Observations after an operation.

When I came out of the anaesthetic I had nothing but a feeling of anger. I saw the nurse standing on my left-hand side in the same way as when she had given me the drug which put me to sleep, and I heard myself saying angrily, "Now why did you wait so long? I can see I have woken up too early, and I have a pain where I did not have one before." I was then told that it was some time after the operation. This feeling of anger, dissatisfaction with the world, persecution, was rather striking at the time in contrast to my actual appreciation that it had all been done so easily, quickly, without my knowing it; helpfulness, and pleasure that it was over, which did not seem to appear at this moment at all.

I have been told that people are accustomed to putting things away from the bed table with patients after an operation, because they are likely to wake up and knock everything off the table. It confirms something I worked out before about
about the little girl, who felt so persecuted by something having been done to her without her knowing what it was.

It is clear from the following account that what had been done while I was unconscious was at least in some aspects, because this came out again, an attack and injury, and had stirred distrust. I found it very difficult to take interest in anything in these first three or four days. I could not take the usual interest—Dimly, when people came, though I felt pleased at seeing Judy and Eric, and about flowers arriving, and found myself all the time trying to take interest, also taking it to some extent, but of a different kind, some other quality about it.

There was some feeling of unreality about it as if I was lost somewhere and could not get out of it. At the same time I noticed what was going on around me, and felt pleased with the flowers which had come, and especially when I thought that some flowers which were signed by the initials only, and I thought they had come from M. (which was, however, erroneous.)

I had inner discomfort and even some pain, but not very
strongly, and more unpleasant was the feeling of discomfort in my stomach and lack of appetite.

On the fourth day I observed the sun shining on the brick wall, which was all I could see from my bed. I felt very pleased with this sunshine, but discovered that I tried to strengthen these feelings of pleasure, suddenly realizing that this whole sunshine on the wall was absolutely artificial and untrue to me. Suddenly a realization of a feeling of loss of reality and of something which I could not define came over me, and I realized that I was trying to regain relations which had been broken off. Also a relation with grief and the ways of overcoming grief. I felt a great dislike of the food, which I thought very tasteless, and especially did I dislike on this occasion some fish. The same night which followed this realization I had a dream in which I saw an enormous fish, which I got frightened of in the dream. In this dream there was something about my
sucking or wanting to suck this fish, and then it turning into something very terrifying. My first association was 'fish-face', which E. so often calls J., who in those days especially represented a good and motherly figure to me, being very loving and pleasant with me, and coming to see me every day.

Then there were in this dream some waterfalls and an important reason to shut a door against the dangers of this water, and J.O. was to do this, but I felt I could not rely on him at all, and everything seemed to go wrong. There was, however, a strong feeling connected with the internal discomfort, that all these things went wrong inside me.

Here are assocns. with J.O., who has been so disappointing, on whom I could not rely in such important things; and trains of associations in connection with present circumstances as well as with a father whom I could not trust externally and internally, a mother whom I had sucked into me and who had turned into such a horrible creature as the fish was.
The next night, having again experienced, and being aware of the internal discomfort, I saw a bathroom with the bath tab turned up, gas blowing up and everything going to bits. My first assocns. were to my inside and the blowing up of things there, in connection with the assocns. of bad internal objects who had deserted me.

Along with these frightening dreams, which were followed by anxiety dreams, I felt that the relations to people became more real, the world less artificial, and that deep anxiety situations connected with the inside had, as it were, cut off my relation with external objects. It is, of course, more complicated than this, because I felt very strong gratitude and a very friendly relation to the surgeon, who came to see me every day, and who even seemed to take great interest in some of the psychological aspects which I discussed with him, and who said quite spontaneously and before I gave him such details that he feels sure that
Notes on Operation, continued.

FURTHER ASSOCIATIONS.

Where I was speaking of this dream which followed my dislike of fish:

In one part of the dream I looked at the rocks and saw rocks and in between smaller stones, which the water... and the sun was shining on the it. Here is a connection with my watching the sun shining on the brick wall.

When I tried to make contact with the world again and to think it is all very nice and pleasant, but in the dream catch myself with the feeling 'Do I not try now to make this much nicer because really I am afraid of all that?'

To Mr. J., who was to stem the tide and had to shut some door, but let me down in the dream (as I feel he has done in reality), it seemed important that there were certain compartments to be kept water-tight, and that is really what he had not succeeded in helping me in. Now one of my first assocns. in the morning to that part of the dream was of course that
he is unreliable, he did not help me in such important matters. My pain and frustration in this connection and the bad effects which I think it has in important matters, leading straight on in my history to the disappointment with him; but at the same time I had a strong feeling in the dream of internal processes—that this shut door, this compartment, keeping watertight, really meant keeping my internal objects separate from each other, which was, however, so difficult because the good ones were entirely unreliable, i.e. E. J. and A. playing such important parts in my life. That led on to the people who operated on me and whom I tried so much to keep as helpful objects, because otherwise they had just injured and done harm to me. In the dream it was following these feelings that something sinister was behind the beauty, which I tried to cling to, and then it led on to the other part with the fish. Now this fish to begin with was a flat fish like a plaice, but not very much like,
and I seemed here to cling to the part, to tell myself it is quite nice; but the fish grew under my eyes, and then suddenly jumped up off the water, now a real monster (I felt it to be at the moment) and he suddenly jumped at my mouth, putting out some sucking part, as it were sucking my lips. The next assocns., which I mentioned, were 'fish-face' (J.) her being pregnant at the time, expecting the baby I was so interested in, her teeth, which are protruding, and her being the obvious good mother figure, whom, through the expected baby, she represents to me. My assocn. to this sudden attack on my mouth was the projection in it—that this frightening fish-face, eating, good mother, was so because of my similar intense and dangerous attacks on her breast with my teeth and intensely sucking mouth. This led, of course, to assocns. about my own oral greed, frustrations in connection with my mother, and reminded me of the detail of my history which I have been told, of the fit I had when I was 10 months old, in which I went blue, and my uncle ran for the doctor because
it seemed so serious. This fit was supposed to have occurred because my wet-nurse gave me pastry to eat. It always had a sinister meaning in my mind because my mother had warned me not to mention it to anybody, thinking it would be detrimental, obviously because fits, in her mind, had some direct connection with possible epilepsy. I realized later, and especially in this connection, that the hidden and sinister was due to my guilt and fears about the rage and anger and sadism which must have gone along with this fit, including my whole relation to the breast. In this connection it is of course interesting that I should have received the breast by this nurse (who was called rather crazy, but quite a good woman) any time when I wanted it. This dream, through various details which got lost, seemed to bring in the relation to the good but frightening mother.

(But in this relation with J. of course, the reality of the disappointment with M., especially strongly felt at this time, is very important, and also entered strongly into my
assocns. together with sorrow and pain. Then the father, represented through J. and A. and in my assocns - a whole chain of assocns - my painful relation with my father came in. In the background, Mr. M., the good surgeon, who had represented the good father but whom I did not trust in the dream material. All this brought into connection with present and past history was very strongly in connection with the present, but was all internalized. Now this feeling of these objects internalized I never had as strongly as in this dream. It really opened my eyes so very much to things which I had repeatedly seen in patients but not experienced so strongly about myself. This vivid feeling of internalized processes was of course strengthened and stimulated by the actual discomfort inside me, but on the other hand that just helped me to understand the meaning of this internal discomfort.

The next night, in the dream about the bathroom being
topsy-turvy, the bath tipped upside down, fire breaking out, water rushing, went exactly on the same lines and again had very strong assocns. with very painful actual experiences, phases in my relation to A. of humiliation, disappointment, pain; which now seemed to connect with feelings of internal destruction, of having been destroyed internally by me, and the content of this dream, however different from the dream of the night before, seemed to fall in the unconscious material. The destroyed bathroom also became clear as the inside of my own mother... Even assocns. of masturbation in connection with the destroyed bathroom; and here was a link with A. in this very unpleasant experience and memory of my visit in Silesia came in. I was very surprised, again though I knew this very well from my patients, to find how strongly the mental work done in connection with these two dreams altered my psychological state. I have mentioned before that I had recovered in these following days actually
greater contact with things and people, that there were
important changes on this line, but it was very surprising to
me how strong this changed relation was. I recovered to some
extent the early feeling of people becoming more real, more
trustworthy, less vague, ephemeral - a feeling which I had a
strong conviction I must have gone through in an early stage.
I had the feeling, which I have again noticed so often in
patients and which stands for a memory, in which a feeling
appears as if it had been so in early childhood. Now this
revival of feeling which I experienced meant the early stages
in which I tried to cling to people, (such a strong feature in
my early life) strong clinging to objects) against these fears
of inner destruction and persecution.
extremely early fears are stirred through an operation; that it takes one back into quite early times, and that in his view, to recover from an operation is more determined by mastering it psychologically than physically.

I did keep these two dreams quite clearly in my mind. and I was doing a lot of work with myself at this time, I could watch step by step the connection between deep internal anxieties, the external experiences that I had been overwhelmed, cut open, attacked from within, and loss of belief in internal and external objects. That needs qualifying, because at the same time I felt pleasure about the people I liked who came and felt grateful to the surgeon. The process I experienced in mourning was to some extent revived, but much less strongly and more easily overcome. I felt, however, a deep longing for people I had mourned, and grief; and feelings of being hurt were accentuated. I felt my system was 'shocked'. Various characteristics were similar to those in mourning — great sensitiveness, very strong resentment for the slightest
thing in which I felt hurt or discomfort - e.g. when I rang
the bell and it was not answered - all these things seemed like
a psychological assault on me. At the same time I had a great
feeling of dependence and anxiety of the nurse - a ridiculous
fact that for a whole week I allowed the nurse to wash my
face with soap and warm water, a thing which I thoroughly
dislike. It was after a week I objected, and then had it done
the way I wanted it. I was a marvellous patient up to this
moment, which I was sure was connected with anxiety of the
nurse. I became more difficult in the second week, when I
discovered that the food was actually tasteless and not only
FELT it to be so
because I was to blame, and when, it is true, they also took
less care to come in than in the first week. But I took a
great dislike to the hospital, so much that I wanted to leave
it earlier taking a nurse with me, but did not do this because
it seemed too unpractical.

Feelings were so much more unbalanced - resentment and
then again gratitude and satisfaction and reassurance on
the other hand.

The work I did with myself showed me how, when I could bring out to consciousness these deep anxieties of persecution inside and outside, I regained my balance, trust in external people, relation with them, while the internal situation had improved. I am convinced that what is called a 'shock to the system' is a revival of earliest internal anxiety-situations due to what is felt to be an attack from without and within through the operation, and internal discomfort and pain reviving the early fears of internal persecution. The effect of the work I could do myself on this line was very striking to me.