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54 Amusement apparatus.

57 Amusement apparatus is disclosed, comprising at least one strike initiating member (1,2,3) movable into and out of a strike area (1a,2a,3a) and one or more striker members operable by a player to hit the strike initiating member. If the player is successful in achieving this object, the apparatus dispenses a prize. The movement of the strike initiating members is preferably computer controlled and a function of the number of times a particular player has achieved hits.

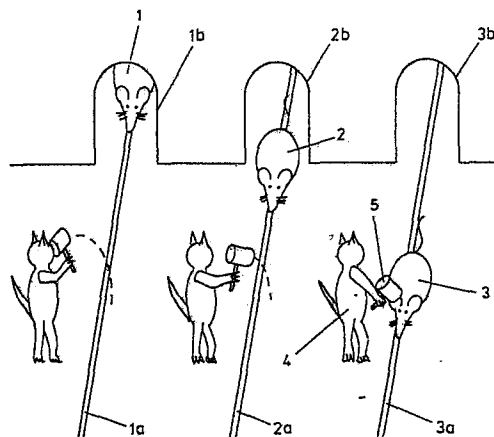


FIG. 1

Description

< <DPA NB=1> > AMUSEMENT APPARATUS

The present invention relates to amusement apparatus, and particularly, though not exclusively, to such apparatus in which a prize is automatically dispensed to the player when certain conditions are met.

Amusement apparatus such as that to which the present invention relates may operate purely on chance, or alternatively may depend to a lesser or greater extent on the skill of the player. The present invention relates to apparatus of a type which requires a degree of skill.

According to the present invention there is provided amusement apparatus comprising at least one strike initiating member adapted for movement into and out of a striking area, and at least one striker member operable by a player to hit said strike initiating member when said strike initiating member is within said strike area, the apparatus also including a prize dispenser and being controlled in such a manner that a prize is dispensed when the striker member hits the strike initiating member.

Preferably, the movement of the or each strike initiating member is controlled by a computer program.

Preferably, the computer program is adapted to store the number of times the strike initiating member is hit by the striker member and to alter the movement of the or each strike initiating member accordingly to make it more difficult for the player to cause the striker member to hit the strike initiating member.

Preferably, there are several strike initiating members with a striker member for each strike initiating member. Alternatively, there may be a single striker member which is movable under the control of the player to strike any one of the several strike initiating members. In the case where there is a single striker, it may be movable along a predetermined path in the form of a straight or curved line, or may alternatively be rotatable about a vertical axis.

Preferably, the apparatus also includes means for producing sound effects to accompany the actions of the striker and strike initiating members.

Embodiments of the present invention will now be described by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which;

Fig 1 shows one embodiment of amusement apparatus in accordance with the present invention,

Fig 2 shows a second embodiment of amusement apparatus in accordance with the present invention,

Fig 3 shows a third embodiment of amusement apparatus in accordance with the present invention,

Fig 4 is a perspective view of amusement apparatus according to the present invention, incorporating the first embodiment.

Referring to the drawings, amusement apparatus according to the present invention takes the form of

a "cat and mouse" game. Three strike initiating members are provided in the form of mice 1, 2 and 3 which run along slots 1a, 2a, 3a. Under the control of a computer program, the mice are individually moved along the slots 1a, 2a, 3a so that they appear intermittently from mouseholes 1b, 2b, 3b.

During the course of the game, one of the mice will move into a strike region where it may be "hit" by an adjacent cat 4 holding a hammer 5. This is achieved by the player of the game pressing a strike button 6 on the amusement apparatus at the correct time. In fact, the hammer does not actually touch the mouse, which may be a soft toy, but electronic sensors indicate a "hit" when the hammer and mouse coincide. When a "hit" occurs, a prize is automatically dispensed from the amusement apparatus through aperture 7.

The computer program is designed on the principles of fruit machine logic, in that the program stores the number of wins and, if the player is winning easily, the movement of the mice is adjusted to make it more difficult to win.

In order to further enhance the appeal of the game, the computer program causes the mice to poke their heads out of the mouseholes without coming out completely, in order to initiate a premature response from the player.

The computer program may also generate sound effects to match the actions of the cats and mice.

In the embodiment shown in Fig 1, there are three cats and three mice, but in the embodiments shown in Figs 2 and 3 there is only a single cat which is movable under the control of the player along a straight or curved line as shown in Fig 2, or rotatable (again under the control of the player) about a vertical axis.

In the embodiments shown in Figs 2 and 3, a joystick may be provided to move the cat, with a single strike button to operate the hammer. In the embodiment shown in Figs 1 and 4, three strike buttons are provided, one for each cat.

The apparatus may be coin-operated, a coin being inserted into the slot 9 to activate the machine and start the game.

Claims

1. Amusement apparatus characterised in that it comprises at least one strike initiating member (1) adapted for movement into and out of a striking area, and at least one striker member (1a) operable by a player to hit said strike initiating member when said strike initiating member is within said strike area, the apparatus also including a prize dispenser (7) and being controlled in such a manner that a prize is dispensed when the striker member hits the strike initiating member.

2. Amusement apparatus according to

Claim 1 further characterised in that movement of the or each strike initiating member is controlled by a computer program.

3. Amusement apparatus according to Claim 2 further characterised in that the computer program is adapted to store the number of times the strike initiating member (1) is hit by the striker member (1a) and to alter the movement of the strike initiating member accordingly to make it more difficult for the player to cause the striker member to hit the strike initiating member.

4. Amusement apparatus according to any of the preceding Claims, further characterised in that there is a single striker member (8) movable under the control of the player.

5. Amusement apparatus according to Claim 4 further characterised in that the single striker member (8) is movable along a predetermined path.

6. Amusement apparatus according to Claim 4 further characterised in that the single striker member is rotatable about a vertical axis.

7. Amusement apparatus according to any of the preceding Claims, further characterised in that the apparatus includes means for producing sound effects to accompany the actions of the striker and strike initiating members.

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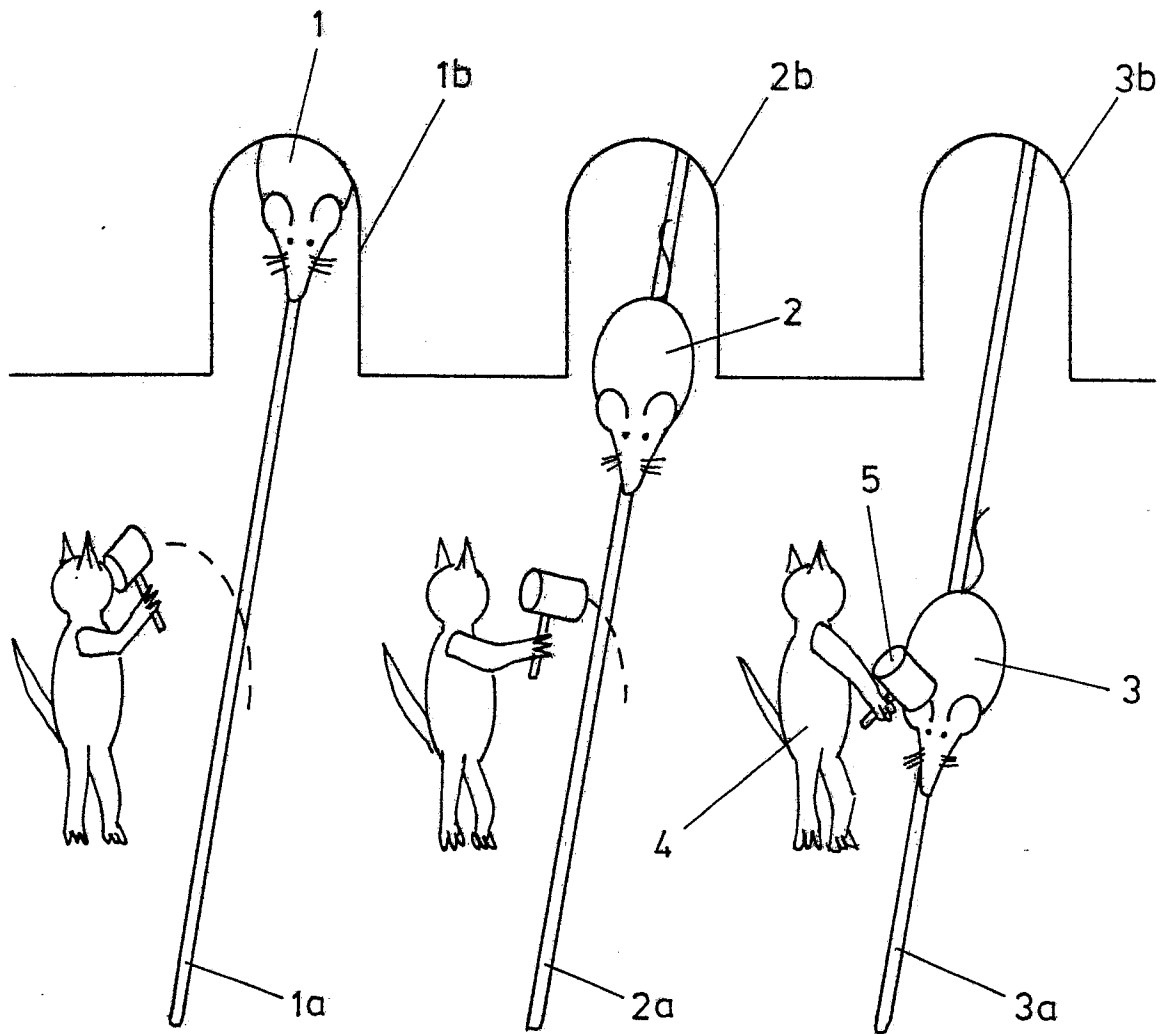
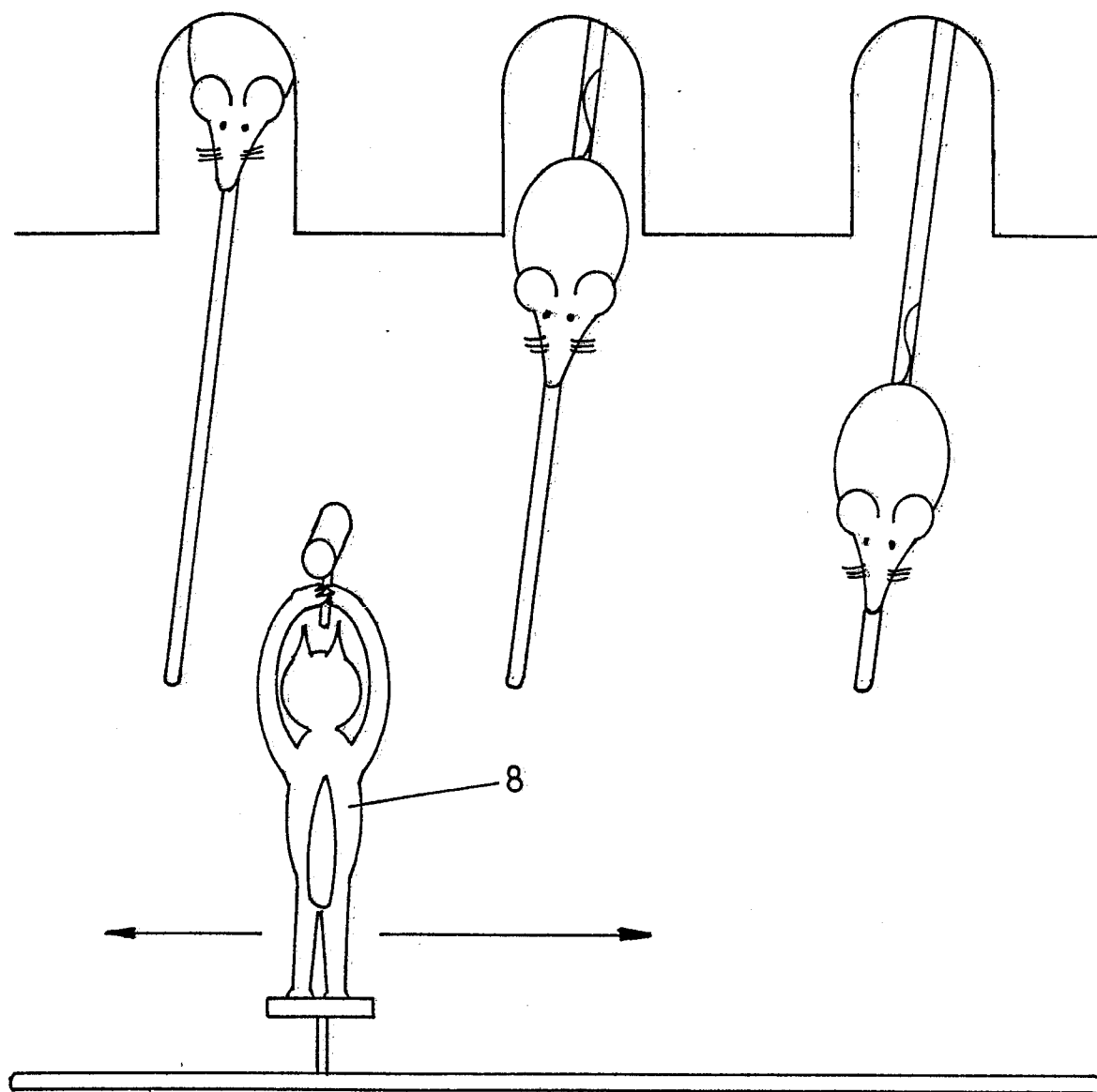
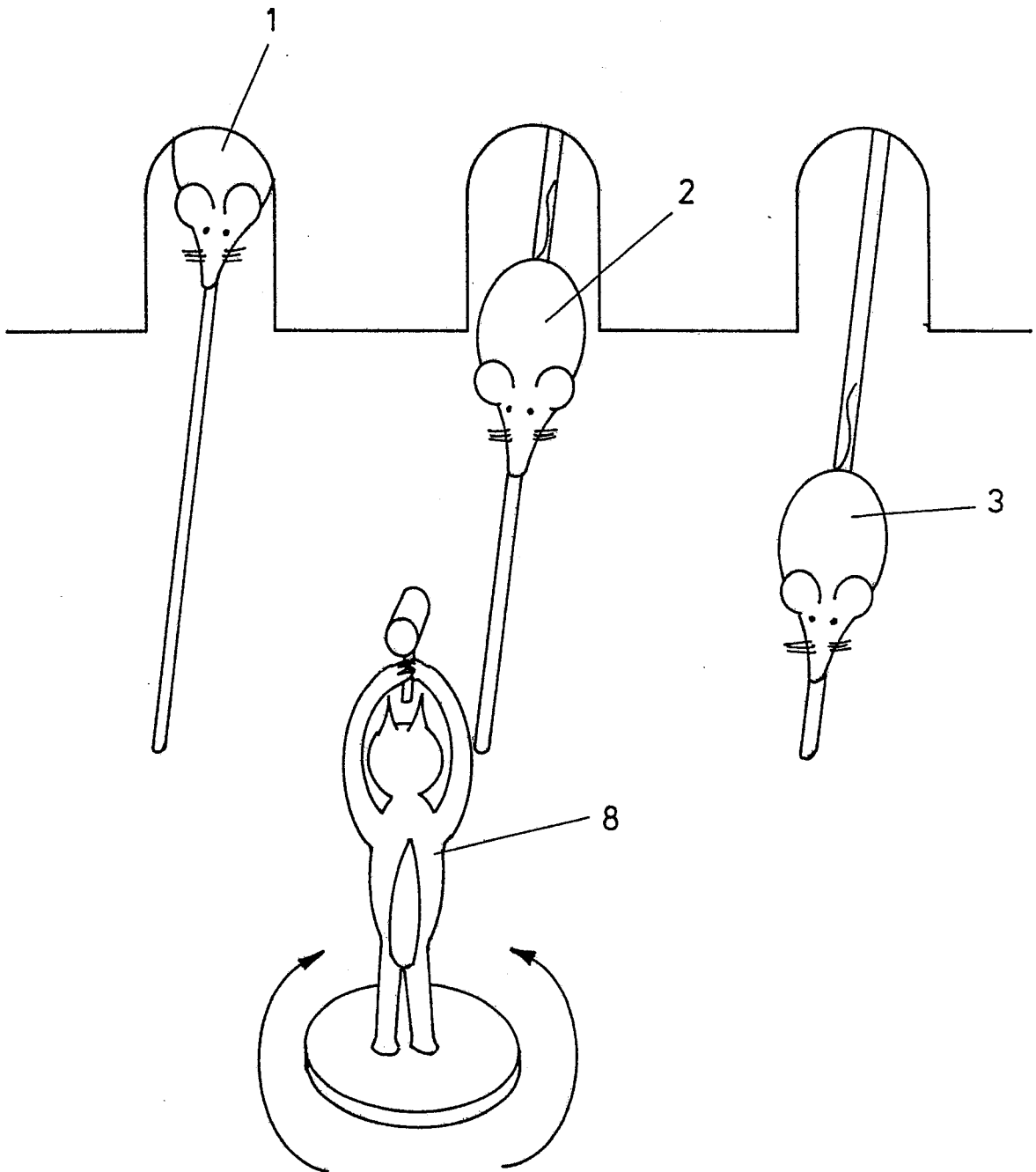


FIG. 1

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FIG. 2

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FIG. 3

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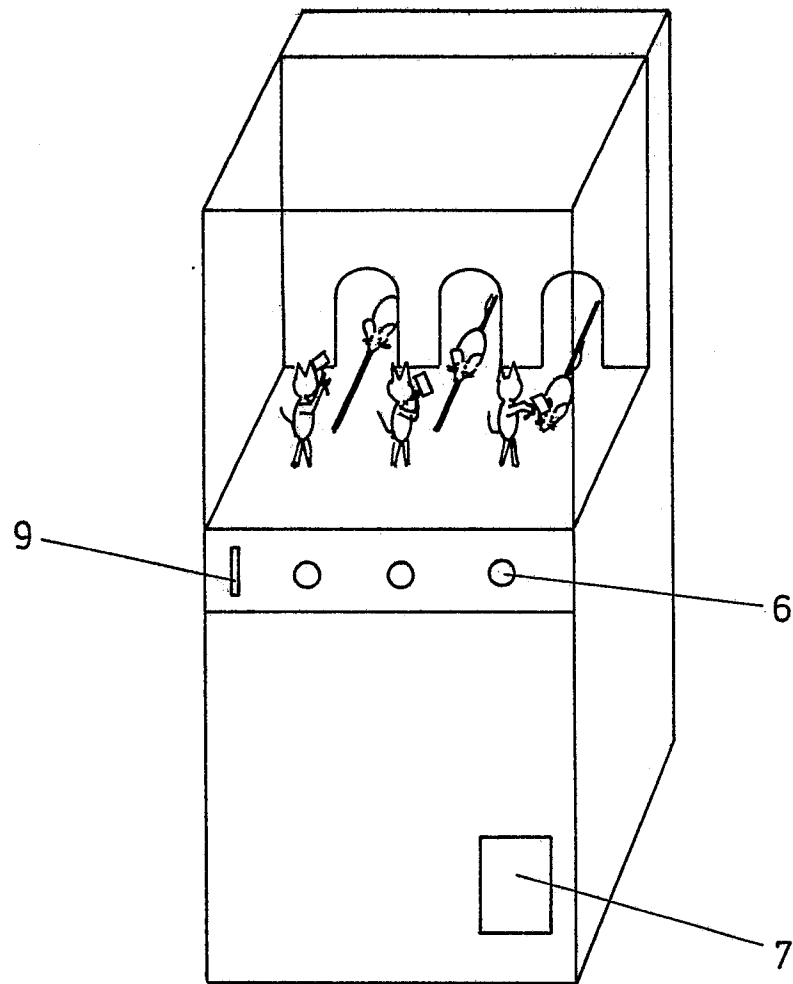


FIG. 4