This is evidenced by the copy of an exchange of letters between Rivera and Luthe from 1980, kindly sent by Dr. Rivera.

⁴⁷ In 1994, Yuji Sasaki from Japan succeeded Luthe. In 2011, Luis de Rivera from Spain succeeded and the name of the committee was changed, “Autogenic Training” becoming “Autogenic Therapy”. ICAT networked members from Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, the FRG and the GDR, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the USSR, Yugoslavia and other countries. On September 20th 2014 “The International Society for Autogenic Training & Psychotherapy” (ISATAP) was founded in Madrid out of the ICAT, while Rivera remained president (Husmann, 2022b, p. 102).



Fig. 17: Rojnev (USSR), J. H. Schultz (FRG), Pichot (France), Cedercreutz (Finland), Jus (Poland), Luthe (Canada), unknown; photo with high probability in the context of the foundation of the International Committee for the Coordination of Clinical Application and Teaching of Autogenic Training (ICAT) on June 5th, 1961 at the 3rd World Congress of Psychiatry in Montreal (from the estate).

Schultz praised Luthe's engagement for the international dissemination of AT as follows:

"In June 1961, at the World Congress of Psychiatry in Montreal/Canada, my translator and assistant Wolfgang Luthe brought autogenic training to general attention and a discussion meeting, which was well attended^[48] and prolonged because of its interest. Luthe deserves special thanks for being a pioneer in supporting the method in the USA, since it is probably particu-

larly suitable for Americans" (Schultz, 1964, 159; cf. Luthe, 1963).

The "pragmatically condensed" (Schultz, 1976, p. XIII) English translation of "The Autogenic Training" came out in 1969, a year before Schultz's death, and was distributed among the first three volumes of Luthe and Schultz's co-authored "Autogenic Therapy" series:

1. Autogenic Methods (Schultz & Luthe, 1969)

⁴⁸ About 150 audience members were present (cf. Luthe, 1961b), among them Milton H. Erickson (USA), Pierre Geissmann (France), Arthur Spencer Paterson (Great Britain), Dietfried Müller-Hegemann (GDR), Dietrich Karl Langen and P. Polzien (both FRG), Berthold Stokvis (Netherlands) and A. Jus (Poland).

2. Medical Application (Luthe & Schultz, 1969a)
3. Application in Psychotherapy (Luthe & Schultz, 1969b)

Underneath their cooperation aimed at promoting AT internationally, significant differences between Schultz and Luthe started to emerge. In this sense, Wallnöfer has already pointed out that Luthe favoured limiting the AT standard exercises to 30-60 sec. of passive concentration and repeating the formula (e.g. “My right arm is heavy”) to the patients [► Audio]; thereupon, patients were instructed to mentally reiterate the formula themselves (Schultz & Luthe, 1969, p. 25). In terms of methodology and didactics of AT, Schultz and Luthe acted in “two truly opposing ways” (Wallnöfer in Rivera, 2017, p. 16). Meaning, Schultz’s maxim was: “The patient practises, the doctor is silent” (ibid.). This reflects Schultz’s concept that the concentrative self-relaxation should develop autogenously, *id est* out of the self. It was precisely this therapeutic distance and refrainment from hetero-suggestive treatment that was fundamental to Schultz and considered an unique attribute of AT compared to related methods (cf. Krampen, 2013, p. 55f; Husmann, 2022b, p. 104; for a more detailed and critical discussion, see also Krampen, 2013, p. 302f; Husmann, 2009, p. 85). According to Wallnöfer, this conceptual difference was:

“contributed to the tension between [...] Luthe and [...] Schultz [...], which is not generally known. [...] Luthe, as is well known, lets speak at the begin-

ning in all his publications. The diplomat [...] Schultz never really fought out this dispute, perhaps because he knew that there was nothing to be won. After all, the ‘autogenic principle’ was never given much attention in its fundamental meaning, which caused Schultz some headaches. [...] He spoke little about it in public, but with me several times” (Wallnöfer in Husmann, 2022b, p. 7).

Luthe’s Concept of Autogenic Training and Autogenic Therapy

After the death of Schultz in 1970, Luthe published the following three volumes of the series “Autogenic Therapy” as single author:

4. Research and Theory (Luthe, 1970a)
5. Dynamics of Autogenic Neutralization (Luthe, 1970b)
6. Treatment with Autogenic Neutralization (Luthe, 1973)

“Passive Acceptance”

Within his discourse, “passive acceptance” in practising AT had a special significance for Luthe (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 2007, p. 56f; Rivera, 2017, p. 108f, ► Audio). Whilst a “formula-bound” passive concentration is practised at the AT basic level, he preferred a “formula-free” passive acceptance for the upper level (Kraft, 2004, p. 182). He also spoke of a “carte blanche”, in the sense “that the images rising from the unconscious should be projected onto a white screen, a white, i.e. blank map”

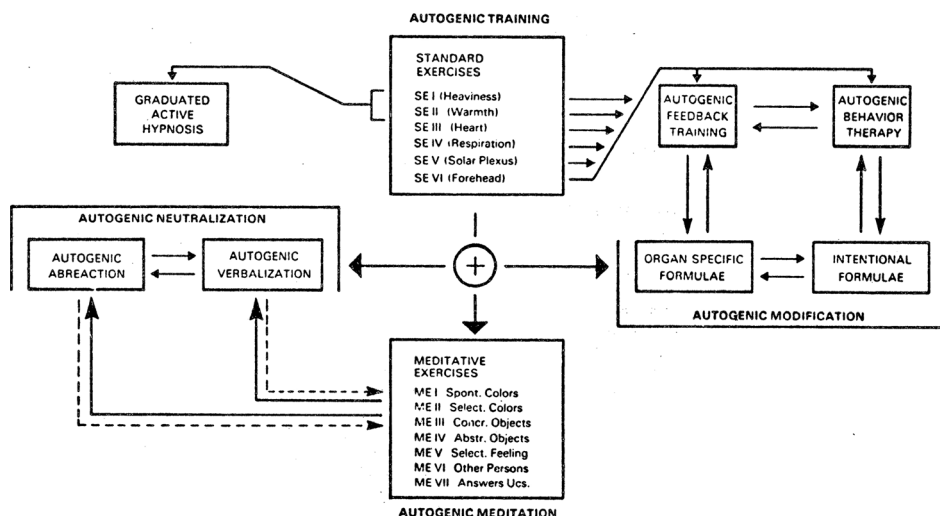


Fig. 18: Autogenic methods combinations and procedural interaction (Luthe, 1977, p. 3; see also Krampen, 2013, Luthe 1966, 1973 ► Audio)

(ibid.). Therefore, Luthe's view has considerable intersections with the free-floating attention of psychoanalysis or the awareness concept of Gestalt therapy or mindfulness-based stress reduction.

The views of Schultz and Luthe did not contradict each other at this point, but Schultz's perspective was strongly rooted in his hypnotherapeutic experiences. That is why he defined the mental state into which the AT standard exercises lead as "hypnoid" and worked at the AT upper level with "questions to the unconscious". Luthe, conversely, defined it as "answers from the unconscious" (ibid., ► Fig. 18).

"Autogenic Discharges" and "Autogenic Abreaction"

On another level, Luthe intensively investigated the so-called "autogenous discharges" (cf. Luthe 1961a). These are:

"involuntary muscular activities, itching, tingling, pain, but also complex processes such as laughing fits, crying, etc., that occur during exercise [...]" (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 200, p. 165).

Whereas such phenomena like "paradoxical reactions" (i.e. the intensification of tension when trying to relax) are often considered by other experts in the field as temporary irritations (for an overview, see Krampen, 2013, p. 329-342), Luthe stated that according to his observations these

discharges would for instance be more frequent in cases of “strong sexual and affective deprivation” and “often coupled with preceding events”, like “defensive movements after accidents or attacks, pent-up restrained attack impulses, etc”.⁴⁹ (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 200, p. 165).

Based on these assumptions, Luthe placed autogenic discharges and their abreaction in an overarching neuro-psychophysiological framework, which deviated considerably from Schultz’s conception:

“The release of various forms of spontaneous discharges during the autogenic state seems to indicate that there exists natural tendency for a self-regulatory safety mechanism which enables the brain to discharge nervous impulse from those areas and neural systems which are overloaded or which have a need for discharge because of unknown reasons. We consider our findings as evidence that the autogenic state supports this hypothetical protective and self-regulatory brain mechanism by facilitating spontaneous discharges.

In following up the hypothesis that there exists a ‘safety-discharge-mechanism’ which enables parts of the brain to get rid of an overload of nervous impulses, it was attempted to use autogenic principles, to promote the activity of the ‘safety-discharge mechanism’ more effectively. In other words, the Autogenic Exercises were

not terminated in the usual fashion, but, analogous to the principles of the Meditative Training [i.e. the AT upper level author’s note], prolonged, so as to give the brain a better chance to discharge whatever it wanted to discharge. This procedure implies maintenance of a passive and casual attitude of the patient [= passive acceptance or ‘carte blanche’; author’s note], and [...] a minimum of support, direction, or other interference by the therapist.

When these principles are observed, the brain will take the opportunity to continue or to start to discharge in a similar, however progressively more systematic and organized, way as it does during the conventional Standard Exercises. The autogenic discharges tend to become more and more differentiated and complex. The pattern and the sequence of the discharges may be limited and/or dominated by a certain functional dimension as, for example, pain or visual experiences, or they may involve a combination of various physiological systems (e.g. respiration, cardiovascular, sexual arousal, muscular, autonomic, sensory, visual, auditory, olfactory [Sensations; author’s note]) simultaneously.

[...] The application of autogenic principles for the promotion of the activity of a hypothetical self-regulatory discharge mechanism which facilitates discharges from various parts of

⁴⁹ The question arises whether Luthe’s own experiences, eventually due to his experiences in World War II or in the Nazi era, might have played a role for this focus. In the case of Schultz, his heavy asthma played an important role in relation to the development of AT, which he was able to reduce by deep relaxation from inside (Husmann, 2017, 2020a, 2022b).

the brain is considered as a therapeutic extension of Autogenic Training" (Luthe, 1961a, p. 487-488; see also Luthe, Jus & Geissmann, 1963; Luthe 1965; ► Audio).

In short, "a multitude of functionally disturbing and non-disturbing material" would accumulate in the brain and self-regulatory mechanisms would reduce these "energies in the sense of homeostasis" by causing "discharges from the respective brain area" (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 2007, p. 165f). Rivera sees in this assumption a "hardly contradicted hypothesis" of Luthe (ibid.). Schultz's disagreement with Luthe on these views is demonstrated through a letter from him from 1965⁵⁰, which at the same time reflects his "diplomatic attitude" towards Luthe:

"I share reservations about the somatocentric speculations of colleague L. [= Luthe; author's note], but perhaps such deductions are not so alienating for the USA mentality, and generally speaking a small discussion can only enliven. In my opinion, L.'s theses should be appreciated without neglecting critical concerns" (Schultz, 1965).

In a similar way, Krampen also criticized "Luthe's neurophysiological speculations and their reductionist transfer to psychodynamic processes" (2013, p. 85).

"Autogenic Neutralization"

Based on his understanding of autogenic discharge and abreaction, Luthe conceived the concept of autogenic neutralization (Luthe, 1965, 1966, 1973). Arguing that the self-regulated neuro-psychophysiological process throughout which "the neuronal-pathogenic excitation corresponding to the engrams of traumatic incidents is reduced and gradually eliminated" (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 2007, p. 57f). In addition he considered it as a therapeutic method, which uses autogenic verbalization to further support the autogenic abreaction, if necessary (Luthe, 1970b, 1973)⁵¹.

A technical prerequisite on the side of the patient is sufficient practise with the AT basic level, so that he can safely initiate the general vegetative switch and deliberately stay in a mode of mindful passive acceptance (Rivera in Stumm & Pritz, 2007, p. 56-57). In this way, the patient can perceive and accept inner and outer processes being an observer, without wanting to reject nor judging the experience made, similar to what is useful and necessary for practicing the upper level of AT. After performing the AT standard exercises, the focus of attention is directed to autogenic discharges or their consequences, contrary to the autogenic emergence and forming of inner im-

⁵⁰ A copy of this letter from Schultz to Oswald Meier from December 1965 (presumably both referred to Luthe 1961a) was kindly sent to me by Dr. Heinrich Wallnöfer, before he died on February 10th 2022.

⁵¹ This form of autogenic therapy is better known in the USA, Canada, Japan, and Great Britain (e.g., Bird, 2015) than in German-speaking countries.

ages in the AT upper level. Concurrently, the practitioner describes

“[...] (ideally on tape) continuously all realized formula contents, as well as all accompanying sensations, thoughts, feelings and physical appearance (sweating, palpitations, dizziness, etc.). Both the practitioner and the therapist accept these manifestations, respect them and consider these individual processes as a part of the neutralization process. The practitioner's active participation in his treatment includes a subsequent reflection on what he has experienced. The content of the tape is written down and read aloud, thus expressing the experience again in the waking state. This also includes the writing of a commentary, with the effort to work out different emphases and aspects of the experience. The results are discussed with the exercise leader, preferably in individual sessions” (Derra, Hoffmann & Stetter, eds., 2004, p. 270).

Rivera (in Stumm & Pritz, 2007, p. 56f) points out that this autogenic verbalization should be performed “without intervening or changing its content” and that the

“procedure is more a verbal simultaneous translation of the subjective experience during the autogenic state, rather than its explanation, intellectualization, etc. [...] The therapist never interprets during the session” (ibid.).

In the progress of the therapeutic work, the patient would develop “insights into his unconscious dynamics” and “material would be brought to light” that is “suitable for psychoanalytic interpretation” (ibid.), whereas Rivera also elsewhere understands autogenous abreaction, verbalization and neutralization in a psychoanalytic context (cf. Rivera 1977, 1997).

Derra, Hoffmann & Stetter (2004, p. 270) wrote that “relatively little time [...] is dedicated to psychoanalytically oriented work” and that the form of “catharsis” described here can “be regarded as a ‘non-autogenic but closely related method’ [Luthe, 1976], since it mobilizes and releases repressed material”.

Audio recordings

In addition to books, scripts and photo albums, the estate also contained five audio tapes with a workshop recording from 1974^{51b}. It was probably made in collaboration with the American Biofeedback Society⁵². These records illustrate some of the conceptual aspects that have been discussed so far and give a vivid impression of Luthe's perspective on AT.

^{51b} Many thanks to I. O'Brien-Docker, the grandson of Wolfgang Luthe, who digitized the audio recordings so that they could be edited thematically afterwards.

⁵² Whose “Award of the Year” Luthe received in 1980 “for demonstrating that by use of Autogenic Feedback Training one could restore equilibrium to the under- or over-active thyroid gland” (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed., p. 458).

B. Husmann: Biographical data and selected conceptual influences of Wolfgang Luthe

| | |
|---|---|
|  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>The development of autogenic training</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [4'58"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Detailed exploration and examination before starting the treatment with autogenic training/therapy</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [9'18"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |
|  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Overview of autogenic approaches</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [3'40"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Recommendations and responsibilities when applying autogenic training and other autogenic methods</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [29'10"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |
|  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Introduction - the first standard exercise "heaviness"</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [22'34"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Active vs. passive concentration / autogenic state / autogenic discharges / autogenic abreaction / autogenic verbalization</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [29'48"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |
|  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Partial exercise: "My neck and shoulders are heavy"</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [2'40"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |  <p>Luthe, Wolfgang (1974)</p> <p>Graduated active hypnosis (Ernst Kretschmer)</p> <p>Excerpt of a workshop recording from the estate [2'45"]</p> <p>Please scan.</p> <p>Part of the exhibition "Over 100 years of autogenic training"</p> |

Additional cathartic exercises and the Creativity Mobilization Technique

Luthe developed these two approaches further by designing additional off-loading exercises. These cathartic sequences are placed after the AT exercises and, if necessary,

practised independently at home. Later followed "Creativity Mobilization Technique"⁵³ (Luthe, 1976⁵⁴). In 1982 he wrote about this in a workshop paper³⁵:

"Clinical observations and research data accumulated during the past 20 years [see final notes; author's note] have helped us to advance our under-

⁵³ In this context, Luthe's assumption is in line with the concept that during an AT exercise, not only does the general vegetative system switches towards parasympathetic activity and a trophotropic reaction, but also occurs an involuntary switch from left to right hemispheric brain activity (Rivera, 2018, p. 94; unfortunately, Rivera does not give a source for this, so that the origin of this hypothesis cannot be stated more precisely).

⁵⁴ 2013 relaunched by BAS

standing of the therapeutic nature of the practise of Autogenic Training. The historical notion that Autogenic Training is just a 'Relaxation Method' has undergone progressive modifications.

As more data from experimental and clinical studies became available, we learned to appreciate the therapeutic significance of homeostatic controlled mechanisms. The increasing evidence that the regular practise of autogenic exercises greatly facilitate the otherwise restricted capacity of functions that aim at functional selfadjustment led to a reorientation of therapeutic management. It became increasingly important to help nature's own systems to perform their self-regulatory (homeostatic) activities in a more efficient manner. In pursuing the question how to tailor such prohomeostatic assistance, it was soon evident that the answers were not to be found through further enhancement of 'deepening' of relaxation. It was more likely to find useful answers to the management tasks of providing pro-homeostatic assistance through a better understanding of nature's own self-help activities.

[...] In pursuing this objective, two developments were of invaluable help. First, the development of the method of Autogenic Abreaction (A. A.) and second, [...] Creativity Mobilization Technique (C.M.T.). [...] The results obtained through A.A. or C.M.T. were not obtainable by Autogenic Training [A.T.] alone. It was also clear

that neither could substitute for the other.

[...] The next step was guided by the question whether it might be possible to enhance treatment work with Autogenic Training by addressing specific areas of homeostatically distributing material more directly without the use of A.T., A.A. or C.M.T. Although it was clear that such intentionally focused approaches would reduce or eliminate the participation of essential integrative functions as characteristic for the autogenic state, A.A. or C.M.T., various procedures were tested.

The approaches under discussion were essentially 'copies' of nature's own homeostatic procedures. However, instead of waiting until homeostatic mechanisms took their opportunity to effectively engage in self-regulatory 'clean-up' activities, the 'functional copies' were aiming at preemption through intentional practise. Such intentionally applied pre-homeostatic procedures were not intended to act as substitutes for A.T., A.A. or C.M.T. They were considered as complementary approaches designed to assist homeostatic mechanisms in their work to reduce the disturbing potency of accumulated neuronal impulse material".

In his last years of life, Luthe prepared an extensive German edition of his book series "Autogenic Therapy" and wrote a biography on Oskar Vogt³⁸ (cf. Luthe 1969a, b, 1970c,

1971)⁵⁵. On January 8th 1985 he died unexpectedly at the age of 62 in Vancouver after being shortly treated for pneumonia in a hospital⁵⁶. His wife Kaori Kyuragi was at his side. The funeral took place in Canada, but his ashes were taken to Germany at his own request (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed., p. 458).

Final notes

The focus of this article, which was written in the context of the exhibition “Over 100 Years of Autogenic Training” (Husmann, 2022b), concentrates on the biography of Luthe and his conceptual contributions to AT.

The informative value of the biographical data is limited because some important data are still missing, and on the other hand, many aspects lacked personal classification⁵⁷. Thus, it can only be speculated about Luthe’s political stance based on his verified membership in the HJ and the NSDAP. It also remains elusive to what extent his presumably very stressful war experiences and his severe wounding in Demyansk have influenced his later research on autogenic discharge, abreaction and neutralization.



Fig. 19: Dr. med. Wolfgang Luthe (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed.)

The presentation of Luthe’s conceptual contributions to AT is of course limited by the fact that it would have been beyond the scope of this article to give a complete literature summary in view of Luthe’s extensive publications list. Likewise, Luthe’s many workshop handouts or the studies of the work of Oskar Vogt are not part of this article. For the same reasons, a discussion of Luthe’s empirical results is not included. Such a discussion would, nonetheless, be a worthwhile topic for subsequent research. Schultz based the first publi-

⁵⁵ According to the Cécile & Oskar Vogt Institute for Brain Research at the University of Düsseldorf, invitations and other organizational correspondence from Luthe as well as the typescript of a lecture given by him on the occasion of the 100th birthday of Oskar Vogt (“The Significance of O. Vogt’s Life Work for Developments in Psychotherapy”, C.&O. Vogt Archive, vol. 956) and also Luthe (1969a, b) are archived there (C.&O. Vogt-Archive, vol. 746).

⁵⁶ Personal information from Dr. Rivera

⁵⁷ Luthe is said to have been “a very private person” (Russel & Russel, 1985, ed., p. 458).

cation of “The Autogenic Training” in 1932 on his experience with 2,028 patients (Husmann, 2017, p. 80). For the effectiveness of the standard exercises of the AT basic level, there are several highly qualitative empirical studies on their preventive and therapeutic areas of application (Krampen, 2013, p. 121ff; Husmann, 2022, p. 52ff; Michaux, 2023). It still needs to be discussed to what degree these results are reciprocally transferable, when the methodological, didactic and conceptual differences between Schultz and Luthe are taken into account. Also, a discussion on Luthe’s research methodology, his study design as well as underlying number of participants would be very interesting.

In addition, it would be worthwhile to conduct a survey that compares the empirical results of autogenic psychotherapy as it is practised and financed in Austria (strongly influenced by Heinrich Wallnöfer and of the catathym-imaginative psychotherapy according to Hanscarl Leuner) with those from Great Britain, Japan, Canada or the USA (strongly influenced by Luthe), where presumably more autogenic neutralization is practised. When discussing such questions, it should be taken into account that there are regionally different academic traditions and different relaxation cultures, which should be respected and critically appreciated, even if this makes a direct comparison of results difficult. After all, just as it is not useful or desirable to continue to replicate, for example, a

Euro- or U.S.-centric perspective, it would not be helpful in discussing the above questions to fall into a polarisation of ‘Schultz-centred’ vs. ‘Luthe-centred’.

Another interesting reflection would be to relate Luthe’s conception of autogenic discharge, abreaction and neutralization as well as his related neuro-psychophysiological theses to other treatment methods. With regard to the time when Luthe developed his concepts, these could be body-therapeutic methods such as bioenergetics, bioenergetic analysis according to Reich, Lowen, etc., since they were also ‘booming’ in the USA between the 1960s and the 1980s and are dealing with the release of pathogenic tensions as well as the transformation of associated patterns. The same applies to Focusing according to Gendlin in relation to his “felt sense” and “felt shift” (Luthe, Jus & Geissmann, 1965, spoke of “Autogenic State” and “Autogenic Shift”), or to Gestalt therapy, which expanded during this time from the more confrontational style of Fritz Perls to the more integrative one of Lore Perls. It is conceivable that Luthe may have been influenced by these or similar therapy concepts, especially with regard to his neuro-psychophysiological conceptualisations. In terms of content, it would also be interesting to refer to newer methods such as Somatic Experiencing (according to Levine) or with regard to “neurogenic tremor” the Trauma and Tension Releasing Exercises

(according to Berceli, cf. Winkler, 2018, 2022).

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