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3,314,188

PUPPET AMUSEMENT DEVICE

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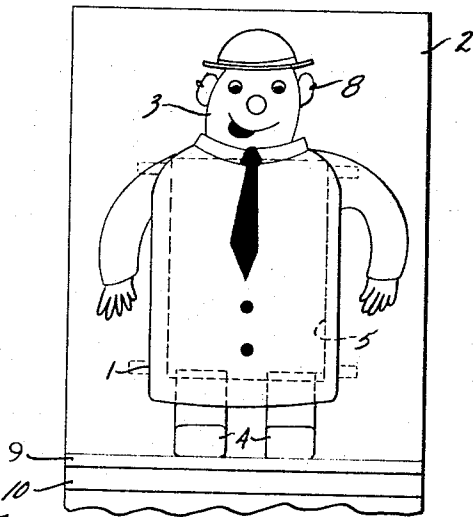


Fig. 1

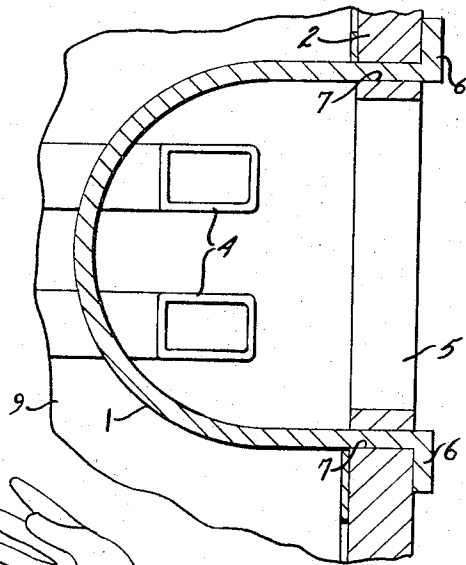


Fig. 3

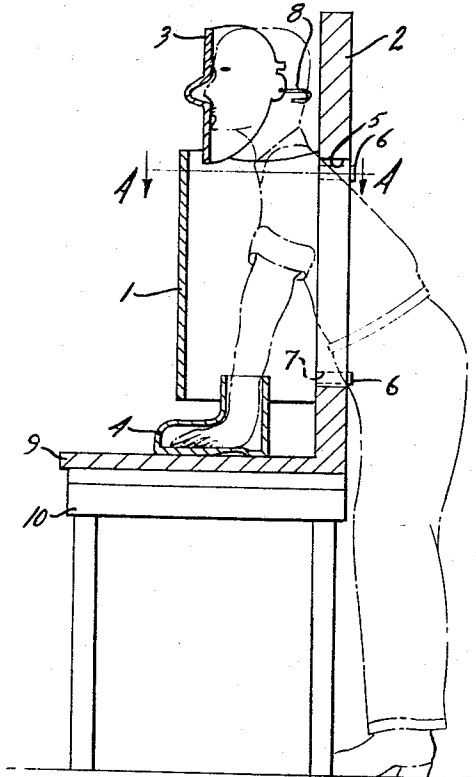


Fig. 2.

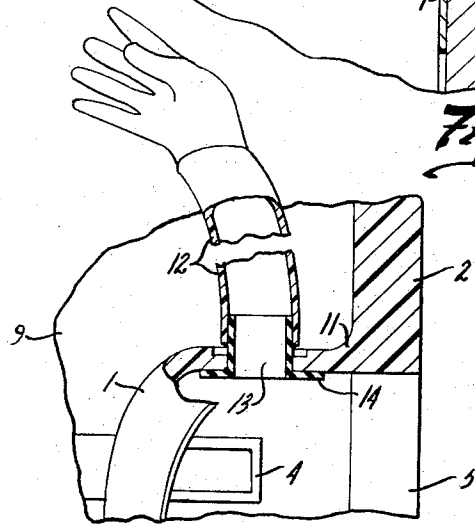


Fig. 4.

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PUPPET AMUSEMENT DEVICE

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This invention relates to a puppet amusement device and particularly to a simulated puppet toy device to be used by a child for amusement and imaginative play.

Children's play will often take a course whereby a child plays out the part of a particular character or other creature; for example a cowboy, knight, rabbit, bear or the like. In order to provide a realistic effect, the child generally prefers to use a visual guise or prop such as a costume or the like. Puppet toys have also been suggested wherein puppets are mounted with respect to a backdrop for manipulation through string or the like, such as shown for example in U.S. Patent No. 1,403,514.

The present invention is particularly directed to a puppet type toy or device wherein the child's head is employed as the head of a puppet and the hands or feet of the puppet are actuated by the hands of the child to produce more realistic puppet movement.

Generally, in accordance with the present invention, a puppet assembly includes a torso section which is secured and extends outwardly from a back drop with the top and bottom opened to respectively receive the head and arms of the child. A stage or floor portion is secured to the back drop in slightly spaced relation to the lower edge or end of the torso with separate leg and feet members provided for manual manipulation by the arms of the child. The child's head forms the head of the puppet properly located with respect to the top of the torso and preferably covered by a mask to more fully portray a desired character. The child's arms which extend through the bottom of the torso are hidden by the feet. The head and feet members may therefor be directly actuated in a coordinated manner by a child; for example, to cause the puppet to dance, walk or the like with or without vocal accompaniments, if desired.

Further, in accordance with the present invention, the feet elements can be formed of a molded or other hollow, self-supporting construction such that they can be placed on the platform to provide a pair of stationary feet portions. The arms can then be made hollow or otherwise constructed to receive the child's arms for manual movement; for example, by providing suitable openings in the torso section through which the child's arms project outwardly into the normal position of the hollow puppet arms which are secured in resilient manner for manual manipulation. The child may then selectively place his arms through the bottom of the torso for operating of the feet or into the arm sections for simulating arm movement. Further, the assembly when not in use may provide a decorative purpose by positioning of a mask on top of the torso and placing of the feet members immediately below the torso on the platform to simulate a doll or other character.

Further, if desired, a plurality of releasably mounted torso members or various costumes to be attached to a basic torso section can be provided with corresponding masks and related feet elements. This would allow use of the top in accordance with the whim or fancy of the child which will normally change from time to time.

The present invention can be constructed with a relatively inexpensive manner by having the various parts made of cardboard or other stiff material which can be manufactured in relatively flat sheets and then punched out and assembled through any conventional construction; for example, using a notch and slot interconnecting

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technique. Further, of course, if desired, the invention could also be readily formed from molded plastic or the like to provide a highly finished product although at a somewhat greater expense.

5 The present invention thus provides an improved puppet unit for children wherein the child employs his arms and head to simulate the realistic movements of a puppet. The advantages and features noted above as well as other objects and features clearly appear in connection with the embodiments of the illustration of the invention shown in the drawing.

In the drawing:

FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of the puppet assembly constructed in accordance with this invention;

15 FIG. 2 is a vertical section showing a child in phantom positioned to use the assembly shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged section taken generally on line 3-3 of FIG. 2; and

20 FIG. 4 is a top elevational view with parts broken away through an arm portion of an alternative construction of the torso or body portion in accordance with the present invention.

Referring to the drawings and particularly to FIGS. 1 and 2, the illustrated puppet assembly includes a torso section 1 generally corresponding in height to the upper portion of a child's body and secured to a vertical back drop panel 2. A face mask 3 is provided for releasable attachment to the child's head and a pair of boots or feet 4 is provided for location immediately beneath the torso section 1 for operation by the child's hands.

30 Referring particularly to FIG. 2, in the illustrated embodiment of the invention, the back drop panel 2 is a planar vertical panel formed of cardboard, molded plastic, wood, metal or other suitable material. Central opening 5 generally corresponding to but somewhat smaller than the size of the torso section 1 is formed in panel 2 immediately behind the torso section 1. The opening 5 in any event is sufficiently large to allow a child for which the device is made to extend his upper body portion through the opening 5, as shown in phantom in FIG. 2.

45 The torso section 1 in the embodiment of the invention illustrated in FIGS. 1-3 may be formed of a cardboard, stiff heavy paper or like material which can be bent into a semi-circular configuration as most clearly shown in FIG. 3. The opposite edges of the torso section 1 include connecting tabs 6 which are projected into suitable slits 7 in the back drop panel 2 on opposite sides of the opening 5 and are bent over to interconnect the torso section 1 to panel 2. The torso section 1 thus extends outwardly around the opening 5 to enclose the body of the child which is extended outwardly through the opening 5. With the mask 3 attached to cover the child's head from the front of the assembly a lifelike characteristic is obtained.

50 The mask 3 is shown as the usual paper mask having an encircling elastic cord 8 by which the mask is held to the head of the child. This provides a relatively inexpensive and simple mask structure which can be readily produced while minimizing the total cost of the puppet unit.

60 The torso 1 is secured to the back drop 2 with the lower end in spaced relation to a forwardly projecting stage or platform 9. The platform 9 simulates a ground or supporting area for the puppet feet or boots 4. Platform 9 also provides a convenient base for mounting of the assembly on a card table 10 or other suitable support for adapting and locating the opening 5 in accordance with the size of the child.

70 In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, hollow molded boots 4 of a self-supporting plastic or other mate-

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rial are illustrated with a leg portion which extends upwardly and terminates immediately within the lower end of the torso section 1. The child's arms may thus project inwardly through the back opening 5 and into the hollow feet 4, as shown in FIG. 2, to provide simulated foot movement of the puppet unit with such movement readily coordinated with the head movement.

The puppet toy thus allows the child to directly participate and simulate the action of the puppet design. The use of the child's head and his arms directly to provide movement allows realistic movement of the puppet. The movement of the feet can be made with relative ease and with a minimum amount of coordination, skill and practice.

The embodiment of the invention illustrated in FIGS. 1-3 can be formed of a relatively inexpensive and readily saleable construction. Thus, the back drop 2 and the attached platform can be formed of a single flat cardboard construction with the backdrop panel held in the vertical position in any desired manner. The torso section 1 can also be formed as a flat member and bent into the desired shape and interconnected by the tab technique, as shown, or in any other suitable manner such as a bayonet.

If desired, however, the back drop and torso may well be formed of a single integral construction and formed of any suitable material. For example, a molded plastic assembly can be provided although this would be a more expensive and permanent construction. FIG. 4 is a fragmentary portion showing an integral back drop and torso unit, and additionally illustrating movable arms secured to the puppet torso section. The elements of FIG. 4 corresponding to those of FIGS. 1-3 are correspondingly numbered for simplicity and clarity of explanation.

In FIG. 4, the panel 2 is shown integrally secured at junction 11 to the torso section 1 which projects outwardly therefrom to enclose the back drop opening 5 as in the previous embodiment. In FIG. 4, the arm 12 is shown as a hollow tubular member interconnected to the torso section 1 by a suitable flexible self-supporting coupling sleeve 13 which extends into the upper socket end of the arm.

In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, a collar 14 is provided on the inner end of the sleeve 13 and prevents the sleeve and arm from becoming detached from torso section 1. If desired, collar 14 may be secured to the inner torsion wall by an adhesive or the like. The sleeve 13 may be formed of a relatively stiff rubber or similar resilient material which will provide a resilient mounting of the hollow arms.

In the construction of FIG. 4, the child can selectively place his arms in the boots or in the arms to provide relatively realistic movement of all four of the movable limbs.

Further, in accordance with the present invention, a molded mask may be provided for completely enclosing a child's head. The mask would be open at the bottom and provided with an elastic collar section to slip down over the head of the child. Breathing openings would of course be provided. The mask can be formed of a relatively rigid self-supporting material such that when the device is not in use, the mask can be more readily placed on the top opening of the torso with the feet placed immediately below the torso section 1 and supported by the platform 9 to provide a highly decorative effect in the child's room. Further, the mask may be integrally attached to the torso portion or separately affixed thereto in any desired manner.

Similarly, although separate feet and leg members are shown, they may of course be suitably attached to the torso section by an elastic member or other suitable means which permit movement to simulate a puppet.

Additionally, if desired, additional coverings for the torso section can be provided, with or without corresponding masks and boots or feet coverings to simulate many different characters. This would permit changing of

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the puppet assembly to accommodate the changing characters continuously produced by the entertainment industry to capture and maintain the interest of children.

In the particular embodiments, the puppet assembly is shown supported on a table with the child in a standing position. If desired, the assembly may be set on the floor with the child kneeling behind the assembly to actuate the puppet. Further, a separate or interconnected seat may be positioned behind the assembly and used by the child.

The present invention thus provides a highly versatile and relatively inexpensive puppet device or assembly permitting highly realistic play by the child.

Various modes of carrying out the invention are contemplated as being within the scope of the following claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which is regarded as the invention.

I claim:

1. A toy puppet assembly, comprising
 - a back-drop panel for accommodating the upper body of a child,
 - a puppet torso section secured to the panel and extending outwardly with the diametrically laterally opposite side edges secured to the back-drop and open at the top and bottom, and
 - feet means for manual positioning by a child's arm which extends through the opening defined by the lower end of the torso section and the panel and are thereby aligned with the torso section to simulate the completed body of a toy puppet.
2. A toy puppet assembly, comprising
 - a back-drop panel having a central opening for accommodating the upper body portion of a child,
 - a puppet torso section secured overlying the opening and extending outwardly with the diametrically laterally opposite side edges secured to the back-drop and open at the top and bottom, and
 - separate feet means for manual positioning by the child's arm which extend through the central opening and below the torso section and are thereby aligned with the torso section to simulate the completed body of a toy puppet.
3. A toy puppet assembly for manual manipulation of a child, comprising
 - a back-drop panel having a central opening to accommodate the upper portion of a child's body and having forwardly projecting horizontal platform spaced downwardly from the lower edge of the opening,
 - a puppet torso section means overlying the opening and extending symmetrically forwardly from diametrically opposite sides of the opening to provide a three dimensional effect and provided with a head opening at the top and an arm opening at the bottom thereof, and
 - feet and leg unit means resting on the platform and extending upwardly with the upper ends terminating immediately within the bottom portion of the torso section to simulate the body of the toy puppet assembly.
4. A toy puppet assembly for a child's amusement wherein the puppet's head is the child's own and the puppet legs are the child's arms, comprising
 - a back-drop unit having a vertical planar back-drop panel and horizontal forwardly projecting platform, said back-drop unit being formed of cardboard and the like and having an opening in the panel spaced upwardly of the platform, said opening being selected to accommodate the upper portion of a child's body,
 - a puppet torso section formed of a flexible sheet and having side edges secured to the back drop panel at diametrically laterally opposite sides of the opening and extending outwardly in spaced overlying relation to the opening with a top opening for receiving

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a child's head and a bottom opening for receiving a child's arms, and

a pair of feet and leg unit means of a length slightly in excess of the spacing between the platform and the lower end of the torso to receive the child's arms for manual manipulation and thereby be aligned with said torso section to simulate the body of said puppet.

5. A toy puppet assembly for a child's amusement wherein the puppet's head is the child's own and the puppet limbs are the child's arms, comprising

a back-drop unit having a vertical planar back-drop and horizontal forwardly projecting platform, said back-drop having an opening spaced upwardly of the platform through which the upper portion of a child's body may project,

a puppet torso overlying the front of the opening and having side edges secured to the back drop at diametrically laterally opposite sides of the opening with a top opening for receiving a child's head and a bottom opening for receiving a child's arms,

a pair of hollow feet and leg unit means of a length slightly in excess of the spacing between the platform and the lower end of the torso to receive the child's arms for manual manipulation, and

a pair of hollow arms and hands secured to the torso to receive the child's arms for manual manipulation and thereby be aligned with said torso section to simulate the body of said puppet thereof.

6. A toy puppet assembly for a child's amusement wherein the puppet's head is the child's own and the puppet limbs are the child's arms, comprising

a back-drop unit having a vertical planar back-drop panel and horizontal forwardly projecting platform, said back-drop unit being formed of a plastic and

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having an opening in the panel spaced upwardly of the platform, said opening being selected to accommodate the upper portion of a child's body,

a puppet torso section integrally secured at vertical side edges to the back drop at diametrically laterally opposite sides of the opening and extending outwardly in spaced overlying relationship to the opening and defining a top horizontal opening for receiving a child's head and a bottom horizontal opening for receiving a child's arms,

a pair of hollow arm members movably secured to the torso section, said torso section having aligned openings to receive the child's arms for manual manipulation of the arms, and

a pair of hollow feet and leg unit means of a length slightly in excess of the spacing between the platform and the lower end of the torso section to selectively receive the child's arms for manual manipulation and thereby be aligned with said torso section to simulate the body of said puppet of the leg units.

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