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(54) **Title:** BALL TYPE CVT INCLUDING A DIRECT DRIVE MODE

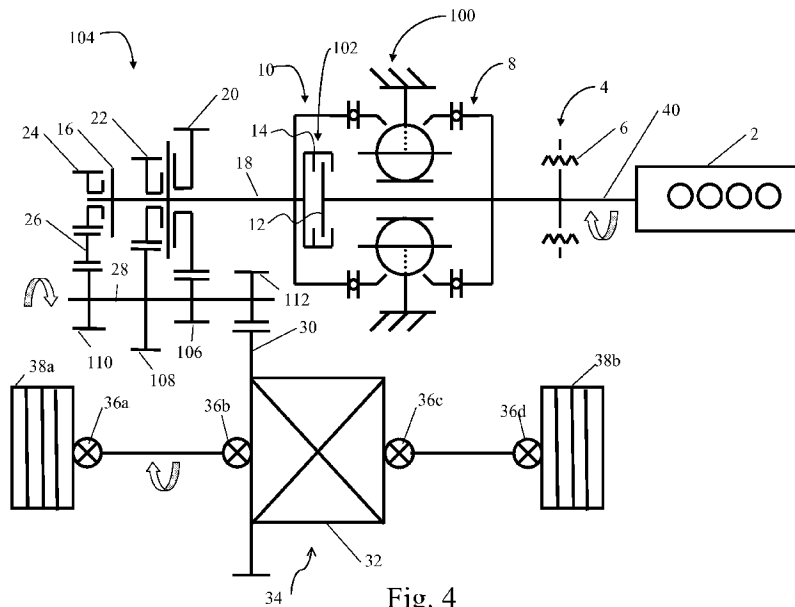


Fig. 4

(57) **Abstract:** Variable transmissions and drivelines using such transmissions having a direct drive mode, a reverse mode, and a continuously variable mode of operation using a continuously variable variator in combination with a gearbox having a one or two speed forward gear, a reverse gear, and a direct drive clutch. The direct drive clutch transfers power from the input shaft directly to the gearbox by running the variator in a unitary (1) speed ratio configuration, or by bypassing the variator altogether by using a set of clutches that disconnect the variator from the input shaft. Additional gears may be provided in the gearbox.

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**BALL TYPE CVT INCLUDING A DIRECT DRIVE MODE****CROSS-REFERENCE**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/697,925, filed September 7, 2012 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/780,456, filed March 13, 2013, which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] A vehicle having a driveline including a continuously variable transmission allows an operator of the vehicle or a control system of the vehicle to vary a drive ratio in a stepless manner, permitting a power source of the vehicle to operate at its most efficient rotational speed.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Provided herein are variable transmissions having a direct drive mode, a reverse mode, and a continuously variable mode of operation using a continuously variable variator in combination with a gearbox having a one or two speed forward gear, a reverse gear, and a direct drive clutch that is configured to transfer power from the input shaft directly to the gearbox by running the variator in a speed ratio of one in a first configuration, or by bypassing the variator altogether by using a set of clutches that disconnect the variator from the input shaft.

[0004] Thus, provide herein is a vehicle transmission comprising an input shaft having a first direct drive clutch first member formed thereon; an output shaft; a variator comprising a first ring assembly drivingly engaged with the input shaft, a second ring assembly drivingly engaged with the output shaft, a direct drive clutch comprising the first direct drive clutch member and a second direct drive clutch member formed on the output shaft drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly; and a gearbox drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly and with the second direct drive clutch member through the output shaft, the gearbox comprising a first gear and a reverse gear; and wherein the vehicle transmission comprises a reverse mode, a direct drive mode, and a continuously variable mode.

[0005] In some embodiments, the gearbox comprises a second gear, third gear, or more than one gear, more than two gears, more than three gears, or even more gears. The gearbox, thus allows for a forward and reverse mode of operation.

[0006] In some embodiments, the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle output. In some embodiments, the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle

output using a countershaft. In some embodiments, the countershaft comprises first countershaft gear, a reverse countershaft gear, and a pinion gear, and wherein the pinion gear is drivingly engaged with a vehicle output through the crown gear of the differential. In some embodiments, the first countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the first gear of the gearbox.

**[0007]** In some embodiments, the reverse countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the reverse gear of the gearbox. In some embodiments, the reverse gear comprises a reverse gear idler between the reverse gear and the reverse countershaft gear. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear.

**[0008]** In some embodiments, the gearbox comprises a second gear, and the countershaft comprises a second countershaft gear. In some embodiments, the second countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the second gear of the gearbox. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft, and the second gear is disengaged from the output shaft. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear, and the second gear is disengaged from the second countershaft gear. While the gearbox described has particular elements, one of skill in the art would recognize that any number or type of gears may be used in the gearbox, so long as the resulting gearbox results in a forward and reverse mode for the transmission. Thus, the gearbox elements noted herein is for illustration, while alternative components are contemplated herein.

**[0009]** In some embodiments, disengaging the direct drive clutch results in continuously variable mode operation of the vehicle transmission. In some embodiments, in continuously variable mode power is transferred through the first ring assembly, one or more balls of the carrier assembly, the second ring assembly, the gearbox and to the vehicle output. In some embodiments, the gearbox increases the overall ratio spread and provides a reverse mode using the reverse gear.

**[0010]** In some embodiments, wherein engaging the direct drive clutch results in direct drive mode. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode power is transferred through directly from the input shaft to the gearbox. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode the variator is free

to turn. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode a speed ratio of the variator is set to 1 by keeping the ball axles horizontal.

[0011] In some embodiments, the vehicle transmission further comprises a first variator clutch on the first ring assembly and a second variator clutch on the second ring assembly. In some embodiments, disengaging the first variator clutch and the second variator clutch disconnect the first ring assembly and the second ring assembly respectively from the input shaft and the output shaft. In some embodiments, a continuously variable mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are engaged and the direct drive clutch is disengaged. In some embodiments, a direct drive mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are disengaged and the direct drive clutch is engaged. In some embodiments, a direct drive mode exists when the variator stands still.

[0012] Provided herein is a vehicle driveline comprising an engine, a variable transmission of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein, and a vehicle output. In some embodiments, the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and one or more wheels of a vehicle. In some embodiments, the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and a drive axle. In some embodiments, the dampener is disposed between the engine and the variable transmission. In some embodiments, the dampener comprises at least one torsional spring.

[0013] In some embodiments, the vehicle driveline comprises a clutch for starting the starting function. In some embodiments the dampener is coupled with a clutch for the starting function.

[0014] Provided herein is method comprising providing a variable transmission of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein.

[0015] Provided herein is a method comprising providing a vehicle driveline of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein.

#### **INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE**

[0016] All publications, patents, and patent applications mentioned in this specification are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent, or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The novel features of the invention are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. A better understanding of the features and advantages of the present invention will be obtained by reference to the following detailed description that sets forth illustrative embodiments, in which the principles of the invention are utilized, and the accompanying drawings of which:

[0018] **Figure 1** is a cutaway view of a currently known and used ball type continuously variable transmission (CVT);

[0019] **Figure 2** is a magnified cutaway view of a ball and ring of the CVT of Figure 1;

[0020] **Figure 3** depicts an embodiment of a typical vehicle driveline including a CVT.

[0021] **Figure 4** depicts an embodiment of a variable transmission in a vehicle driveline.

[0022] **Figure 5** depicts an embodiment of a variable transmission in a vehicle driveline.

[0023] **Figure 6** depicts an embodiment of a ball-type of variator.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] Automatic and manual transmissions are commonly used on automobile vehicles. Those transmissions become more and more complicated since the engine speed has to be adjusted to limit the consumption and the emissions of cars. This finer control of the engine speed in usual transmissions can only be done by adding gears and increasing the overall complexity and cost. 6-speed manual transmissions then become frequent as are 8 or 9 speed automatic transmissions.

[0025] Besides these transmissions are developed Continuously Variable Transmissions or CVTs. Those CVTs are of many types: belts with variable pulleys, toroidal, conical, at least. The principle of a CVT is that it enables the engine to run at its most efficient rotation speed by changing steplessly the transmission ratio in function of the speed of the car. If needed for example when accelerating, the CVT can also shift to a ratio providing more power. A CVT can change the ratio from the minimum to the maximum ratio without any interruption of the power transmission, at the opposite of usual transmissions which require an interruption of the power transmission by disengaging to shift of ratio.

[0026] As described herein, in a vehicle, a variable transmission is replaced by a conventional transmission and a clutch in a vehicle driveline. As a non-limiting example, the variable transmission that employ a ball type Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT, which is also known as CVP for continuously variable planetary, herein) and may replace a conventional transmission in a vehicle, such as a front wheel drive automobile.

[0027] Basic concepts of a ball type Continuously Variable Transmissions are described in US20040616399 and AU2011224083A1, incorporated herein by reference in their entirety. Additional variable transmission details are described in U.S. Application No. 13/743,951 filed Jan 17, 2013, and/or PCT/US2013/026037 filed Feb. 14, 2013, incorporated herein by reference in their entirety. Such a CVT, adapted herein as described throughout this specification, comprises of a certain number of balls 997 (for example, 3-15 balls), depending on the application, two discs 995, 996 with a conical surface contact with the balls 997, as input and output, and an idler 999 as shown on FIG. 1. The balls are mounted on axes 998, themselves hold in a cage or carrier allowing changing the ratio by tilting the ball's axes. An idler 999 sits below the balls in the cage. Other types of ball CVTs also exist, such as the one produced by Milner but are slightly different.

[0028] The working principle of such a CVT of FIG. 1 is shown on FIG. 2. The CVP itself works with a traction fluid. The lubricant between the ball and the conical rings acts as a solid at high pressure, transferring the power from the input ring, through the balls, to the output ring. By tilting the ball's axis using the ball axle shaft 54 (shown in additional detail in FIG.6), the ratio can be changed between input and output of the variator. When the axis is horizontal the ratio is one, when the axis is tilted the distance between the axis and the contact point change, modifying the overall ratio. When the axis is horizontal the ratio is one (1:1), when the axis is tilted the distance between the axis and the contact point change, modifying the overall ratio (input radius > output radius = underdrive; input radius < output radius = overdrive). All the balls' axes are tilted at the same time with a mechanism included in the cage.

[0029] In a car, the CVT 1000 is used to replace traditional transmission and is located between the engine 2 (such as an internal combustion engine or other type of engine) and the differential 32 as shown on FIG. 3. A torsional dampener (alternatively called a damper) 4 may be introduced between the engine and the CVT 1000 to avoid transferring torque peaks and vibrations that could damage the CVT. In some configurations this dampener 4 can be coupled with a clutch for the starting function. In some embodiments, the torsional dampener comprises a torsional spring 6. In some embodiments, the vehicle driveline comprises a clutch for starting the starting function. In some embodiments the dampener is coupled with a clutch for the starting function.

[0030] The variable transmission is located between an engine 2 and a vehicle output 34. The vehicle output 34 may include a differential 32 and a drive axle or a differential crown

gear (for example, as shown in FIGs. 4 and 5), however, it is understood that other vehicle outputs may be used. The vehicle output may comprise bearings 36a, 36b, 36c, 36d and wheels 38a, 38b of the vehicle. A torsional dampener 4 may also be included, the torsional dampener 4 disposed between the engine 2 and the variable transmission 1000 to reduce vibration and torque peaks. A clutch (not shown) can be added to provide the starting function.

**[0031]** FIG. 4 depicts an embodiment of the transmission composed of a dampener 4 between the ICE 2 and the variable transmission 1000. The variable transmission of FIG. 4 also includes the variator 100, a clutch 102, and a two-speed gearbox 104. The gearbox 104 for may include a reverse mode, in addition to the two-speed functionality. This gearbox 104 may be an automatic gearbox known in the art for automotive or other applications.

**[0032]** The variator 100 of FIG. 4 is also depicted in FIG. 6. FIG. 5 is a variation of FIG. 4, and thus the description of FIG. 6 also applies to FIG. 5, except for the addition of first variator clutch 42 on first assembly 8, and the addition of second variator clutch 44 and second assembly 10 in FIG. 5,. Thus, FIG. 6 depicts the variator 100 comprising a first ring assembly 8, a second ring assembly 10, and a carrier assembly disposed therebetween. The carrier assembly includes a plurality of variator balls 62a, 62b having tiltable axle shafts 54a, 54b as described herein. In some embodiments, the first ring assembly 8 is rotatably disposed in a housing; the first ring assembly 8 comprises a first variator ball engagement surface 50 that is in driving engagement with a plurality of variator balls 62a, 62b of the carrier assembly. The first ring assembly 8 may be drivingly engaged with input shaft 40.

**[0033]** As shown in FIG. 6, first variator ball engagement surface 50 is formed in a distal end of the first ring assembly 8. In some embodiments, the first variator ball engagement surface 50 is a conical surface or a concave or convex toroidal surface in contact with or slightly spaced apart from each of the variator balls 62a, 62b. In some embodiments, the first variator ball engagement surface 50 is in driving engagement with each of the variator balls 62a, 62b of the carrier assembly through one of a boundary layer type friction and an elastohydrodynamic film.

**[0034]** The carrier assembly of FIG. 6 is rotatably disposed in the housing and is drivingly engaged with the first ring assembly. The carrier assembly comprises an annular arrangement of the plurality of tiltable variator balls 62a, 62b each having tiltable ball axle shafts 54a, 54b. A cage of the carrier assembly may be configured to be prevented from rotating relative to the housing by a grounding device linked to said ground 52. In some

embodiments, each of the ball axle shafts 54a, 54b is adjusted using a cam style tilting mechanism. In some embodiments, each of the ball axle shafts 54a, 54b is adjusted using a split carrier axle skewing mechanism (not shown).

[0035] As depicted in FIG. 6, at least, the second ring assembly 10 is rotatably disposed in the housing. The second ring assembly 10 comprises and a second variator ball engagement surface 58 that is in driving engagement with variator balls 62a, 62b of the carrier assembly. In some embodiments, the second variator ball engagement surface 58 is formed in a distal end of the second ring assembly. In some embodiments, the second variator ball engagement surface 58 is a conical surface or a concave or convex toroidal surface in contact with or slightly spaced apart from each of the variator balls 62a, 62b. In some embodiments, the second variator ball engagement surface 58 is in driving engagement with each of the variator balls 62a, 62b of the carrier assembly through one of a boundary layer type friction and an elastohydrodynamic film.

[0036] Provided herein are variable transmissions having a direct drive mode, a reverse mode, and a continuously variable mode of operation using a continuously variable variator in combination with a gearbox having a one or two speed forward gear, a reverse gear, and a direct drive clutch that is configured to transfer power from the input shaft directly to the gearbox by running the variator in a speed ratio of one, or by bypassing the variator altogether by using a set of clutches that disconnect the variator from the input shaft.

[0037] Thus, provide herein is a vehicle transmission comprising an input shaft having a first direct drive shaft first member formed thereon; an output shaft; a variator comprising a first ring assembly drivingly engaged with the input shaft, a second ring assembly drivingly engages with the output shaft, and a carrier assembly, a direct drive clutch comprising the first direct drive clutch member and a second direct drive clutch member formed on the output shaft drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly; and a gearbox drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly and with the second direct drive clutch member through the output shaft, the gearbox comprising a first gear and a reverse gear; and wherein the vehicle transmission comprises a reverse mode, a direct drive mode, and a continuously variable mode.

[0038] In some embodiments, the gearbox comprises a second gear.

[0039] In some embodiments, the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle output. In some embodiments, the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle output using a countershaft. In some embodiments, the countershaft comprises first

countershaft gear, a reverse countershaft gear, and a pinion gear, and wherein the pinion gear is drivingly engaged with a vehicle output through the crown wheel of the differential. In some embodiments, the first countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the first gear of the gearbox.

**[0040]** In some embodiments, the reverse countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the reverse gear of the gearbox. In some embodiments, the reverse gear comprises a reverse gear idler between the reverse gear and the reverse countershaft gear. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear.

**[0041]** In some embodiments, the gearbox comprises a second gear, and the countershaft comprises a second countershaft gear. In some embodiments, the second countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the second gear of the gearbox. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft, and the second gear is disengaged from the output shaft. In some embodiments, a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear, and the second gear is disengaged from the second countershaft gear.

**[0042]** In some embodiments, disengaging the direct drive clutch results in continuously variable mode operation of the vehicle transmission. In some embodiments, in continuously variable mode power is transferred through the first ring assembly, one or more balls of the carrier assembly, the second ring assembly, the gearbox and to the vehicle output. In some embodiments, the gearbox increases the overall ratio spread and provides a reverse mode using the reverse gear.

**[0043]** In some embodiments, wherein engaging the direct drive clutch results in direct drive mode. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode power is transferred through directly from the input shaft to the gearbox. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode the variator is free to turn. In some embodiments, in direct drive mode a speed ratio of the variator is set to 1 by keeping the ball axles horizontal.

**[0044]** In some embodiments, the vehicle transmission further comprises a first variator clutch on the first ring assembly and a second variator clutch on the second ring assembly. In some embodiments, disengaging the first variator clutch and the second variator clutch

disconnect the first ring assembly and the second ring assembly respectively from the input shaft and the output shaft. In some embodiments, a continuously variable mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are engaged and the direct drive clutch is disengaged. In some embodiments, a direct drive mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are disengaged and the direct drive clutch is engaged. In some embodiments, a direct drive mode exists when the variator stands still.

**[0045]** Provided herein is a vehicle driveline comprising an engine, a variable transmission of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein, and a vehicle output. In some embodiments, the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and one or more wheels of a vehicle. In some embodiments, the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and a drive axle. In some embodiments, the dampener is disposed between the engine and the variable transmission. In some embodiments, the dampener comprises at least one torsional spring. In some embodiments, the vehicle driveline comprises a clutch for starting the starting function. In some embodiments the dampener is coupled with a clutch for the starting function.

**[0046]** Provided herein is a method comprising providing a variable transmission of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein.

**[0047]** Provided herein is a method comprising providing a vehicle driveline of any of configuration described herein or obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein.

**[0048]** In FIG. 4, the engine 2 is connected to the first ring assembly 8 of the variator 100 through the dampener 4 and the input shaft 40. The input shaft 40 also links to the direct drive clutch 102 comprising a first direct drive clutch member 12 and a second direct drive clutch member 14. The first direct drive clutch member 12 may be formed at an end of the input shaft 40. A second ring assembly 10 of the variator 100 is drivingly engaged with the second direct drive clutch member 14 of the direct drive clutch 102 and is drivingly engaged with to the gearbox 104. The gearbox 104 is drivingly linked to the differential 32 and the vehicle output 34 of the vehicle using a countershaft 28. The countershaft 28 has fixed upon it a first countershaft gear 106, second countershaft gear 108, a reverse countershaft gear 110, and a pinion gear 112. It is anticipated that the first countershaft gear 106, second countershaft gear 108, a reverse countershaft gear 110, and a pinion gear 112 are of varying

diameters, as shown in FIG. 4, or 5, for example, or may be in any combination of diameters, that are the same or different, depending on the needs of the CVP.

**[0049]** The first countershaft gear 106 is drivingly engaged with a first gear 20. The second countershaft gear 108 is drivingly engaged with a second gear 22. The reverse countershaft gear 110 is drivingly engaged with a reverse gear 24 through a reverse gear idler 26. A reverse mode may be enabled when a reverse clutch 16 is engaged with the output shaft 18 and the first gear 20 and the second gear 22 are disengaged from the output shaft 18. Alternatively, a reverse mode may be enabled when a reverse clutch 16 is engaged with the output shaft 18 and the first gear 20 is disengaged from the first countershaft gear 106, and the second gear 22 is disengaged from the second countershaft gear 108. The crown ring 112 is drivingly engaged with the differential 32 through a differential crown wheel 30.

**[0050]** The central part of the variable transmission in the embodiment of FIG. 4 includes a variator 100. A ball ramp on each side of the variator provides the clamping force necessary to transfer the torque. Ball ramps 48, indicated in FIG. 4, 5, and 6 by a circle between a pair of vertical lines, making up a first thrust ring on the first ring assembly and a second thrust ring on the second ring assembly are disposed between components of the variable transmission as shown to generate an amount of axial force necessary for proper operation of the variable transmission (i.e. transfer of torque); however, it is understood that the amount of axial force necessary for proper operation may be generated by a clamping mechanism (not shown) or as a load applied during assembling of the variable transmission. Thus, as depicted in FIG. 4, a ball ramp on each side of the variator 100 provides the clamping force necessary to transfer the torque in this embodiment.

**[0051]** This configuration can be used in two different modes: continuously variable mode and direct drive (DD). In continuously variable mode, the direct drive clutch 102 is not engaged and the power is transferred through the first ring assembly 8, the variator 100, the second ring assembly 10, the gearbox 104 and finally goes to the vehicle output 34. The gearbox 104 is added to increase the overall ratio spread and to provide a reverse mode using the reverse gear of 24 and reverse gear idler 26 drivingly engaged with reverse countershaft gear 110 on countershaft 28. As previously noted, countershaft 28 is drivingly engaged with differential crown wheel 30 which drives the vehicle output 34.

**[0052]** The direct drive mode is applied by engaging the direct drive clutch 102. By doing this, the power will directly go the gearbox 104. In this mode, the variator 100 is free to turn,

and its speed ratio must be set to 1 (wherein the first ring assembly 8 and the second ring assembly 10 turn together) by keeping the ball axles horizontal.

**[0053]** To avoid having power losses in the transmission when in the direct drive mode, two clutches (labeled as first variator clutch 42 and second variator clutch 44 in FIG. 5) may be added to disconnect the first ring assembly 8 and the second ring assembly 10 from the input shaft 40 and output shaft 18. FIG. 5 shows this variant of the concept.

**[0054]** In the embodiment of FIG. 5, a continuously variable mode exists when the first variator clutch 42 and second variator clutch 44 are engaged and the direct drive clutch 102 is disengaged. In direct drive mode, using the embodiment of FIG.5, the first variator clutch 42 and second variator clutch 44 are disengaged, thus, the variator 100 stands still and avoids losses due to the friction in the variator 100.

**[0055]** Embodiments of the variable transmission described herein or that would be obvious to one of skill in the art upon reading the disclosure herein are contemplated for use in a variety of vehicle drivelines. For non-limiting example, the variable transmissions disclosed herein may be used in bicycles, mopeds, scooters, motorcycles, automobiles, electric automobiles, trucks, sport utility vehicles (SUV's), lawn mowers, tractors, harvesters, agricultural machinery, all terrain vehicles (ATV's), jet ski's, personal watercraft vehicles, airplanes, trains, helicopters, buses, forklifts, golf carts, motorships, steam powered ships, submarines, space craft, or other vehicles that employ a transmission.

**[0056]** While the figures and description herein are directed to ball-type variators (CVTs), alternate embodiments are contemplated another version of a variator (CVT), such as a Variable-diameter pulley (VDP) or Reeves drive, a toroidal or roller-based CVT (Extroid CVT), a Magnetic CVT or mCVT, Ratcheting CVT, Hydrostatic CVTs, Naudic Incremental CVT (iCVT), Cone CVTs, Radial roller CVT, Planetary CVT, or any other version CVT.

**[0057]** While preferred embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described herein, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that such embodiments are provided by way of example only. Numerous variations, changes, and substitutions will now occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. It should be understood that various alternatives to the embodiments of the invention described herein may be employed in practicing the invention. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the invention and that methods and structures within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby.

## CLAIMS

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A vehicle transmission comprising
  - an input shaft having a first direct drive shaft first member formed thereon;
  - an output shaft;
  - a variator comprising a first ring assembly drivingly engaged with the input shaft, a second ring assembly drivingly engages with the output shaft, and a carrier assembly;
  - a direct drive clutch comprising a first direct drive clutch member and a second direct drive clutch member formed on the output shaft drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly; and
  - a gearbox drivingly engaged with the second ring assembly and with the second direct drive clutch member through the output shaft, the gearbox comprising a first gear and a reverse gear;wherein the vehicle transmission comprises a reverse mode, a direct drive mode, and a continuously variable mode.
2. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the gearbox comprises a second gear.
3. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle output.
4. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the gearbox is drivingly linked to a differential of a vehicle output using a countershaft.
5. The vehicle transmission of claim 4, wherein the countershaft comprises first countershaft gear, a reverse countershaft gear, and a pinion gear, and wherein the crown ring is drivingly engaged with a vehicle output.
6. The vehicle transmission of claim 5 wherein the first countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the first gear of the gearbox.
7. The vehicle transmission of claim 5 wherein the reverse countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the reverse gear of the gearbox.
8. The vehicle transmission of claim 5 wherein the reverse gear comprises a reverse gear idler between the reverse gear and the reverse countershaft gear.

9. The vehicle transmission of claim 5, wherein a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft.

10. The vehicle transmission of claim 5, wherein a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft and the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear.

11. The vehicle transmission of claim 5, wherein the gearbox comprises a second gear, and the countershaft comprises a second countershaft gear.

12. The vehicle transmission of claim 11, wherein the second countershaft gear is selectively drivingly engaged with the second gear of the gearbox.

13. The vehicle transmission of claim 11, wherein a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the output shaft, and the second gear is disengaged from the output shaft.

14. The vehicle transmission of claim 11, wherein a reverse mode is enabled when a reverse clutch is engaged with the output shaft, the first gear is disengaged from the first countershaft gear, and the second gear is disengaged from the second countershaft gear.

15. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein disengaging the direct drive clutch results in continuously variable mode operation of the vehicle transmission.

16. The vehicle transmission of claim 15, wherein in continuously variable mode power is transferred through the first ring assembly, one or more balls of the carrier assembly, the second ring assembly, the gearbox and to the vehicle output.

17. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the gearbox increases the overall ratio spread and provides a reverse mode using the reverse gear.

18. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein engaging the direct drive clutch results in direct drive mode.

19. The vehicle transmission of claim 15, wherein in direct drive mode power is transferred through directly from the input shaft to the gearbox.

20. The vehicle transmission of claim 15, wherein in direct drive mode the variator is free to turn.

21. The vehicle transmission of claim 15, wherein in direct drive mode a speed ratio of the variator is set to 1 to keeping the ball axles horizontal.

22. The vehicle transmission of claim 21, further comprising a first variator clutch on the first ring assembly and a second variator clutch on the second ring assembly.

23. The vehicle transmission of claim 22, wherein disengaging the first variator clutch and the second variator clutch disconnect the first ring assembly and the second ring assembly from the input shaft and output shaft.

24. The vehicle transmission of claim 22, wherein a continuously variable mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are engaged and the direct drive clutch is disengaged.

25. The vehicle transmission of claim 22, wherein a direct drive mode exists when the first variator clutch and second variator clutch are disengaged and the direct drive clutch is engaged.

26. The vehicle transmission of claim 22, wherein a direct drive mode the variator stands still.

27. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the carrier assembly comprises a plurality of variator balls having tiltable axle shafts.

28. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the first ring assembly is rotatably disposed in a housing.

29. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the first ring assembly comprises a first variator ball engagement surface that is in driving engagement with a plurality of variator balls of the carrier assembly.

30. The vehicle transmission of claim 29, wherein the first variator ball engagement surface is formed in a distal end of the first ring assembly.

31. The vehicle transmission of claim 29 wherein the first variator ball engagement surface is a conical surface or a concave or convex toroidal surface in contact with or slightly spaced apart from each of the variator balls.

32. The vehicle transmission of claim 29, wherein the first variator ball engagement surface is in driving engagement with each of the variator balls of the carrier assembly through one of a boundary layer type friction and an elasto-hydrodynamic film.

33. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the carrier assembly is rotatably disposed in the housing and is drivingly engaged with the first ring assembly.

34. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the carrier assembly comprises an annular arrangement of the plurality of tiltable variator balls each having tiltable ball axle shafts.

35. The vehicle transmission of claim 34, wherein each of the ball axle shafts is adjusted using a cam style tilting mechanism.

36. The vehicle transmission of claim 34, wherein each of the ball axle shafts is adjusted using a split carrier axle skewing mechanism.
37. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein a cage of the carrier assembly may be configured to be prevented from rotating relative to a housing by a grounding device linked to said housing.
38. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the second ring assembly is rotatably disposed in a housing.
39. The vehicle transmission of claim 1, wherein the second ring assembly comprises and a second variator ball engagement surface that is in driving engagement with variator balls of the carrier assembly.
40. The vehicle transmission of claim 39, wherein the second variator ball engagement surface is formed in a distal end of the second ring assembly.
41. The vehicle transmission of claim 39, wherein the second variator ball engagement surface is a conical surface or a concave or convex toroidal surface in contact with or slightly spaced apart from each of the variator balls.
42. The vehicle transmission of claim 39, wherein the second variator ball engagement surface is in driving engagement with each of the variator balls of the carrier assembly through one of a boundary layer type friction and an elastohydrodynamic film.
43. A vehicle driveline comprising an engine, a variable transmission of any of claims 1-42, and a vehicle output.
44. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, wherein the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and one or more wheels of a vehicle.
45. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, wherein the vehicle output comprises a wheel differential and a drive axle.
46. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, wherein the dampener is disposed between the engine and the variable transmission.
47. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, wherein the dampener comprises at least one torsional spring.
48. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, the dampener is coupled with a clutch for the starting function.
49. The vehicle driveline of claim 43, comprising a clutch for starting the starting function.
50. A vehicle comprising the vehicle driveline of any of claims 1-42.

51. A method comprising providing a variable transmission of any of claims 1-42.
52. A method comprising providing a vehicle driveline of any of claims 42-49.

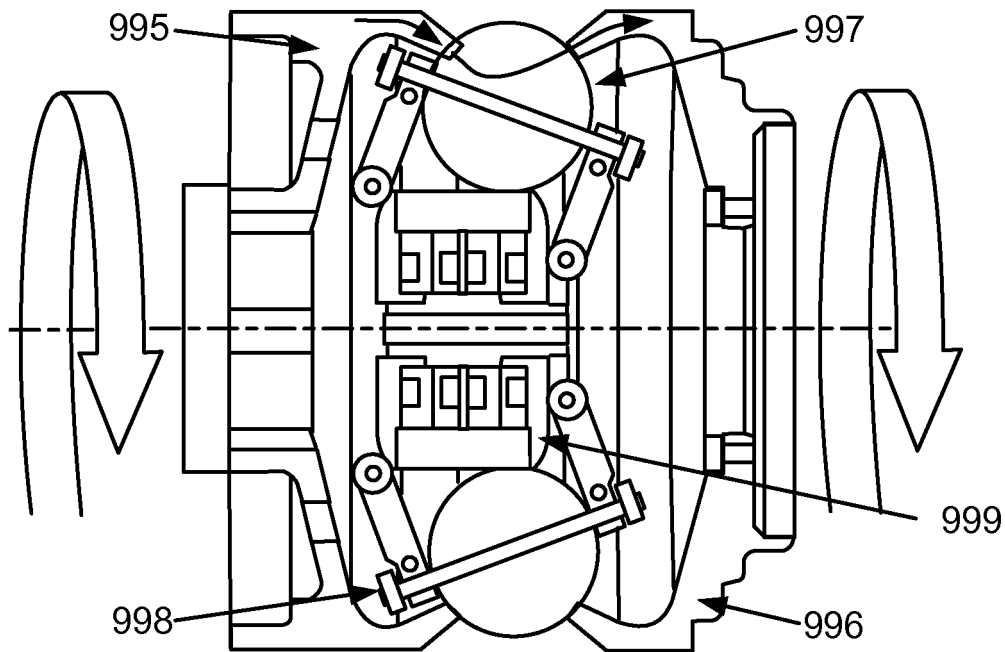


Fig. 1

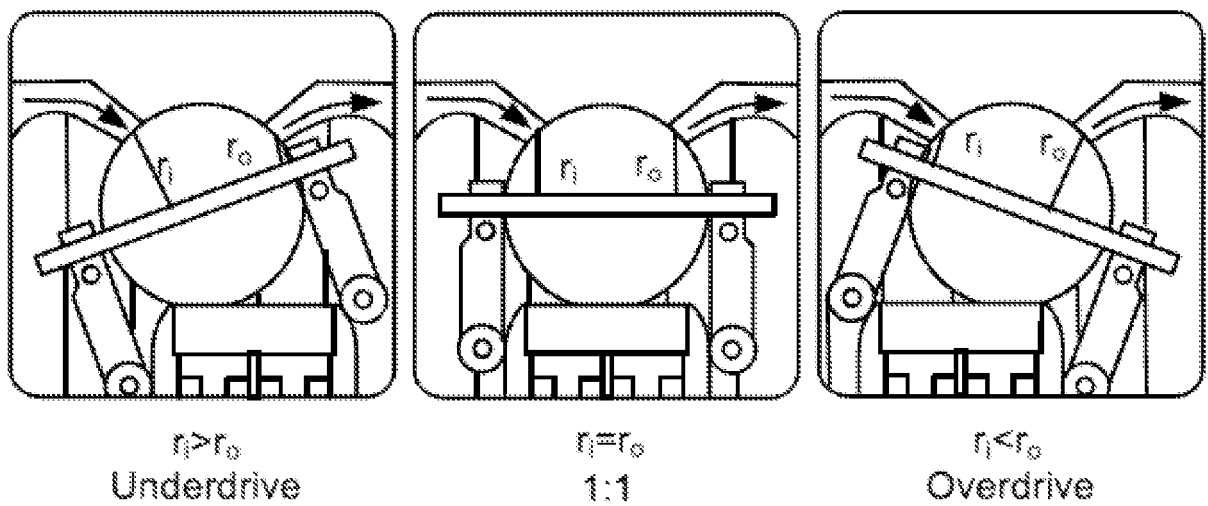


Fig. 2

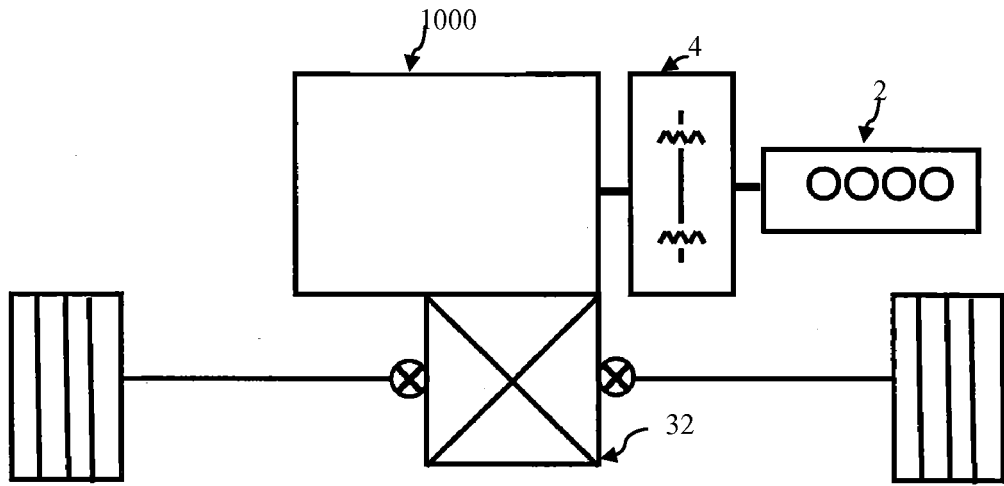


Fig. 3

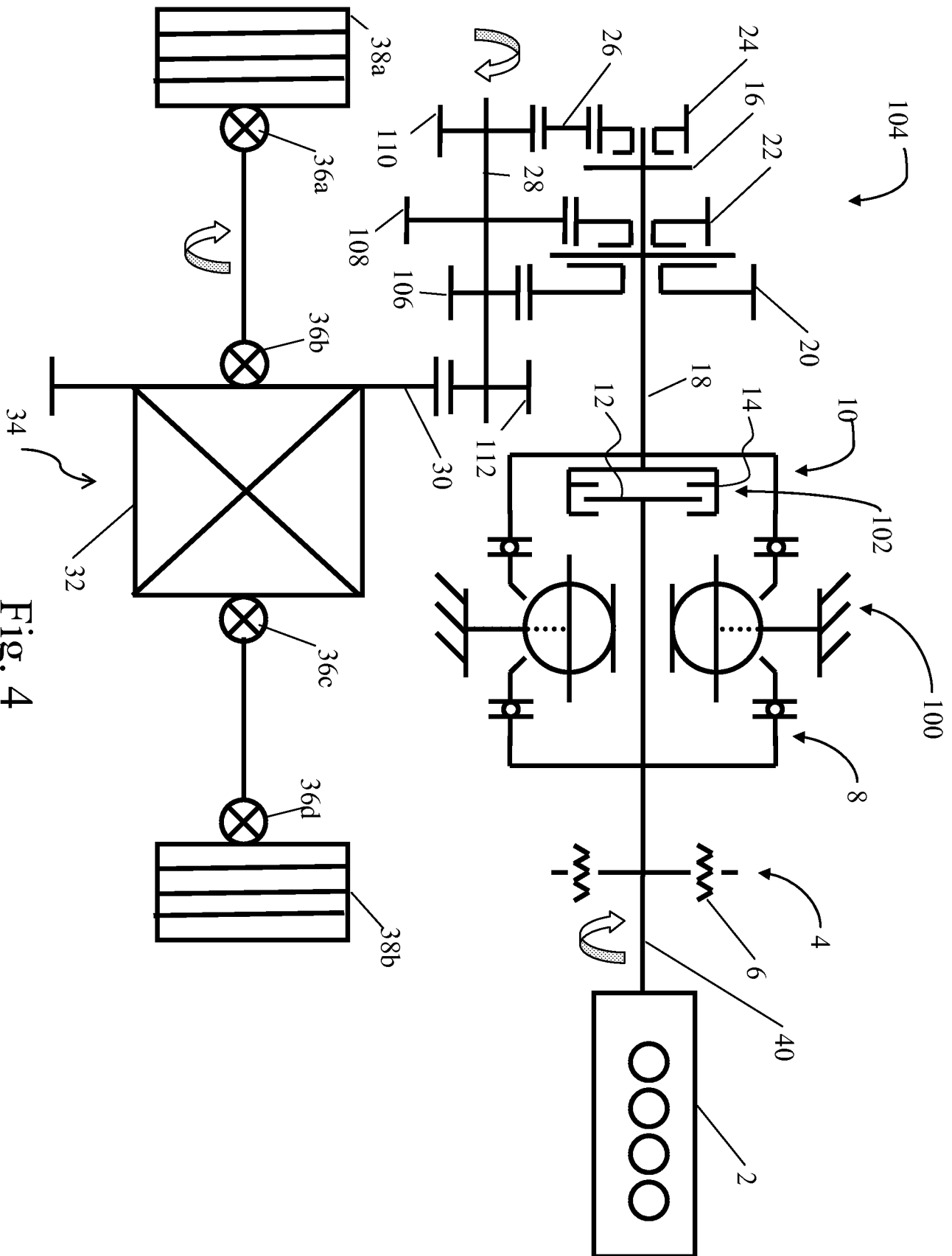


Fig. 4

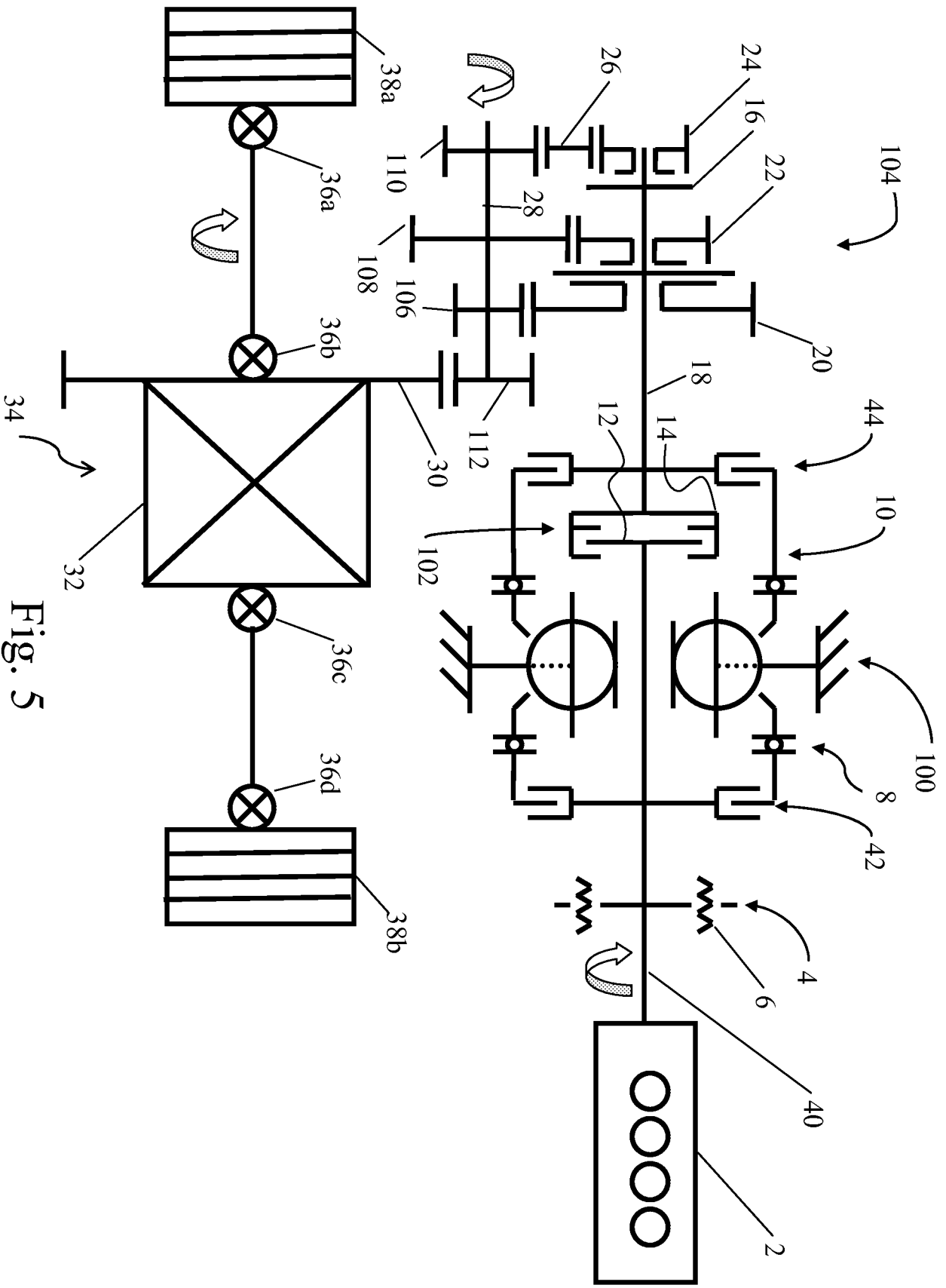


Fig. 5

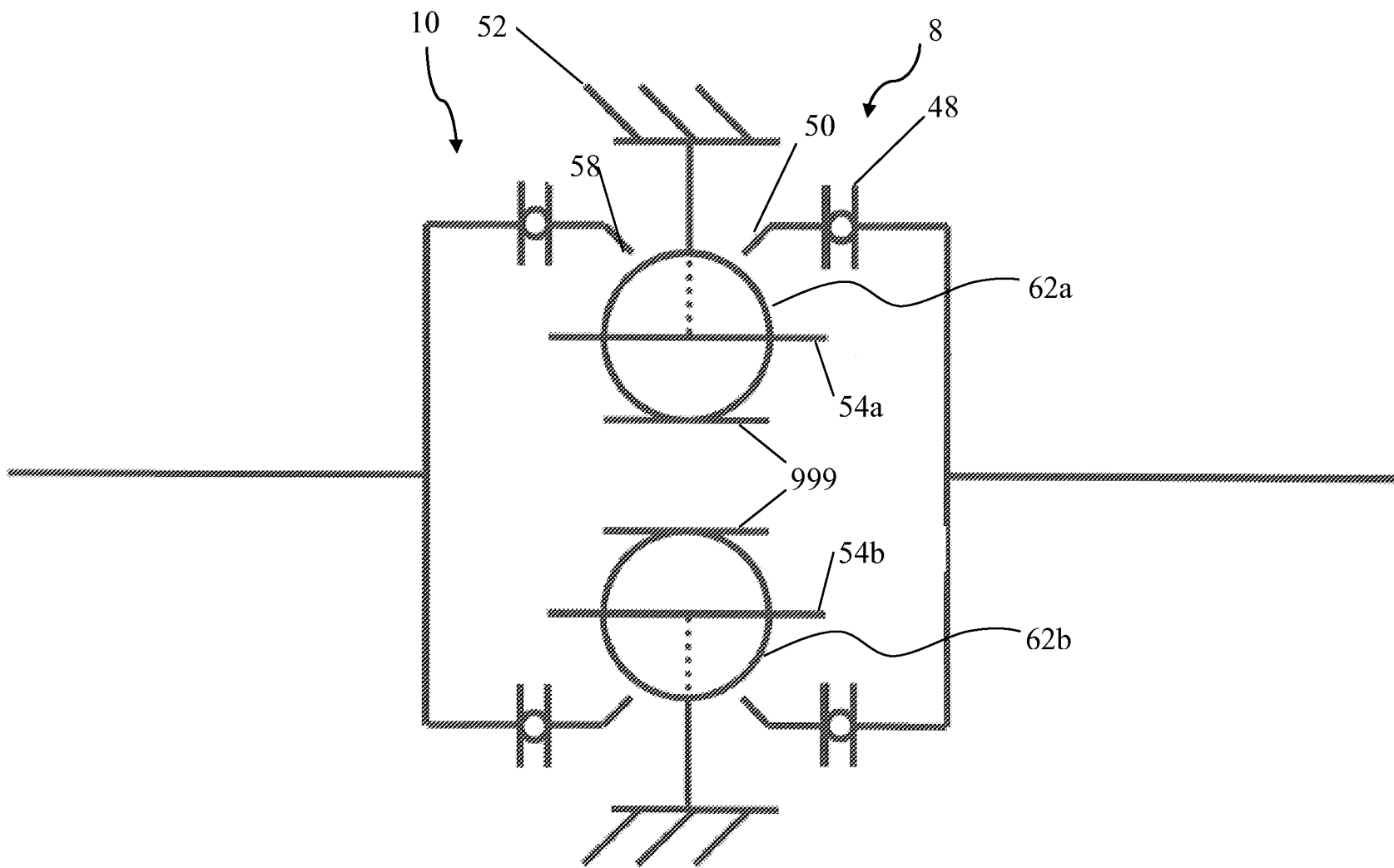


Fig. 6

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

International application No.  
PCT/US2013/058309

<p><b>A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b>                  IPC(8) - F16H 15/50 (2014.01)                  USPC - 476/38                  According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC</p>																				
<p><b>B. FIELDS SEARCHED</b></p> <p>Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)                  IPC(8) - F16H 15/28, 15/40, 15/50 (2014.01)                  USPC - 180/364; 475/207, 214; 476/38</p> <p>Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched                  CPC - F16H 15/28, 15/40, 37/086, 2037/088 (2013.01)</p> <p>Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)                  PatBase, Google Patents, Google</p>																				
<p><b>C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category*</th> <th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th> <th>Relevant to claim No.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>EP 2 113 056 B1 (WINTER) 18 July 2012 (18.07.2012) entire document</td> <td>1-51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>US 2006/0234822 A1 (MORSHECK et al) 19 October 2006 (19.10.2006) entire document</td> <td>1-51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>US 2012/0040794 A1 (SCHOOLCRAFT) 16 February 2012 (16.02.2012) entire document</td> <td>1-51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A, P</td> <td>WO 2013/123117 A1 (COOPER et al) 22 August 2013 (22.08.2013) entire document</td> <td>1-51</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A, P</td> <td>US 2013/0130859 A1 (LUNDBERG et al) 23 May 2013 (23.05.2013) entire document</td> <td>1-51</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.	A	EP 2 113 056 B1 (WINTER) 18 July 2012 (18.07.2012) entire document	1-51	A	US 2006/0234822 A1 (MORSHECK et al) 19 October 2006 (19.10.2006) entire document	1-51	A	US 2012/0040794 A1 (SCHOOLCRAFT) 16 February 2012 (16.02.2012) entire document	1-51	A, P	WO 2013/123117 A1 (COOPER et al) 22 August 2013 (22.08.2013) entire document	1-51	A, P	US 2013/0130859 A1 (LUNDBERG et al) 23 May 2013 (23.05.2013) entire document	1-51
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<p><input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input type="checkbox"/></p>																				
<p>* Special categories of cited documents:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>“A” document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</td> <td>“T” later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</td> </tr> <tr> <td>“E” earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date</td> <td>“X” document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>“L” document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</td> <td>“Y” document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art</td> </tr> <tr> <td>“O” document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</td> <td>“&amp;” document member of the same patent family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>“P” document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			“A” document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	“T” later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention	“E” earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	“X” document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone	“L” document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	“Y” document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art	“O” document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	“&” document member of the same patent family	“P” document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed									
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<p>Date of the actual completion of the international search</p> <p>27 January 2014</p>	<p>Date of mailing of the international search report</p> <p><b>11 FEB 2014</b></p>																			
<p>Name and mailing address of the ISA/US</p> <p>Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents                  P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450                  Facsimile No. 571-273-3201</p>	<p>Authorized officer:</p> <p>Blaine R. Copenheaver</p> <p>PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300                  PCT OSP: 571-272-7774</p>																			

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US2013/058309

**Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)**

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

- 1.  Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
  
- 2.  Claims Nos.:  
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
  
- 3.  Claims Nos.: 52  
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

**Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)**

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

- 1.  As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
- 2.  As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.
- 3.  As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
  
- 4.  No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

**Remark on Protest**

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.
- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.