

PSYCHOLOGY

Life in Comic Strip World

► THE WORLD of the "funnies" is not the rough-and-tumble land of murder and mayhem that some adults think.

The truly altruistic, humanitarian atmosphere that pervades the comic strip was disclosed by a study of 52 nationally syndicated comic strips, including most of the favorites, conducted by Drs. Marvin Spiegelman, Carl Terwilliger and Franklin Fearing of the University of California.

The world of the comic strip is a man's world, the scientists found. Not only are there twice as many male as female characters, but the males fulfill more active roles, commonly outside the home, whereas the female characters take the more passive, "homey" parts.

Far from being a brute, the hero of the comic strip has as his chief goal service to the community. Recreation (sport) is also a chief interest as is the attaining of status.

Although a good many male characters are eager to gain wealth, disapproval of this goal is shown by the fact that this is the object of the unsympathetic characters—the villains.

Women in the funnies also want to serve, but their goal of second importance is romantic love instead of sport.

In this world the men are not primarily concerned with wooing and winning women. The women seek love while the men pursue sport.

There are very few villainous women in the comic strip world, but those who exist try to gain power and status.

A disproportionate number of comic strip women are from the upper classes, such as princesses. Men are more frequently from the lower economic brackets.

Both upper and lower classes are sympathetically presented. Both upper and lower class men seek above all to serve their fellow men. Justice and adventure are also sought after. Romantic love and vengeance are almost never goals for men.

Upper class women devote themselves to being loved and lovable; middle class girls try to make their way through hard work; lower class girls devote themselves to the service of others and to accepting their fate.

Details of the study are reported in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. (May)

Science News Letter, August 1, 1953

AERONAUTICS

British Pilots Wear Air-Cooled Suits

► BRITISH PILOTS soon will be wearing air-cooled suits while waiting inside their planes on landing fields in the blistering tropics. Air is pumped under the pilot's clothes to keep his body cool. The more clothes the pilot dons, the cooler he is.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1953



SUPER-SWITCH—This giant switch for electric utilities can withstand a lightning stroke of 1,300,000 volts. The switch blade, about 17-feet long, can be operated manually or by an electric motor.

• RADIO

Saturday, August 8, 1953, 3:15-3:30 p.m., EDT
"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS station.

Dr. Kenneth Landauer, assistant medical director, National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, will discuss "Polio Patients Breathing Again."

ASTRONOMY

Star Can Grow in Three Million Years

► ONLY ABOUT three million years, a short time astronomically speaking, would be required for a star five times the size of the sun to grow "appreciably" when trapped in an interstellar cloud.

Dr. W. H. McCrea of the University of London made this estimate to the Royal Astronomical Society meeting in London.

Such a growth rate would furnish fresh hydrogen at least as fast as it is used up by the star. The growth, or accretion, theory was developed to account for the young, massive stars—giants in the sky some 30 to more than 100 times as massive as our sun.

Approximately one star in a million in our galaxy is of such a type, about five million years old, compared to an estimated five billion years for the age of the sun.

When a star is trapped in an interstellar cloud, the material just falls on to the star under gravity, Dr. McCrea stated.

For a star with a mass about twice that of the sun, "appreciable accretion takes place" in about eight million years. The accretion theory was first proposed by Drs. Fred Hoyle and R. A. Lyttleton, both of St. John's College, Cambridge, England. Dr. H. Bondi of Cambridge University has helped in its development.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1953

ELECTRONICS

Wonder Crystal Junctions Marked Electrolytically

► ELECTRONIC DEVICES, such as transistors, that substitute for electronic tubes depend upon one part of the germanium of which they are made conducting electrons, while the other part of the crystal does not.

A new way of discovering practically the invisible junction between these different regions is announced in *Nature* (July 18) by two scientists of the Associated Electrical Industries, E. Billig and J. J. Dowd.

The method is expected to be of use in manufacturing these advanced and useful electronic devices.

The boundary of what are called the n region, conducting electrons, and the p region, with electrical "holes," can be shown up by electrolytic etching. The junction acts as a rectifier, and electricity is forced through the metal so that the n, or electron, region is attacked and can thus be seen visually.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1953