May 23, 1950 R. COPLAN 2,509,135

MARIONETTE

Filed March 10, 1947

Fig. 1.

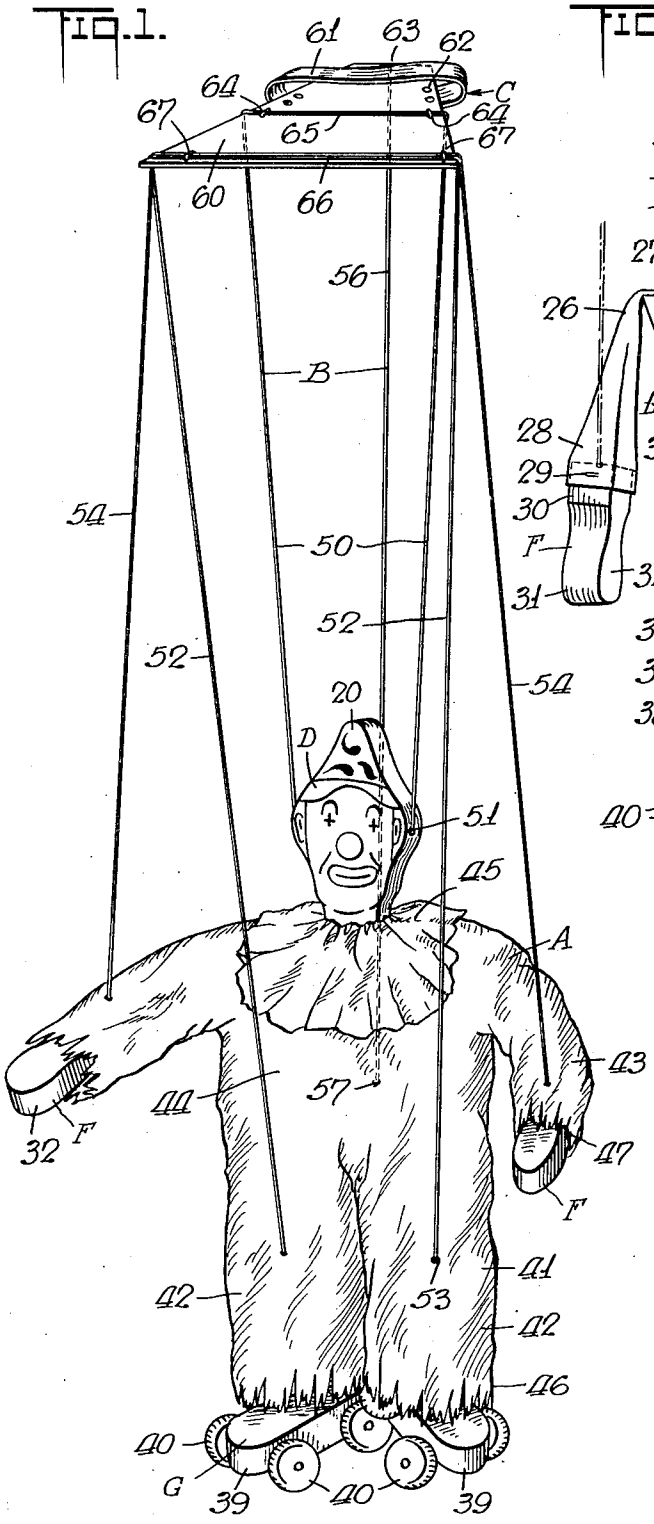


Fig. 2.

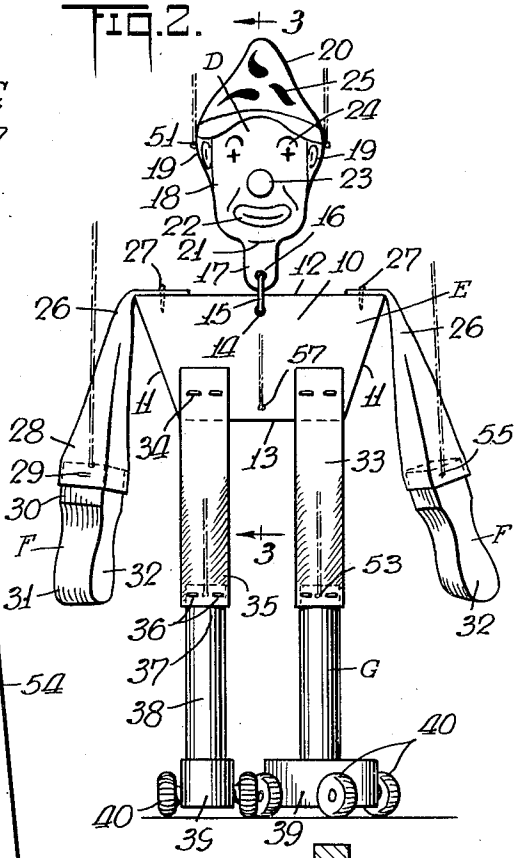
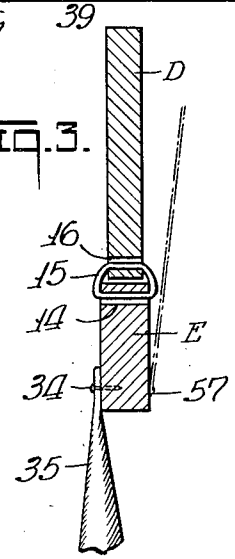


Fig. 3.



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Patented May 23, 1950 2,509,135

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,509,135

MARIONETTE

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Application March 10, 1947, Serial No. 733,608

6 Claims. (Cl. 46—126)

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The present invention relates to a marionette or string puppet and it particularly relates to a toy marionette.

It is among the objects of the present invention to provide a marionette and particularly a controller therefor which may be operated by one hand, as contrasted to ordinary controls requiring operation by two hands.

Another object is to provide a marionette of the character described which will be inexpensive to manufacture; which may be made of light weight and readily obtainable materials; the dress and clothing of which may be readily changed, quite durable even when used as a children's toy, and which is particularly suitable for handling by children ranging in age from 5 to 13 years.

A further object is to provide a marionette figure of the character described which will permit two figures to be handled by the operator at the same time, one by each hand, and which may be readily operated with shorter and more direct and compact string or cord connections with decreased tendency toward tangling.

Still further objects and advantages will appear in the more detailed description set forth below, it being understood, however, that this more detailed description is given by way of illustration and explanation only and not by way of limitation, since various changes therein may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

In accomplishing the above objects it has been found to be most satisfactory to provide a marionette of six main pieces or elements of wood, light weight metal or plastic constituting a head and neck, a body, two hand and lower arm units and two lower leg and foot units.

Preferably the upper arm, hip and thigh pieces are eliminated and are replaced by flexible cloth strip or cord connections.

The control element or controller which is an important feature of the invention consists of a thin panel of cardboard, wood or plastic which may be triangular or trapezoidal in shape and provided with a hand strap, thus eliminating the four wooden sticks which must be handled by both hands to actuate one figure.

To this triangular or trapezoidal panel are attached seven strings, which are half the usual number, and which may be of lighter construction eliminating the expensive fish line necessary for the normal heavy marionette figures. These strings respectively lead to the back of the body element, the sides of the head element at the ears, the front portions of the forearm elements and the front portions of the lower leg elements. The cords or strings to the forearms and legs may extend loosely across the controller and be capable of being moved independently of the movement of the controller.

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The invention also consists in certain new and original features of construction and combination of parts hereinafter set forth and claimed and as to its other objects, features and advantages, the mode of operation and manner of its organization, these, inter alia, may be better understood by referring to the following description considered in connection with the accompanying drawings forming a part thereof in which:

Fig. 1 is a front perspective view of the marionette or string puppet device according to one embodiment of the present invention suspended from a manual controller or actuator with the marionette fully clothed,

Fig. 2 is a front elevational view of the marionette figure or puppet by itself with the clothes removed indicating how the limbs are jointed or controlled,

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary transverse sectional view on the line 3—3 of Fig. 2.

Referring to Fig. 1 there is shown a clothed marionette figure A, controlling strings B and an actuator C.

The figure itself as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 simulates a clown and it has a body unit E formed of a body portion 10 of wood, plastic, light metal or cardboard with the downwardly and inwardly sloping sides 11, the top 12 and the bottom 13. Through an opening 14 in the upper portion of the body 10 passes the loop or string 15 which passes through an opening 16 in the depending neck-portion 17.

In the head unit or element D, the neck-portion 17 is attached to a head 18 having outstanding ears 19 and the peaked capped portion 20, the chin 21, the mouth 22, the nose 23, the eyes 24 and the cap 25, all are painted or imprinted upon one side of the flat head portion 18, but if desired they may constitute a simulated head having three dimensions of papier-mâché, plastic or other light weight materials.

The arms are formed by the folded strips of fabric 26 which are nailed at 27 to the wooden body block 10 constituting the body unit E and which at their lower ends 28 are attached by the nails or brads 29 to the square portions 30 of the wood or plastic hand elements F. The square portions form an upward projection of the simulated hand portions 31 which have the

flat side faces 32. The folded fabric strip arm extensions 26 encircle the square portion 30 of the hand elements F. The folded fabric strip leg elements 33 are stapled at 34 to the front of the body 10 and are stapled at their lower ends 35 by the staples 36 to the upper ends 37 of the legs 38 forming the leg units G.

The legs 38 consist of wooden rods which carry the shoe or foot members 39 preferably normally set so that they will incline at an angle from and toward one another as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The shoes 39 carry the roller or skate members 40.

The puppet or marionette may be clothed as in Fig. 1 in a clown suit 41 having trousers 42. The sleeves 43 and the body 44 may be of the same or different materials and a neck ruffle 45 may also be of contrasting or the same color. This suit may be readily changed if desired. The edges 46 of the leg portions or trousers 42 and 47 of the arm portions or sleeves 43 may be finished as indicated.

As shown in Figs. 1 to 3 there are seven actuating strings or cords depending from controllers C. The strings 50 go to the side or ears of the head 51 as shown best in Figs. 1 and 2. The strings 52 go to the front portions of the legs 38 as indicated at 53. The strings 54 go to the square portions 30 as indicated at 55 and the string 56 goes to the middle of the back of the body member 10 as indicated at 57. To summarize, the actuating strings 52 and 54 go to the front of the marionette, actuating string 56 goes to the rear of the marionette and actuating strings 50 go to the sides of the marionette. The strings 50, 52 and 54 may extend continuously over the element C and if desired they may be independently grasped and drawn up or they may be mounted permanently on the element so that they cannot be drawn up from or across the same.

The present invention is particularly directed to the controller C which consists of a trapezoidal piece of cardboard, wood or plastic 60 having the hand retaining loop 61 held in position by the tacks or rivets 62 at its end portions. The back control string 56 is fixed in position at the rear of the element C at 63 while the control strings 50 are fixed in position by the brads 64 across the top of the actuating plate 60. The brads 64 may permit sliding movement of the portion 65 of strings 50 which extends over the top of controller C. However, the strings 52 and 54 have portions 66 extended over the top of the plate 60 and passing under the loops 67 and they are freely movable and slidable under said loops. The fingers upon being inserted under said strap 61 may be inserted under said string portion 66 or may grasp and move both said string portion 66 and said string portion 65.

The various elements 10, 18, 31, 38 and 39 may be of wood, plastic or even light weight metal as may also the actuating plates 60. The controller C is particularly novel in that it permits one hand to make all the necessary movements of the object.

It is thus apparent that the present applicant has provided a novel toy marionette or string puppet particularly suitable for mass production. The unique controller enables it to be controlled by one hand, so that one person may control two puppets simultaneously which is particularly desirable where two marionettes or puppets are to dance or do other gyrations in time or rhythm with each other. The puppet or marionette may conveniently be 12" in height or of other suitable dimensions.

The small size of the figure and the spacing of the strings and decrease in length thereof reduces the possibility of tangling to a minimum.

The device is an excellent demonstration toy suitable for window display and it may readily be actuated by an electric hand.

As many changes could be made in the above marionette and many apparently widely different embodiments of this invention could be made without departing from the scope of the claims, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

What is claimed is:

1. A marionette figure comprising head, body, lower arm and hand, and lower leg and foot elements, said elements being actuated by elongated flexible members and a single controller for actuating the same, and said controller including a flat trapezoidal member the widest portion of which is designed to fit under the fingers and the narrowest portion of which is to fit under the palm of the hand, said flexible members extending loosely and transversely across the top of said flat trapezoidal member and said trapezoidal member being provided with guides.

2. In a control device for a marionette having jointed arm, leg, body and head members and actuating cords connected to the sides of said head, to said arms, to said body and to said legs, a plate of increased width at one end for contact with four fingers of the hand and wider than said fingers and of decreased width at the other end so that the bottom of the palm of the hand will project beyond the sides of said plate at said last end, a hand retention loop intermediate of the ends of said plate and toward the rear thereof to engage the middle part of the hand and hold the hand against said plate, the actuating cords for the arms, legs and sides of the head forming inverted U's and extending transversely and loosely across the top of the plate and through retention guides thereon near the sides of the plate, the actuating hand being placed below said cords and between the cords and the plate.

3. In a control device for a marionette having jointed arm, leg, body and head members and actuating cords connected to the sides of said head, to said arms, to said body and to said legs, an elongated rigid controller member to be grasped by the fingers of the hand and having a greater dimension than the width of the hand, the actuating cords for the arms, legs and sides of the head forming inverted U's and extending transversely and loosely across the top of the controller member and through retention guides thereon near the sides of the controller member, the actuating hand being placed below said cords and between the cords and the controller member, and the actuating cord for the body being attached to the end of the controller member.

4. In a marionette construction having a body block, a head pivotally mounted on the top of said body block, hand and foot members, fabric sleeves fastened to the hand and foot members at one end and to the body block at the other end, cords connected to the hand and foot members, to the back of the body and to the sides of the head and control means to control movement of said feet, hands, head and body by actuating said cords, said cords being connected to said control means, said control means including a rigid member having the hand and foot cords passing through spaced guides thereon and

taking the form of continuous set apart, separated inverted U's, the bases of which extend across the control means whereby the fingers of the hand may be inserted between the control means and said cords.

5. In a marionette construction having a body block, a head pivotally mounted on the top of said body block, hand and foot members, fabric sleeves fastened to the hand and foot members at one end and to the body block at the other end, cords connected to the hand and foot members, to the back of the body and to the sides of the head and control means to control movement of said feet, hands, head and body by actuating said cords, said cords being connected to said control means, said control means being operable by one arm to move the head, body, feet and hands of the marionette and including continuous set apart, separated inverted U's, the bases of said U's extending across the control means and which bases freely slide in respect to said control means and said control means being provided with spaced guides through which said loops extend.

6. A controller for a marionette having a body with relatively movable feet and hands, said controller consisting of a rigid member to be held by the hand of the operator, which rigid member is provided with separated guides, separated guiding cords taking the form of continuous inverted U's which are attached, respectively, at their lower opposite ends to the left and right movable feet and to the left and right movable hands, and said cords extending upwardly from said points of attachment to the feet and hands and to and through said guides with the bases of the U's loose and unattached on top of the rigid member so that the hand of the operator may be positioned between said bases and said rigid member independently to actuate the U cord attached to the hands or the U cord attached to the feet.

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