June 7, 1966 R. GARDEL ET AL 3,254,409

TOY SPOON

Filed March 31, 1964

Fig. 1

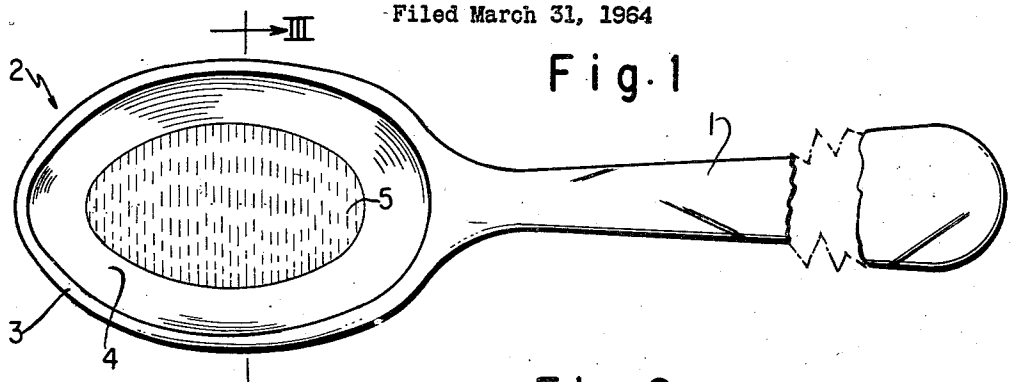


Fig. 2

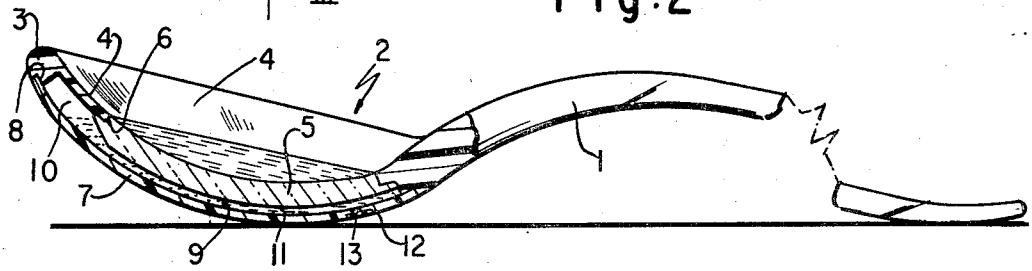


Fig. 3

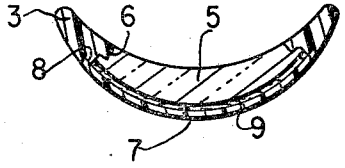


Fig. 4

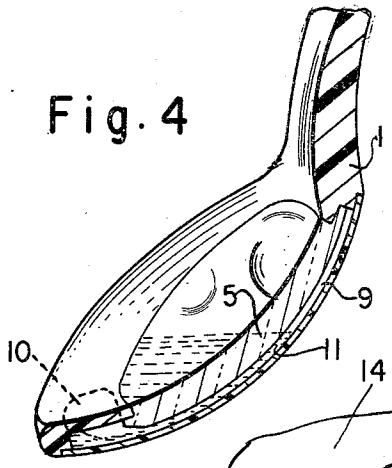
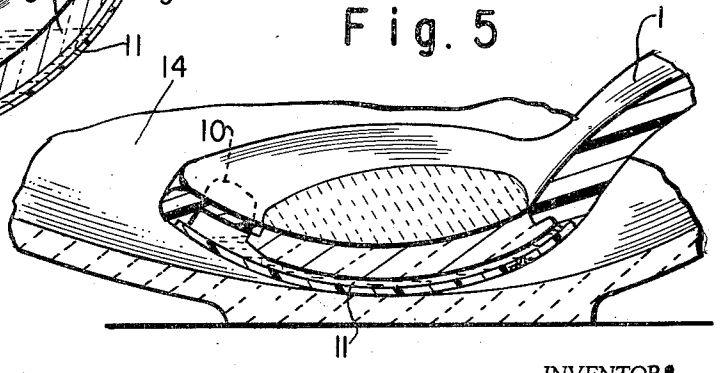


Fig. 5



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TOY SPOON

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This invention relates to a toy spoon, and particularly to a spoon so constructed that it appears to be empty when held in one position and appears to be partly filled with something when held in another position.

More specifically, the bowl of the spoon is formed by double walls, spaced apart to provide a two-part chamber, one part being relatively shallow and defined in part by a transparent upper wall, the other part being relatively deep and defined largely by opaque walls, and the capacities of the two parts being substantially equal or, at least, comparable. It is considered preferable to locate the deep opaque chamber in the front or tip portion of the spoon bowl while the shallow part extends throughout the middle portion of the bowl. A suitably colored liquid (or flowable solid) material in a quantity sufficient to fill the shallow part of the chamber, is contained therein, such material being visible through the transparent upper wall of the shallow part when the position of the spoon has caused it to flow into that part, and being invisible when the position of the spoon is changed to cause the material to flow into the deeper part of the chamber, within opaque walls.

A practical embodiment of the invention is shown in the accompanying drawing, wherein:

FIG. 1 represents a top plan view of the spoon, in a flat position, part of the handle being broken away;

FIG. 2 represents a longitudinal vertical section through the bowl of the spoon, the handle being in elevation and partly broken away;

FIG. 3 represents a transverse vertical section on the line III—III of FIG. 1, looking in the direction of the arrows;

FIG. 4 represents a detail longitudinal vertical section through the bowl of the spoon, the handle being broken away and the bowl being shown tilted with its tip down, in a position simulating the "feeding" of a doll, and the contents of the spoon having begun to disappear, and

FIG. 5 represents a side view, partly in section, from a somewhat elevated position, looking down into the bowl of the spoon as it rests in a dish.

Referring to the drawings, the spoon comprises a handle **1**, of conventional shape and construction, and a bowl designated generally as **2**, all parts being made conveniently of suitable plastic materials although other materials could be used for some parts, as noted below. The bowl edge portion **3** is integral with the handle, is somewhat thickened and is provided with a thinner inwardly projecting rim **4**, defining an oval opening. This opening is filled by a lenticular plate **5** which may have a rabbeted edge as indicated at **6**, the upper surface of the plate **5** being a smooth concave continuation of the upper surface of the rim **4**, and the plate **5** being substantially thicker than said rim. The bottom of the spoon bowl is constituted by a thin lenticular plate **7**, the periphery of which is received in a rabbet **8** in the under surface of the edge portion **3**. Throughout most of its area the plate **7** lies close to, but spaced from, the lower convex surface of the plate **5**, in order to define the shallow part **9** of the chamber, while a zone near the tip end of the plate **7** is spaced by a much greater distance from the under side of the rim **4** to define the deeper part **10** of the chamber, all as clearly shown in FIGS. 2, 4 and 5. The plates **5** and **7** may

be cemented or welded around their peripheries to the matching surfaces of the bowl edge portion **3**.

A suitable quantity of colored liquid or flowable solid material **11** is put into the chambers **9–10** through a small hole **12** near the heel end of the plate **7**, the hole being plugged and sealed by means of a button **13** the head of which is countersunk to leave the surface of the plate smooth.

In order to obtain the desired illusory effect, the spoon handle **1**, bowl edge portion **3** and plate **7** are made of a suitably colored opaque plastic material, while the plate **4** is of transparent material such as "Plexiglas." The material **11** may be colored to suggest any desired sort of food, particularly baby food, e.g., shades of green for pea soup or spinach, red for tomato juice or beets, etc.

In use, a child desiring to spoon-feed her doll, dips the bowl of the spoon into an empty dish **14**, brings it to a level position and thus causes the material **11** to fill the shallow part **9** of the chamber, the material being visible throughout the whole extent of the plate **5** and giving the spoon the appearance of being about half full of some sort of food, as indicated in FIG. 5. The spoon is then lifted—carefully, to avoid "spilling" the contents—to the doll's mouth and is tilted so that the tip of the bowl is lower than the rest (as in FIG. 4), whereupon the material **11** flows into the deeper (and more compact) part **10** of the chamber where it is completely out of sight, leaving the spoon bowl apparently empty and ready to be refilled from the dish. The zone of communication between the deep and shallow parts of the chamber is wide enough so that there is no appreciable tendency for an air lock to develop, if the material **11** is a liquid, and if it is a flowable solid (such as the sand used in three minute timers) air lock is impossible.

As a possible alternative form of construction, the spoon handle, edge portion and upper plate **5** could be made as a unit from a transparent plastic material, after which all surfaces except that corresponding to the upper plate could be made opaque, as by painting, but this arrangement has certain disadvantages. While the spoon parts are most conveniently molded from suitable plastics, it is apparent that the opague parts might be metallic if desired.

The spoon shown herein is actually spoon shaped and could be used for picking up and conveying real food in a normal manner, which may or may not be desirable. If such utility is to be avoided, the spoon bowl can readily be filled in (or covered over) with a body or sheet of transparent plastic, either separate from the plate **5** or integral therewith. In the latter case the part corresponding to the plate **5** would naturally be altered to engage the rim **4** from above rather than from below. Under any of the foregoing modifications the operation will obviously remain the same and the appearance will not be substantially altered.

As a further modification, a surface of the transparent plate **5** (preferably its under surface) can be provided with suitably arranged markings in a color which makes the markings substantially invisible against the background of the opaque plate **7**, but which stands out clearly when the part **9** of the chamber is filled with a white or light colored material. In this manner the bowl of the spoon may appear to be filled with such more or less discrete foods as rice or spaghetti.

It will be understood that various changes may be made in the form, construction and arrangement of the several parts without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, and hence we do not intend to be limited to the details shown or described herein except as the

same are included in the claims or may be required by disclosures of the prior art.

What we claim is:

1. A toy spoon comprising a bowl, an enclosed chamber being formed in said bowl and extending throughout a substantial proportion of the area thereof, part of said chamber being relatively shallow, being bounded upwardly by transparent material disposed across the central portion of the bowl, and part of said chamber being relatively deep and being bounded upwardly and downwardly by opaque material, the volumetric capacity of said deep part being at least as great as the capacity of the part bounded by transparent material, and a quantity of a flowable material sufficient to fill said last named part being contained in said chamber.

2. A toy spoon according to claim 1 in which the deep part of the chamber is located adjacent the tip of the spoon.

3. A toy spoon according to claim 1 in which the bowl comprises an opaque edge and rim portion, a downwardly convex transparent plate extending across the central portion of the bowl and an upwardly concave opaque plate spaced slightly from said first named plate to define the relatively shallow part of the chamber and the bottom of the relatively deep part thereof.

4. A toy spoon according to claim 3 in which the edge and rim portion is provided with a cavity adjacent its tip adapted to form, with the front portion of the

opaque plate, the relatively deep part of the enclosed chamber.

5. A toy spoon according to claim 1 in which the flowable material is of a color and character such as to give the visual impression, when said material is in the shallow part of the chamber, that the spoon bowl contains food.

6. A toy spoon according to claim 5 in which the flowable material is adapted to flow by gravity from the shallow part to the deep part of the chamber, and to give the visual impression, when in the deep part, that the spoon bowl is empty.

7. A toy spoon according to claim 5 in which the transparent material is of a color and character such as to cooperate with the flowable material, when said material is in the shallow part of the chamber, in giving the visual impression that the spoon bowl contains food.

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