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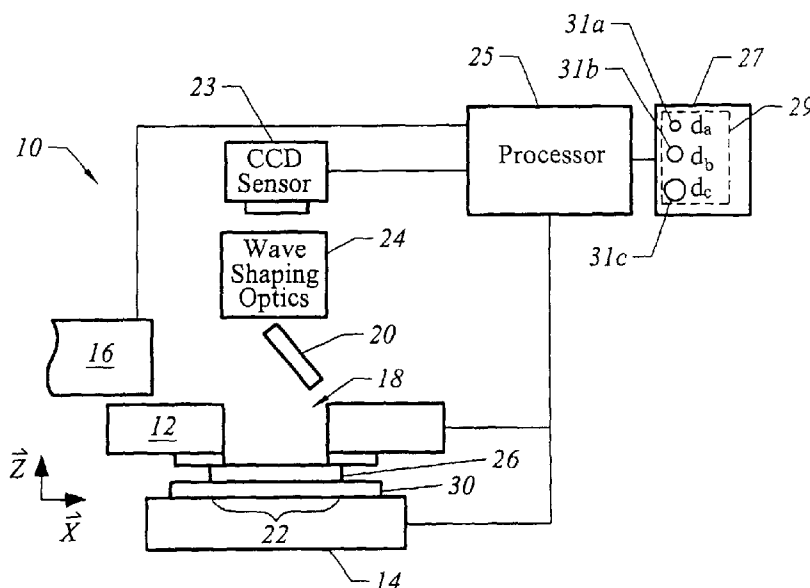
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DETERMINING CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBSTRATES EMPLOYING FLUID GEOMETRIES



(57) Abstract: The present invention provides a technique for determining characteristics of substrates, such as the presence of contaminants, shape, as well as the spatial relationships between spaced-apart substrates. The spatial relationships include distance and angular orientation, between first and second spaced apart substrates. The technique includes forming a volume of fluid on the second substrate, with the volume of fluid having an area associated therewith. The volume of fluid is compressed between the first and second substrates to effectuate a change in properties of the area, defining changed properties. The changed properties are sensed, and the characteristics of the first and second substrates are determined as a function of the changed properties.

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