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SPATIAL FREQUENCY MASKING AND VISIBILITY.(U)  
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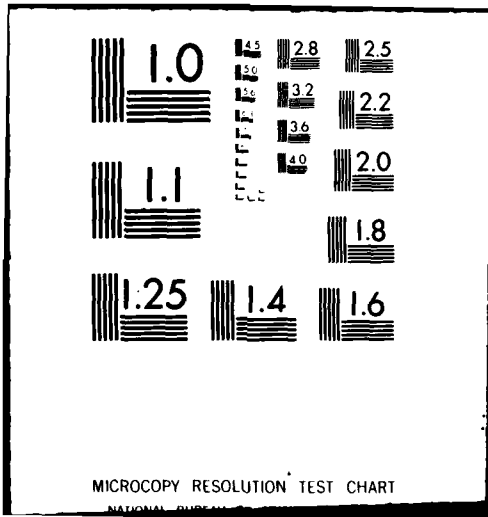
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) → In the past year, work has progressed in four interrelated areas. 1) Substantial evidence supports the hypothesis that visual detection in the presence of masking noise occurs at a constant signal/noise ratio only if the subject is unfamiliar with the mask. → cont (continued on reverse)		

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Item 20 (continued)

- (2) The computerized model of visual masking now incorporates enhancement by sub-threshold masks and spatial frequency tuning, in addition to 1), above.
- (3) Spatial adaptation studies provide a better estimate of channel bandwidth than was previously available. This appears, however, to represent an altogether different mechanism from that involved in masking.
- (4) Attempts to confirm studies showing the existence of two separate visual systems for the processing of spatial and temporal information have failed even to replicate published effects. The reason for this is still under investigation.

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**AFOSR-TR. 82-0223**

SPECTRAL FREQUENCY MASKING AND VIBRILITY

Prepared by

Robert A. Smith

For: Air Force Office of Scientific Research

*AFOSR* 80-0015

Second Annual Report  
1 October 1981

Wright Research Laboratory  
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which surround it, to be sure, not in harmonically pure stimulus; its Fourier spectrum contains energy over a broad band, primarily at low frequencies. Nevertheless, by treating this energy as "noise", it is reasonably straightforward to do a signal/noise calculation from the Fourier treatment of the target stimulus, and to predict thresholds from this. These predictions show a power-law fall-off in masking as a function of target frequency, with the power depending upon the shape of the target waveform: square waves show a fall-off of  $f^{-1}$ , circular fields show  $f^{-3/2}$ , and diamond-shaped fields show  $f^{-2}$ . Our plots (Fig. 1), taken with a circular field, do indeed show this dependence, as do those of McCann et al (Fig. 2), which were taken with a square field. This gave us a great deal of confidence that our signal/noise model would make a reasonably realistic assessment of the effects of noise from the Fourier spectrum of the mask. In an effort to make this assessment rigorous, we considered additional complications for thresholding. In particular, since a wide range of mask shapes appear with our stimuli, we considered the effects of our noncircular fields on the understanding we have gained in the previous literature, which has been formidable.

#### 2. Summary of the findings of the first year

Our first year's research produced some unexpected results. We found that a certain (and at first, unexplained) assumption in our model of masking was not generally true. Specifically, if the mask stimulus is considered as noise, then it is found that detection does not always occur at a constant  $S/N$  ratio (Carter's Law). Much of the first year was devoted to exploring this question, and this research marked the beginning of a new era. We had originally predicted that temporal factors were responsible, and studied the effects of varying detection in some depth. Although our original model was not designed to account for long-term Weber's Law, they led to increasing the critical

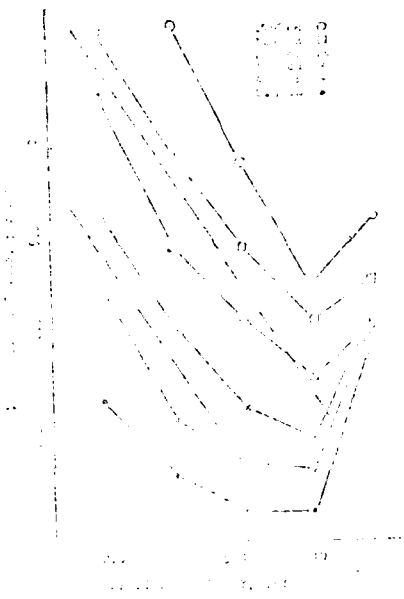


Fig. 1. Marshall and  
 (1978), special  
 slope for various  
 fluid states.  
 The dashed lines show  
 the predicted slope  
 of  $-3/2$ .

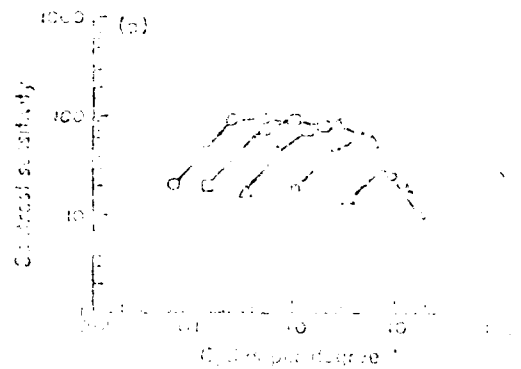


Fig. 2. Data from McGinn et al.  
 (1978), similar to Fig. 1  
 for various square fields.  
 Here the frequency axis  
 has the predicted value of  
 unity.

... (omitted) ... and to some probability practical applications to ... which form the basis of our current studies of image-substitution ... (omitted) ... (NIH Grant Proposal).

... of the first year, to ... a dual channel model for detection ... believe is correct. We derived a much-improved computer model of the masking process -- incorporating our dual mechanism -- which, ... in agreement with our experimental results.

### 5. Status of our Research in the Current Year

#### 5.1. Masking Strategy

... of the year was to ... additional data to support our hypothesis ... law masking occurs when the subject is sufficiently unfamiliar ... to detect its presence. Under a variety of conditions, ... particular masking conditions ... (but not to zero) and a power-law replaces Weber's Law. ... (Unger and Susskind, 1970), ... that any monotonic non-linear system will display Weber's Law ... if external noise is the limiting factor. Conversely, the theory ... that when the discrimination is well-learned, and the mask can be ... the resulting power-law behavior represents a consequence of ... non-linearity. These studies led to a paper which is currently in ...

... of the year, the ... computer model for ... masking ... law or power-law detection, depending upon the ... year it has been expanded to ... for ... experiments, in which stimulation to the test channel is ...





100-1

Task	Task Support	Task Level	Special Env.	Procedure
100-1 (173)	Cont.	Cont.	2-5 opd	Adjustment
100-1 (174)	Cont.	Cont.	4-12	Adjustment; mark was visual notice
100-1 (175)	Cont.	1 sec	12	Forced Choice
100-1 (176)	Cont.	Cont.	10	Adjustment
100-1 (177)	2-0 ms	200 ms	many	Forced choice, D. Synthetic masking
100-1 (178)	Steady	0.5 Hz 20-off	>7.5	Adjustment
100-1 (179)	8 Hz Flaver 1	0.5 Hz Reversal 0.5 Hz cutoff	0.6	Adjustment
100-1 (180)	Steady	0.5 Hz on-off	12	Yes-No

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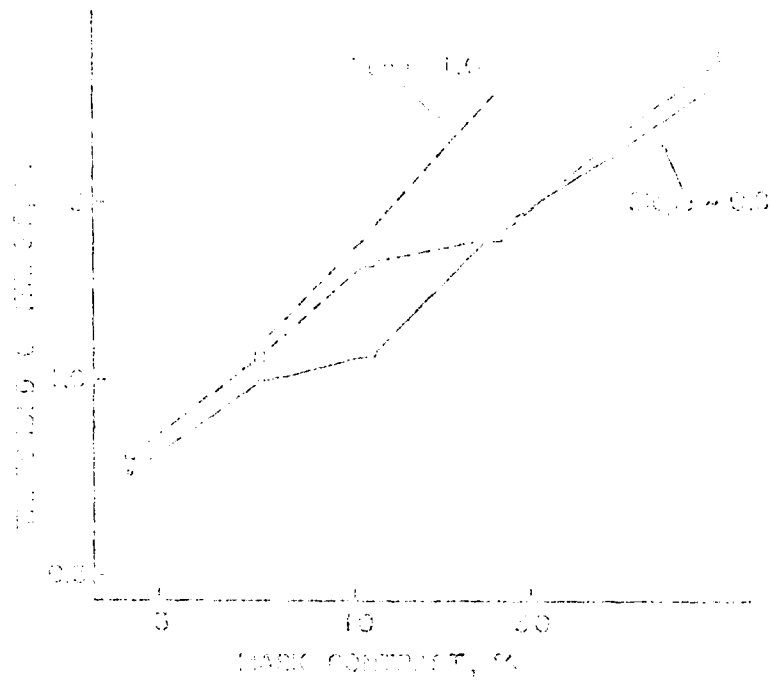


Figure 1. Relationship between dark contrast and threshold contrast. The immediate mask (---) is a presaturation mask of contrast; the control mask (—) is an equal luminance presaturation mask of contrast.

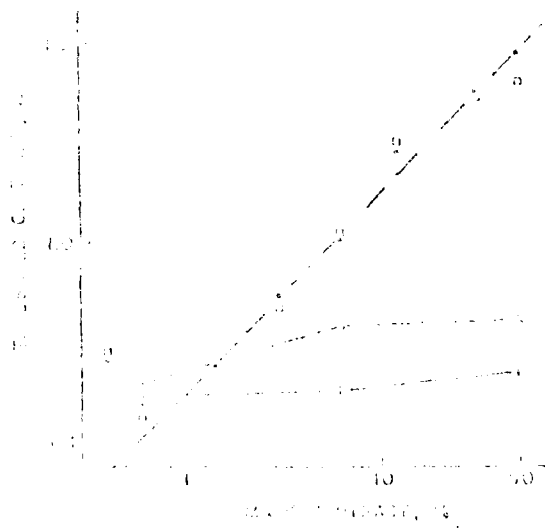


Figure 2. Relationship between mask contrast and threshold contrast. The dashed line (a) is a presaturation mask of contrast; the solid line (b) is an equal luminance presaturation mask of contrast; the solid line (c) is a control mask of contrast.







Figure 2, where the prediction is verified. This reinforces our assertion that a simple incremental channel energy criterion cannot be responsible for all seeking results. It also makes the point that the contrast discrimination situation should probably be considered separately from true seeking and that results obtained with the two paradigms may differ in fundamental ways. With a few explicitly noted exceptions, we have previously avoided the contrast discrimination paradigm, and shall continue to do so for the remainder of this study. Indeed, Leige (1991) has produced an experiential analysis of this paradigm, asking many of the same questions which we ask here; significantly, not all of the answers are the same for the two paradigms. For example, contrast discrimination does not obey Weber's law, even when behavioural effort is not considered.

It is at this point in our studies, we became concerned that we had never demonstrated Weber's law to hold with forced-choice seeking as our task (at least in any other condition except the present one). We therefore tried to demonstrate that Weber's Law was not obeyed. Thus Weber's Law was demonstrated at the limits of Weber's Law might be seen in effect on experimental design order; we had typically measured seeking slopes by starting with the lowest work modulation and proceeding through to the highest, in order. In this case, we reversed the presentation order; we also tried a random presentation order. Finally we interspersed trials randomly for different work levels. The results of all of these experiments were uniform; after some initial exploration, the data showed that Weber's Law was not obeyed. In fact, we found that Weber's Law was obeyed together with a mean of 0.7. In other words, we also found a 0.7 power law for this form of seeking. Finally, however, we discovered conditions under which Weber's Law did hold. To achieve this, we worked with a different set of

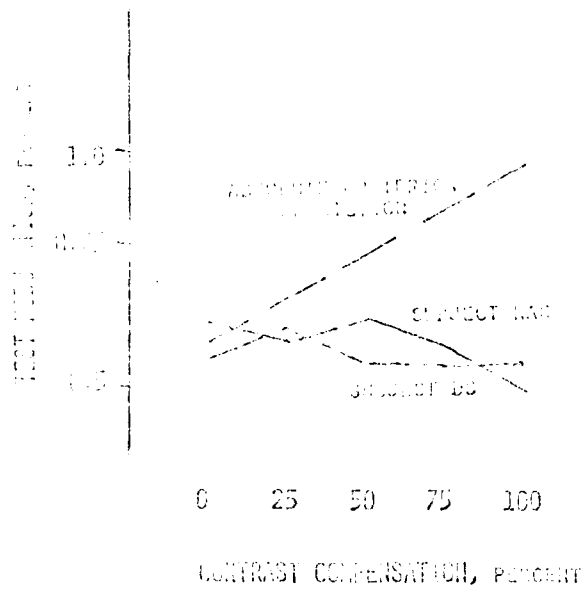


Fig. 5. The effect of contrast compensation (see text) on contrast correction. Mask frequency 5 c/deg, contrast 10%; test frequency 4 c/deg. The dotted line shows the prediction of Liang and Foley's absolute channel capacity model.

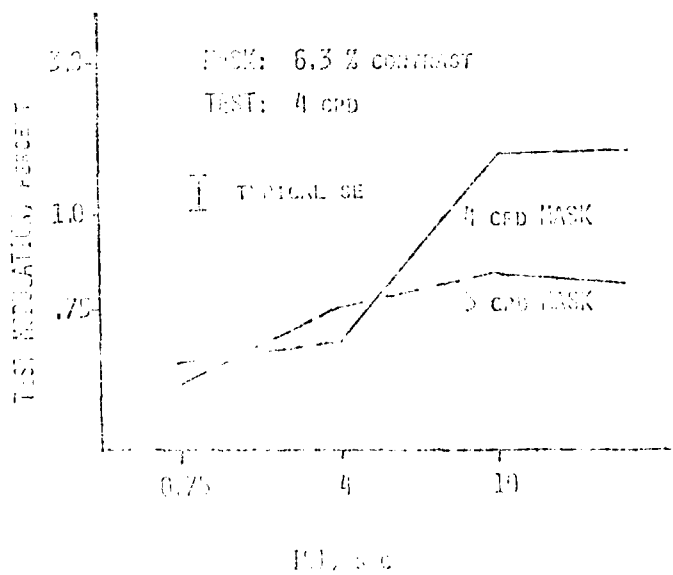


Fig. 6. The differential effect of IPI on contrast discrimination. Mask frequency 4 c/deg with contrast masking (as in Fig. 5).



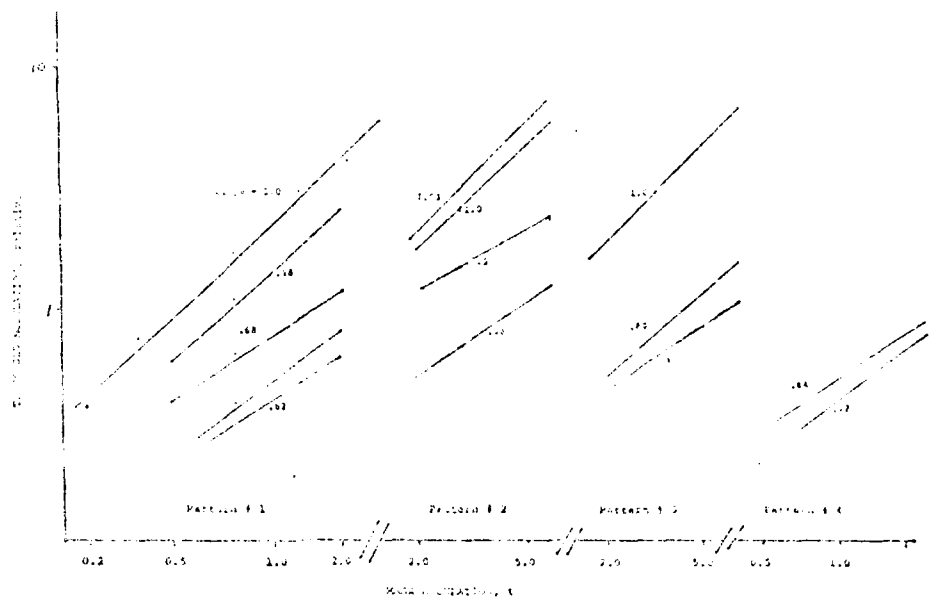


Fig. 8. Forced-choice masking data with four different 3-component (2 - 8 cpd) mask patterns, each with a single 1 cpd test grating. Lower lines represent increasing practice with each pattern. Numbers represent slope values for each pattern. The slope values increase with increasing practice for each pattern.

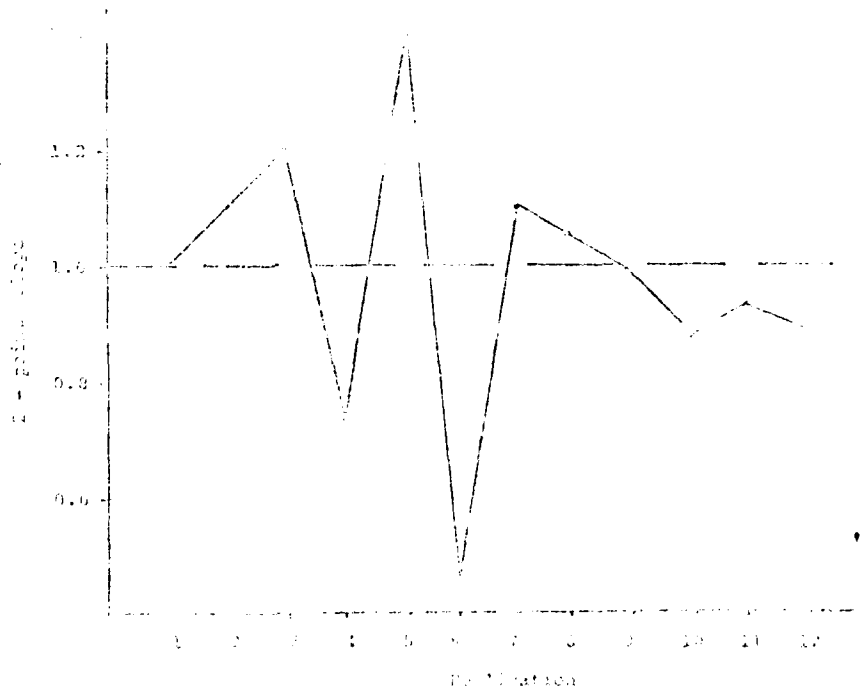


Fig. 9. Slope of correct response function for a single mask pattern. The data are from the same experiment as in Fig. 8. The slope values are plotted against the number of practice trials. The slope values are plotted against the number of practice trials. The slope values are plotted against the number of practice trials.

line, unexpected to be in -- caused difficulties in our search for conditions which produced Weber's law. As we tried each new condition, it so first appeared that we had finally succeeded, only to have our results slowly degenerate to the familiar 0.7 power law. Since this learning is a cumulative phenomenon, not easily replicated and averaged, we present data in detail for subject PS, learning to detect the 4 c/d test in the presence of a 2 c/d test noise stimuli (Fig. 8). The subject's d' curves were plotted in terms of the subject's working function (5 points) which displays a slope of 1. From this, two convenient points were selected for repeated settings. As PS continued to set his threshold for these two points, settings decreased systematically as did the slope of the line joining the two points. Eventually this slope reached a value of 0.7. At this point, we repeated the test with a 3 c/d test, and the slope again rose to 1.0, falling off a before with a period of 10 trials. PS then returned to the 4 c/d test, and the slope again fell to 0.7. In 10 trials to reach asymptote, and eventually is able to do so on the first trial.

It is worth the data for two additional observations. In each observation, the overall decrease in threshold is much less pronounced, here approximately 10% it occurs in the first few trials. Despite these differences, however, the decrease in slope is still observed. Thus we conclude that there is a general learning phenomenon involved in our task and that as learning proceeds, the subject is able to change the Weber's Law to a power law. The substantial individual differences observed in our study of this learning process. In particular, we suggest the existence of a generalizable, cumulative learning phenomenon, which is not yet fully understood.

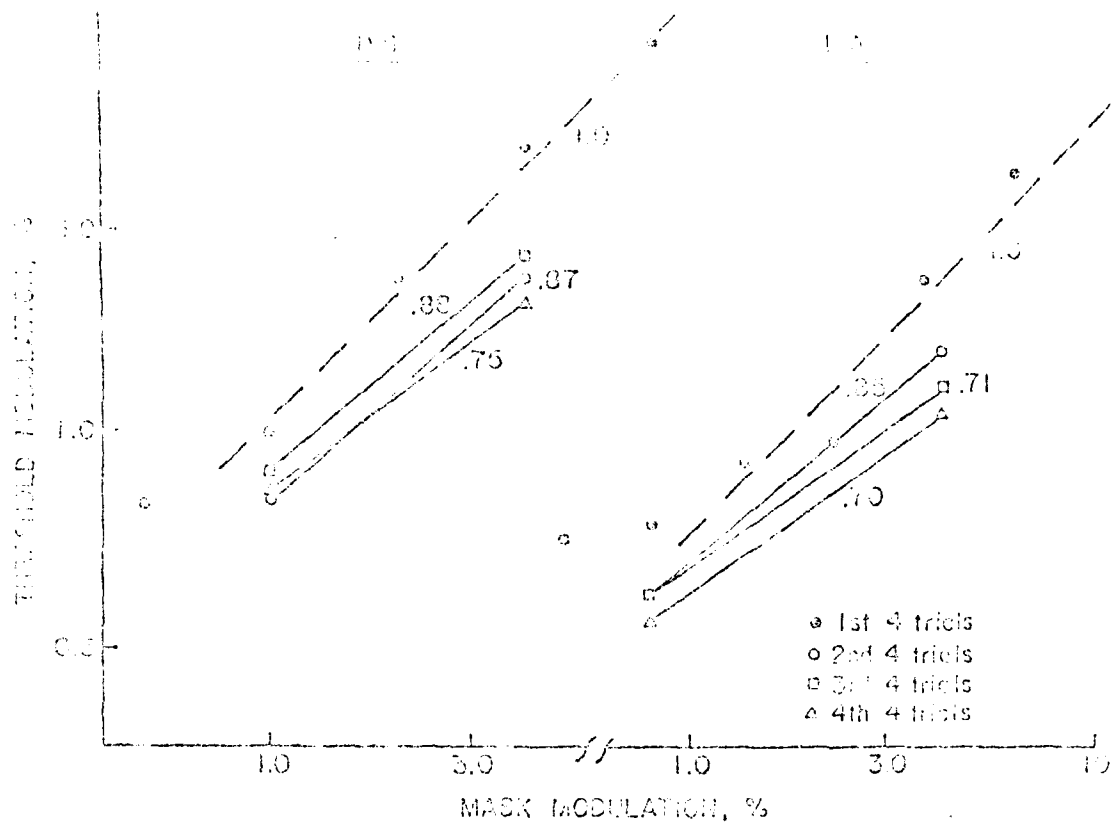


Fig. 9. Similar to Fig 8 for subjects DS and LA. Here each point is the average of 4 trials.

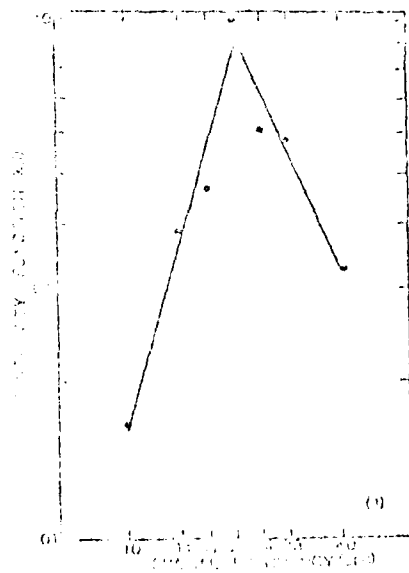


Fig. 10. Channel shape derived by averaging the results of the anomalously high center point, and the fact that higher mask frequencies are more effective than lower mask frequencies.

The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window. The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window. The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window.

Under these conditions the observer must look for the actual appearance of the test. He will notice this merely finding a deviation in the mask pattern. This deviation is not really necessary for a mask to be seen. The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window.

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With practice, of course, the observer can see the mask. He can see the mask, but only the window. The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window.

The observer is not aware of the fact that the mask is not a mask at all, but a window. As a result, he is not able to see the mask, but only the window.

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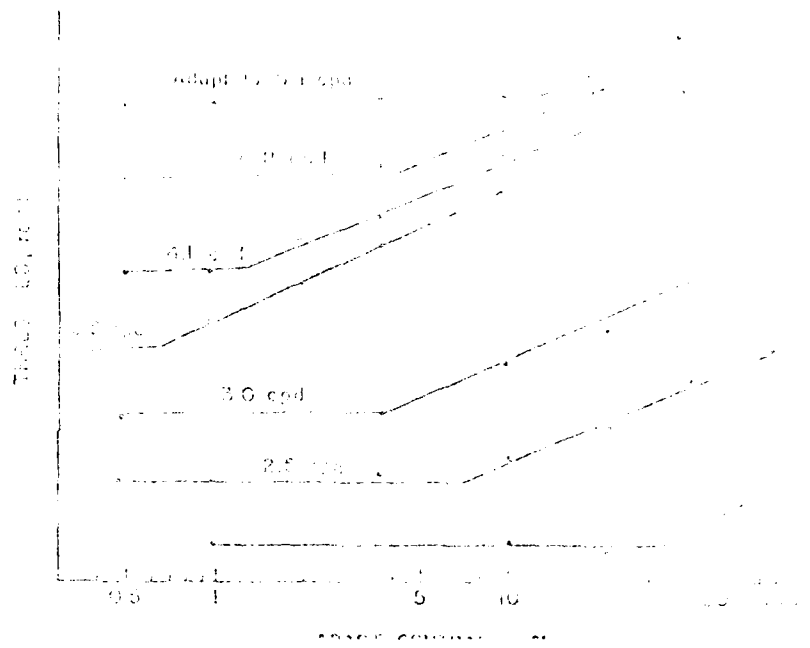


Fig. 11. Plot of anode current versus throat current for various operating voltages of the magnets. Choice of position marked at 1.5 kv.

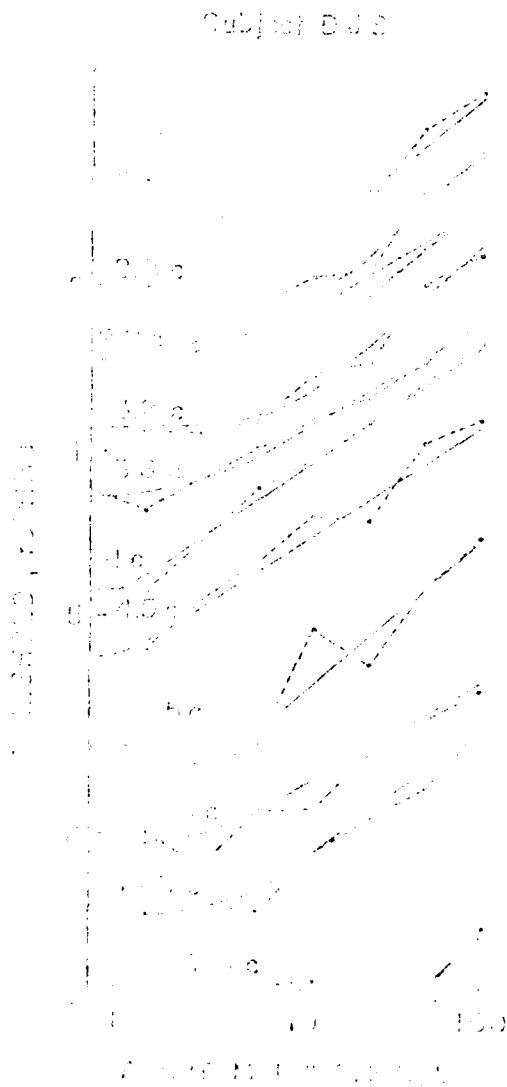


Fig. 12. Similar to Fig. 11 but by direct choice.



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