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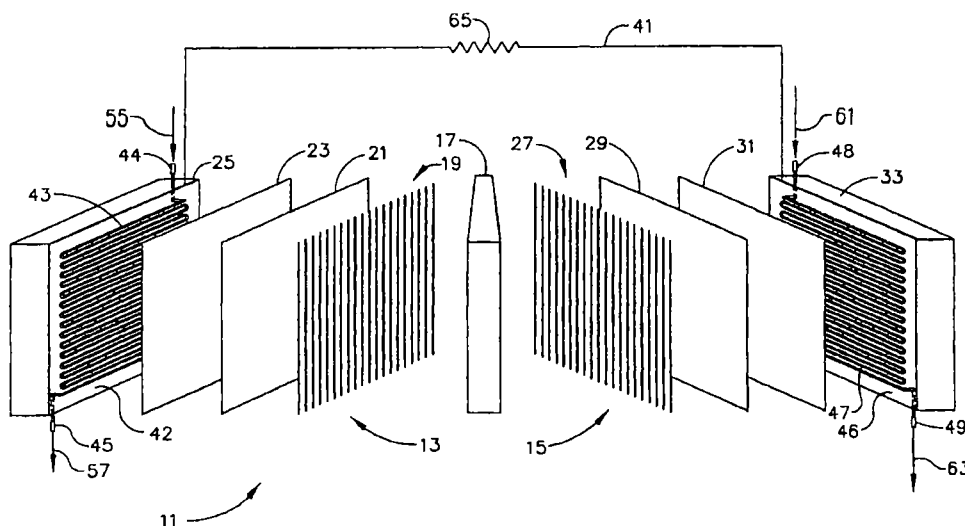
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(54) Title: WICKING STRANDS FOR A POLYMER ELECTROLYTE MEMBRANE FUEL CELL



(57) Abstract: In a hydrogen gas fuel cell a polymer electrolyte membrane (17), or "PEM", is located between two layers (21, 29) composed of a catalyst material such that a sandwich-like assembly is formed. An anode electrode (23) and a cathode electrode (31), each composed of a thin sheet of porous material that is permeable to liquid and gas, are situated on either side of the sandwich-like assembly such that one surface of each electrode abuts a catalyst layer. The remaining surface of each electrode abuts a conductive nonporous bipolar plate (42, 46) having grooves cut therein. Wicking strands (13, 15) composed of a trilobed fiber are located in between each catalyst layer and the adjacent PEM, and arranged in a repetitive pattern such that the strands do not cross over each other. Each wicking strand abutting the PEM surface facing the anode electrode has one end situated in a reservoir of liquid water. Each wicking strand abutting the PEM surface facing the cathode electrode drains into an exhaust reservoir.

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