

Infinitely Variable Compression Ratio Mechanism of a Reciprocating Double-acting Piston-Type Gas Compressor

5 The current application is a continuation-in-part (CIP) application of a U.S non-
provisional application serial number 15/819,084 filed on November 21, 2017. The U.S.
non-provisional application 15/819,084 claims a priority to a U.S. provisional application
serial number 62/432,011 filed on December 9, 2016.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention relates generally to alternative designs for reciprocating
piston gas compressors. More specifically, the present invention is an infinitely variable
15 adjusting compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas
compressor. The present invention is capable of simultaneously varying the top dead
center positions of a tandem pair of opposing pistons during operation, thus capable of
varying the compression ratio of the compressor and varying the compressor flow
capacity and corresponding power input. The compression ratio may be varied anytime,
20 at any speed, and instantaneously, thus allowing the compressor to be flow-controlled
from zero flow to full flow capacity without varying the input speed while input power
requirements are commensurable with the actual flow and pressure rise through the
compressor.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention applies to all types of reciprocating piston compressors,
similar machines, and devices as the present invention allows for varying the piston travel
30 at both end stop positions of the double-action. Additionally, the present invention allows
for two different pistons to travel in tandem, to adjust equally and simultaneously, and to

operate similar to a single double-acting piston, but with an infinitely variable compression ratio adjustment.

The present invention is essentially a double-acting version of a prior invention applicable to internal combustion engine (known as the SOWDA engine). A reduction in
5 energy or a reduced fuel consumption during reduced gas flow requirements, in addition to accurate flow control from zero flow to 100% flow for portable air compressors, large natural gas transmission compressors, industrial/process make-up and recycle compressors, etc., has become more and more critical to the economic stability and environmental stability of the earth. Presently, no apparatus or method provides a 100%
10 turn-down flow control by providing an infinitely variable compression ratio to a positive displacement double-acting reciprocating compressor.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a portion of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective view of the portion of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view of the present invention.

20 FIG. 5 is a front exploded view of the present invention, depicting a mirror-image planetary-gear assembly.

FIG. 6 is a side view of a partially internal view of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is an internal side view of the present invention implemented as a single cylinder compressor.

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DETAIL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE INVENTION

All illustrations of the drawings are for the purpose of describing selected versions of the present invention and are not intended to limit the scope of the present
30 invention.

The present invention generally relates to alternative designs for gas compressors. More specifically, the present invention is a balanced and rotating compact mechanism integrated into a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas compressor which provides a means for managing and controlling the compression ratio(s) of the reciprocating
5 double-acting piston-type gas compressor during operations for increased efficiency and accurate flow control.

For simplicity purposes, the present invention is disclosed as being implemented as a reciprocating compressor with a single cylinder. There are two main portions to the present invention. The first portion consists of the components and mechanisms to
10 converts rotating motion into linear motion. The second portion consists of the linear movement components and mechanisms that receive, compress, and expel gas at specific inlet and outlet pressures. In particular, the first portion receives rotational motion and transfers the rotation motion into linear motion through a crank-like coupling. The first portion comprises a mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** with a gear pin crankshaft
15 **1** that acts as a crank in the present invention and a forward connecting rod **5**, an at least one rearward connecting rod **6**. The second portion consists of the linear motion components and comprises a forward crosshead **9**, a rearward tubular crosshead **10**, a forward piston shaft **18**, a rearward piston tube **19**, a tandem piston assembly **14**, a forward gas inlet and outlet assembly, a rearward gas inlet and outlet assembly.

20 Referring to FIG. **1**, FIG. **2** and FIG. **4**, the gear pin crankshaft **1** is the main component linking the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** to the forward connecting rod **5**, and at least one rearward connecting rod **6**. The mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** with the gear pin crankshaft **1** assembly, the forward connecting rod **5**, and the rearward connecting rod **6** form a crank-shaft mechanism for
25 converting rotational motion into reciprocating linear motion. The forward connecting rod **5** and the rearward connecting rod **6** are each a connecting rod with a design similar to traditional connecting rods used in internal combustion engines

The forward connecting rod **5** is terminally and rotatably connected to the gear pin crankshaft **1** about a forward piston rotation axis **21**. Similarly, the rearward
30 connecting rod **6** is terminally and rotatably connected to the gear pin crankshaft **1** about a rearward piston rotation axis **22**; wherein, the forward piston rotation axis **21** and the

rearward piston rotation axis **22** are positioned parallel and equally offset to each other. This offset distance is the defining feature of the present invention which allows for variable stroke distance. During operation, the overall travel distance of the forward connecting rod **5** and the rearward connecting rod **6** may be increased or decreased up to the offset distance by rotating the gear pin crankshaft **1**. As a result, the travel position or stroke location, but not the stroke length, of the of the forward connecting rod **5** and the rearward connecting rod **6** may be adjusted. As the forward connecting rod **5** travel location translates closer to the gear pin crankshaft **1**, the rearward connecting rod **6** travel location translates the same amount away from the gear pin crankshaft **1**.

The forward connecting rod **5** couples to the forward crosshead **9**, and the rearward connecting rod **6** couples to the rearward tubular crosshead **10**. The forward crosshead **9** and rearward tubular crosshead **10** are the first two components that only move linearly. The forward crosshead **9** is a bar or block the links the forward connecting rod **5** to a forward piston **15** from the tandem piston assembly **14** to reduce and or eliminate sideways forces/pressures. The forward crosshead **9** is terminally and rotatably connected to the forward connecting rod **5**, opposite to the gear pin crankshaft **1**. It is preferred that forward crosshead **9** is a U-shaped block that is shaped and sized to receive the forward connecting rod **5** and is rotatably connected to the forward connecting rod **5** through a pivot pin. The rearward tubular crosshead **10** is a tubular structure which links the rearward connecting rod **6** to a rearward piston **16** from the tandem piston assembly **14** to reduce and or eliminate sideways forces/pressures. The rearward tubular crosshead **10** is terminally and rotatably connected to the rearward connecting rod **6**, opposite the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** travel along the same path and therefore the forward crosshead **9** and the rearward tubular crosshead **10** must also travel along the same path. For this configuration, the forward crosshead **9** is slidably mounted and guided within the rearward tubular crosshead **10**. Additionally, the forward crosshead **9** and the rearward tubular crosshead **10** are sized and designed for a complimentary fit. Resultantly, the rearward tubular crosshead **10** acts as a track for the forward crosshead **9**, thus allowing for independent translation about a shared path.

The tandem piston assembly **14** draws in and compresses air or any gas through the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**. For this arrangement, the tandem piston

assembly **14** is positioned adjacent to the rearward tubular crosshead **10**, opposite the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** are each a disk or a short cylinder designed to move in a reciprocating fashion to compress gas, specifically air. The forward piston **15** moves along with the forward crosshead **9** and, thus, is mounted to the forward crosshead **9**. The rearward piston **16** moves along with the rearward tubular crosshead **10** and, thus, is mounted to the rearward tubular crosshead **10**.

Referring to FIG. **2** and FIG. **5**, it is preferred that the at least one rearward connecting rod **6** comprises a first rearward connecting rod **7** and a second rearward connecting rod **8** to ensure a force-balanced support for the rearward tubular crosshead **10**. To accommodate the additional force-balance support, the gear pin crankshaft **1** comprises three cylindrical coupling points, a forward journal **2**, a first rearward journal **3**, and a second rearward journal **4**. The forward journal **2** is concentrically aligned with the forward piston rotation axis **21**. The forward journal **2** is sized complimentary to the forward connecting rod **5**. Specifically, the forward connecting rod **5** is terminally and rotatably connected about the forward journal **2** about the forward piston rotation axis **21**, similar to traditional journal coupling methods. The first rearward journal **3** and the second rearward journal **4** are each aligned with the rearward piston rotation axis **22** and couple to the first rearward connecting rod **7** and the second rearward connecting rod **8**, respectively. More specifically, the forward journal **2** is terminally mounted to the first rearward journal **3**. Opposite to the first rearward journal **3**, the second rearward journal **4** is terminally mounted to the forward journal **2**. Resultantly, the forward journal **2** is terminally mounted in between the first rearward journal **3** and the second rearward journal **4**. The offset between the first rearward journal **3**, the forward journal **2**, and the second rearward journal **4** is 180 degrees. The resulting design of the gear pin crankshaft **1** is an elongated shaft with two but equal offset steps as seen in FIG. **5**. Complimentary to the first rearward journal **3** and the second rearward journal **4**, the first rearward connecting rod **7** and the second rearward connecting rod **8** are positioned parallel and opposite to each other across the forward connecting rod **5**; specifically, the first rearward connecting rod **7** and the second rearward connecting rod **8** are a mirror image of each other, separated by the forward connecting rod **5**. Additionally, the first rearward connecting rod **7** is terminally and rotatably connected about the first rearward journal **3**

about rearward piston rotation axis **22**. Similarly, the second rearward connecting rod **8** is terminally and rotatably connected to the second rearward journal **4** about the rearward piston rotation axis **22**. Resultantly, the forward connecting rod **5**, the first rearward connecting rod **7**, and the second rearward connecting rod **8** rotate within parallel planes.

5 Referring to FIG. 7, the tandem piston assembly **14** further comprises a cylinder **17**, a forward piston shaft **18**, a rearward piston tube **19**, the rearward piston **16**, a cylindrical bore **20**, and the forward piston **15**. The cylinder **17** is an elongated tubular structure which acts a guide and housing for the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**. Resultantly, the internal space of the cylinder **17** acts a compression chamber
10 for gases undergoing gas intake by the movement of the forward piston **15** moving rearward and the rearward piston **16** moving forward and undergoing compression by the movement of the forward piston **15** moving forward and the rearward piston **16** moving rearward.

The rearward tubular crosshead **10** is mounted adjacent to and perpendicular to
15 the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The cylinder **17** is concentrically positioned with the rearward tubular crosshead **10**; and, the cylinder **17** is mounted adjacent to the rearward tubular crosshead **10** and the forward crosshead **9**, opposite the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The cylinder **17**, the forward piston **15**, and the rearward piston **16** are sized complimentary to each other. The forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** are slidably mounted within
20 the cylinder **17** to form two adjacent chambers to be utilized in conjunction or independently for compressing any gas. The rearward piston **16** is positioned closest to the gear pin crankshaft **1** to form a rearward compression chamber. The forward piston **15** is positioned furthest from the gear pin crankshaft **1** to form a forward compression chamber. The forward piston shaft **18** is an elongated rod that rigidly couples the forward
25 crosshead **9** to the forward piston **15**. Similarly, the rearward piston tube **19** is an elongated tube that rigidly couples the rearward tubular crosshead **10** to the rearward piston **16**. The rearward piston tube **19** is connected between the rearward piston **16** and the rearward tubular crosshead **10**, aligned with the central axis of the rearward piston **16** and the central axis of the rearward tubular crosshead **10**. The forward piston shaft **18** is
30 designed to fit within the rearward piston tube **19** to allow the forward piston **15** to move opposite relative to the rearward piston **16** movement during compression ratio

adjustments. This movement requires the cylindrical bore **20**, wherein the cylindrical bore **20** concentrically traverses through the rearward piston **16** and into the rearward piston tube **19**. The cylindrical bore **20** is sized to receive the forward piston shaft **18** and, thus, allows the forward piston shaft **18** to traverse through the rearward piston **16**.

5 Specifically, the forward piston shaft **18** is slidably positioned within the rearward piston tube **19**. The forward piston shaft **18** is connected in between the forward crosshead **9** and the forward piston **15**. Resultantly, the forward crosshead **9**, the forward piston shaft **18**, and the forward piston **15** are capable of movement independent of the rearward tubular crosshead **10**, the rearward piston tube **19**, and the rearward piston **16**.

10 In the preferred embodiment, the present invention is implemented as a double-acting piston-type gas compressor. In this embodiment, the compression chamber of the cylinder **17** is divided into two separate chambers, the rearward intake-and-compression chamber and the forward intake-and-compression chamber. The separate chambers also include independent gas intake ports. In particular, the forward intake-and-outlet
15 assembly and the rearward intake-and-outlet assembly connect the separate chambers to a supply of gas and to a receiving tank for storing the compressed gas. The forward intake-and-outlet assembly and the rearward intake-and-outlet assembly each comprise an intake channel, an intake valve, an outlet channel, and an outlet valve. The forward intake-and-outlet assembly and the rearward intake-and-outlet assembly are positioned opposite to
20 each other along the cylinder **17**. The forward intake-and-outlet assembly is integrated into the cylinder **17**, adjacent to the forward piston **15**. The rearward intake-and-outlet assembly is integrated into the cylinder **17**, adjacent to the rearward piston **16**. The intake channel is an opening within the cylinder **17** for drawing gas into the cylinder **17**. The outlet channel receives compressed gas and discharges the gas to a high-pressure
25 discharge pipe or a storage tank. For efficiency purposes, referring to FIG. **7**, the intake channel and the outlet channel are positioned opposite to each other, across the cylinder **17**. The intake channel laterally traverses into the cylinder **17**, intersecting the compression chamber. Similarly, the outlet channel laterally traverses into the cylinder **17**, intersecting the compression chamber. The intake valve, not shown, controls the flow
30 of gas along the intake channel. Thus, the intake valve is mechanically integrated into the cylinder **17**, along the intake channel. The outlet valve, not shown, controls the flow of

gas along the outlet channel. Thus, the outlet valve is mechanically integrated into the cylinder **17**, along the outlet channel. Resultantly, the intake channel, the outlet channel, and the compression chamber are all in fluid communication with each other.

Referring to FIG. **2** and FIG. **3**, in one embodiment of the present invention, the rearward tubular crosshead **10** comprises an elongated sliding body **11**, an inner channel **12**, and an inner cylindrical bore **13**. The inner channel **12** is sized to act as a channel for the forward crosshead **9** to translate within. The inner channel **12** traverses into and along the elongated sliding body **11**. Additionally, the inner channel **12** is oriented towards the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The forward crosshead **9** is slidably positioned within and along the inner channel **12**. The elongated sliding body **11** reciprocates due to the motion of the first rearward rod and the second rearward rod. Specifically, the first rearward connecting rod **7** and the second rearward connecting rod **8** are positioned opposite to each other, across the inner channel **12**. As mentioned above, the first rearward connecting rod **7** and the second rearward connecting rod **8** are each terminally and rotatably connected to the elongated sliding body **11**; it is preferred that the aforementioned connections are achieved through a pin coupling. The inner cylindrical bore **13** traverses through the elongated sliding body **11** from the inner channel **12** in order to receive the forward piston shaft **18**. Specifically, the forward piston shaft **18** is positioned within the cylindrical bore **20** and is terminally connected to the forward crosshead **9** at one end and to the forward piston **15** at the other end. The rearward piston tube **19** overlaps the forward piston shaft **18** and, thus, is positioned adjacent to the elongated sliding body **11**, opposite the forward crosshead **9**. Additionally, the rearward piston tube **19** is connected to the sliding body, about the inner cylindrical bore **13**.

Referring to FIG. **2**, FIG. **3**, and FIG. **4**, the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** in conjunction with the gear pin crankshaft **1** act as a crank mechanism. The mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** receives rotational motion and through the gear pin crankshaft **1**, the forward connecting rod **5**, the rearward connecting rod **6**, the forward crosshead **9**, the rearward tubular crosshead **10**, the forward piston shaft **18**, and the rearward piston tube **19** transfers and transforms said motion into reciprocating translation for the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**. Additionally, and more importantly, the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** and the gear pin crankshaft **1**

vary and control the overall travel end distance of the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**, thus controlling the overall compression ratio of the present invention.

The mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** further comprises a first planetary-gear assembly **24** and a second planetary-gear assembly **25**. The first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** are each an epicyclic gear system comprising a sun gear **26**, a primary planet gear **27**, a plurality of secondary planet gears **28**, and a ring gear **29**. Referring to FIG. **3** and FIG. **5**, the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** are mounted offset from each other to symmetrically support the gear pin crankshaft **1** from opposing sides. More specifically, the sun gear **26** from the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the sun gear **26** from the second planetary-gear assembly **25** are concentrically positioned with each other about a main rotation axis **42**. As such, the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** are mounted and centered about the main rotation axis **42**. Similar to traditional designs, the sun gear **26** is a spur gear of similar tooth size to the planet gears and acts as the center support member for the primary planet gear **27**, the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**, and the ring gear **29**. The sun gear **26** acts a structural member in order to support the primary planet gear **27**, the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**, and the ring gear **29**. Additionally, in general, when the sun gear **26** is rotated, the primary planet gear **27**, and the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** are rotated about their respective axis. This configuration, in turn, rotates the gear pin crankshaft **1** and, therefore, raising or lowering the top dead center (TDC) height of the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** and changing the compression ratio.

Referring to FIG. **6**, the primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** are radially distributed about the sun gear **26** and are each a spur gear that is mechanically engaged to the sun gear **26**. Similar to traditional designs, the primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** revolve about the sun gear **26**, i.e. the main rotation axis **42**. The primary planet gear **27** of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the primary planet gear **27** of the second planetary-gear assembly **25** support the gear pin crankshaft **1** to transfer reciprocating motion to the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**. The plurality of secondary planet gears **28** assists in the transmission of torsional forces, counter-balances the primary planet gear

27, and support the ring gear 29 such that the ring gear 29 can symmetrically rotate about the main rotation axis 42. The ring gear 29 is mounted coaxial with the sun gear 26 and mechanically engages with the primary planet gear 27 and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears 28. Thus, the ring gear 29 encompasses the sun gear 26, the primary planet gear 27, and the plurality of secondary planet gears 28. When the primary planet gear 27 rotates about the sun gear 26, the ring gear 29 is rotated by the primary planet gear 27 and the plurality of secondary planet gears 28 about the main rotation axis 42 because the sun gear 26 is held fixed. The sun gear 26 only rotates slightly when varying the compression ratio.

10 The gear pin crankshaft 1 contains eccentric journals which act as the crankpin elements to mechanically couple the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly 23 to the forward connecting rod 5 and the rearward connecting rod 6. Referring to FIG. 5, the primary planet gear 27 from the first planetary-gear assembly 24 and the primary planet gear 27 from the second planetary-gear assembly 25 are concentrically positioned with each other along a shared rotation axis 43 and support the gear pin crankshaft 1. More specifically, the gear pin crankshaft 1 is torsionally and eccentrically connected in between the primary planet gear 27 from the first planetary-gear assembly 24 and the primary planet gear 27 from the second planetary-gear assembly 25. Specifically, the forward piston rotation axis 21 and the rearward piston rotation axis 22 are positioned parallel and offset with the shared rotation axis 43. Resultantly, the gear pin crankshaft 1 rotates and travels along the same path as the primary planet gear 27. This configuration is key in varying the compression ratios within the compression chamber of the present invention. Resultantly, the forward connecting rod 5, the forward crosshead 9, the forward piston shaft 18, and the forward piston 15 are all interlinked and connected to the gear pin crankshaft 1 at a 180-degree offset from the rearward connecting rod 6, the rearward tubular crosshead 10, the rearward piston tube 19, and the rearward piston 16.

As the primary planet gear 27 travels about the main rotation axis 42, the gear pin crankshaft 1 follows the same path. This circular motion about the main rotation axis 42 is converted to reciprocating motion for the forward piston 15 and the rearward piston 16 through the first rearward connecting rod 7, the second rearward connecting rod 8, the forward connecting rod 5, the forward crosshead 9, the rearward tubular crosshead 10, the

forward piston shaft **18**, and the rearward piston tube **19**; similar to traditional crank-type mechanisms. In general, the first rearward connecting rod **7**, the second rearward connecting rod **8**, the forward connecting rod **5**, the forward crosshead **9**, the rearward tubular crosshead **10**, the forward piston shaft **18**, and the rearward piston tube **19** make up a connecting-rod assembly.

When the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **1** rotates about the main rotation axis **42**, the tandem piston assembly **14** moves linearly and reciprocates about a stroke length equivalent to the diameter of the circumference created by the gear pin crankshaft **1** rotating around the main rotation axis **42**. This stroke length moves the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** equally and draws in and compresses gas through the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**. The mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** receives rotational motion through the ring gear **29** of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the ring gear **29** of the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. The rotational motion is then transferred to the primary planet gear **27** and the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** to rotate the gear pin crankshaft **1** about the main rotation axis **42**, similar to traditional planetary gear systems. A variety of means may be used to drive or impart rotational motion to the ring gear **29**.

The overall method of the present invention is disclosed in relation to both the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25**; in particular, the subcomponents of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** move identical with the same subcomponents of the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. When rotational motion is imparted onto the ring gear **29**, due to the characteristics of epicyclic gearings, the primary planet gear **27** and the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** begin to rotate about the sun gear **26**, as the sun gear **26** remains fixed. This configuration, in turn, rotates the gear pin crankshaft **1** about the main rotation axis **42** and forces a proximal end of the coupled connecting-rod assembly to follow the same path. The distal end of the connecting-rod assembly is restricted to linear motion and therefore moves in a reciprocating motion in response to the gear pin crankshaft **1** rotating about the main rotation axis **42**. Resultantly, the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** also travel in a reciprocating motion within the cylinder **17**, similar to conventional compressor designs. The reciprocating motion draws in, compresses, and expels compressed gas. In

order to vary the volume within the forward compression chamber and the volume of the rearward compression chamber, the TDC height of the forward piston **15** and the TDC height of the rearward piston **16** are altered. The TDC height for the forward piston **15** is defined by the location at which point the forward piston **15** is furthest from the gear pin crankshaft **1**. Alternatively, the TDC height for the rearward piston **16** is defined by the location at which point the rearward piston **16** is closest to the gear pin crankshaft **1**. The TDC heights can be altered by uniformly rotating both the sun gear **26** of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the sun gear **26** of the second planetary-gear assembly **25**.

10 The following description of movement is disclosed in relation to both the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. To increase or decrease the TDC heights, the sun gear **26** is partially rotated. Specifically, because the forward rotation axis and the rearward piston rotation axis **22** are positioned eccentric relative to the shared rotation axis **43**, the TDC heights can be modified through the rotation of the primary planet gear **27**, i.e. partial rotation of the sun gear **26**. In other words, the primary planet gear **27** travels along a circular path around the sun gear **26** while the gear pin crankshaft **1** rotates about shared rotation axis **43** and the main rotation axis **42**. For each cycle, at 0 degrees and 180 degrees positions, the gear pin crankshaft **1** always returns to the same orientation as long as the sun gear **26** has not moved; wherein a single cycle is defined by a single full 360-degree rotation of the primary planet gear **27** about the main rotation axis **42**. Because of the characteristics of epicyclical gearing, partially rotating the sun gear **26** rotates the relative position of primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality secondary planet gears. The partial rotation of sun gear **26** alters the orientation of the primary planet gear **27** and the orientation of the gear pin crankshaft **1** at each increment of 0 degrees and 180 degrees. Because of the eccentric configuration, rotating the gear pin crankshaft **1** moves the forward piston rotation axis **21** and the rearward piston rotation axis **22** further or closer to the main rotation axis **42** at the 0 degrees and 180 degrees, thus effectively increasing or decreasing the TDC heights and the compression ratios within the compression chamber.

30 The forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** move equally and in opposite directions when the gear pin crankshaft **1** is rotated about the shared rotation axis **43**.

Thereby, the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16** either move closer together yielding less volumetric displacement and a lower compression ratio or move farther apart yielding more volumetric displacement and a higher compression ratio.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the gearing and sizing
5 between the primary planet gear **27**, the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**, the sun gear **26**, and the ring gear **29** may be altered to achieve a number of different cycles, different TDC heights, different chamber sizes, and more. For the preferred embodiment of the present invention, a main tooth ratio between the sun gear **26**, the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** and the primary planet gear **27**, and the ring gear **29** is 1:1:3,
10 respectively. Resultantly, for every full rotation of the ring gear **29** about the main rotation axis **42**, the primary planet gear **27** rotates a three-fourth (3/4) times about the main rotation axis **42** and one and one-half (1.5) times about the shared rotational axis **43**.

Referring to FIG. 7, the present invention further comprises a compressor block **44** and a crosshead housing **45**. The compressor block **44** houses and protects the mirror-
15 image planetary-gear assembly **23**, the gear pin crankshaft **1**, and a portion of the connecting-rod assembly. The crosshead housing **45** houses and protects a portion of the connecting-rod assembly and supports the compressor cylinder **17**. The first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** each further comprise a bearing **40** and a ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The ratio-adjustment mounting
20 shaft **32** controls the radial displacement of the sun gear **26**, thus varying the relative position of the primary planet gear **27** and, equally varying the forward movement of the forward piston **15** and the rearward movement of the rearward piston **16**; therefore, equally varying the compression ratios of the forward compression chamber and the rearward compression chamber. The ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** is positioned
25 adjacent to the sun gear **26**, opposite the gear pin crankshaft **1**. Additionally, the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** is torsionally and axially connected to the sun gear **26** such that any rotational movement of the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** will translate to an equivalent rotational movement of the sun gear **26**. The bearing **40** rotatably mounts the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** within the compressor block **44**. More
30 specifically, the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23**, the gear pin crankshaft **1**, and the connecting-rod assembly are positioned within the compressor block **44**. The bearing

40 is adjacently connected within the compressor block **44**, adjacent to the sun gear **26**. The ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** is attached within the bearing **40** such that the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** is rotatably mounted to the compressor block **44** with the bearing **40**. This configuration is identical to the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. Additionally, the crosshead housing **45** is oriented perpendicular to the gear pin crankshaft **1** and is laterally mounted to the compressor block **44**. The rearward tubular crosshead **10** is slidably mounted within the crosshead housing **45**. Furthermore, the tandem piston assembly **14** is adjacently mounted to the crosshead housing **45**. Specifically, the compressor cylinder **17** is oriented along the crosshead housing **45**. In alternative embodiments, different means and mechanisms may be used to mount the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** within the compressor block **44**.

The ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** may be controlled through a variety of means. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** is controlled by a ratio-control shaft **41**. More specifically, the ratio-control shaft **41** is mechanically coupled to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** of the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. For this coupling, the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** each further comprise a control arm **33**, an arc gear **34**, and a drive-adjustment gear **35** to mechanically couple the ratio-control shaft **41** to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The ratio-control shaft **41** is rotatably mounted within the compressor block **44**, in particular the ratio-control shaft **41** is mounted parallel and offset to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The control arm **33** is an elongated plate or rod that is terminally and perpendicularly connected to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The arc gear **34** is a semi-annular gear that is terminally connected to the control arm **33**, opposite to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The drive-adjustment gear **35** is concentrically connected about the ratio-control shaft **41** and is mechanically engaged with the drive-adjustment gear **35**. Resultantly, rotational motion of the ratio-control shaft **41** raises or lowers one end of the control arm **33** through the mechanical engagement between the arc gear **34** and the drive-adjustment gear **35**. This engagement rotates the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** and the sun gear

26, and resultantly changes the compression ratio. In relation to the overall system, the ratio-control shaft **41** is mechanically coupled to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** of the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32** of the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. It is preferred that the arc gear **34** and the drive-
5 adjustment gear **35** are sized such that rotation of the arc gear **34** rotates the sun gear **26** equally, which equally rotates the primary planet gear **27**, which equally moves the forward piston **15** and the rearward piston **16**.

The present invention utilizes a multitude of methods in order to ensure that the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** is adequately balanced during operations, thus
10 decreasing vibration, decreasing energy losses, and increasing efficiency of the compressor. More specifically, the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** each further comprise an eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** and a counterweight coupling plate. The eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** is a circular plate with a hole that is positioned off-center, thus
15 positioning a majority of its weight one half of the circular plate. The eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** is positioned adjacent to the primary planet gear **27** and the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**, opposite the gear-pin assembly. Additionally, the eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** is positioned around the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**, thus allowing the eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** to
20 rotate without engaging the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**. The eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** is designed to rotate about the main rotation axis **42** with the primary planet gear **27** and the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** in order to counter balance the weight of the gear pin crankshaft **1**, the connecting-rod assembly, and any forces associated with the aforementioned components. As such, the eccentric annular
25 external-counterweight **36** is rotatably mounted to the primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**. Additionally, a center of gravity **37** of the eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** and the shared rotation axis **43** are positioned opposite to each other about the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft **32**.

The counterweight coupling plate adds to the eccentric annular external-
30 counterweight **36**. The counterweight coupling plate is an elongated plate, preferably of a rectangular shape, that is attached to the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**. More

specifically, the counterweight coupling plate is positioned in between the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. The counterweight plate is rotatably mounted to each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**. It is understood that the design, shape, weight, and material configuration of the eccentric annular external-counterweight **36** and the counterweight coupling plate is subject to change.

Additionally, in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the gear pin crankshaft **1** further comprises a first counterweight plate and a second counterweight plate. The first counterweight plate and the second counterweight plate apply counterbalance to the shared rotational axis where out-of-balance is created by the eccentrically positioned first rearward journal **3** and the second rearward journal **4**. The first counterweight plate and the second counterweight plate are each a semi-circular plate. The first counterweight plate is connected about the first rearward journal **3**. Similarly, the second counterweight plate is connected about the second rearward journal **4**.

Referring to FIG. **4** and FIG. **6**, the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23** is powered by a driving power shaft **39**. The driving power shaft **39** is mounted within the compressor block **44**; and the driving power shaft **39** is positioned parallel and offset to the main rotation axis **42**. The driving power shaft **39** is torsionally connected to a motor, or another similar source of rotational power, in order to power the present invention. To transfer rotational motion from the driving power shaft **39** to the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly **23**, the driving power shaft **39** is torsionally coupled to the ring gear **29** from the first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the ring gear **29** from the second planetary-gear assembly **25**. In one embodiment, the ring gear **29** is coupled to the driving power shaft **39** through a chain. In the preferred embodiment, the ring gear **29** is coupled to the driving power shaft **39** through a gear mesh. More specifically, the ring gear **29** is an internal-external ring gear **30** that comprises an external ring gear **30** and an internal ring gear **29**. The internal ring gear **29** meshes with and is designed complimentary to the primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28**. More specifically, the primary planet gear **27** and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears **28** are mechanically engaged with the internal ring gear **29**. The first planetary-gear assembly **24** and the second planetary-gear assembly **25** each further comprise a driving

gear **38**. The driving gear **38** is concentrically connected about the driving power shaft **39** and is positioned coplanar with the internal-external ring gear **30**. In order to transfer rotational energy/motion, the external ring gear **30** is mechanically engaged to the driving gear **38**.

5 Although the invention has been explained in relation to its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that many other possible modifications and variations can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as hereinafter claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. An infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas compressor comprises:

a gear pin crankshaft;

5 a forward piston-connecting rod;

an at least one rearward piston-connecting rod;

a forward crosshead;

a rearward tubular crosshead;

a forward piston shaft;

10 a rearward piston tube;

a tandem piston assembly;

the forward piston-connecting rod being terminally and rotatably connected to the gear pin crankshaft about a forward piston rotation axis;

the rearward piston-connecting rod being terminally and rotatably

15 connected to the gear pin crankshaft about a rearward piston rotation axis;

the forward piston rotation axis and the rearward piston rotation axis being positioned parallel and equally offset to each other;

the forward crosshead being terminally and rotatably connected to the forward piston-connecting rod, opposite the gear pin crankshaft;

20 the rearward tubular crosshead being terminally and rotatably connected to the rearward-piston connecting rod, opposite the gear pin crankshaft;

the forward crosshead being slidably mounted and guided within the rearward tubular crosshead;

25 the tandem piston assembly being positioned adjacent to the rearward tubular crosshead, opposite the gear pin crankshaft;

a forward piston from the tandem piston assembly being mounted to the forward crosshead; and

a rearward piston from the tandem piston assembly being mounted to the rearward tubular crosshead.

30

2. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 1 comprises:

the at least one rearward piston-connecting rod comprises a first rearward rod and a second rearward rod;

5 the gear pin crankshaft comprises a forward journal, a first rearward journal, and a second rearward journal;

the forward journal being concentrically aligned with the forward piston rotation axis;

the first rearward journal being terminally mounted to the forward journal;

10 the second rearward journal being terminally mounted to the forward journal, opposite the first rearward journal;

the first rearward journal and the second rearward journal being concentrically aligned with the rearward piston rotation axis;

15 the forward piston-connecting rod being terminally and rotatably connected about the forward journal about the forward piston rotation axis;

the first rearward rod and the second rearward rod being positioned parallel and opposite to each other across the forward piston-connecting rod;

the first rearward rod being terminally and rotatably connected about the first rearward journal about the rearward piston rotation axis; and

20 the second rearward rod being terminally and rotatably connected about the second rearward journal about the rearward piston rotation axis.

3. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 1 comprises:

25 the tandem piston assembly comprises a cylinder, a forward piston, a rearward piston, a forward piston shaft, a rearward piston tube, and a cylindrical bore;

the rearward tubular crosshead being mounted adjacent and perpendicular to the gear pin crankshaft;

30 the cylinder being concentrically positioned with the rearward tubular crosshead;

the cylinder being mounted adjacent to the rearward tubular crosshead and the forward crosshead, opposite the gear pin crankshaft;

the forward piston and the rearward piston being slidably mounted with the cylinder;

5 the rearward piston tube being connected in between the rearward piston and the rearward tubular crosshead;

the cylindrical bore concentrically traversing through the rearward piston into the rearward piston tube;

10 the forward piston shaft being slidably positioned within the rearward piston tube; and

the forward piston shaft being connected in between the forward crosshead and the forward piston.

4. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 1 comprises:

15 a mirror-image planetary-gear assembly;

the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly comprises a first planetary-gear assembly and a second planetary-gear assembly;

20 the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly each comprise a sun gear, a primary planet gear, a plurality of secondary planet gears, and a ring gear;

the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly being mounted offset from each other;

25 the sun gear from the first planetary-gear assembly and the sun gear from the second planetary-gear assembly being concentrically positioned with each other about a main rotation axis;

the primary planet gear from the first planetary-gear assembly and the primary planet gear from the second planetary-gear assembly being concentrically positioned with each other along a shared rotation axis;

30 the rearward piston rotation axis and the forward piston rotation axis being positioned parallel and offset with the shared rotation axis;

the gear pin crankshaft being torsionally connected in between the primary planet gear from the first planetary-gear assembly and the primary planet gear from the second planetary-gear assembly; and

5 the forward piston rotation axis and the rearward piston rotation axis being positioned parallel and equally offset from the shared rotation axis.

5. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 4 comprises:

10 the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly gear assembly each further comprise a ratio-adjustment mounting shaft;

the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft being positioned adjacent to the sun gear, opposite the gear pin crankshaft; and

the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft being torsionally and axially connected to the sun gear.

15

6. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 5 comprises:

a compressor block;

a crosshead housing;

20 the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly each further comprise a bearing;

the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly and the gear pin crankshaft being positioned within the compressor block;

25 the bearing being mounted within the compressor block, adjacent to the sun gear;

the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft being rotatably mounted to the compressor block with the bearing;

the crosshead housing being laterally mounted to the compressor block;

30 the rearward tubular crosshead being slidably mounted within the crosshead housing; and

the tandem piston assembly being adjacently mounted to the crosshead housing, opposite the compressor block.

7. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 6 comprises:

a ratio-control shaft;

the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly each further comprise a control arm, an arc gear, and a drive-adjustment gear;

the ratio-control shaft being mounted parallel and offset to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft;

the control arm being terminally and perpendicularly connected to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft;

the arc gear being terminally connected to the control arm, opposite to the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft;

the drive-adjustment gear being concentrically connected about the ratio-control shaft; and

the arc gear being mechanically engaged with the drive-adjustment gear.

8. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 5 comprises:

the first planetary-gear assembly and the second planetary-gear assembly gear assembly each further comprise an eccentric annular external-counterweight;

the eccentric annular external-counterweight being positioned adjacent to the primary planet gear and the plurality of secondary planet gears, opposite the gear pin crankshaft;

the eccentric annular external-counterweight being positioned around the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft;

the eccentric annular external-counterweight being rotatably mounted to the primary planet gear and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears; and

a center of gravity of the eccentric annular external-counterweight and the shared rotation axis being positioned opposite to each other about the ratio-adjustment mounting shaft.

- 5 9. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 5 comprises:
- a driving power shaft;
 - a compressor block;
 - the mirror-image planetary-gear assembly and the gear pin crankshaft
- 10 being rotatably mounted within the compressor block;
- the driving power shaft being positioned parallel and offset to the main rotation axis;
 - the driving power shaft being rotatably mounted within the compressor block;
- 15 the ring gear from the first planetary-gear assembly being torsionally coupled to the driving power shaft; and
- the ring gear from the second planetary-gear assembly being torsionally coupled to the driving power shaft.
- 20 10. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 9 comprises:
- the ring gear being an inner-external ring gear;
 - the inner-external ring gear comprises an external ring gear and an inner ring gear;
- 25 the first planetary-gear assembly further comprise a driving gear;
- the driving gear being concentrically connected about the driving power shaft;
 - the driving gear being positioned coplanar with the inner-external ring gear;
- 30 the external ring gear being mechanically engaged to the driving gear; and

the primary planet gear and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears being mechanically engaged to the inner ring gear.

5 11. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 9 comprises:

the ring gear being an inner-external ring gear;

the inner-external ring gear comprises an external ring gear and an inner ring gear;

10 the second planetary-gear assembly further comprise a driving gear;

the driving gear being concentrically connected about the driving power shaft;

the driving gear being positioned coplanar with the inner-external ring gear;

15 the external ring gear being mechanically engaged to the driving gear; and the primary planet gear and each of the plurality of secondary planet gears being mechanically engaged to the inner ring gear.

12. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 4, wherein a main tooth ratio between the sun gear, the plurality of secondary planet gears and the primary planet gear, and the ring gear is 1:1:3.

20

13. The infinitely variable compression ratio mechanism of a reciprocating piston-type gas compressor as claimed in claim 2 comprises:

25

the rearward tubular crosshead comprising an elongated sliding body, an inner channel, and an inner cylindrical bore;

the inner channel traversing into and along the elongated sliding body;

the inner channel being oriented towards the gear pin crankshaft;

30

the first rearward rod and the second rearward rod being positioned opposite to each other, across the inner channel;

the forward crosshead being slidably positioned within and along the inner channel;

the inner cylindrical bore traversing through the elongated sliding body from the inner channel;

5 a forward piston shaft of the tandem piston assembly being positioned within the inner cylindrical bore;

the forward piston shaft being terminally connected to forward crosshead;

a rearward piston tube being positioned adjacent to the elongated sliding body, opposite to the forward crosshead; and

10 the rearward piston tube being terminally connected to the sliding body, about the inner cylindrical bore.

ABSTRACT

A crank-piston mechanism for a reciprocating double-acting piston-type gas compressor that allows for infinitely variable compression ratios during operations. The mechanism includes a gear pin crankshaft, a forward piston-connecting rod, a rearward piston-connecting rod, a forward crosshead, a rearward tubular crosshead, and a tandem piston assembly. The forward piston-connecting rod and the rearward piston-connecting rod are each rotatably connected to the gear pin crankshaft about two parallel but offset axes. On the opposite end, the forward piston-connecting rod and the rearward piston-connecting rod are connected to the forward crosshead and the rearward tubular crosshead, respectively. Wherein, the forward crosshead is slidably mounted within the rearward tubular crosshead. The forward crosshead is connected to a forward piston from the tandem piston assembly and the rearward tubular crosshead is connected to a rearward piston from the tandem piston assembly. The forward piston and the rearward piston are aligned for reciprocating motion.

20

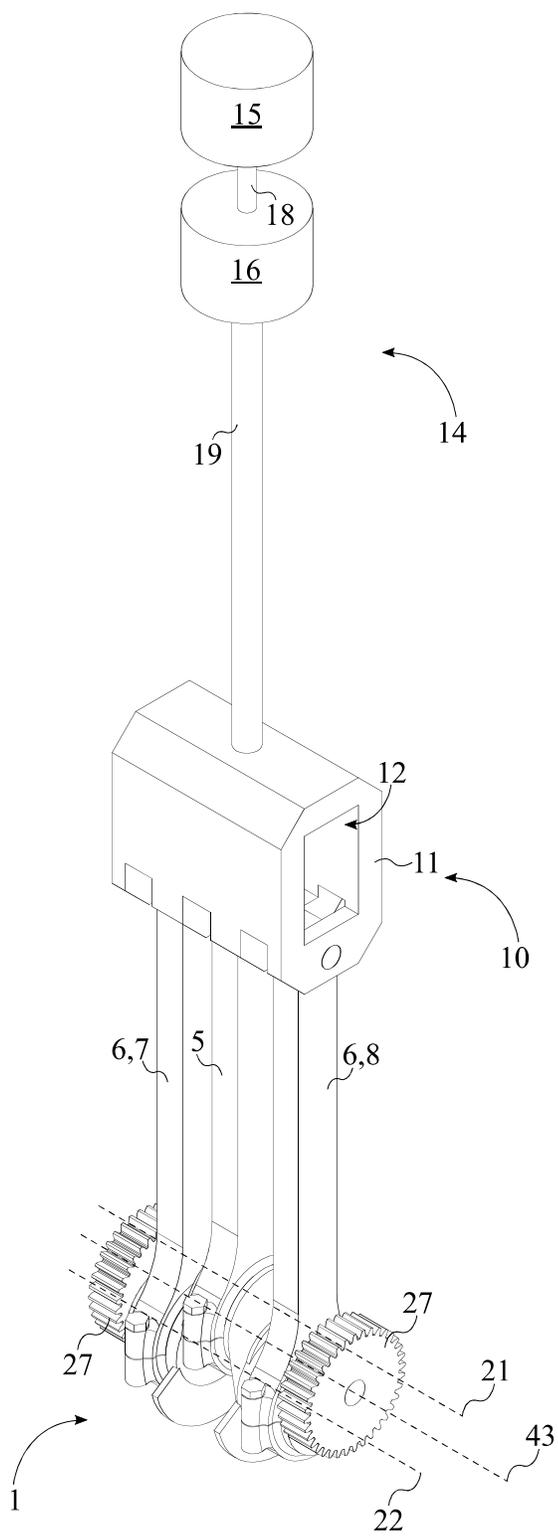


FIG. 1

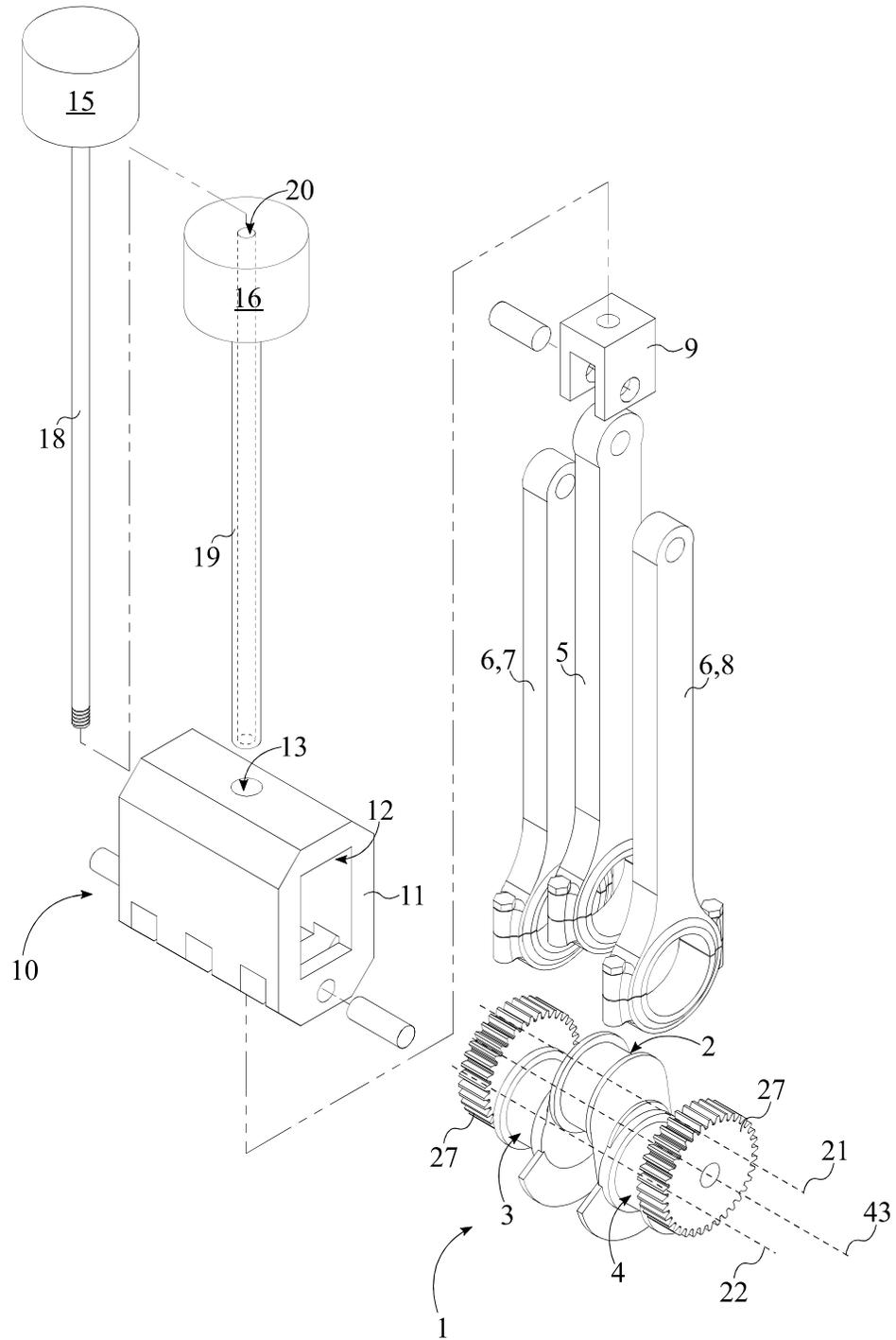


FIG. 2

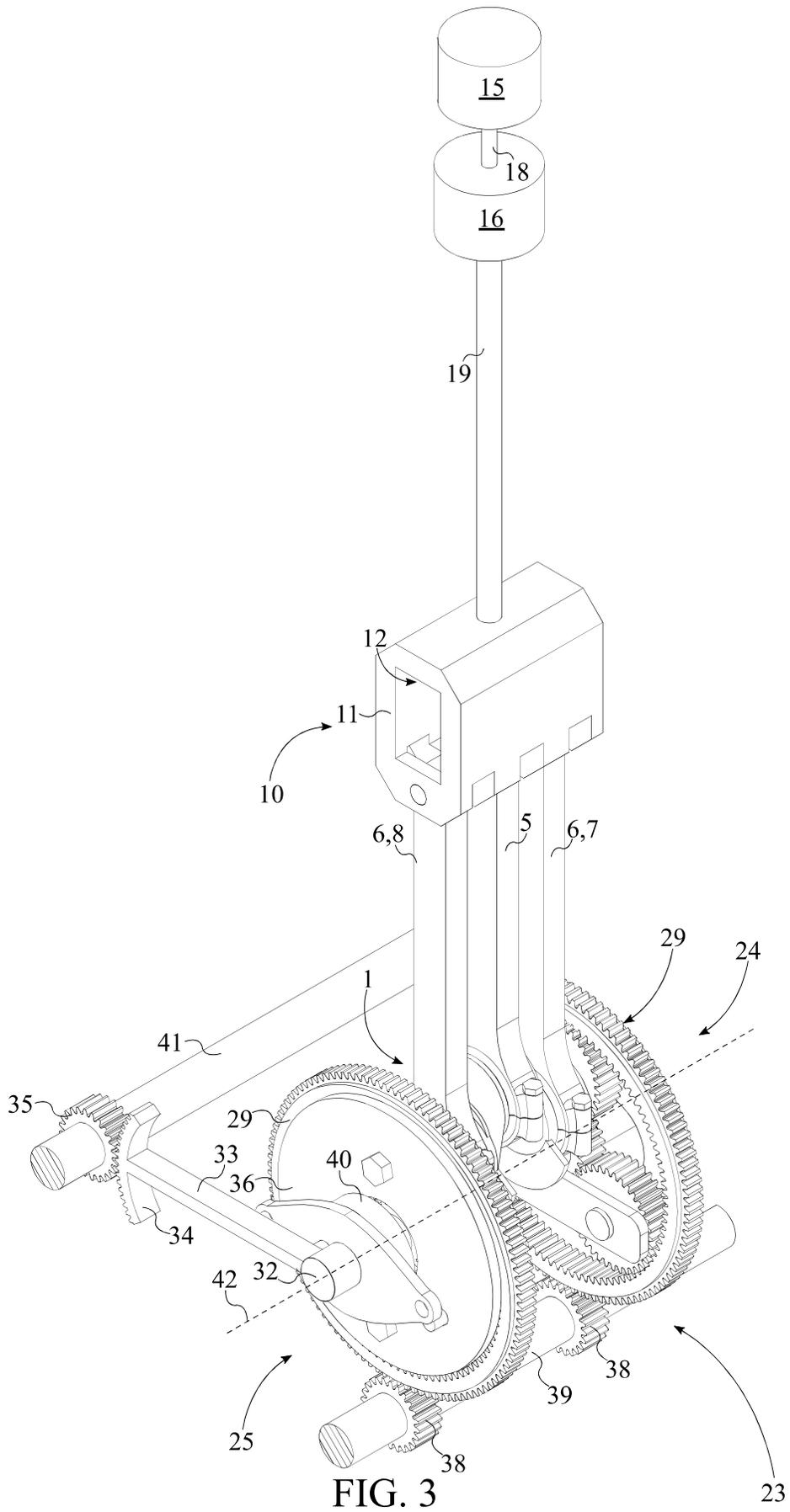


FIG. 3

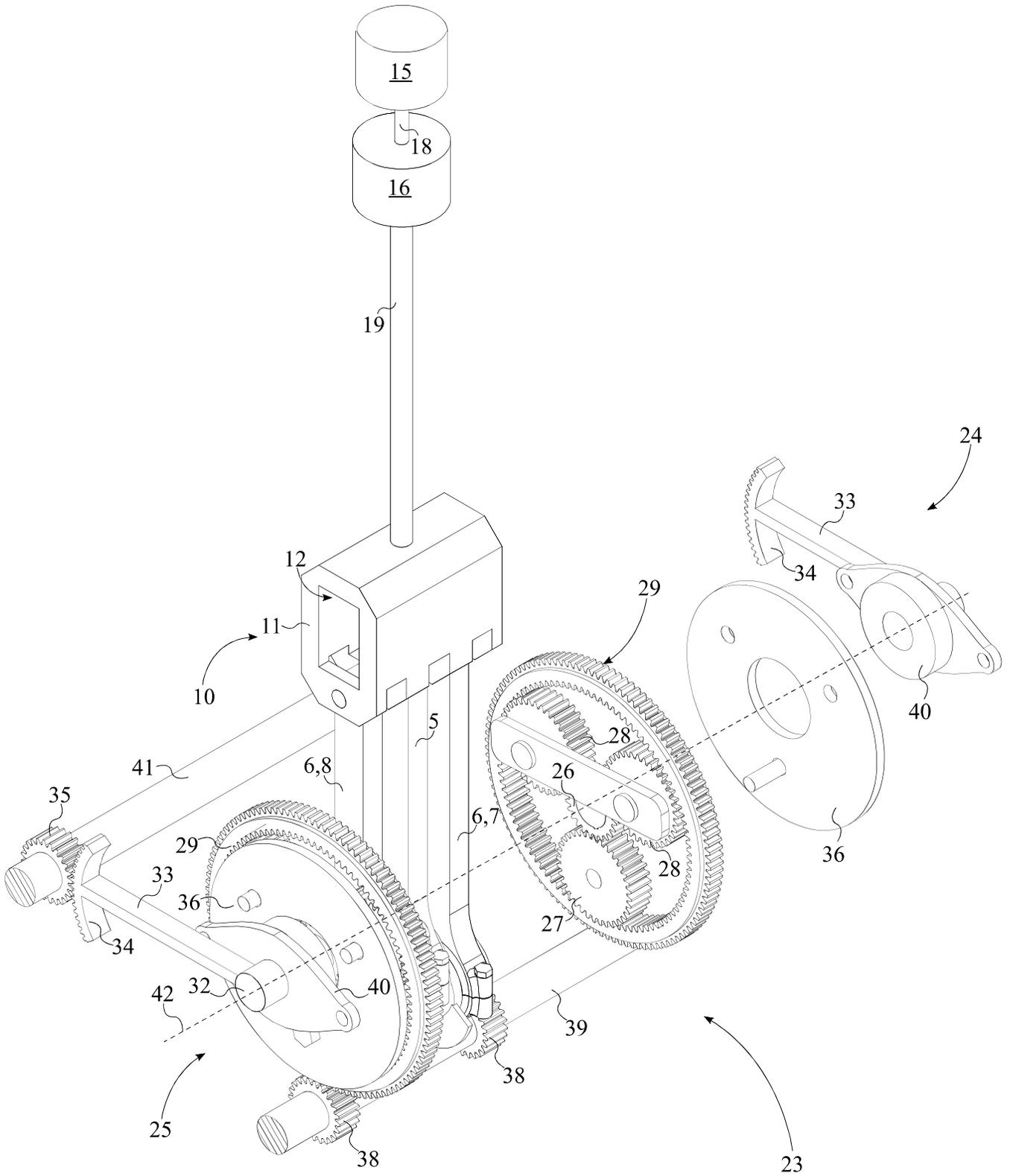


FIG. 4

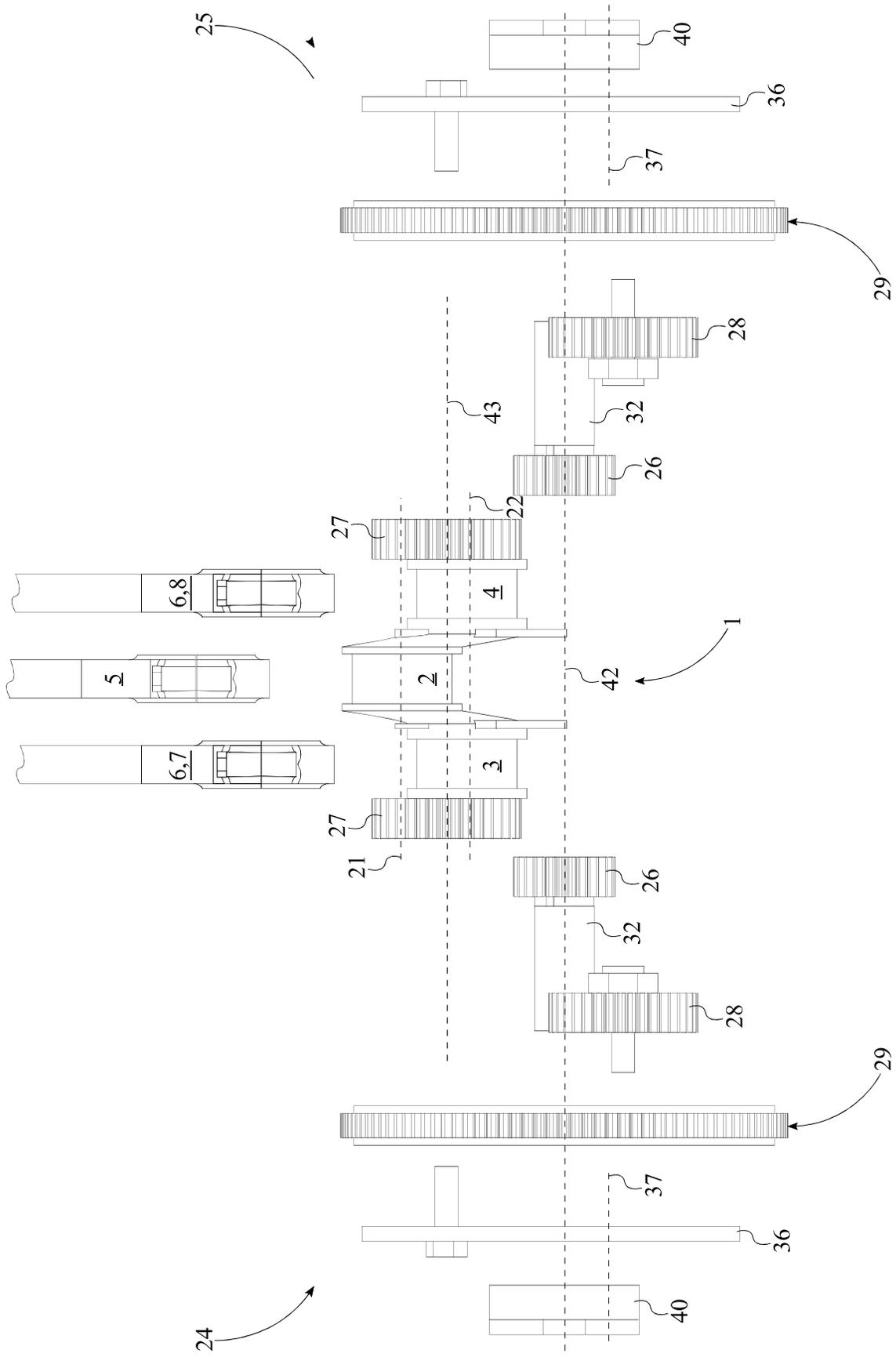


FIG. 5

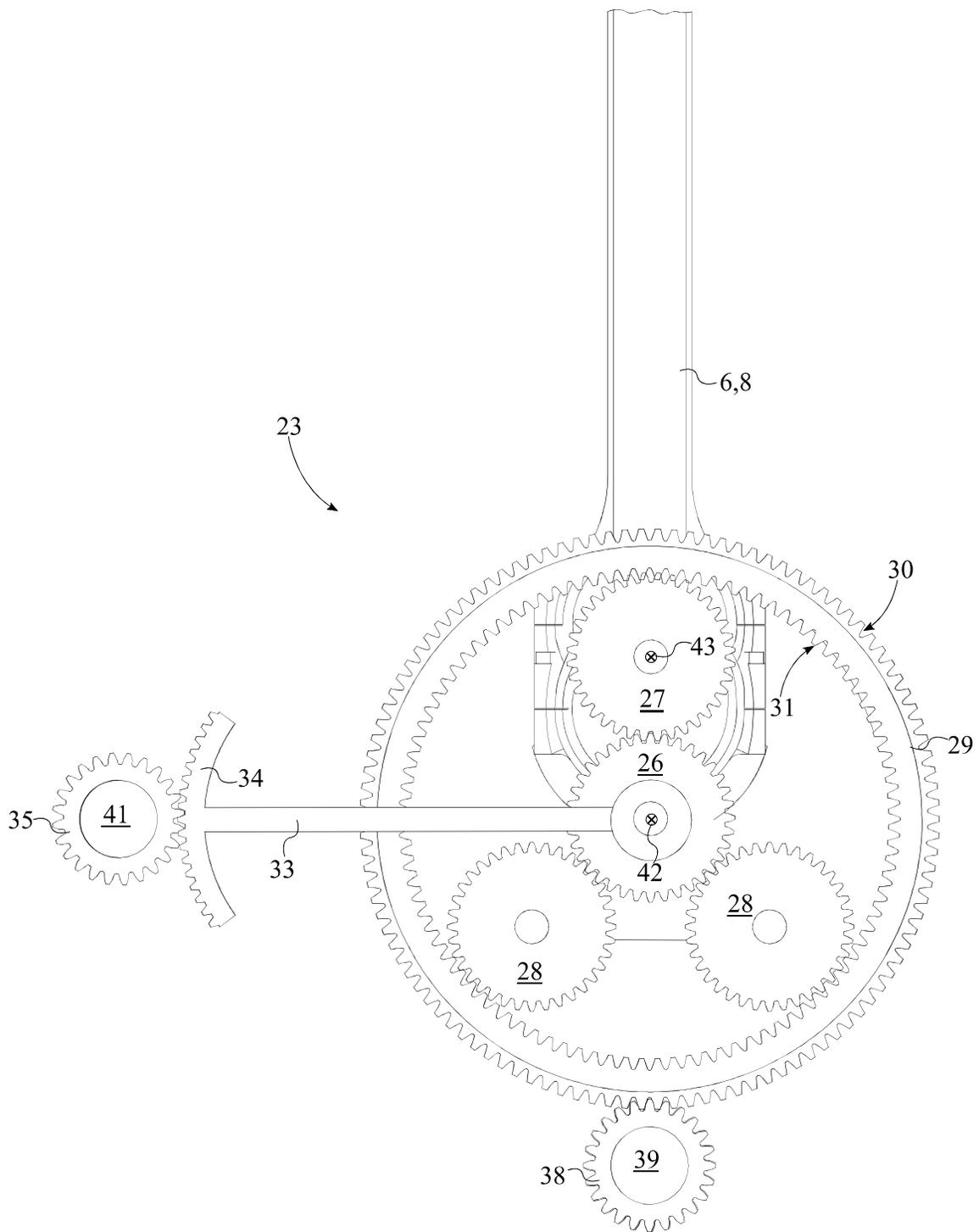


FIG. 6

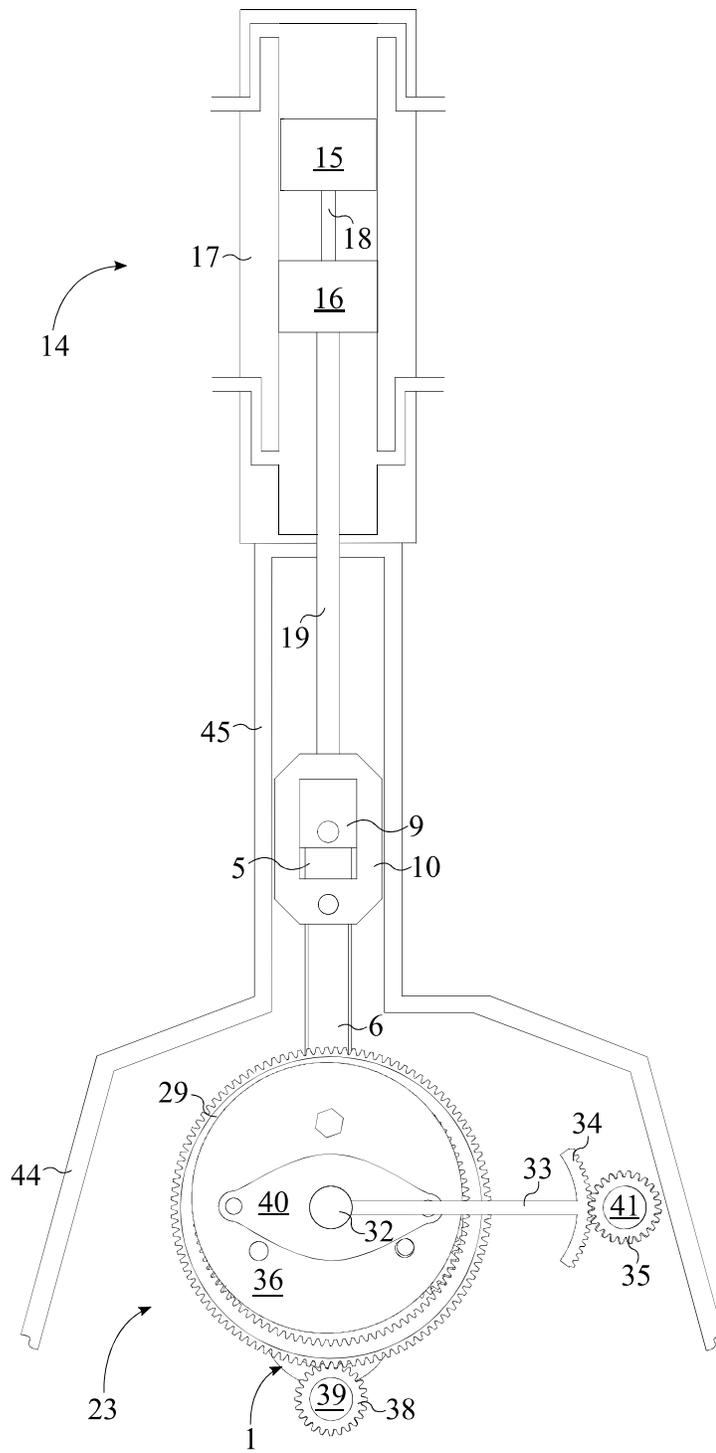


FIG. 7