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(54) Benævnelse: **PLANETGEAR OMFATTENDE KEGLEHJUL OG EN KRAFTSBALANCERINGSENHED**

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DESCRIPTION

Technical field

[0001] The present disclosure relates to a gear train comprising an input and an output wherein power is transferred between input and output via two or more gears in parallel.

Background

[0002] Gear trains with gear that run parallel are used in various systems. For instance, planetary gear trains often employ three or more planet gears that connect to a ring wheel at separate locations to convey power.

[0003] One problem with gear trains of the initially mentioned type is that they require components with high tolerances and often must be considerably over-dimensioned compared to what would be needed in an ideal realisation. Therefore gear trains of the initially mentioned type are often expensive.

[0004] EP 0 084 197 A1 describes a planetary gear train comprising a sun gear, three planet gears and an outer ring gear. Each planet gear is axial displaceable and pivotably mounted on its planetary shaft.

Summary

[0005] The object of the present disclosure is therefore to provide a gear train that can be less costly and still have a considerable capacity in terms of transferred power. This object is achieved by means of a gear train as defined in claim 1. More specifically, in a gear train of the initially mentioned kind, each of the two or more gears are bevelled (beveloid gears), and are arranged to rotate about a respective gear shaft, each of the gears are displaceable in the axial direction of the gear shaft, and an equalizing arrangement, that interconnects the gears, such that they are subjected to a similar force of application in their respective axial directions. Thanks to this arrangement, the load will be more or less evenly distributed between the parallel gears. This increases the capacity of a given gear train, such that it can be used to transfer more power. Alternatively, tolerances can be less demanding. The result is a more efficient and/or less expensive gear train.

[0006] The gear train may be a planetary gear train and said two or more gears may be planet gears.

[0007] The gear shafts may be influenced by the pressure in a chamber, and the equalizing

arrangement may include a hydraulic or pneumatic conduit arrangement interconnecting said chambers, such that they have the same axial force.

[0008] According to one embodiment the planetary gear train comprises at least four planet gears and said equalizing arrangement comprises a mechanical force balancing device, said force balancing system comprising at least one substantially rigid member and being connected to a support structure at a central pivot point. The force balancing system may be connected to the planet holder of the planetary gear train.

[0009] In this embodiment the axial force on the bevelled planet gears are balanced by the mechanical force balancing system, which may be a mechanical linkage or a rigid body arrangement, and there is thus no need for a hydraulic or pneumatic conduit arrangement. The axial force on the bevelled planet gears are balanced such that equal load in each planet gear mesh is achieved. A mechanical equalizing arrangement may thus be used instead of a hydraulic or pneumatic arrangement, which provides for a very robust and cost efficient solution. Especially, such a mechanical force balancing system is advantageous in situations where the planet holder of the planetary gear rotates, where no hydraulic system is available and where there is complicated to connect a hydraulic system, e.g. in hub reduction gears in heavy vehicles.

[0010] According to one embodiment the force balancing system comprises a mechanical linkage which is connected to the support structure via a revolute joint.

[0011] The mechanical linkage may comprise a first lever which is pivotable around a central pivot axis, a second and a third lever which are pivotable around said first lever, each of said second and third levers being connected to one planet gear shaft on one side of said first lever and one planet gear shaft on an opposite side of said first lever, wherein said second and third levers are pivotally connected to said first lever at opposite sides of said rotational joint. The mechanical linkage may thus comprise three pivot joints. The mechanical linkage may be H-shaped in case the gear train comprises four planet gears and may have another shape in case the gear train comprises more than four planet gears.

[0012] According to one embodiment said rigid member interconnects said at least four planet gears and is connected to the support structure via a spherical joint. For instance, the rigid member may be connected to the support structure by means of a spherical roller bearing.

[0013] The rigid member may e.g. be a number of rods rigidly connected to each other so as to move together as a single unit or a disc-shaped element.

[0014] According to one embodiment the gear train is a linear gear train and one of said input and output comprises a rack gear.

Brief description of the drawings

[0015]

Figs 1 and 2 illustrate a planetary gear according to known art.

Fig 3 shows an outer perspective view of a planetary gear train according to the present disclosure, and fig 4 indicates a cross section through that gear train.

Fig 5 shows the cross section indicated in fig 4.

Fig 6 shows an outer perspective view of a planetary gear train according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure.

Fig 7 shows a partly sectioned view of the planetary gear train shown in Fig 6.

Detailed description of preferred embodiments

[0016] The present disclosure relates generally to gear trains where a common driving gear drives two or more driven gears. One example of such a gear train is an epicyclic gear train (or planetary gear train).

[0017] Epicyclic gear trains are often used to accomplish high overall gear ratios, and have a compact structure. Figs 1 and 2 illustrate schematically a planetary gear according to known art.

[0018] Fig 1 shows a schematic front view of such a planetary gear 1 according to known art with a central driving pinion 3 constituting an input shaft. The gear 1 may have an outer casing (not shown) that may be attached to a structure to provide a stationary reference point with regard to the operation of the gear train.

[0019] The illustrated gear train has three planet gears 7 attached to a common planet holder (not shown) and arranged with 120° spacing, although different angular spacings are possible. Although three planetary gears will be considered preferred in most applications a different number of planetary gears may be conceivable. One planetary gear 7 is shown in the scematic cross section of fig 2 where it interacts with the driving pinion 3 and and the outer ring gear 9.

[0020] As mentioned, the centrally located driving pinion 3 meshes with each planetary gear 7. Each of the planetary gears 7 further mesh, at different locations, with the outer ring gear 9. Either the planet holder or the ring wheel 9 is kept fixed with regard to the reference of the gear train, which means that the other part (the ring wheel or the planet holder) will be driven by the driving pinion 3 but at a much lower angular speed and constitutes the output. Of course, the gear may be reversed, such that the driving pinion is instead driven.

[0021] One problem associated with known planetary gears is due to that they transfer power from the driving pinion via more than one planetary gear and to the gear ring connected to the output shaft. The planetary gears will not necessary share the distributed power evenly among them, especially not for gear trains with more than three planet gears. Instead, one or more planetary gears may carry considerably more power than the other planetary gears. This gives the disadvantage that the more heavily loaded gear will have recuded life time than the others, and that the full transmission capacity of the gear train is not used. Therefore the gear train must be over-dimensioned as compared to an ideal gear train.

[0022] The uneven power distribution is mainly due to manufacturing tolerances. It would be possible to improve the distribution by using components with better tolerances. However, this would require high costs, and the problem still cannot be fully eliminated.

[0023] This problem can arise also in other gear trains where power is transmitted between different sets of gears in parallel.

[0024] In the present disclosure, this problem is obviated as follows with reference to Fig 3 showing an outer perspective view of a planetary gear train 11 according to the present disclosure, fig 4 indicating a cross section through that gear, and fig 5 showing this cross section.

[0025] To start with and with reference to fig 5, a bevelled gear 13, also referred to as beveloid gear 13, is used in the component that is intended to carry an evenly distributed fraction of the transferred power (the planet gear in the case of a planetary gear train), instead of a cylindrical gear as shown in fig 2. That bevelled gear is located on an axis and can be displaced in that axis' axial direction. In the illustrated planetary gear train, the planet gear 13 is thus bevelled (frustoconical) and arranged by means of bearings to rotate around a planet shaft 15, which shaft can be displaced in its axial direction. Alternatively, the gear can be displaced on the gear shaft. In the illustrated case the planet shaft 15 axis is slightly angled with respect to the overall axial direction of the gear train, although this is not necessary. However, as the planet axis is angled in this way a more or less cylindrical driving pinion 17, constituting the input and being connected to an input shaft, can be used as the conicity of the planet gear 13 is compensated for. The outer ring wheel 19 is bevelled to match the planet gear depending on the latter's bevelling and axial direction. A bevelled driving pinion can be considered as well.

[0026] In the conventional planetary gear of figs 1 and 2 with cylindrical gears, it is more or less impossible to achieve an even load distribution, especially if more than three planet gears are used.

[0027] By using bevelled gears, i.e. beveloid gears, and making sure that they are loaded axially with the same force a more or less exactly even load distribution can be acheved. The pressure with which the planet shafts 15 are urged towards the ring wheel is determined by the pressure in a fluid filled chamber 21 in the planet carrier 23 where the shaft functions as a piston. As is best illustrated in fig 3, the planet carrier 23 of the gear train is further provided

with hydraulic conduits 25 that interconnect these chambers 21, which will consequently have the same pressure. The pressure may be the athmospheric pressure when the gear train is not loaded, but an overpressure may be considered as well and may also reduce play.

[0028] Consider a case where the gear train begins to rotate, and one of the planet gears carries most of the load. The load from the ring gear will then move that planet shaft towards the chamber to which it is connected, thereby increasing the pressure in that chamber. As the chambers are interconnected, the pressure in the other chambers rises as well which means that those chambers will begin pressing their planet shafts towards the ring wheel. Thus the planet gears of those shafts will take a larger part of the transferred load until the system is balanced, which occurs when all planet shafts are exposed to the same axial force. As in the known gear train, either of the planet carrier 23 or the ring gear 19 may constitute the output, the other being fixed.

[0029] Figs. 6-7 ilustrate a gear train 111 according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure. Essentially all features disclosed in the first embodiment are also present in the second embodiment with reference numerals identifying similar or same features. Having mentioned this, the description will focus on explaining the differing features.

[0030] The gear train 111 according to this embodiment differs in that the equalizing arrangement includes a mechanical force balancing system, in the form of a mechanical linkage 27, instead of a hydraulic conduit arrangement. Furthermore, the planetary gear train 111 comprises a further bevelled planet gear 13, i.e. a fourth planet gear 13. Hence, in this embodiment the gear train has four beveloid planet gears 13 attached to a common planet holder 23 and arranged with 90° spacing, although different angular spacings are possible. The mechanical linkage 27, which interconnects the planet gears 13, is connected to the planet holder 23 via a rotational joint 28 allowing rotation around a central pivot axis. The mechanical linkage 27 is arranged to ditribute forces such that the same axial force is applied to each bevelled planet gear 13. Thereby, equal torque share in every gear mesh may be achieved.

[0031] The mechanical linkage 27 comprises three levers. A first lever 29 is pivotally connected to the planet holder 23 via the rotational joint 28. The first lever 29 is thereby pivotable around a central pivot axis, that extends in the longitudinal direction of the first lever 29, but prevented from translatory movement relative to the planet holder 23. A second 33 and a third 35 lever are pivotally connected to the first lever 29 at opposite sides of the rotational joint 28. The second 33 and third 35 levers are pivotable around the first lever 29 but prevented from translatory movement relative thereto. Each of the second 33 and third 35 levers is connected to one planet gear shaft 15 on one side of said first lever 29 and one planet gear shaft 15 on an opposite side of said first lever 29, as shown in Fig. 7. In the illustrated embodiment, the mechanical linkage 27 thus comprises a central rotational joint 28, that allows the first lever 29 to pivot around a central pivot axis, and two further rotational joints 37, 39, each of which allows a respective lever 33, 35 to pivot around the first lever 29.

[0032] The first lever 29, which is arranged between the second 33 and third 35 levers, is

perpendicular to each of the second 33 and third 35 levers. In the illustrated embodiment, the mechanical linkage 27 is H-shaped.

[0033] As the planet gears 13 are interconnected by the levers 29, 33, 35 of the mechanical linkage 27, the system will be balanced, which occurs when all planet shafts 15 are exposed to the same axial force.

[0034] The present disclosure is not restricted to the above illustrated example, and may be varied and altered in different ways within the scope of the appended claims. For instance, other types of planet gear trains exist where more than one ring wheel is used, and it is possible to adapt the disclosure to such gear trains.

[0035] As described hereinbefore with reference to Figs. 3-5, the planet shafts may be angled with respect to the overall axial direction of the gear train in a way that enables a more or less cylindrical (non-bevelled) driving pinion to be used. Alternatively, the planet shafts may be angled with respect to the overall axial direction of the gear train in a way that enables a more or less cylindrical (non-bevelled) outer ring wheel. Then, the driving pinion is bevelled to match the bevelled planet gears.

[0036] Furthermore, it is appreciated that each of the driving pinion, the planet gears and the outer ring wheel may be bevelled. This enables a planetary gear train in which the planet shafts are substantially parallel to the overall axial direction of the gear train.

[0037] According to one embodiment each of the gears of the planetary gear train is thus a beveloid gear and the planetary axes are parallel with the overall axial direction of the gear train.

[0038] It is howeverer appreciated that the planetary shaft axes may be angled with respect to the overall axial direction of the gear train although each of the gears of the planetary gear train is a beveloid gear. According to one embodiment each of the gears of the planetary gear train is thus a beveloid gear and the planet shafts are slightly angled with respect to the overall axial direction of the gear train.

[0039] As described hereinbefore with reference to Figs. 6-7, a mechanical force balancing system may comprise a mechanical linkage connected to a supporting structure via a joint that allows rotational movement around one single axis but prevent translatory movement. Alternatively, the mechanical force balancing system may be a substantially rigid body, such as, e.g., a number of bars rigidly connected to each other, or a disc-shaped element, connected to a support structure via a joint that allows free rotational movement but prevents translational movement.

[0040] Also, the present disclosure can be used in other types of gear trains than planetary gear trains, including linear gear trains. When used in a linear gear train the input or the output comprises a rack gear. As long as power is transferred in parallel via two gears, load can be

more evenly distributed between those gears by devising them as bevelled gears, making them axially displacable and making sure that they are exposed to the same axial force by providing a connection between them.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

- EP0084197A1 **[0004]**

P A T E N T K R A V

1. Gear (11; 111) omfattende en indgang (17) og en udgang (19; 23), hvor kraft overføres mellem indgang (17) og udgang (19; 23) via to eller flere tandhjul (13) parallelt,

hvert af de to eller flere tandhjul (13) er konisk og arrangeret til at rotere omkring hver sin tandhjulsaksel (15),

hvert af tandhjulene (13) er forskydelige i den aksiale retning af tandhjulsakslen (15),

kendetegnet ved

en udligningsindretning (25; 27) som sammenkobler tandhjulene (13) med hinanden således at de udsættes for en lignende påføringskraft i deres respektive aksiale retninger.

2. Gear (11; 111) ifølge krav 1, hvor gearet er et planetgear og de to eller flere tandhjul (13) er planethjul.

3. Gear (11) ifølge krav 1 eller 2, hvor hver tandhjulsaksel (15) påvirkes af et tryk i et kammer (21) og udligningsindretningen indbefatter en hydraulisk (25) eller pneumatisk ledningsindretning som sammenkobler kamrene (21) med hinanden, således at de har det samme indre tryk.

4. Gear (111) ifølge krav 2, hvor planetgearet (111) omfatter mindst fire planethjul (13) og udligningsindretningen (25, 27) omfatter en mekanisk kraftbalanceringsenhed i form af en mekanisk kobling (27) eller en indretning af stift legeme, hvor kraftbalanceringssystemet omfatter mindst ét stift element (29, 33, 35) og er forbundet til en støttestruktur (23) via et rotationsled (28).

5. Gear (111) ifølge krav 4, hvor kraftbalanceringssystemet er en mekanisk kobling (27) som er forbundet til støttestrukturen (23) via et drejeled.

6. Gear (111) ifølge ét hvilket som helst af kravene 4-5, hvor den mekaniske kobling (27) omfatter en første arm (29) som er pivoterbar omkring en central pivoteringsakse, en anden (33) og en tredje (35) arm som er pivoterbare omkring den første arm (29), hvor hver af den anden (33) og tredje (35) arm er forbundet til én planethjulsaksel (15) på én side af den første arm (29) og én planethjulsaksel (15) på en modsat side af den første arm (29), hvor den anden (33) og tredje (35) arm er pivoterbart forbundne til den første arm (29) ved modsatte sider af rotationsledet (28).

7. Gear (111) ifølge krav 4, hvor det mindst ene stive element (29, 33, 35) sammenkobler de mindst fire planethjul (13) med hinanden og er forbundet til støttestrukturen (23) via et kugleled.

8. Gear (11; 111) ifølge krav 1, hvor gearet (11; 111) er et lineært gear og én af indgangen og udgangen omfatter en tandstang.

DRAWINGS

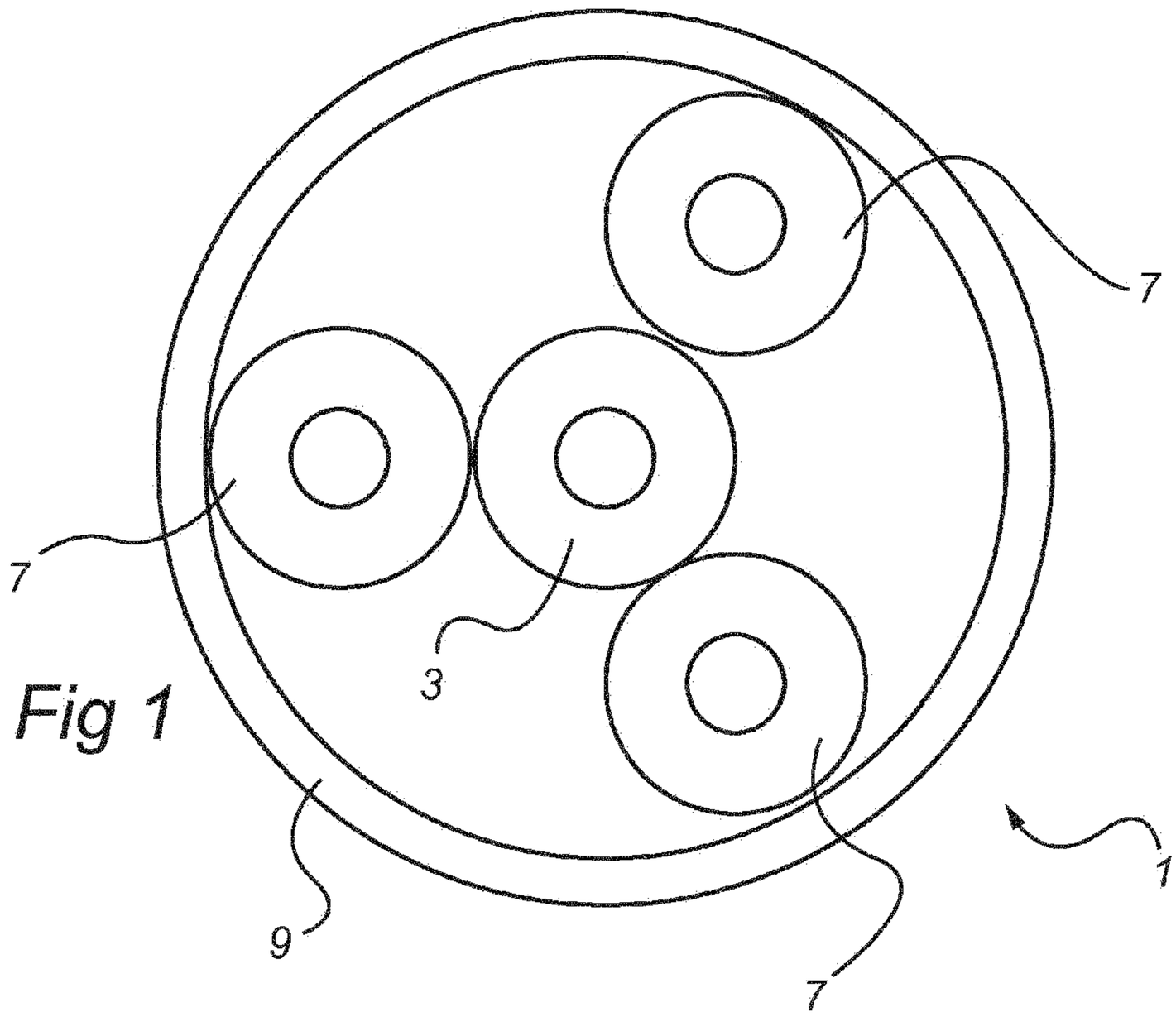


Fig 1

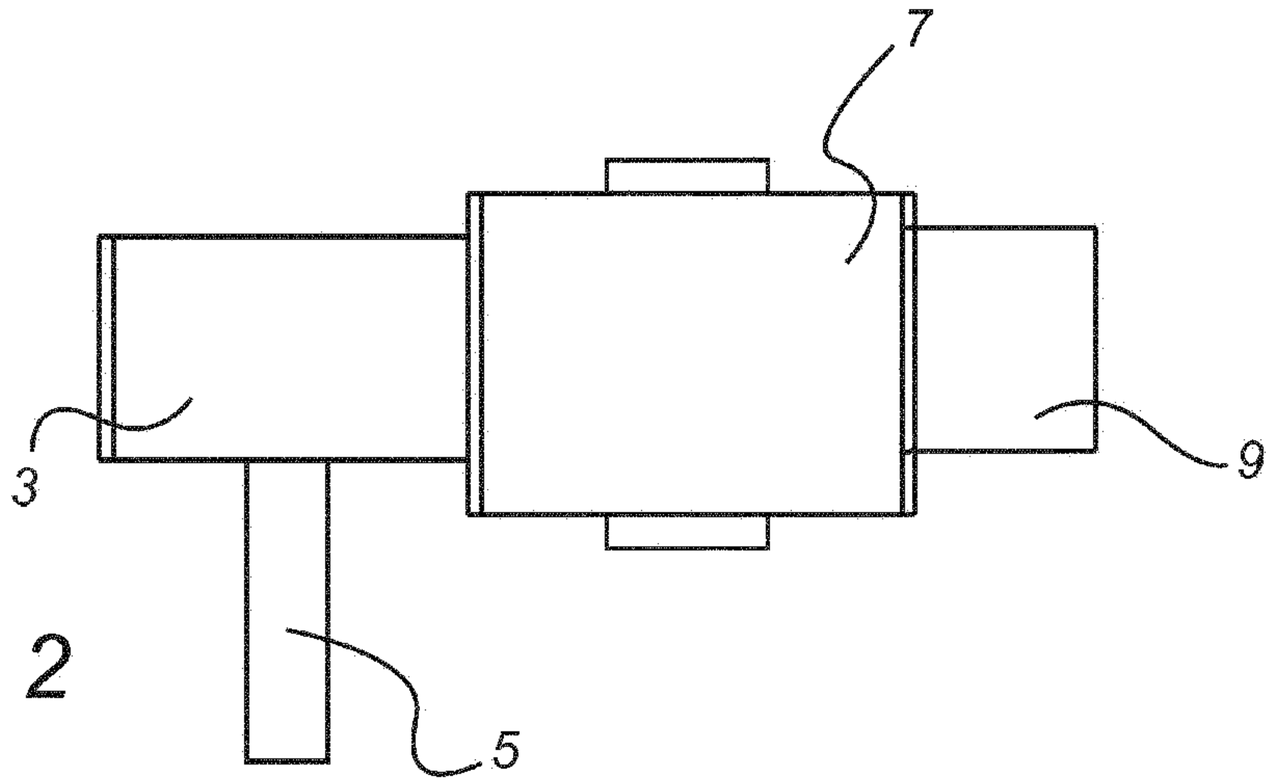


Fig 2

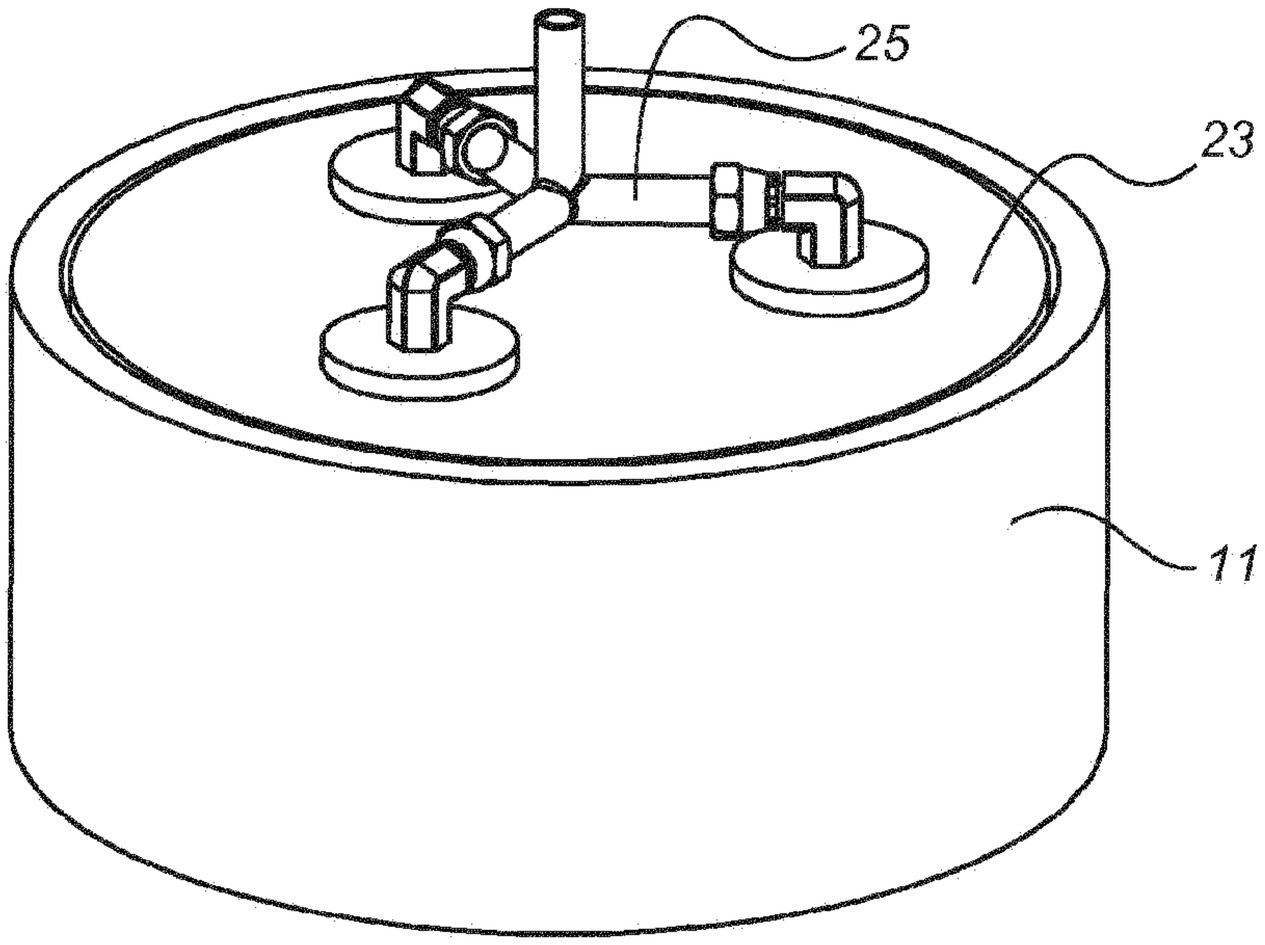


Fig 3

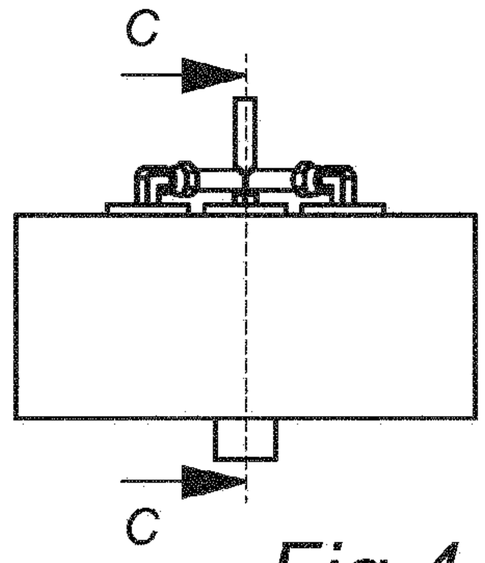


Fig 4

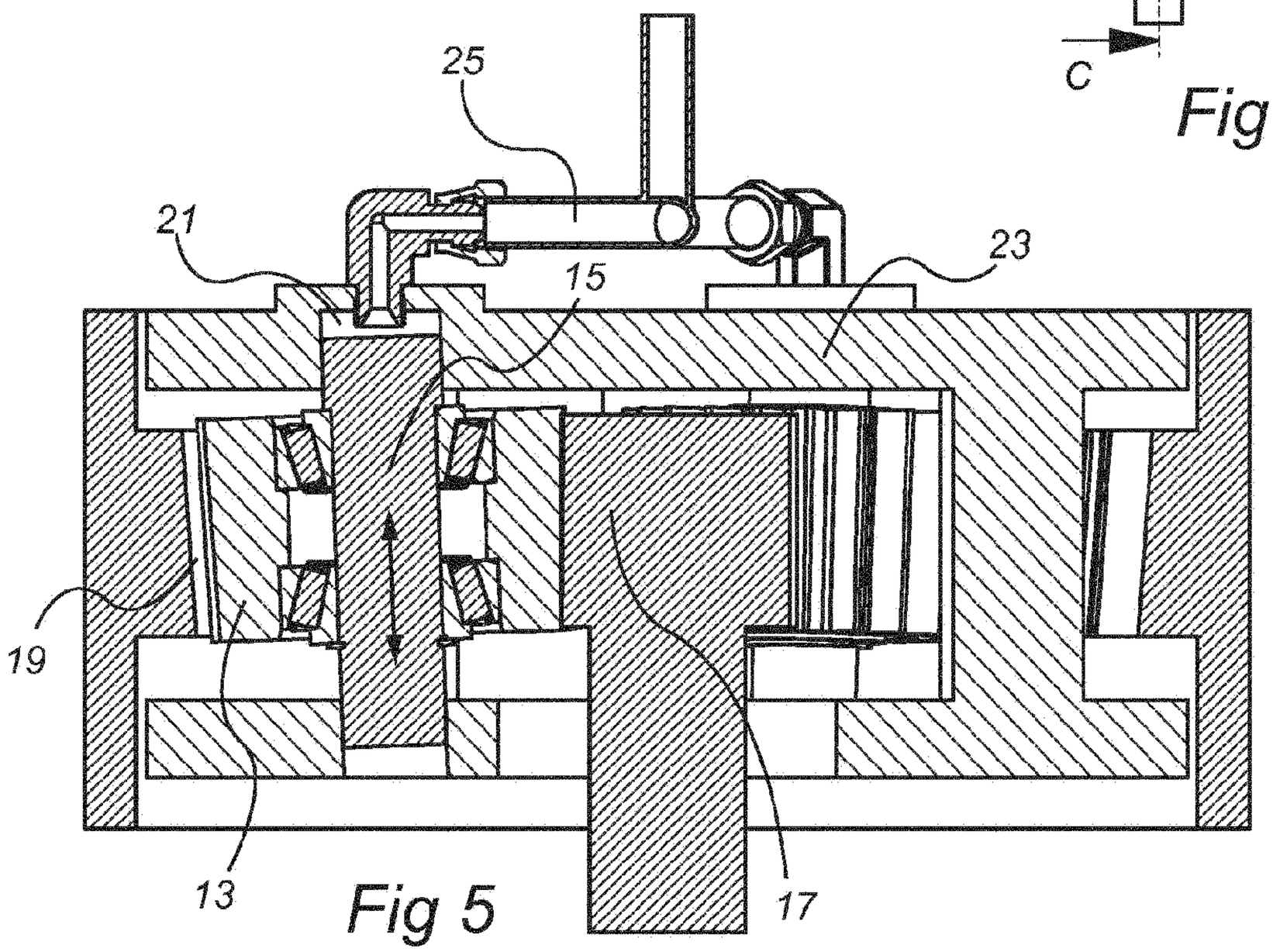


Fig 5

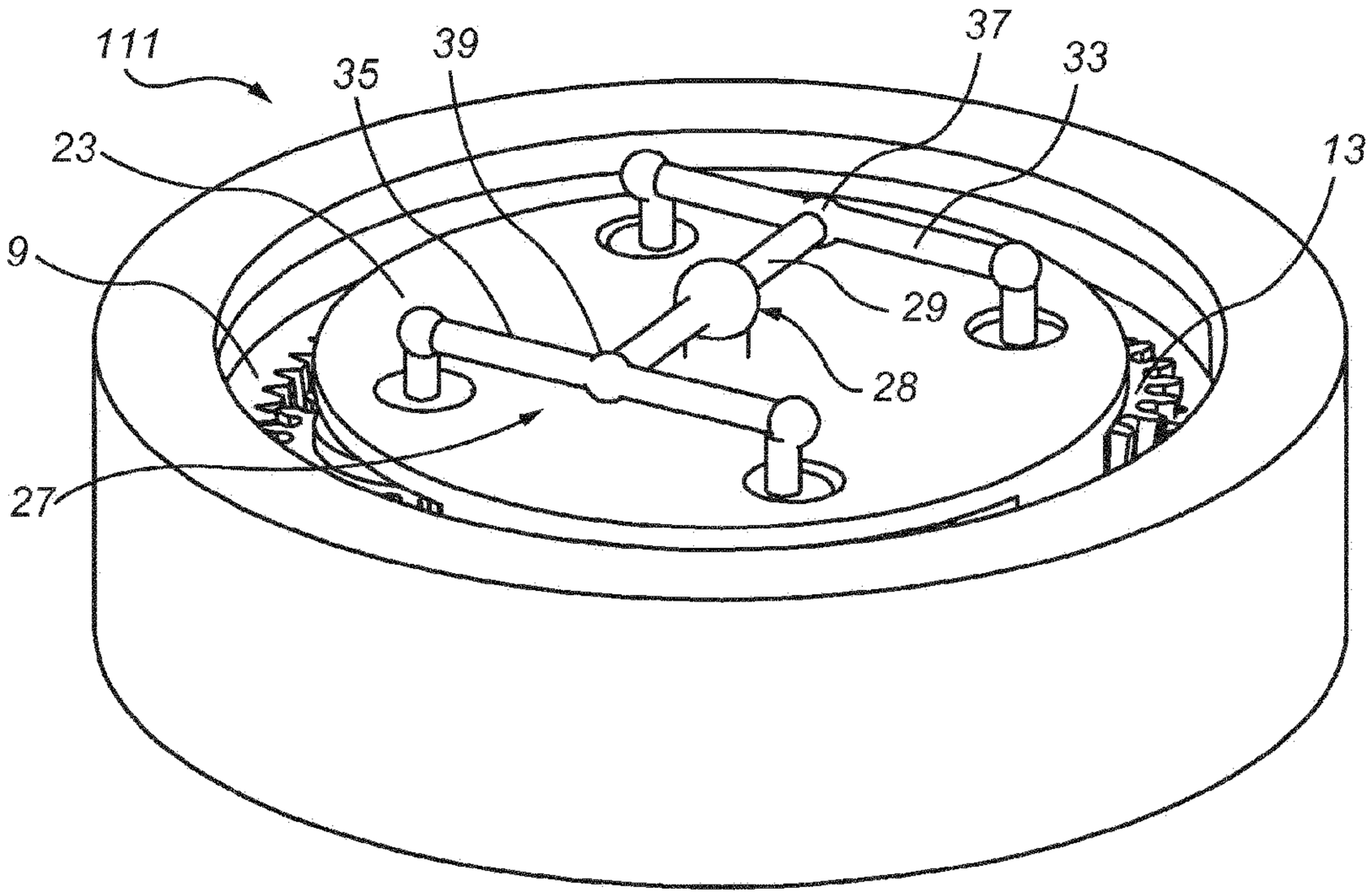


Fig 6

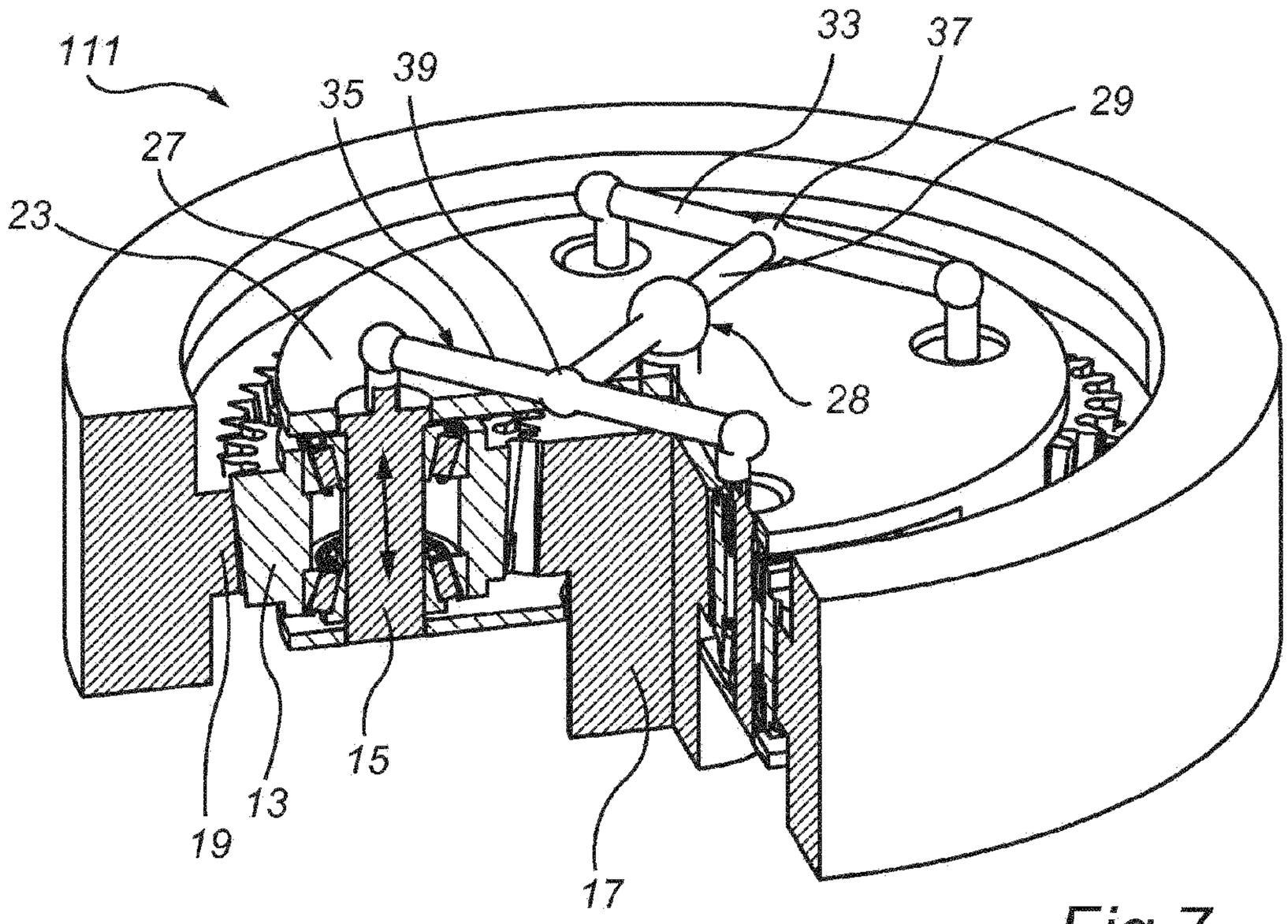


Fig 7