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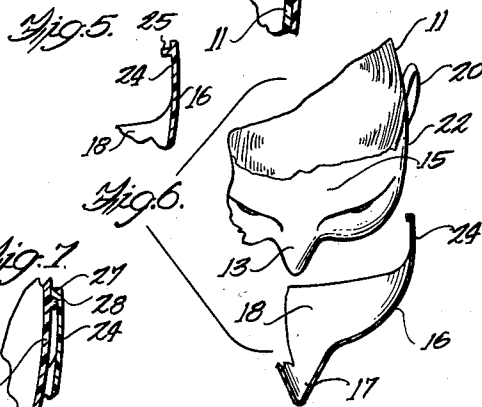
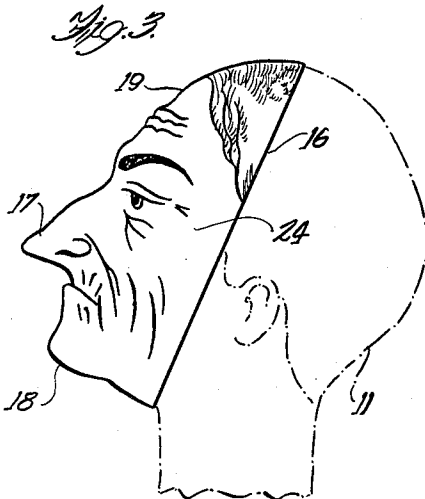
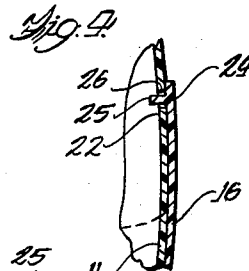
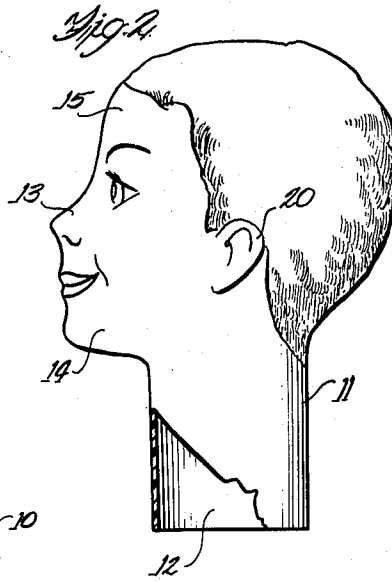
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3,106,041

MULTIPLE CHARACTER HAND PUPPET

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2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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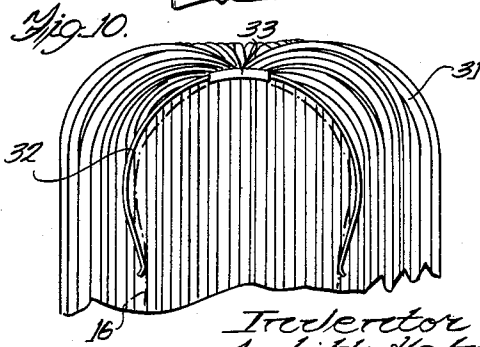
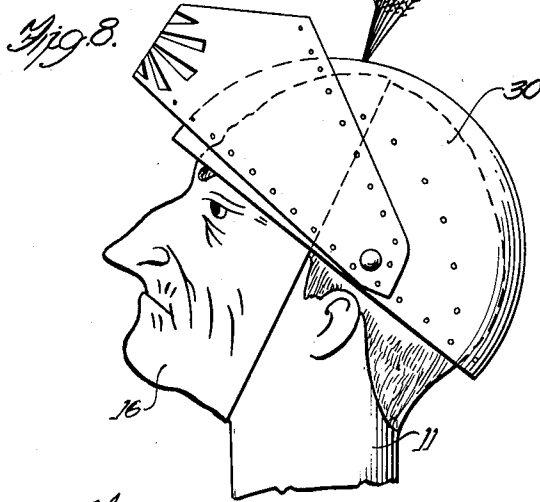
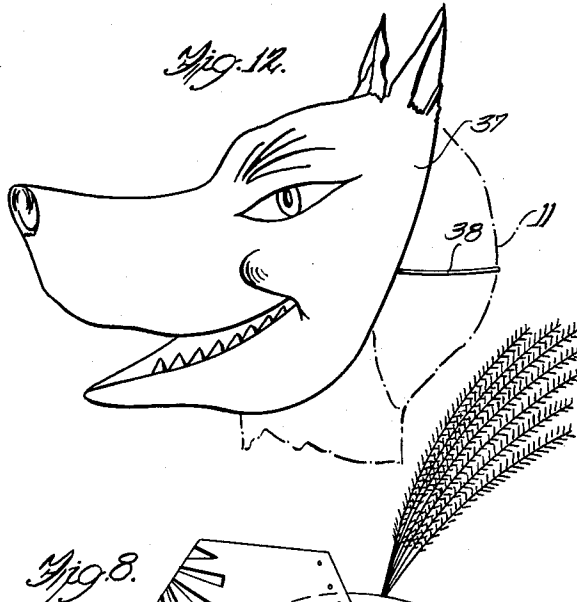
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MULTIPLE CHARACTER HAND PUPPET

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2



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3,106,041

**MULTIPLE CHARACTER HAND PUPPET**  
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5 Claims. (Cl. 46—154)

This invention relates to a multiple character hand puppet. The puppet of this invention is particularly adapted for use in marionette shows and puppet theatres to provide a number of different puppet characters while using only one or a limited number of hand puppets.

Heretofore it has been necessary to have one hand puppet for each character, and this has rather severely limited the use of hand puppets by children. Although hand puppets are in common use, a child usually has only one or two of the puppets, and this is inadequate for the dramatization of a skit or play involving a number of characters. It is therefore a principal object of this invention to provide a multiple character hand puppet, which permits each individual puppet to be used to portray a large number of different characters. Further objects and advantages will appear as the specification proceeds.

The present invention contemplates a marked departure from hand puppets as they are manufactured and used today. The multiple character hand puppets of this invention are provided with one or more removable face masks, which when placed over the face, portray different characters as to age, sex, expression, various animals, etc. It is also contemplated that the face masks can be provided with removable beards, mustaches, and wigs, which can be applied to the mask to further change its character. Thus, the hand puppets of this invention can actually change character, and not merely costumes. The hand puppets of this invention also provide an important commercial advantage in that it is more economical to make one puppet and several masks rather than to make a number of separate complete puppets.

The invention is shown in illustrative embodiments in the accompanying drawings, in which—

FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a hand puppet which can be used in practicing the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the head of the puppet of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3, a side elevational view illustrating how the puppet head of FIG. 3 can be changed to provide a different character;

FIG. 4, a detailed sectional view of an interlocking means which can be employed with the puppet of FIGS. 1 and 2 and the puppet face mask of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5, a detailed sectional view of a portion of the face mask of FIG. 4 illustrating the interlocking pin and the chin-conforming portion of the mask;

FIG. 6, a fragmentary top exploded view, partly in section, illustrating the relation between the face mask and the puppet head of the preceding figures;

FIG. 7, a fragmentary sectional view similar to FIG. 4 and illustrating an alternate interlocking means between the puppet head and face piece;

FIG. 8, a side elevational view illustrating a further transformation of the puppet head of FIG. 2 with the mask of FIG. 3 applied thereto;

FIG. 9, a side elevational view illustrating another transformation of the same puppet head and face mask;

FIG. 10, a side elevational view illustrating the application of a special wig to the assembly of the face mask and puppet head;

FIG. 11, a fragmentary front elevational view of the wig employed with the assembly of FIG. 10; and

FIG. 12, a side elevational view of the puppet head of FIGS. 1 and 2 provided with an animal face mask.

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As shown in FIG. 1, the multiple character hand puppet of the present invention includes a hand puppet having the usual skirt 10 for insertion of the hand and a head 11 extending above the skirt. It will be understood that the head 11 is arranged for control and movement by the hand which is inserted in the skirt 10. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, the inside of head 11 may be hollow as indicated at 12 so that one of the fingers of the hand can be inserted into the neck of the head, and used for moving the head.

For use in the present invention, the puppet head 11 preferably provides a face with a projecting nose 13, a pronounced chin 14, and a forehead 15, as shown more clearly in FIG. 2.

In FIG. 3 there is shown a face mask 16 having a generally concavo-convex shape. As indicated in FIG. 3 by the dotted outline of head 11, the mask 16 is received on the front portion of the head. The convex interior of mask 16 fits over the nose, chin, and forehead of head 11, and also extends over the upper front portion of the head. It is desirable that the mask chin portion 18 and the mask forehead portion 19 respectively conform as closely as possible to the corresponding chin portion 14 and forehead portion 15 of the head. In one preferred embodiment, the mask nose portion 17 should also closely conform to the face nose portion 13. The desired relationship is illustrated more clearly in the exploded view of FIG. 6.

With the construction just described, and especially if the face mask is formed of a flexible, resilient material, the face mask when properly applied will tend to remain on the puppet head because of the close fit and the frictional engagement therebetween. The gripping engagement of the face mask with the puppet head can be further improved by having the sides of the mask 16 terminate in front of the ears 20 and 21 which are provided on the sides of head 11. With this construction, relatively flat areas, such as areas 22 and 23, are provided by the sides of head 11 adjacent to and in front of the ears 20 and 21. The sides of the mask 16 are also provided with corresponding flat areas, as indicated at 24 in FIGS. 3 and 6. It will be understood that the mask area 24 conforms closely with the face area 22, thereby providing additional frictional engagement between the mask and head.

As indicated, the face masks, such as the mask 16, are preferably formed of a flexible, resilient material. Thermoplastic materials are particularly desirable. For example, suitable thermoplastic materials include vinyl chloride-acetate copolymers, and cellulose acetate or butyrate plastics.

In some embodiments, especially when the configuration of certain features of the face mask, such as the nose, eyes, mouth, etc. is quite different from the configuration of the corresponding features of the puppet head, it will be desirable to provide the face mask and the head with more positive means for releasably holding the mask on the head while the head is being moved by the hand of the puppeteer. This interlocking means can be conveniently provided on or in conjunction with the mating flat areas on the sides of the head and mask. For example, as indicated in FIGS. 4 and 5, the flat side portion of the mask 16, such as the side portion 24, can be provided with an inwardly extending pin 25 which is received in a hole 26 provided by head portion 22. It will be understood that the other side of the face piece and head could be similarly provided with an interlocking pin and hole. Another type of interlocking arrangement is illustrated in FIG. 7 where the side portion 24 of the face piece provides an inwardly projecting lug 27 which cooperates with

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the outwardly projecting lug 28 provided by the head portion 22 to hold the mask on the head.

In another embodiment of the invention, the assembly of the head 11 and the face mask 16 can be provided with a headpiece which is received on the top of the head and which extends over the forehead portions of the head and mask and onto the back of the head. For example, as shown in FIG. 8, the headpiece may consist of a hat 30. In the illustration given, the hat is in the form of a knight's helmet. The sides of the helmet 30 conform closely to the sides of head 11 and the sides of face mask 16, thereby clamping the sides of the face mask against the sides of the head and helping to hold the face mask on the head.

In FIG. 9 there is shown a headpiece 31 in the form of a wig which extends over the top of the head 11 and face mask 16. In the illustration given, the underside of wig 31 is provided with a U-shaped spring clip 32, as shown more clearly in FIG. 10. The spring clip 32 is secured to the wig 31 at 33. It is preferred that the clip 32 extend over the edge of face mask 16 around the top of the head, in the manner illustrated in FIG. 10. Clip 32 thereby performs the dual function of holding the wig 31 on head 11 and also clamping the face piece 16 to the head.

FIG. 11 illustrates another character transformation with the face mask 16 applied to the puppet head 11. The appearance of the face mask has been changed by applying a beard 34, a mustache 35 and horns 36, thereby giving the mask the appearance of a devil. In the illustration given, the beard, mustache, and horns are formed of felt, which are coated on the back with a pressure-sensitive adhesive. This permits them to be selectively attached and removed.

FIG. 12 illustrates the application of an animal mask 37 to the puppet head 11. In the illustration given, the animal mask provides the face of a wolf. It will be noted that the sides of the mask extend over the ears of the puppet. An elastic string 38 is secured to the sides of the mask and extends around the back of the head 11.

While in the foregoing specification this invention has been described in relation to certain embodiments thereof and many details have been set forth for purpose of illustration, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the invention is susceptible to other embodiments and that many of the details described herein can be varied considerably without departing from the basic principles of the invention.

I claim:

1. A multiple character hand puppet, comprising a puppet having a skirt for insertion of the hand and a head extending above said skirt for control and movement by said hand, the front portion of said head providing a face, a face mask formed of flexible resilient material having a generally concavo-convex shape received on the front portion of said head, and a headpiece received on the top of said head and extending over the upper portion of said face mask and onto the back of said head, said headpiece tending to hold said mask on said head.

2. A multiple character hand puppet comprising a hand puppet having a skirt for insertion of the hand and

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a head extending above said skirt for control and movement by said hand, the front portion of said head providing a face with a nose, chin, and forehead, a face mask formed of a flexible resilient thermoplastic material having a generally concavo-convex shape received on the front portion of said head, the convex interior of said mask fitting over the said nose, chin, and forehead of said head and conforming closely to at least the lower portion of said chin and the upper front portion of said head, and a headpiece received on the top of said head and extending over the forehead portion of said head and mask and onto the back of said head, said headpiece tending to hold said mask on said head.

3. A multiple character hand puppet, comprising a hand puppet having a skirt for insertion of the hand and a head extending above said skirt for control and movement by said hand, the front portion of said head providing a face, a face mask providing a different face and being formed of a flexible resilient thermoplastic material, said face mask having a generally concavo-convex shape and being received on the front portion of said head, and a close-fitting wig received on the top of said head and extending from the back of said head over the upper portion of said face mask, said wig tending to hold said face mask on said head.

4. The multiple character hand puppet of claim 3 in which said wig is provided with a U-shaped spring clip which is received on said head and extends over the edge of said face piece around the top of said head, thereby holding said face piece on said head and also holding said wig on said head.

5. A multiple character hand puppet comprising a hand puppet having a skirt for insertion of the hand and a head extending above said skirt for control and movement by said hand, the front portion of said head providing a face with a nose, chin, and forehead, the side portions of said head having ears and providing relatively flat areas adjacent to and in front of said ears, and a face mask formed of flexible resilient thermoplastic material having a generally concavo-convex shape received on the front portion of said head, the convex interior of said mask fitting over said nose, chin, and forehead of said head, said face mask having relatively flat side portions in opposed relation to the said flat side portions of said head, the said opposed relatively flat areas of said head and face piece providing means for releasably interlocking said head and said mask.

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