~~What is c~~Claim~~ed is~~:

1. A device for holding a wafer-shaped article, comprising a plurality of movable contact elements having a projecting portion for contacting a wafer-shaped article and a mounting portion fitted within a body of said device, and a gear mechanism driving the contact elements in unison between a first position in which they contact a wafer-shaped article positioned on the device, and a second non-contact position, wherein the gear mechanism comprises, in at least one region engaging one of said plurality of contact elements, a construction that more readily yields to lateral displacement said plurality of contact elements than other regions of said gear mechanism adjacent the at least one region, wherein said gear mechanism has a portion on a body having teeth parallel to an elongated slot within said body.

2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the contact elements are a series of pins that are conjointly movable from said second position to said first position.

3. The device according to claim 1, wherein said body of the device is made of plastic.

4. The device according to claim 1, wherein said device is a spin chuck in a process module for single wafer

least one resilient element is a body of elastomeric material fitted within said cavity.

15. A device for holding a wafer-shaped article, comprising a plurality of movable pin assemblies each having a projecting portion for contacting a wafer-shaped article and a mounting portion fitted within a body of said device, and a gear mechanism driving the movable pin assemblies ~~contact elements~~ in unison between a first position in which they contact a wafer-shaped article positioned on the device, and a second non-contact position, wherein the gear mechanism comprises, in at least one region engaging one of said plurality of movable pin assemblies~~contact elements~~, means for accommodating lateral displacement said plurality of movable pin assemblies ~~contact elements~~ more readily than in other regions of said gear mechanism adjacent the at least one region, wherein said gear mechanism has a portion on a body having teeth parallel to an elongated slot within said body.