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(54) **PUPPET WITH DETACHABLE WEIGHT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A puppet with a detachable weight is described. The weighted puppet includes a shell having a top portion and a bottom portion. The shell further has a cavity therein with an opening in the bottom portion that provides access to the cavity. A detachably attachable weighted apparatus is included for connecting with the opening. When the weighted apparatus is connected with the opening, the weighted puppet is weighted and operates as a bop bag. Thus, when pushed over, the weighted apparatus is attracted to a ground surface and thereby raises the top portion. When the weighted apparatus is removed from the opening, a user can position a body part within the cavity and utilize the shell as a puppet.

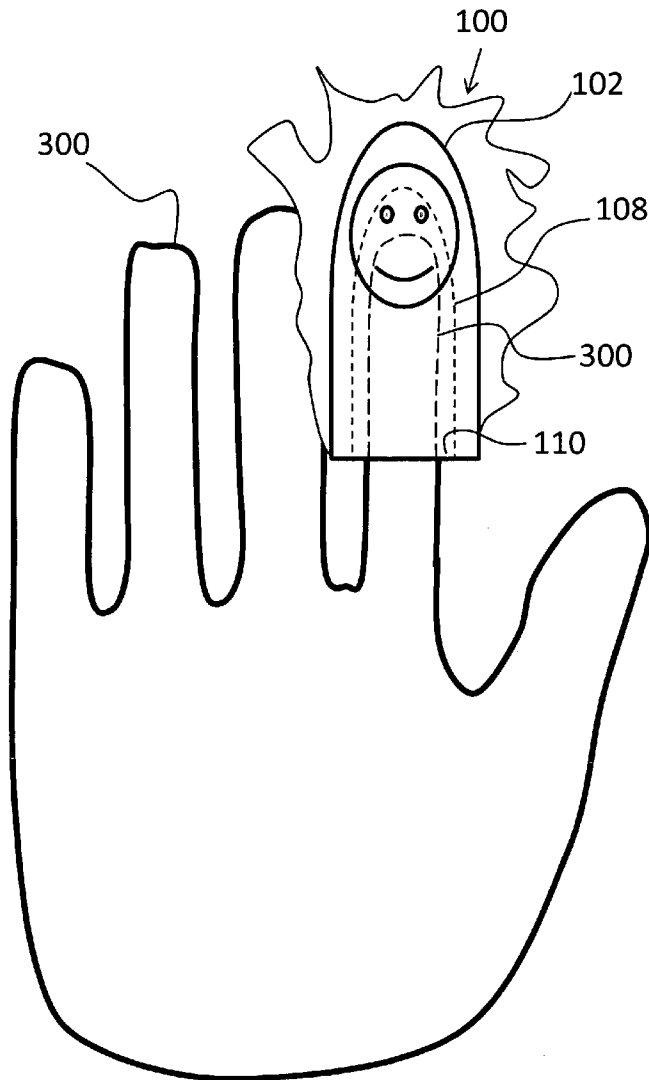
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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 61/068,268, filed on Mar. 4, 2008.



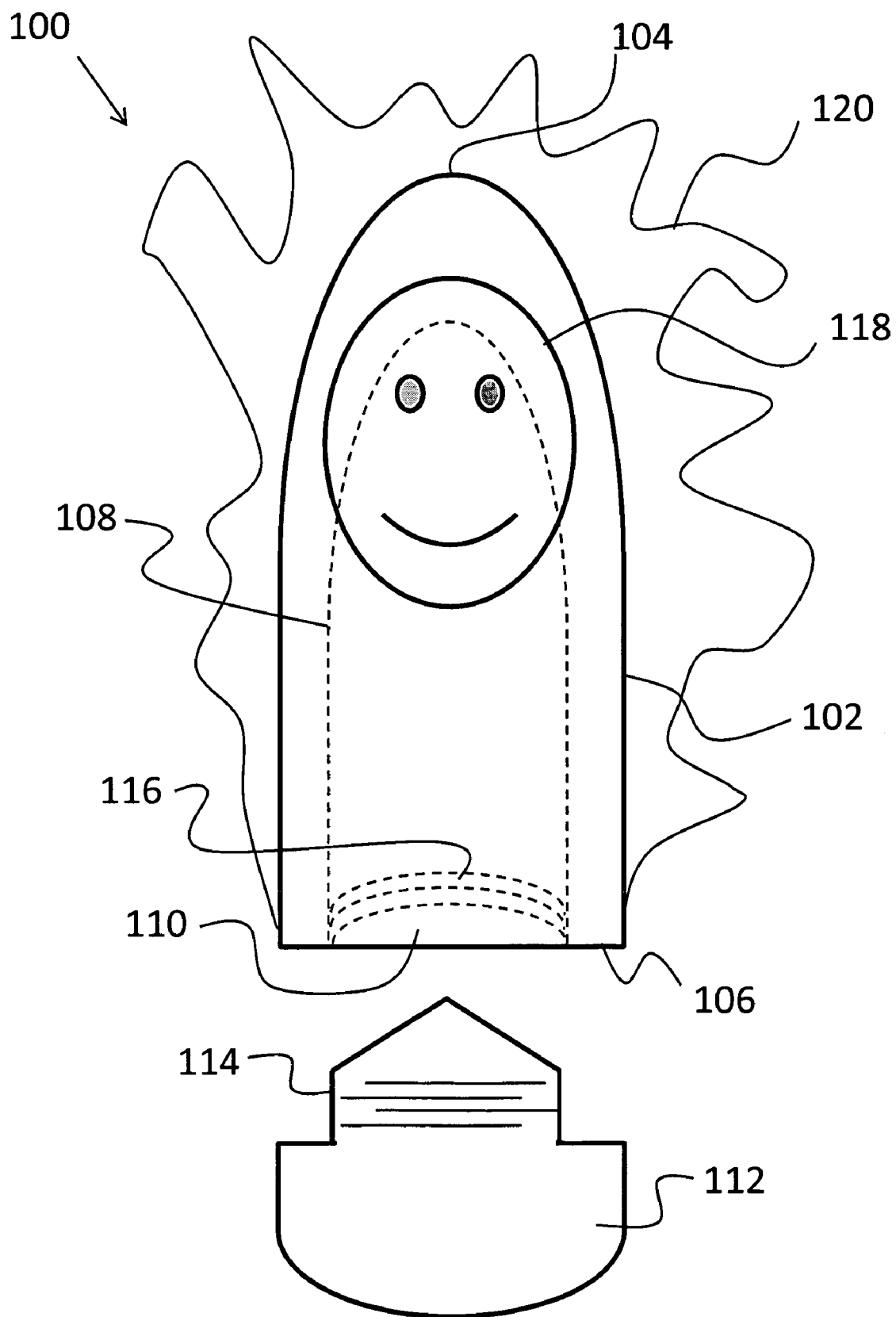


FIG. 1

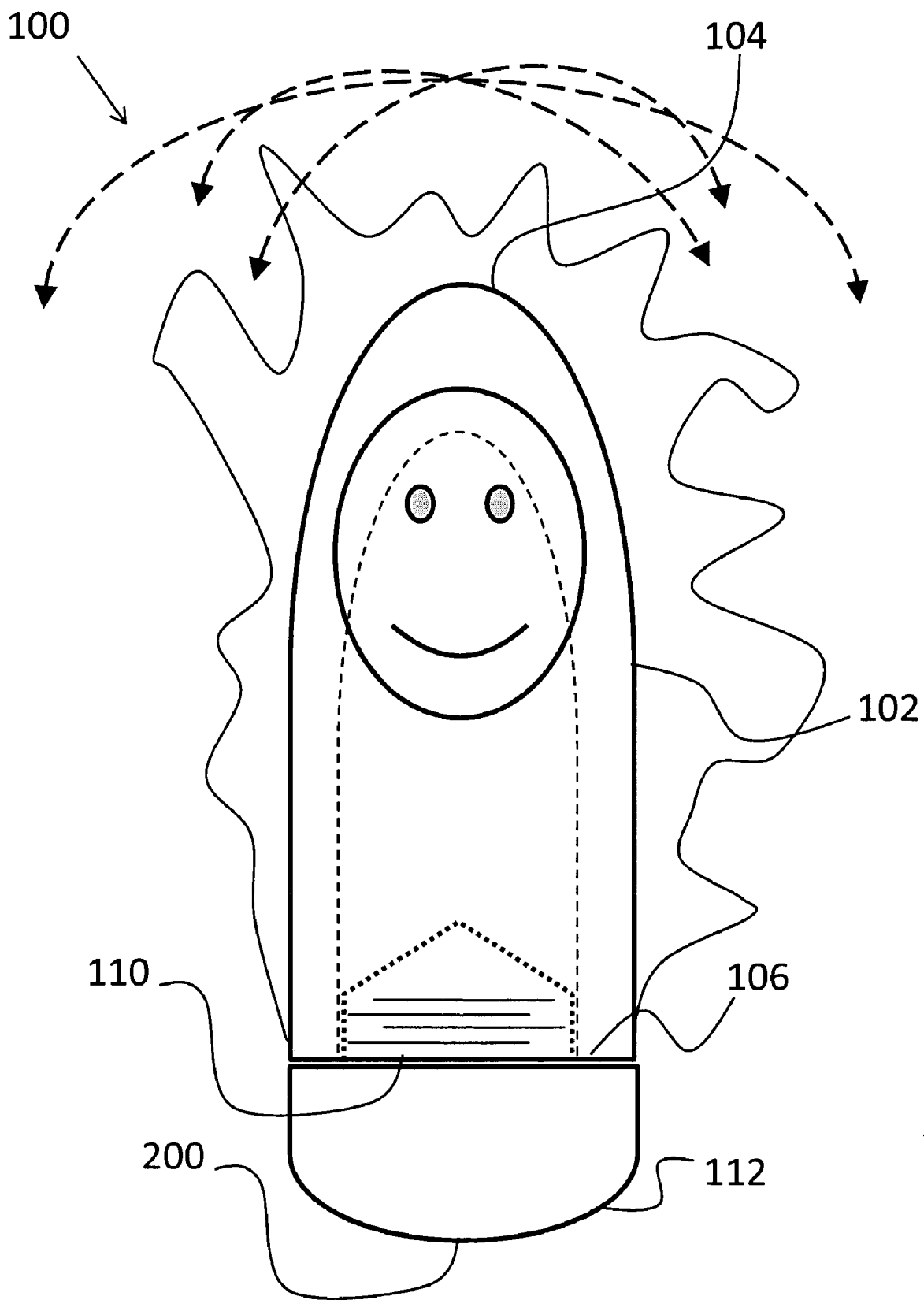


FIG. 2

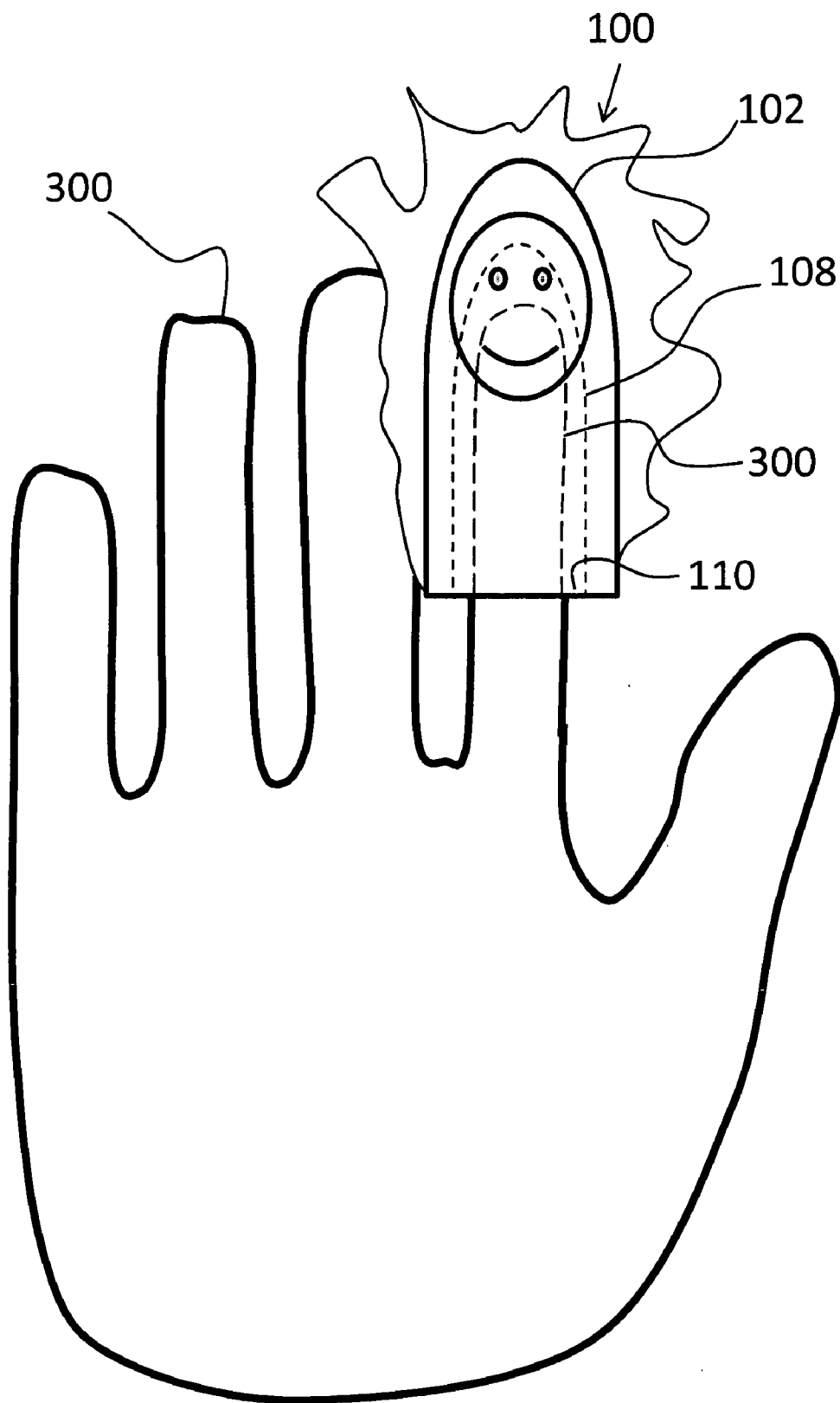


FIG. 3

**PUPPET WITH DETACHABLE WEIGHT**

**PRIORITY CLAIM**

[0001] The present application is a non-provisional patent application, claiming the benefit of priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/068,268, filed in the United States on Mar. 4, 2008, titled, "Weighted Finger Puppet."

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] (1) Field of Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a toy puppet and, more particularly, to a weighted puppet that operates as a bop bag which can also be utilized as a finger puppet.

[0004] (2) Description of Related Art

[0005] Puppets have long been known in the art. Puppets are toys that are formed to simulate an object and allow a user to operate and thereby animate the puppet. Over the years, a variety of puppets have been formed. For example, some elaborate puppets are operated through string mechanisms (i.e., marionette puppets). Other puppets are much simpler and simply require a user to place the user's hands within the puppet. An example of such a puppet is a sock puppet. As a smaller version of a sock puppet, other puppets have been devised for placement upon a user's fingers (i.e., finger puppets). Finger puppets are simple items that include a cavity for placement of the user's fingers therein. Popular with children, the finger puppets allow children to place multiple puppets upon a user's hand (one on each finger), while animating each puppet separately.

[0006] In another art, traditional bop bags are inflatable bags that are sometimes referred to as punching bags. Bop bags are typically large, inflatable bags that include a weight at a bottom portion of the bag. Due to the weight, it is difficult to knock over the bag. In other words, when used as a punching bag, the bop bag can be punched and pushed over, only to return to an upright position. The weight at the bottom of the bag causes a top and lighter portion of the bag to be forced upwards while gravity pulls the weight downwards.

[0007] While both bop bags and puppets have unique functions, it is desirable to have a puppet that can also operate as a bop bag. Thus, in this aspect, a user can selectively use the item as either a puppet or a bop bag. Therefore, a continuing need exists for weighted puppet that is operable as both a bop bag and a puppet.

**SUMMARY OF INVENTION**

[0008] The present invention relates to a weighted puppet. The weighted puppet includes a shell having a top portion and a bottom portion. The shell further has a cavity therein with an opening in the bottom portion that provides access to the cavity. A detachably attachable weighted apparatus is included for connecting with the opening via an attachment mechanism. When the weighted apparatus is connected with the opening, the weighted puppet is weighted and operates as a bop bag. Thus, when pushed over, the weighted apparatus is attracted to a ground surface and thereby raises the top portion. When the weighted apparatus is removed from the opening, a user can position a body part within the cavity and utilize the shell as a puppet. Additionally, the shell is of a size suitable for operation as a finger puppet and the cavity of a size suitable to accommodate a user's finger, such that the puppet is operable as a finger puppet.

[0009] In another aspect, an image is printed on the shell. The image is formed to represent at least a portion of an object such that the shell in conjunction with the image represents at least a portion of the object.

[0010] In yet another aspect, the weighted apparatus includes a bottom portion that is formed to have a rounded surface such that the bottom portion can roll around on a ground surface.

[0011] In another aspect, the attachment mechanism is a frictional snap fit configuration.

[0012] In another aspect, the attachment mechanism is a compressible protrusion configuration.

[0013] In another aspect, the attachment mechanism is a thread and screw configuration.

[0014] Finally, as can be appreciated by one in the art, the present invention also comprises a method for forming and using the weighted puppet described herein.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0015] The objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed descriptions of the various aspects of the invention in conjunction with reference to the following drawings, where:

[0016] FIG. 1 is an illustration of a puppet according to the present invention, depicting a weight for attachment with the puppet;

[0017] FIG. 2 is an illustration of the puppet according to the present invention, depicting the weight as attached with the puppet; and

[0018] FIG. 3 is an illustration of a puppet positioned upon a user's fingers.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

[0019] The present invention relates to a toy puppet and, more particularly, to a weighted puppet that operates as a bop bag which can also be utilized as a finger puppet. The following description is presented to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention and to incorporate it in the context of particular applications. Various modifications, as well as a variety of uses in different applications will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the general principles defined herein may be applied to a wide range of embodiments. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments presented, but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

[0020] In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without necessarily being limited to these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are shown in block diagram form, rather than in detail, in order to avoid obscuring the present invention.

[0021] The reader's attention is directed to all papers and documents which are filed concurrently with this specification and which are open to public inspection with this specification, and the contents of all such papers and documents are incorporated herein by reference. All the features disclosed in this specification, (including any accompanying claims, abstract, and drawings) may be replaced by alternative features serving the same, equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly

stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is only one example of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

**[0022]** Furthermore, any element in a claim that does not explicitly state “means for” performing a specified function, or “step for” performing a specific function, is not to be interpreted as a “means” or “step” clause as specified in 35 U.S.C. Section 112, Paragraph 6. In particular, the use of “step of” or “act of” in the claims herein is not intended to invoke the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 112, Paragraph 6.

**[0023]** Please note, if used, the labels left, right, front, back, top, bottom, forward, reverse, clockwise and counter clockwise have been used for convenience purposes only and are not intended to imply any particular fixed direction. Instead, they are used to reflect relative locations and/or directions between various portions of an object.

**[0024]** (1) Description

**[0025]** As shown in FIG. 1, the present invention relates to a weighted puppet **100**. The weighted puppet **100** includes a shell **102** having a top portion **104** and a bottom portion **106**. The shell **102** further includes a cavity **108** therein with an opening **110** in the bottom portion **106** that provides access to the cavity **108**. The shell **102** is formed of any suitable material that can include a cavity **108** therein, non-limiting examples of which include cloth and plastic. As a non-limiting example, the cavity **108** can be formed of two pieces of cloth, while the shell **102** is also formed of two pieces of cloth. A stuffing or liner can be placed between the cavity **108** and shell **102**, with the cavity **108** then being sewn into the shell **102**. As can be appreciated by one skilled in the art, there are numerous techniques and methods by which a manufacturer can produce a shell **102** with a corresponding cavity **108**.

**[0026]** The present invention also includes a detachably attachable weighted apparatus **112**. The weighted apparatus **112** is formed to be reversibly connected with the opening **110** in the bottom portion **106** of the shell **102**. The weighted apparatus **112** is any suitable weighted device that is substantially heavier than the shell **102**. As a non-limiting example, the weighted apparatus **112** is a shell that houses a single metal weight therein. Alternatively, multiple smaller weights (e.g., metal weighted balls) may be enclosed within a shell. As another non-limiting example, the weighted apparatus **112** is a plastic shell that is filled with sand. In any event, one skilled in the art can appreciate that there are numerous techniques by which the weighted apparatus **112** can be weighted.

**[0027]** The weighted apparatus **112** includes an attachment mechanism **114** that allows the weighted apparatus **112** to be connected with the opening **110**. The attachment mechanism **114** is any suitable mechanism that allows one object to be connected with another, a non-limiting example of which includes a thread and screw configuration. For example, as illustrated in FIG. 1, a threaded plastic ring **116** can be sewn into the opening **110**, which would allow corresponding threads on the weighted apparatus **112** to be connected with the opening **110**. Alternatively, the attachment mechanism **114** can simply be a compressible protrusion configuration (e.g., formed of rubber) with a diameter that is slightly greater than the diameter of the opening **110**. In this aspect, the attachment mechanism **114** is simply forced into the opening **110** and held in place by the expansive properties of the compressible protrusion (similar to that of a plug forced into an opening). As another non-limiting example, the attachment mechanism **114** and opening **110** may connect with a frictional snap fit configuration. In any event, as can be appreciated by one skilled in the art, there are numerous mecha-

nisms that can be formed on and/or connected with the attachment mechanism **114** and/or the opening **110** to allow the weighted apparatus **112** to be connected with the opening **110**.

**[0028]** In a desired aspect, the weighted puppet **100** is formed to represent an object. For instance, an image **118** can be printed on the shell **102**. The image **118** is formed to represent at least a portion of an object such that the shell **102** in conjunction with the image **118** represents at least a portion of the object. As a non-limiting example, the image may depict a character or animal. The image **118** is formed on the shell **102** using any image forming technique, non-limiting examples of which include screen printing, painting, drawing, etc.

**[0029]** In another aspect, the weighted puppet **100** can be formed to include peripheral objects **120**. The peripheral object **120** is any suitable object that extends beyond the shell to provide additional dimensionality and realism to the puppet **100**. For example, the peripheral object **120** can be a cloth mane that is sewn into the shell **102** and surrounds the image **118** to provide the appearance of hair or any other object. Additionally, the peripheral object may include appendages, such as arms, legs, or a tail, if the image **118** formed on the shell **102** represents a character or animal.

**[0030]** FIG. 2 illustrates the weighted apparatus **112** connected with the shell **102**. When the weighted apparatus **112** is connected to the opening **110**, the puppet **100** is weighted and operates as a bop bag. Thus, after being pushed over, the weighted apparatus **112** is attracted back to a ground surface and thereby raises the top portion **104** so that the puppet **100** is upright again. In a desired aspect, to further facilitate the bop bag operation, the weighted apparatus **112** includes a bottom portion **200** that is formed to have a rounded surface. Thus, due to the rounded surface of the bottom portion **200**, the weighted apparatus **112** can roll around on a ground surface and more easily raise the top portion **104**.

**[0031]** In a desired aspect and as illustrated in FIG. 3, the shell **102** can be used without the weighted apparatus **112**. Thus, when the weighted apparatus **112** is removed from the opening **110**, a user can position a body part **300** within the cavity **108** and utilize the shell **102** as a puppet. The shell **102** and corresponding cavity **108** can be formed in any suitable size to allow for animation by a user. As a non-limiting example, the shell **102** is of a size suitable for operation as a finger puppet and the cavity **108** is of a size suitable to accommodate a user’s finger. Thus, the puppet **100** is operable as a finger puppet. As can be appreciated by one skilled in the art, the shell **102** of the puppet **100** could also be sized to accommodate a hand of a user so that the puppet **100** is operable as a hand puppet. In a desired aspect, an image printed on the shell is formed to represent a wrestling character. When the weighted apparatus is removed, a user can position the puppet on a finger (e.g., thumb) and engage in thumb wrestling with another user having a puppet positioned on their thumb. While the users thumb wrestle with their thumbs inside the puppets, it will appear as though the wrestling characters themselves are wrestling.

What is claimed is:

1. A weighted puppet, comprising:

- a shell, the shell having a top portion and a bottom portion, the shell further having a cavity therein with an opening in the bottom portion that provides access to the cavity; and

a detachably attachable weighted apparatus for connecting with the opening via an attachment mechanism, whereby when connected, the weighted puppet is weighted and operates as a bop bag in that when pushed over, the weighted apparatus is attracted to a ground surface and thereby raises the top portion, and when removed, a user can position a body part within the cavity and utilize the shell as a puppet.

2. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 1, further comprising an image printed on the shell, the image being formed to represent at least a portion of an object such that the shell in conjunction with the image represents at least a portion of the object.

3. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 2, wherein the weighted apparatus comprises a bottom portion that is formed to have a rounded surface such that the bottom portion can roll around on a ground surface.

4. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 3, wherein the shell is of a size suitable for operation as a finger puppet and the cavity of a size suitable to accommodate a user's finger, such that the puppet is operable as a finger puppet.

5. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the attachment mechanism is a frictional snap fit configuration.

6. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the attachment mechanism is a compressible protrusion configuration.

7. A weighted puppet as set forth in claim 4, wherein the attachment mechanism is a thread and screw configuration.

8. A method for forming a weighted puppet, comprising acts of:

forming a shell, the shell having a top portion and a bottom portion, the shell further having a cavity therein with an opening in the bottom portion that provides access to the cavity;

forming a detachably attachable weighted apparatus; and

connecting the detachably attachable weighted apparatus via an attachment mechanism with the opening, whereby when connected, the weighted puppet is weighted and operates as a bop bag in that when pushed over, the weighted apparatus is attracted to a ground surface and thereby raises the top portion, and when removed, a user can position a body part within the cavity and utilize the shell as a puppet.

9. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 8, further comprising an act of printing an image on the shell, the image being formed to represent at least a portion of an object such that the shell in conjunction with the image represents at least a portion of the object.

10. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 9, wherein in the act of forming the detachably attachable weighted apparatus, the detachably attachable weighted apparatus is formed to comprise a bottom portion having a rounded surface such that the bottom portion can roll around on a ground surface.

11. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 10, wherein in the act of forming the shell, the shell is formed to be a size suitable for operation as a finger puppet, and the cavity is formed to be a size suitable to accommodate a user's finger, such that the puppet is operable as a finger puppet.

12. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 11, wherein the attachment mechanism is formed as a frictional snap fit configuration.

13. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 11, wherein the attachment mechanism is formed as a compressible protrusion configuration.

14. A method for forming a weighted puppet as set forth in claim 11, wherein the attachment mechanism is formed as a thread and screw configuration.

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