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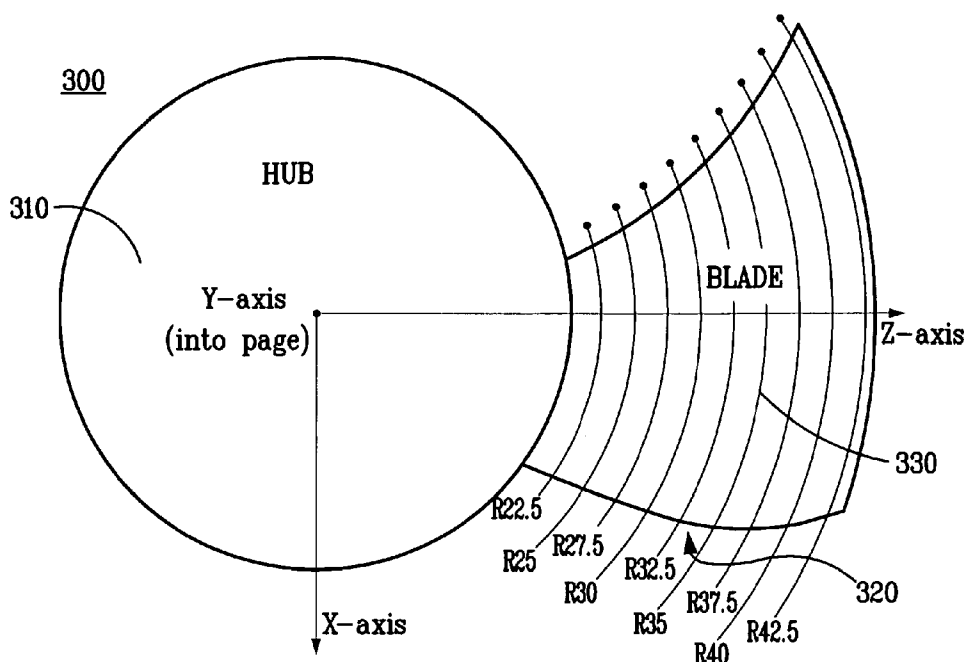
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(54) Title: AXIAL FLOW FAN



(57) Abstract: A fan or rotor design where the surface profile may be configured to desired dimensions particular to a given operating environment is disclosed.

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AXIAL FLOW FAN

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[001] The present application claims the priority benefit of U.S. provisional patent application number 60/827,677 filed September 29, 2006 and entitled "Axial Flow Fan" and U.S. provisional patent application number 60/950,610 filed July 19, 2007 and entitled "Surface Profile for a Quiet Rotor or Stator." The disclosure of these commonly owned applications are incorporated herein by reference.

[002] This application is related to U.S. patent numbers 5,934,877 for a "Rotor with Logarithmic Scaled Shape" and 6,702,552 for an "Impeller Having Blade(s) Conforming to the Golden Section of a Logarithmic Curve." The disclosures of these commonly owned patents are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[003] The present invention generally concerns axial flow fans and rotors. More specifically, the present invention concerns a surface profile for axial flow fans and rotors used in environments requiring high output in conjunction with constrained fan size including but not limited to electronics cooling.

Description of the Related Art

[004] Fan and rotor design has undergone little change over the past century. As a result, fans and rotors remain relatively inefficient. A part of this inefficiency is the result of fans and rotors generating a considerable amount of noise and turbulence. Similarly, fans and rotors used in liquid environments typically result in cavitation. Noise, turbulence, and cavitation reduce the operational efficiency of the fan and rotor.

[005] A chart illustrating inefficiencies with respect to flow and sound in a series of 92x38mm computer fans as found in the prior art are shown in FIGURE 1A. A similar chart illustrating inefficiencies with respect to flow and torque in prior art fan design is shown in FIGURE 1B. FIGURE 1B illustrates, specifically, a 22" best-in-class A/C fan with a standard bell shroud operating at 850 rpm.

[006] Much of the noise, turbulence, and unwanted torque in prior art fan design may be attributable to the surface design of the fan or rotor. In many instances, fans and rotors are implemented in a particular operating environment based on a pre-existing design. These pre-existing designs are not necessarily designed or intended for that particular operating environment. Nevertheless, these pre-existing designs may achieve results that are adequate or 'good enough' for that particular environment.

[007] Determining which pre-existing design is adequate or 'good enough' for a particular environment is a never-ending exercise. Trial and error will continually redefine the best adequate or 'good enough' design implementation. Notwithstanding these adequate results, some degree of the aforementioned noise, turbulence, and/or unwanted torque will inevitably remain.

[008] There is, therefore, a need in the art for fan and rotor design where the surface profile may be configured to desired dimensions particular to a given operating environment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] Embodiments of the present invention provide for an axial flow fan that is quieter for the same or better output throughout a range of operating points compared to prior art fan designs. References to an axial flow fan or any fan are meant to be inclusive with respect to rotors and other blade designs.

[0010] In one exemplary embodiment, a method for constructing an axial fan is disclosed. In this exemplary method, a spline is drafted to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface. The blade surface is then offset by a constant amount and filled to form a single blade. The single blade is oriented with respect to a hub and patterned along with a total number of blades to be affixed to the hub. The single blade and remaining blades are then attached to the hub.

[0011] In another embodiment, a fan apparatus is disclosed. The fan apparatus includes a hub a blade coupled to the hub, the blade including a blade surface. The blade surface is created by drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch. The blade is created by offsetting the blade surface by a constant amount and filling the blade surface to form a single blade.

[0012] Another exemplary method provides for constructing an axial fan. The exemplary method includes drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface. A complimentary airfoil shape is then created. The airfoil is then lofted into a solid.

[0013] A computer-readable storage medium is also disclosed. The medium has embodied thereon a program being executable by a processor to perform a method for constructing an axial fan.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] FIGURE 1A is a chart exhibiting flow and sound inefficiencies in prior art fan design.

[0015] FIGURE 1B is a chart exhibiting flow and torque inefficiencies in prior art fan design.

[0016] FIGURE 2A is a chart exhibiting flow and sound efficiency of a fan as may be designed in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention as compared to the inefficiencies of prior art fans like those shown in FIGURE 1A.

[0017] FIGURE 2B is a chart exhibiting flow and torque efficiency of a fan as may be designed in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the present invention as compared to the inefficiencies of a prior art fan like that shown in FIGURE 1B.

[0018] FIGURE 3 illustrates an exemplary fan and surface profile according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0019] FIGURE 4 illustrates an exemplary surface profile of a fan blade according to an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] FIGURE 5 illustrates an exemplary method for constructing a blade surface according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] FIGURE 6 illustrates a method for forming a blade according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0022] FIGURE 7 illustrates an alternative method for forming a blade according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0023] FIGURE 8 illustrates an exemplary method for constructing a fan according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0024] FIGURES 9A-9E illustrate exemplary fans constructed utilizing the surface profile disclosed with respect to FIGURE 3.

[0025] FIGURES 10A-10E illustrate exemplary fans constructed utilizing the surface profile disclosed with respect to FIGURE 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0026] Embodiments of the present invention provide for a fan that is quieter for the same or better output throughout a range of operating points compared to prior art fan designs. FIGURE 2A is a chart exhibiting flow and sound efficiency of an exemplary fan as may be designed in accordance with the present invention compared to the inefficiencies of a prior art fan like that found in FIGURE 1A. FIGURE 2B, in turn, is a chart exhibiting flow and torque efficiency of an exemplary surface profile as may be designed for a fan in accordance with the present invention compared to the inefficiencies of a prior art fan like that found in FIGURE 1B.

[0027] FIGURE 3 illustrates a portion of an exemplary fan 300 and surface profile 330 according to an embodiment of the present invention. Fan 300 may be motor driven or subject to the natural flow of a fluid (*e.g.*, liquid or gas). Fan 300 includes a hub 310, which may be approximately cylindrical or conical in shape. Hub 310 may be hollowed like that of FIGURE 9A or solid as is shown in FIGURE 10E. Hub 310 may also include a cap like that shown in FIGURE 9B. Hub 310 may be altered with radii, chamfers, and/or blends with symmetry about the Y-axis as illustrated throughout FIGURES 9 and 10. Hub 310 may be configured to an appropriate height and diameter in order to incorporate a desired motor and hub-tip ratio as illustrated throughout FIGURES 9 and 10.

[0028] Blades 320 are circularly patterned around hub 310. Blades 320 may be permanently or temporarily coupled or affixed to the hub 310 through various techniques as known in the art. The surface profile 330 of blades 320 may be configured in accordance with the various profiles described in U.S. patent numbers 5,934,877 and 6,702,552, the disclosure of which has been previously incorporated herein by reference. For example, a portion of the surface profile 330 of fan blade 320 may conform to a logarithmic spiral. The radius of that particular logarithmic spiral may unfold at a constant order of growth when measured at equiangular radii, which may sometimes be referred to as the Golden Section.

[0029] Surface profile 330 configurations may also correspond to external or internal shell configurations as found in nature. For example, the surface profile 330 of blade 320 may conform to the shell of the phylum *Mollusca*, class *Cephalopoda*, genus *Nautilus*. An alternative surface profile-to-shell configuration may be inclusive of the shell shaping of the phylum *Mollusca*, class *Gastropoda*, genus *Conus*, *Conidae*, *Turbinidea*, or *Volutidae*. Shell configurations from other members of phylum *Mollusca*, class *Gastropoda* or *Cephalopoda* may also be implemented with respect to the surface profile 330 of blade 320.

[0030] Various other surface configurations may be implemented in accordance with embodiments of the present invention. For example, surface profile 330 of blade 320 may be defined by the following tables. In Tables I-IX, Cartesian points are taken at even intervals along the span of the blade, which corresponds to an 87mm diameter fan. In the context of FIGURE 3, axis Y represents the hub axis and serves as the zero reference for all radial measurements. All dimensions in Tables I-IX are in millimeters. The blade surface may be constructed through a method like that disclosed in the context of FIGURE 5.

TABLE I

22.5mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-5.389	-2.463	21.845
2	-2.804	-0.447	22.325
3	-1.548	0.621	22.447
4	-0.338	1.725	22.497
5	4.187	6.381	22.107
6	6.236	8.883	21.619
7	8.171	11.467	20.964
8	9.981	14.098	20.165
9	11.645	16.791	19.252
10	12.675	18.611	18.590

TABLE II

25mm Radius			
Pt#	X	Y	Z
1	-6.755	-3.085	24.070
2	-5.230	-1.984	24.447
3	-3.708	-0.850	24.723
4	-2.209	0.344	24.902
5	-0.743	1.590	24.989
6	0.680	2.866	24.991
7	2.072	4.159	24.914
8	4.740	6.826	24.547
9	7.203	9.653	23.940
10	9.536	12.571	23.110
11	11.695	15.578	22.096
12	13.656	18.668	20.941

TABLE III

27.5mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-8.339	-3.663	26.205
2	-6.681	-2.508	26.676
3	-5.014	-1.334	27.039
4	-3.379	-0.118	27.292
5	-1.774	1.140	27.443
6	-0.200	2.438	27.499
7	1.360	3.757	27.466
8	2.898	5.107	27.347
9	4.395	6.508	27.147
10	5.841	7.963	26.873
11	7.233	9.452	26.532
12	9.896	12.488	25.658
13	12.351	15.634	24.571
14	14.594	18.869	23.308

TABLE IV

30mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-10.052	-4.175	28.266
2	-8.259	-2.972	28.841
3	-6.454	-1.744	29.298
4	-2.895	0.799	29.860
5	-1.145	2.119	29.978
6	0.589	3.464	29.994
7	2.300	4.847	29.912
8	3.968	6.289	29.736
9	5.597	7.786	29.473
10	7.177	9.315	29.129
11	10.171	12.444	28.223
12	11.578	14.055	27.676
13	12.919	15.705	27.076
14	15.426	19.108	25.730

TABLE V

32.5mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-11.904	-4.628	30.241
2	-8.077	-2.121	31.480
3	-6.134	-0.832	31.916
4	-4.200	0.476	32.227
5	-0.387	3.180	32.498
6	3.326	6.035	32.329
7	5.121	7.551	32.094
8	6.879	9.111	31.764
9	10.229	12.302	30.848
10	13.307	15.645	29.651
11	16.096	19.177	28.234

TABLE VI

35mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-13.944	-5.042	32.102
2	-11.950	-3.756	32.897
3	-9.913	-2.465	33.567
4	-7.835	-1.168	34.112
5	-5.747	0.160	34.525
6	-1.625	2.908	34.962
7	2.419	5.778	34.916
8	4.393	7.286	34.723
9	6.319	8.865	34.425
10	10.022	12.110	33.535
11	11.778	13.779	32.959
12	13.453	15.502	32.311
13	15.045	17.284	31.602
14	16.552	19.129	30.839

TABLE VII

37.5mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-16.217	-5.442	33.812
2	-14.137	-4.107	34.733
3	-12.003	-2.783	35.527
4	-9.813	-1.473	36.193
5	-7.592	-0.132	36.724
6	-3.163	2.655	37.366
7	1.205	5.545	37.481
8	3.361	7.039	37.349
9	5.468	8.607	37.099
10	7.519	10.247	36.738
11	9.510	11.916	36.274
12	11.447	13.606	35.710
13	13.311	15.339	35.058
14	15.077	17.149	34.335
15	16.736	19.050	33.558

TABLE VIII

40mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-18.694	-5.801	35.363
2	-16.540	-4.436	36.420
3	-14.332	-3.083	37.344
4	-12.065	-1.755	38.137
5	-9.759	-0.412	38.791
6	-7.428	0.970	39.304
7	-5.073	2.390	39.677
8	-0.382	5.301	39.998
9	4.225	8.324	39.776
10	6.454	9.943	39.476
11	8.614	11.644	39.062
12	10.707	13.380	38.540
13	12.752	15.132	37.913
14	14.711	16.945	37.197
15	16.538	18.880	36.421

TABLE IX

42.5mm Radius			
Pt #	X	Y	Z
1	-21.317	-6.090	36.767
2	-19.109	-4.701	37.962
3	-16.842	-3.324	39.020
4	-12.129	-0.612	40.732
5	-9.709	0.774	41.376
6	-7.262	2.199	41.875
7	-2.365	5.103	42.434
8	0.080	6.575	42.500
9	2.514	8.074	42.426
10	4.912	9.640	42.215
11	7.231	11.300	41.880
12	9.460	13.033	41.434
13	11.633	14.797	40.877
14	13.759	16.584	40.211
15	15.754	18.503	39.472

[0031] FIGURE 4 illustrates an exemplary surface profile 410 of a fan blade 400 according to an alternative embodiment of the present invention. Surface profile 410 may correspond to a blade coupled or affixed to a hub like the fan 300 shown in FIGURE 3. The surface profile 410 of fan blade 400 in FIGURE 4 has been defined by the Cartesian points as referenced in Tables X-XXVI (below) and taken at even intervals along the axis of the fan blade 400. The X, Y, and Z axis are orthogonal to one another and oriented as shown in Figure 4. Like tables I-IX, all dimensions are in millimeters.

TABLE X

z=0mm	
X	Y
-15.143	-23.188
-14.326	-22.832
-13.543	-22.424
-12.092	-21.431
-10.769	-20.241
-9.567	-18.931
-8.467	-17.536
-7.442	-16.078
-5.577	-13.054
-3.900	-9.921
-2.423	-6.683
-1.140	-3.369
0.000	0.000
1.470	5.110
2.078	7.697
2.576	10.311
3.158	15.563
3.063	20.820
2.698	23.451
2.425	24.763
2.094	26.055
0.214	31.012
-0.392	32.199
-1.055	33.364
-2.543	35.567
-4.264	37.579
-6.176	39.433

TABLE XI

z=5mm	
X	Y
-11.448	-21.282
-10.262	-20.347
-9.220	-19.270
-8.278	-18.093
-7.405	-16.861
-5.804	-14.307
-4.345	-11.667
-3.026	-8.955
-1.861	-6.181
-0.828	-3.356
0.111	-0.493
1.605	4.777
2.219	7.445
2.718	10.142
3.285	15.559
3.152	20.975
2.756	23.684
2.464	25.033
2.110	26.361
0.100	31.441
-0.550	32.655
-1.259	33.838
-2.848	36.059
-4.681	38.070
-6.717	39.906

TABLE XII

z=10mm	
X	Y
-9.055	-19.049
-8.218	-18.097
-7.448	-17.100
-6.051	-15.004
-4.790	-12.815
-3.650	-10.566
-1.700	-5.933
-0.091	-1.161
1.427	4.243
2.559	9.716
3.150	15.287
3.183	18.115
3.003	20.923
1.906	26.433
1.465	27.782
0.961	29.098
-0.226	31.637
-1.658	34.046
-2.476	35.197
-3.368	36.305
-5.342	38.334
-7.510	40.159

TABLE XIII

z=15mm	
X	Y
-7.636	-16.833
-6.407	-15.142
-5.294	-13.382
-3.400	-9.666
-1.841	-5.788
-0.520	-1.823
1.028	3.721
2.187	9.359
2.794	15.067
2.623	20.801
2.171	23.646
1.454	26.416
0.460	29.106
-0.142	30.420
-0.810	31.697
-4.123	36.335
-5.129	37.364
-6.209	38.335
-8.496	40.128

TABLE XIV

z=20mm	
X	Y
-6.748	-14.747
-5.797	-13.336
-4.930	-11.879
-3.443	-8.825
-1.117	-2.431
0.442	3.175
1.607	8.854
2.225	14.633
2.247	17.565
2.033	20.472
1.556	23.345
1.212	24.767
0.793	26.176
-1.576	31.479
-3.193	33.910
-4.118	35.055
-5.109	36.129
-7.282	38.061
-9.650	39.775

TABLE XV

z=25mm	
X	Y
-6.097	-12.664
-5.414	-11.525
-4.785	-10.362
-3.674	-7.973
-1.861	-3.015
-0.288	2.627
0.863	8.346
1.461	14.168
1.463	17.118
1.220	20.041
0.706	22.931
-0.102	25.770
-1.196	28.484
-2.586	31.057
-3.400	32.287
-4.294	33.466
-6.282	35.609
-8.535	37.464
-10.991	39.098

TABLE XVI

z=30mm	
X	Y
-5.585	-10.399
-4.067	-7.100
-2.804	-3.695
-1.189	1.944
-0.064	7.667
0.486	13.491
0.463	16.449
0.189	19.383
-0.363	22.272
-0.751	23.699
-1.217	25.108
-3.828	30.353
-4.679	31.560
-5.615	32.715
-7.690	34.793
-10.027	36.564
-12.561	38.097

TABLE XVII

z=35mm	
X	Y
-5.162	-7.551
-4.098	-4.761
-2.368	0.873
-1.217	6.608
-0.708	12.454
-0.704	13.936
-0.758	15.427
-1.060	18.379
-1.647	21.280
-2.058	22.709
-2.552	24.119
-3.772	26.814
-5.307	29.331
-6.199	30.519
-7.177	31.651
-9.340	33.665
-11.769	35.341
-14.399	36.754

TABLE XVIII

z=40mm	
X	Y
-4.536	-2.789
-3.114	2.520
-2.292	7.928
-2.135	10.675
-2.170	13.441
-2.907	18.884
-3.250	20.222
-3.664	21.546
-4.704	24.098
-6.028	26.505
-6.800	27.653
-7.645	28.755
-9.517	30.760
-11.648	32.479
-14.038	33.894
-16.570	35.051

TABLE XIX

z=45mm	
X	Y
-3.952	5.610
-3.744	9.858
-4.047	14.086
-4.411	16.191
-4.929	18.258
-6.455	22.212
-6.949	23.159
-7.488	24.086
-8.690	25.845
-10.056	27.471
-11.599	28.952
-13.298	30.240
-15.124	31.311
-17.062	32.195
-19.063	32.962

TABLE XX

z=-5mm	
X	Y
-19.764	-24.408
-18.389	-24.124
-17.077	-23.624
-14.607	-22.303
-12.354	-20.650
-11.318	-19.698
-10.354	-18.686
-7.038	-14.217
-5.603	-11.812
-4.294	-9.345
-2.231	-4.690
-0.511	0.098
0.964	5.079
2.097	10.148
2.738	15.274
2.712	20.412
2.387	22.987
2.136	24.271
1.829	25.537
0.074	30.408
-0.494	31.579
-1.117	32.730
-2.524	34.917
-4.159	36.924
-5.979	38.785

TABLE XXI

z=-10mm	
X	Y
-21.148	-24.550
-19.540	-23.946
-17.984	-23.240
-15.006	-21.576
-13.608	-20.570
-12.302	-19.447
-9.977	-16.914
-8.556	-14.998
-7.262	-13.011
-4.973	-8.872
-3.030	-4.542
-1.367	-0.074
0.131	4.783
1.301	9.730
2.016	14.737
2.087	19.764
1.814	22.288
1.591	23.550
1.314	24.796
-0.307	29.601
-1.426	31.897
-2.762	34.067
-4.328	36.060
-6.086	37.906

TABLE XXII

z=-15mm	
X	Y
-21.794	-24.790
-20.175	-23.944
-18.591	-23.032
-17.082	-22.071
-15.621	-21.055
-12.915	-18.773
-10.552	-16.093
-8.510	-13.142
-5.128	-6.869
-3.707	-3.589
-2.436	-0.232
-0.930	4.469
0.255	9.261
1.019	14.115
1.181	18.994
0.970	21.446
0.540	23.894
-0.937	28.601
-1.982	30.851
-3.246	32.984
-4.740	34.943
-6.430	36.756

TABLE XXIII

z=-20mm	
X	Y
-22.214	-26.282
-20.683	-24.942
-19.172	-23.578
-17.670	-22.205
-16.180	-20.819
-14.728	-19.392
-13.353	-17.905
-10.889	-14.728
-8.742	-11.328
-6.831	-7.765
-3.661	-0.323
-2.183	4.174
-1.014	8.742
-0.234	13.401
-0.037	15.773
-0.005	18.144
-0.510	22.827
-1.071	25.139
-1.836	27.393
-3.977	31.617
-4.658	32.603
-5.400	33.542
-7.006	35.315

TABLE XXIV

z=-25mm	
X	Y
-22.961	-27.642
-22.018	-26.664
-21.095	-25.669
-19.289	-23.642
-15.812	-19.472
-12.680	-15.049
-9.911	-10.389
-8.345	-7.520
-6.615	-4.030
-5.102	-0.441
-3.634	3.837
-3.014	6.011
-2.481	8.210
-1.722	12.644
-1.476	17.128
-1.592	19.393
-1.890	21.635
-3.064	25.986
-3.957	28.073
-5.049	30.035
-6.358	31.855
-7.844	33.558

TABLE XXV

z=-30mm	
X	Y
-4.440	6.519
-3.341	13.018
-3.243	16.316
-3.330	17.977
-3.515	19.623
-4.193	22.849
-4.700	24.428
-5.326	25.969
-6.933	28.834
-8.986	31.417

TABLE XXVI

z=-35mm	
X	Y
-5.258	14.085
-5.583	18.053
-5.972	20.003
-6.524	21.926
-8.139	25.532
-9.219	27.183
-10.437	28.755

[0032] Both prototype and manufactured surfaces resulting from the application of Tables I-IX and Tables X-XXVI may conform to these points within reasonable process tolerances.

[0033] FIGURE 5 illustrates an exemplary method 500 for constructing a blade surface according to an embodiment of the present invention. In step 510, a radius cut is sketched. Points are identified along that radius cut in step 520 and a spline is drafted to connect the aforementioned points in step 530. In step 540, each radius cut sketch is lofted in increasing radius order to form a surface. The surface may be extended or trimmed at the edges to reach the exact desired dimensions in step 550.

[0034] FIGURE 6 illustrates a method 600 for forming a blade according to an embodiment of the present invention. In step 610, the surface (as may be created through the method described with respect to FIGURE 5) is offset by a constant amount. In step 620, the offset is filled to form a single blade. In optional step 630, the bluntness of the leading and/or trailing edges may be altered for desired operating conditions.

[0035] FIGURE 7 illustrates an alternative method 700 for forming a blade according to an embodiment of the present invention. In step 710, a complimentary airfoil shape is created. In step 720, a semi- or fully-airfoil blade cross-section is created on one or both sides of the blade. This cross-section may then be lofted into a solid in step 730.

Alterations may also be made with respect to the bluntness of the leading and/or trailing edges for the purpose of desired operating conditions in step 740.

[0036] FIGURE 8 illustrates an exemplary method 800 for constructing a fan according to an embodiment of the present invention. In step 810, blades are oriented with respect to the hub, which may include rotating the in-tact blade surface about an axis to change the pitch, dihedral, or sweep angle as they pertain to desired fan performance. The blade is then patterned around the hub or other fixturing device in step 820 for the appropriate number of blades. Blades can be fully or partially attached to the hub in step 830 and radiused as desired. Alterations may also be made to the leading and/or trailing edge bluntness in order to achieve desired operation conditions.

[0037] While Tables I-IX, for example, dictate an 87mm diameter fan, the blade surface, full blade, and/or final fan may be scaled to change the size and output of the fan as may the measurements set forth in Tables X-XXVI. The resulting fan blade may be mirrored or run in either rotation. Additional attributes may be added to the fan including radii, mid-blade or blade-tip winglets (vertical extrusions out of the blade), full or partial-depth rings, extended or indented turbulators (bumps or cavities along the blade to change boundary layer behavior or noise), embossings, fastening devices, coatings and so forth. Additional surface features and/or strategic roughness may be employed. Furthermore, this blade surface may also be used in a similar fashion to make a non-rotating fan, or stator.

[0038] The methods disclosed with respect to FIGURES 5-8 may be embodied in computer software. A computer-readable storage medium may have embodied thereon a program. The program may be executable by a processor to perform the methods or combinations thereof as disclosed herein. These methods may be applicable in the field of computer-aided drafting or design, which may include three-dimensional design tools. The results of such computer-aided drafting and design may be rendered on a display device (*e.g.*, a computer monitor) or printed to a tangible medium such as a computer printout. These results may be annotated with measurement information.

[0039] FIGURES 9A-9E illustrate exemplary fans constructed utilizing the surface profile disclosed with respect to FIGURE 3. These fan configurations are exemplary and various elements thereof (*e.g.*, hub, blade number, blade configuration, stators) may be interchangeably combined with one another and in conjunction with a particular surface profile to construct a fan in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0040] FIGURE 9A illustrates an exemplary fan including five blades arranged about a cylindrical and hollowed hub.

[0041] FIGURE 9B illustrates another exemplary fan including seven blades arranged about a cylindrical and capped hub.

[0042] FIGURE 9C illustrates an exemplary fan including five blades with serrated edges and arranged about a conical hub.

[0043] FIGURE 9D illustrates an exemplary fan including twelve blades with a notched edge and arranged about a cylindrical and capped hub.

[0044] FIGURE 9E illustrates an exemplary fan including two blades and arranged about a cylindrical hub, the fan being enclosed within a stator.

[0045] FIGURES 10A-10E illustrate exemplary fans constructed utilizing the surface profile disclosed with respect to FIGURE 4. These fan configurations are exemplary and various elements thereof (*e.g.*, hub, blade number, blade configuration, stators) may be interchangeably combined with one another and in conjunction with a particular surface profile to construct a fan in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0046] FIGURE 10A illustrates an exemplary fan including three blades extending outward in three-dimensions from an otherwise flat, two-dimensional hub.

[0047] FIGURE 10B illustrates an exemplary fan including six blades and arranged about a cylindrical and solid hub, the fan being enclosed within a stator.

[0048] FIGURE 10C illustrates an exemplary fan including three blades extending outward in three-dimensions from a conical hub.

[0049] FIGURE 10D illustrates an exemplary fan including fourteen blades and arranged about a cylindrical hub, each of the blades being coupled to one another by intermediate 'webbing.'

[0050] FIGURE 10E illustrates an exemplary fan including four blades and arranged about a cylindrical and solid hub.

[0051] While the present invention has been described with reference to exemplary embodiments, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes may be made and equivalents may be substituted for elements or steps thereof without departing from the true spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, methods of design may be applied to methods of manufacture.

CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for axial fan design, the method comprising:
 - drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface;
 - offsetting the blade surface by a constant amount;
 - filling the blade surface to form a single blade;
 - orienting the single blade with respect to a hub;
 - patterning the single blade with a total number of blades to be affixed to the hub around the hub; and
 - attaching the single blade and the remaining blades from the total number of blades to the hub.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of points are connected in increasing radius order.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising extending the blade surface at an edge to achieve a desired dimension.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising trimming the blade surface at an edge to achieve a desired dimension.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the single blade includes rotating the blade surface about an axis to change a pitch angle.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the single blade includes rotating the blade surface about an axis to change a dihedral angle.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein orienting the single blade includes rotating the blade surface about an axis to change a sweep angle.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the attachment is temporary.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the attachment is permanent.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein a portion of the blade surface conforms to a logarithmic spiral, the radius of the logarithmic spiral unfolding at a constant order of growth when measured at equiangular radii.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein a portion of the blade surface conforms to an internal or external shell configuration from the phylum Mollusca and classes Gastropoda or Cephalopoda.

12. A fan apparatus, comprising:
 - a hub; and
 - a blade coupled to the hub, the blade including a blade surface, wherein the blade surface is designed by drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch and the blade is designed by offsetting the blade surface by a constant amount and filling the blade surface to form a single blade.
13. The fan apparatus of claim 12, wherein the plurality of points are connected in increasing radius order.
14. The fan apparatus of claim 12, wherein the blade surface has been extended at an edge to achieve a desired dimension.
15. The fan apparatus of claim 12, wherein the blade surface has been rotated about an axis with respect to the orientation of the blade surface to the hub.
16. The fan apparatus of claim 15, wherein the rotation about the axis changes a pitch angle, dihedral angle, or sweep angle.

17. A method for axial fan design, the method comprising:
 - drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface;
 - creating a complimentary airfoil shape;
 - lofting the airfoil shape into a solid;
 - orienting the solidified blade with respect to a hub;
 - patterning the solidified blade with a total number of blades to be affixed to the hub around the hub; and
 - attaching the solidified blade and the remaining blades from the total number of blades to the hub.
18. The method of 17, further comprising altering a leading edge or trailing edge bluntness of the blade surface.
19. The method of claim 17, wherein the airfoil shape is created on a first side of the blade surface.
20. The method of claim 17, wherein the airfoil shape is created on the second side of the blade surface.
21. The method of claim 17, wherein the airfoil blade is partially based on the surface.
22. The method of claim 17, wherein the airfoil blade is fully based on the surface.

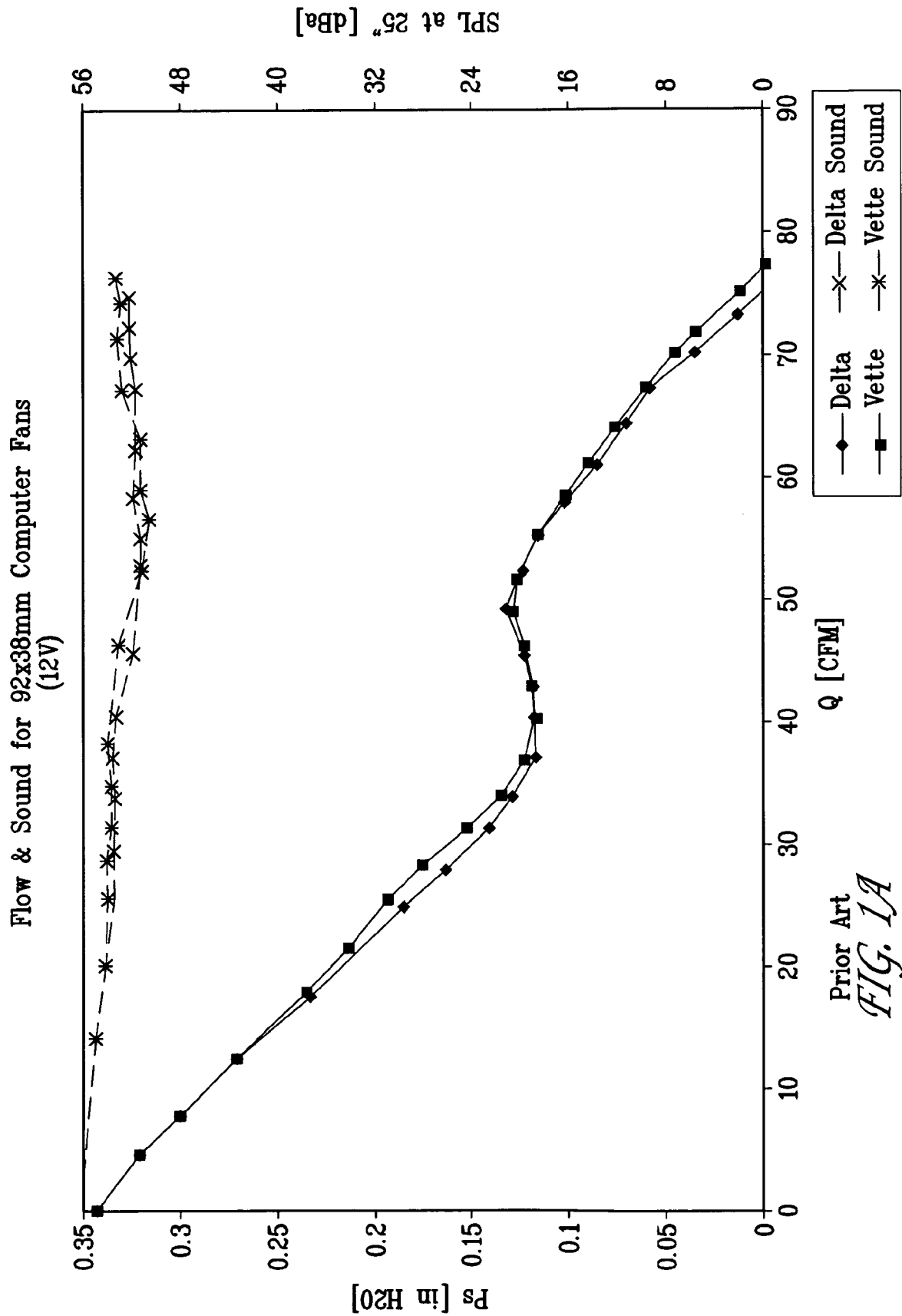
23. A computer-readable storage medium having embodied thereon a program, the program being executable by a processor to perform a method for axial fan design, the method comprising:

- drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface;
- offsetting the blade surface by a constant amount;
- filling the blade surface to form a single blade;
- orienting the single blade with respect to a hub;
- patterning the single blade with a total number of blades to be affixed to the hub around the hub; and
- displaying the single blade and the remaining blades from the total number of blades as being attached to the hub.

24. A computer-readable storage medium having embodied thereon a program, the program being executable by a processor to perform a method for axial fan design, the method comprising:

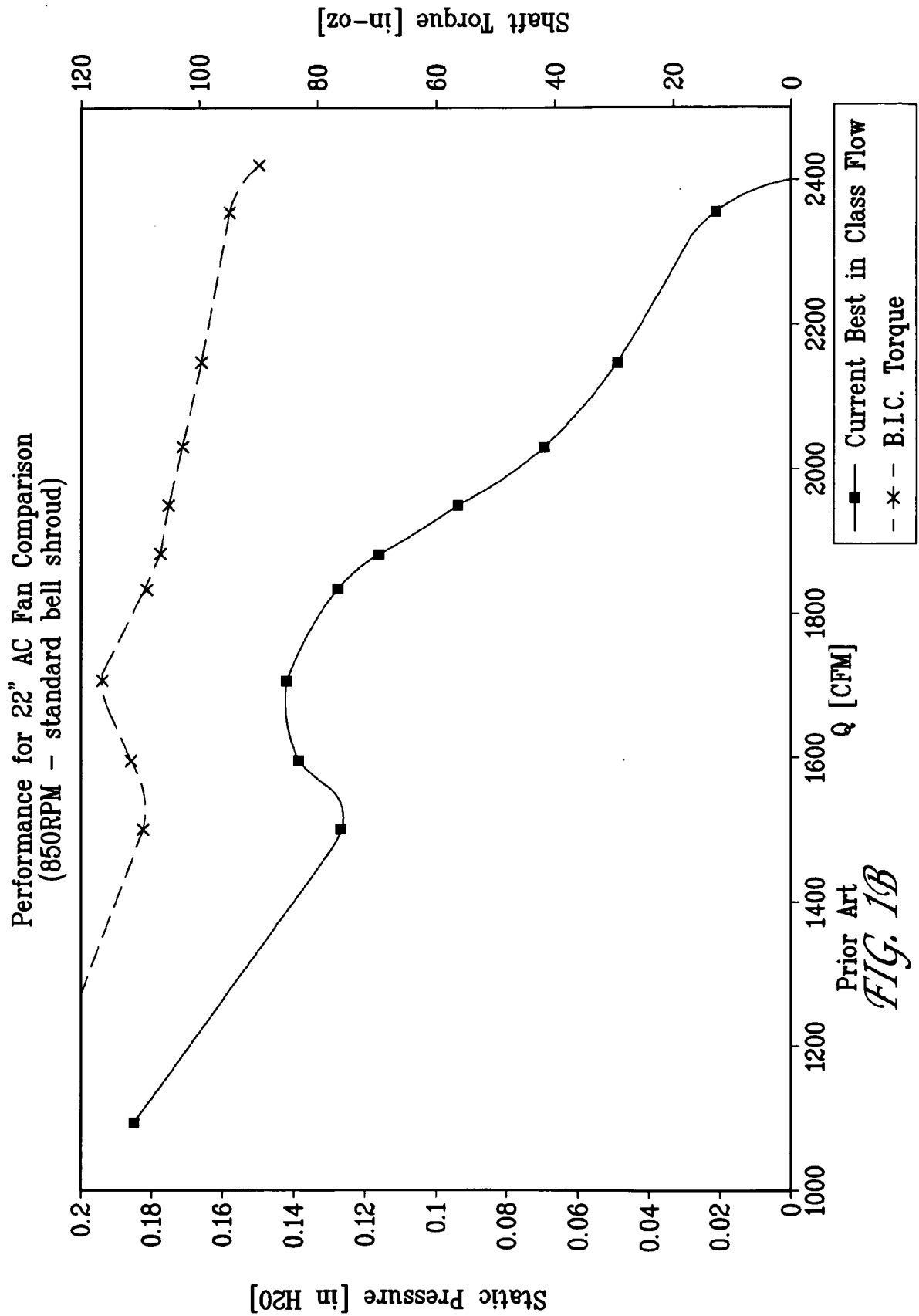
- drafting a spline to connect a plurality of points along a radius cut sketch to form a blade surface;
- creating a complimentary airfoil shape;
- lofting the airfoil shape into a solid blade;
- orienting the solidified blade with respect to a hub;
- patterning the solidified blade with a total number of blades to be affixed to the hub around the hub; and
- displaying the solidified blade and the remaining blades from the total number of blades as being attached to the hub.

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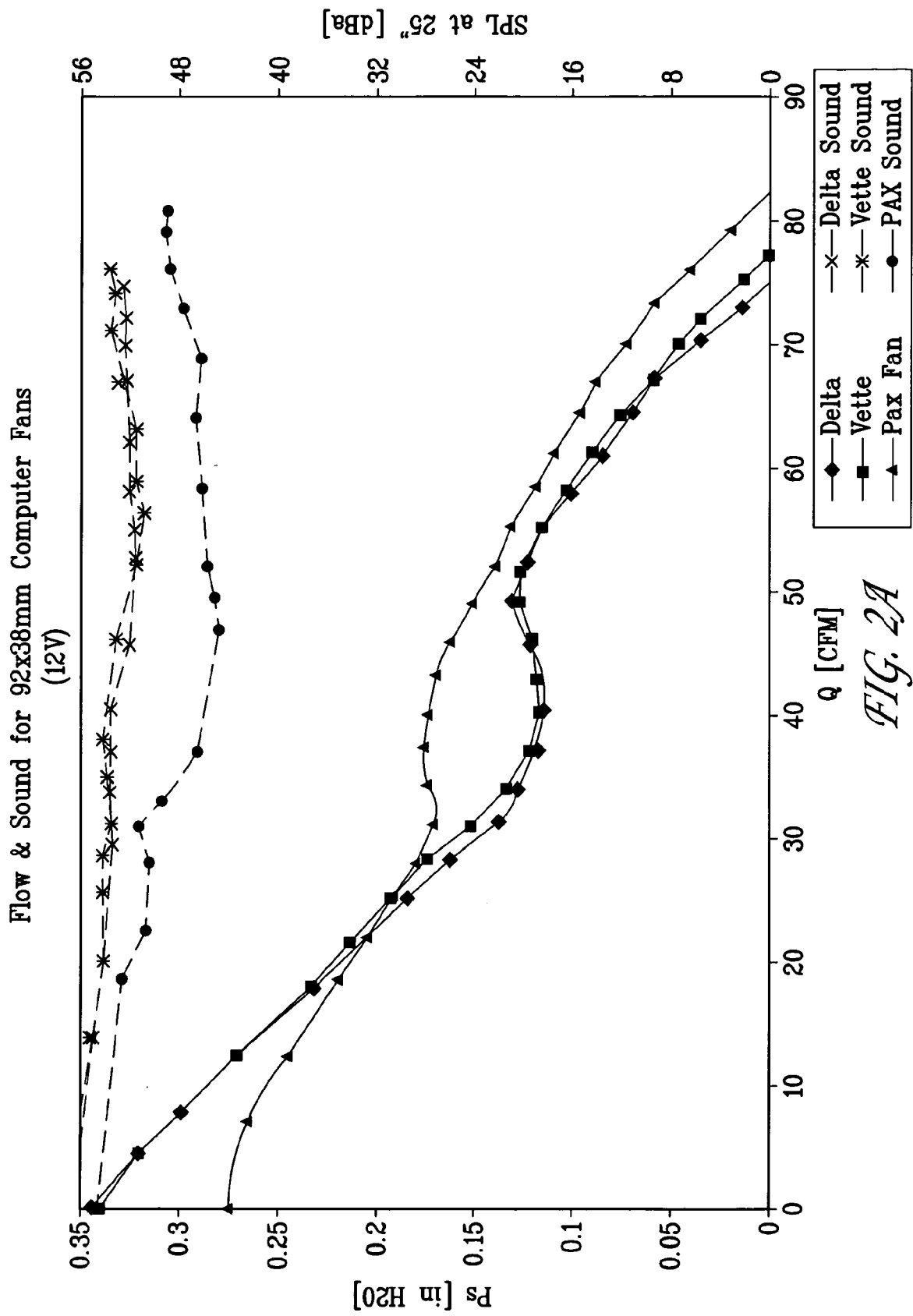
Prior Art
FIG. 1A

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Prior Art
FIG. 1B

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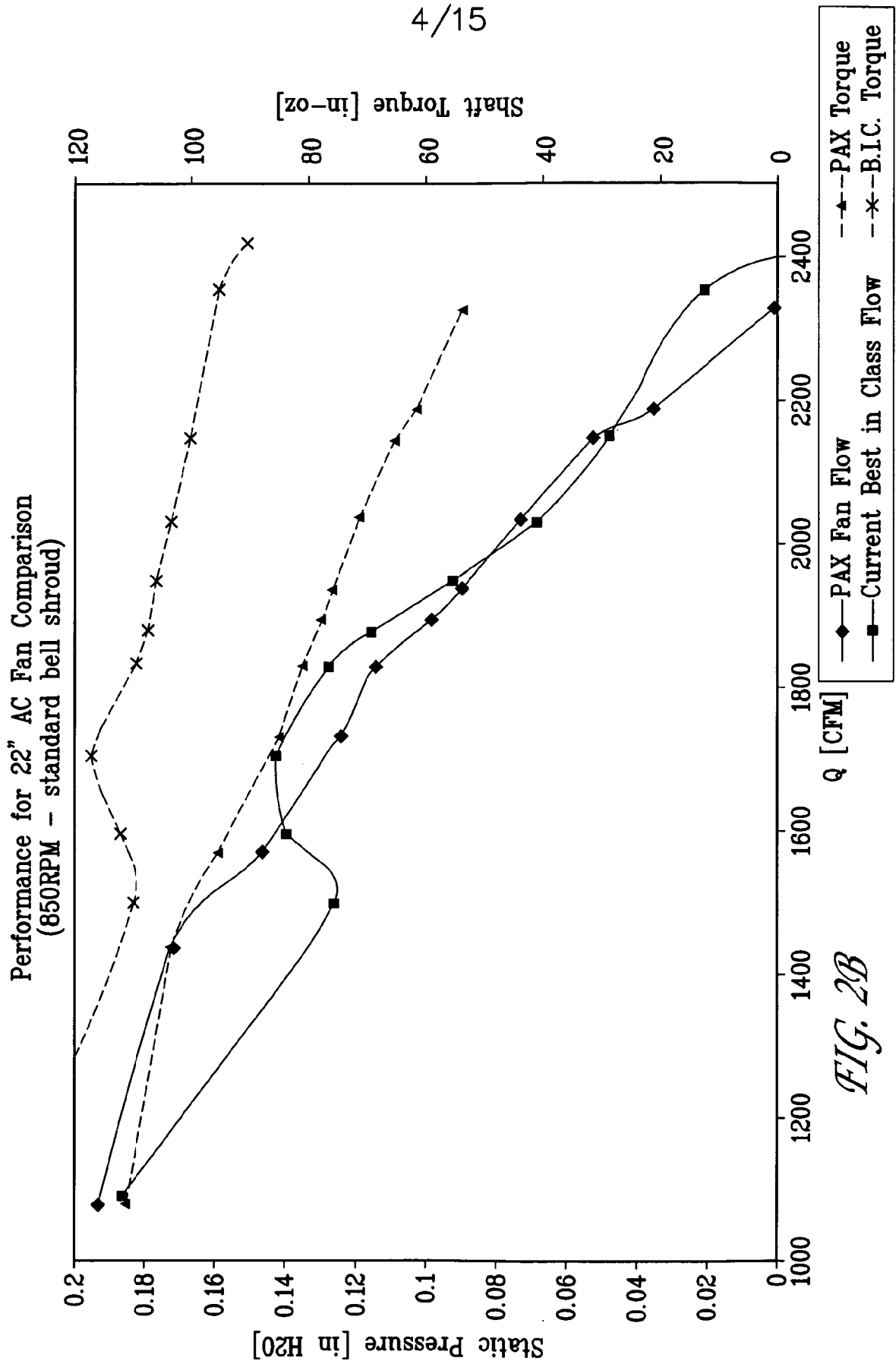


FIG. 2B

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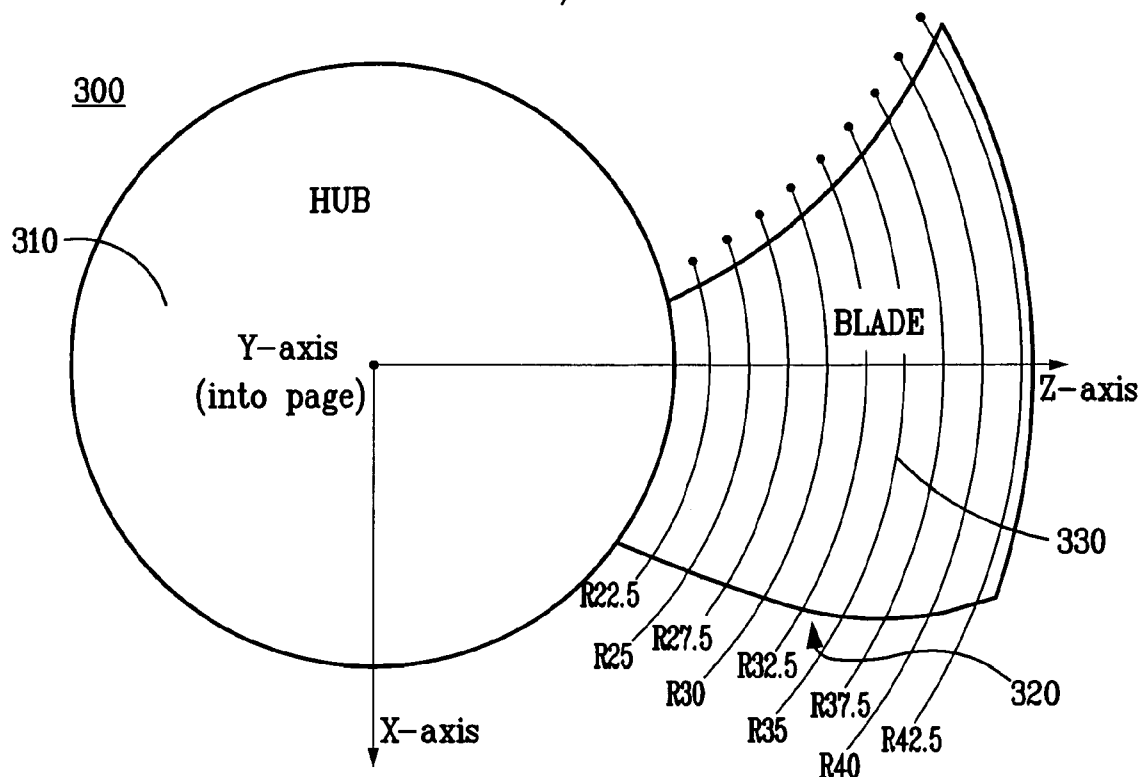


FIG. 3

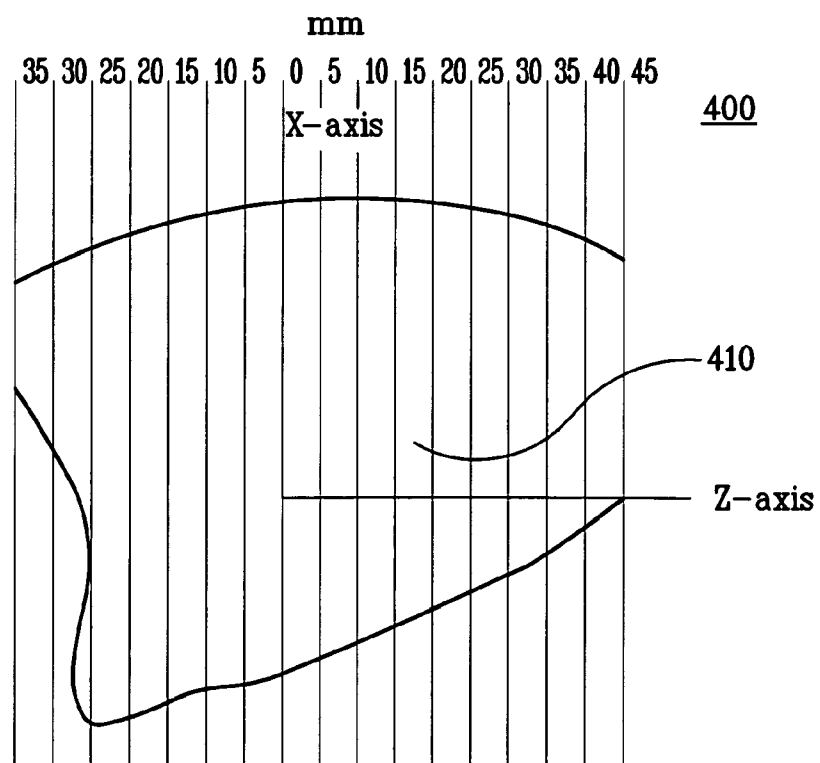
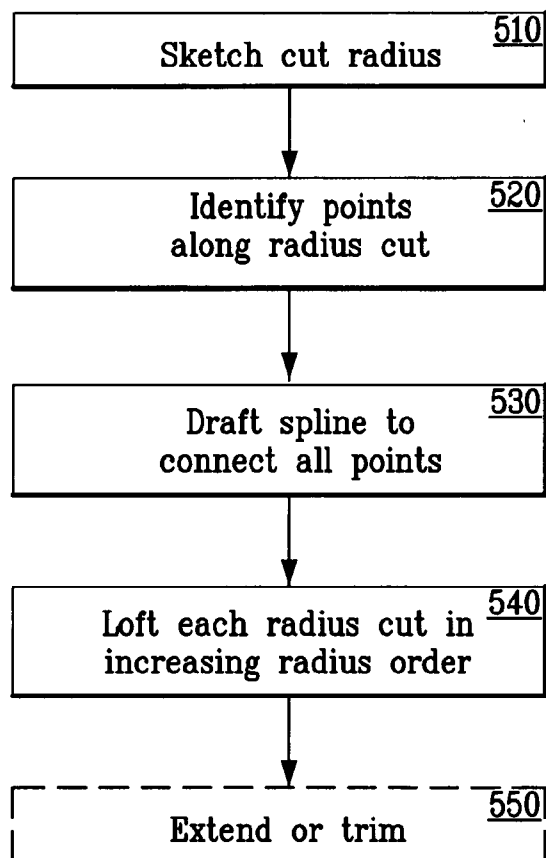


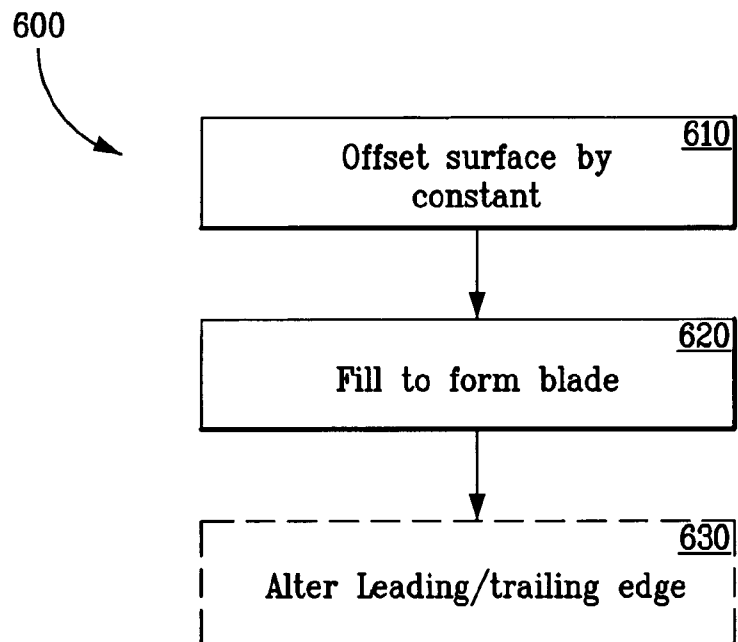
FIG. 4

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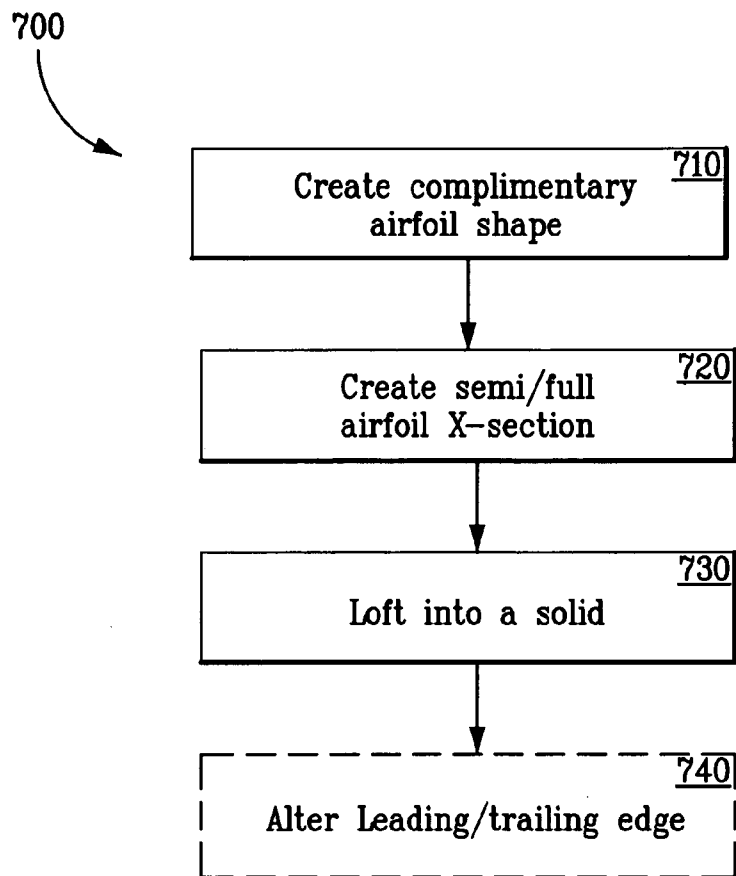
500

*FIG. 5*

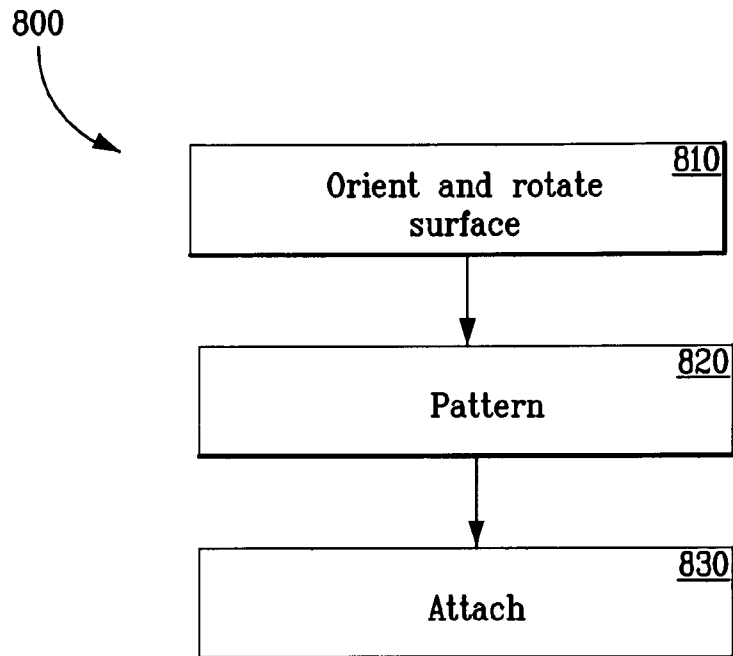
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*FIG. 6*

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*FIG. 7*

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*FIG. 8*

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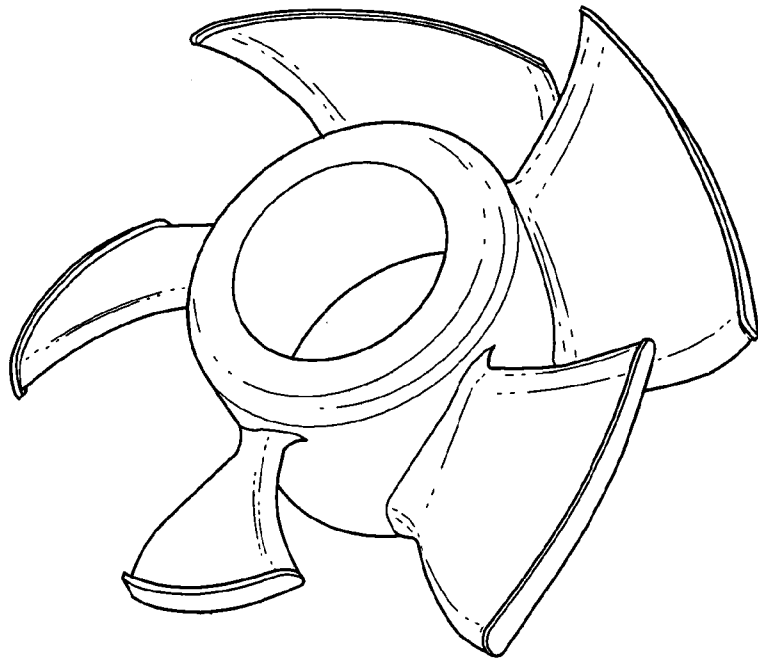


FIG. 9A

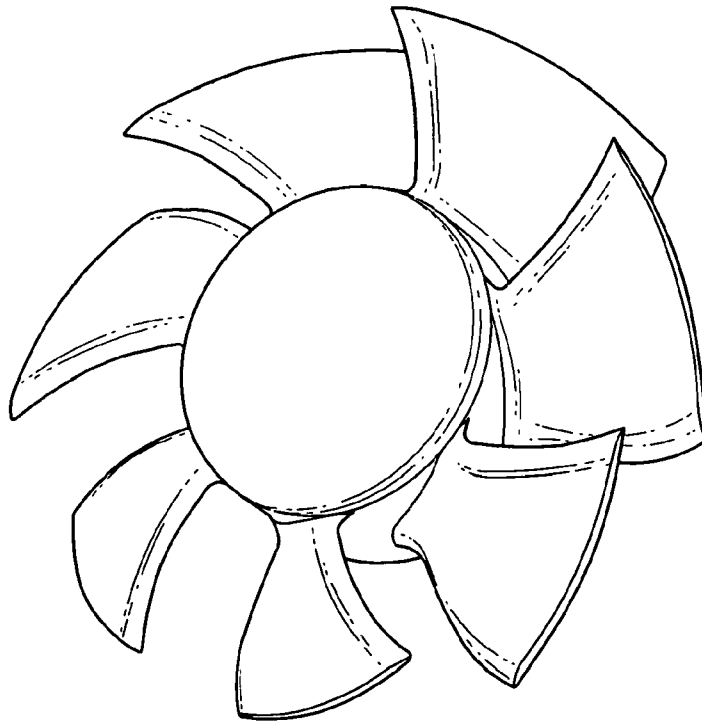


FIG. 9B

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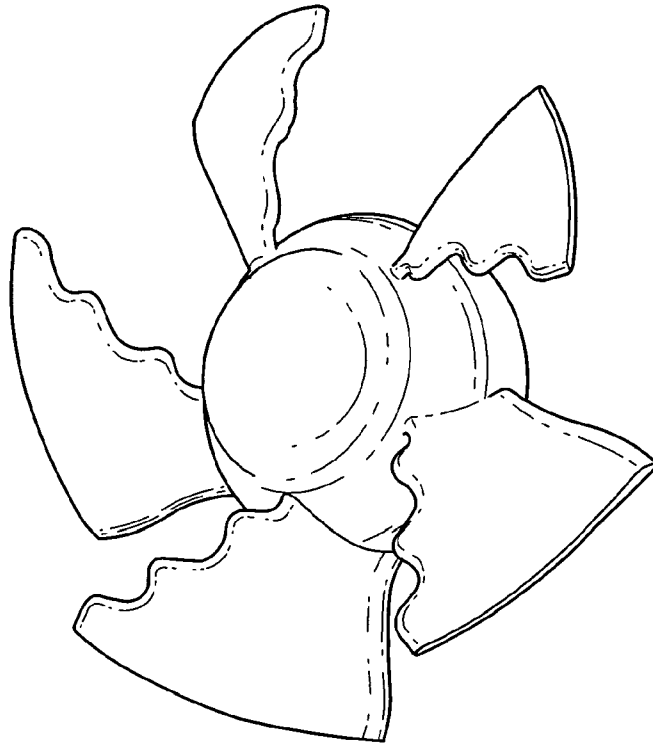


FIG. 9C

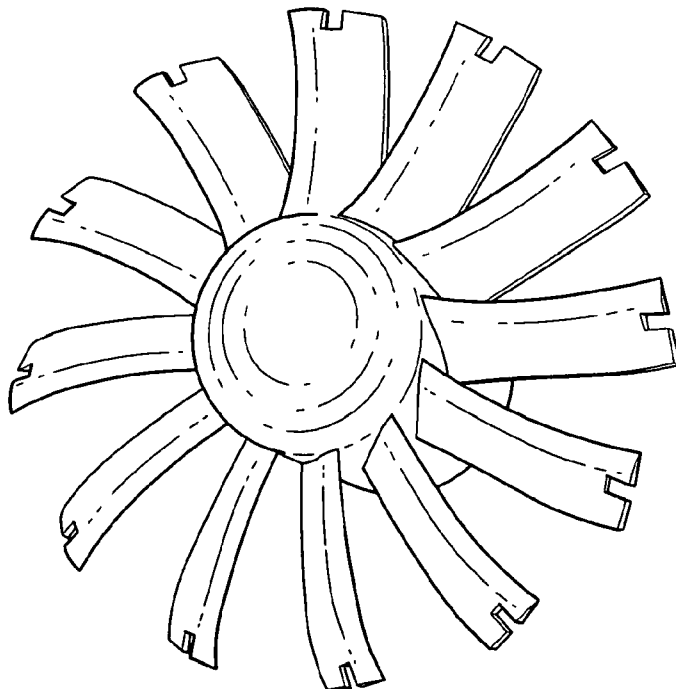


FIG. 9D

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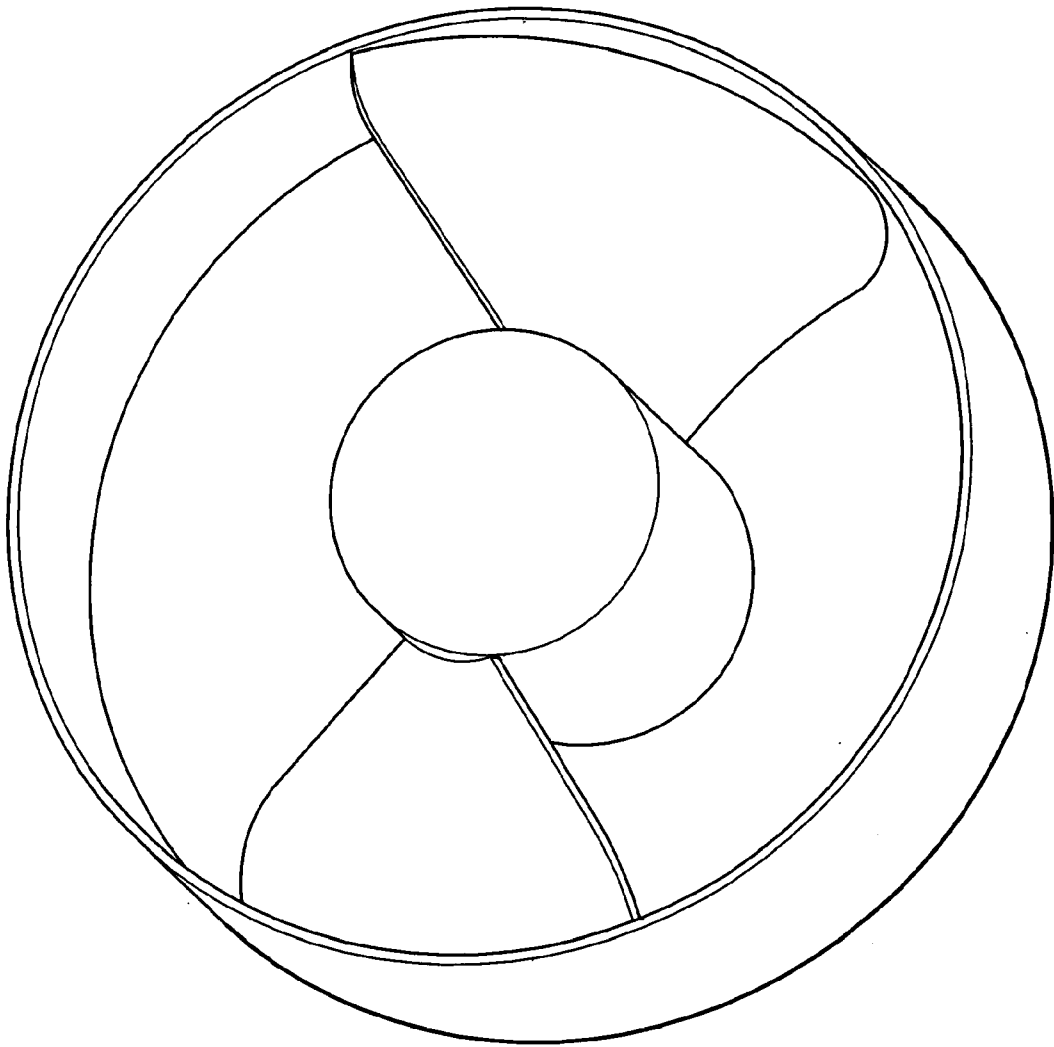


FIG. 9E

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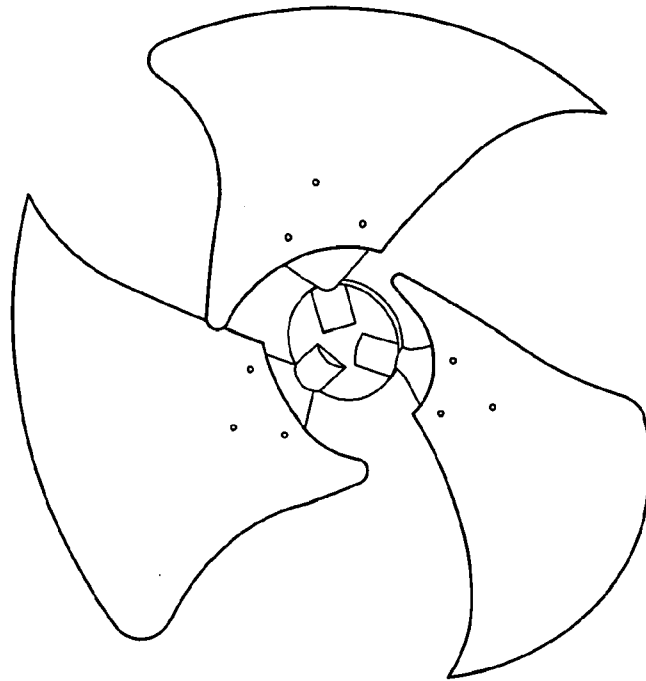


FIG. 10A

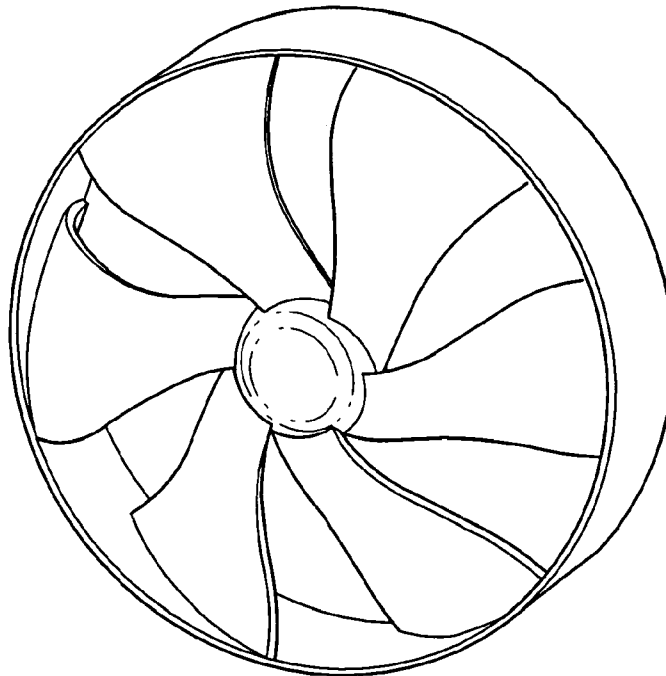


FIG. 10B

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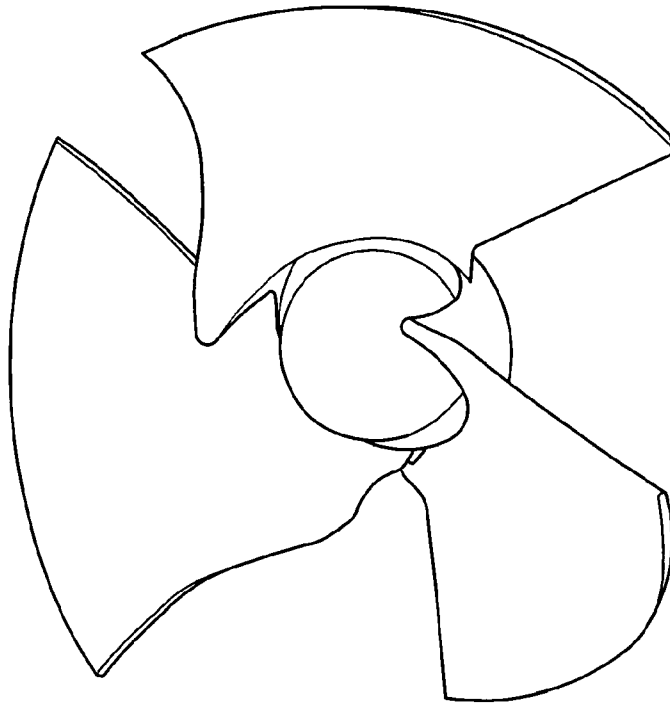


FIG. 10C

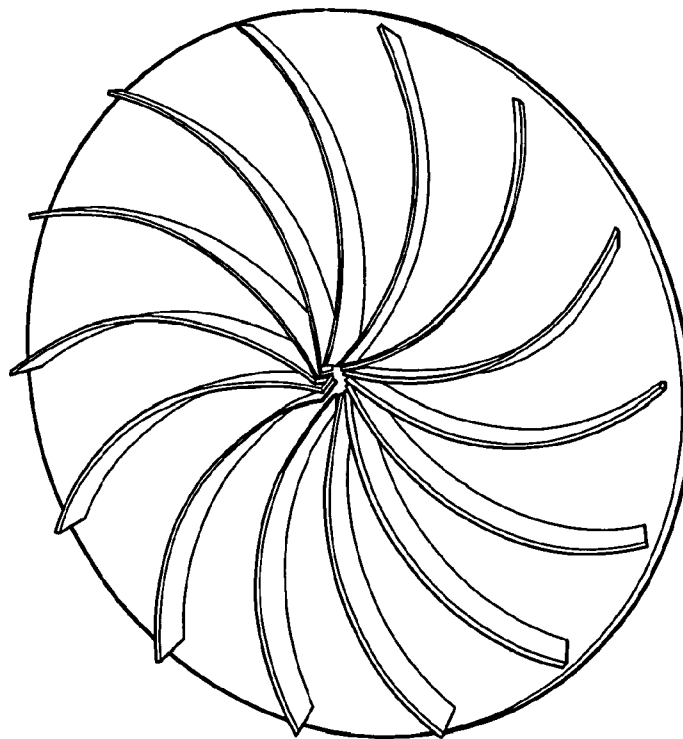


FIG. 10D

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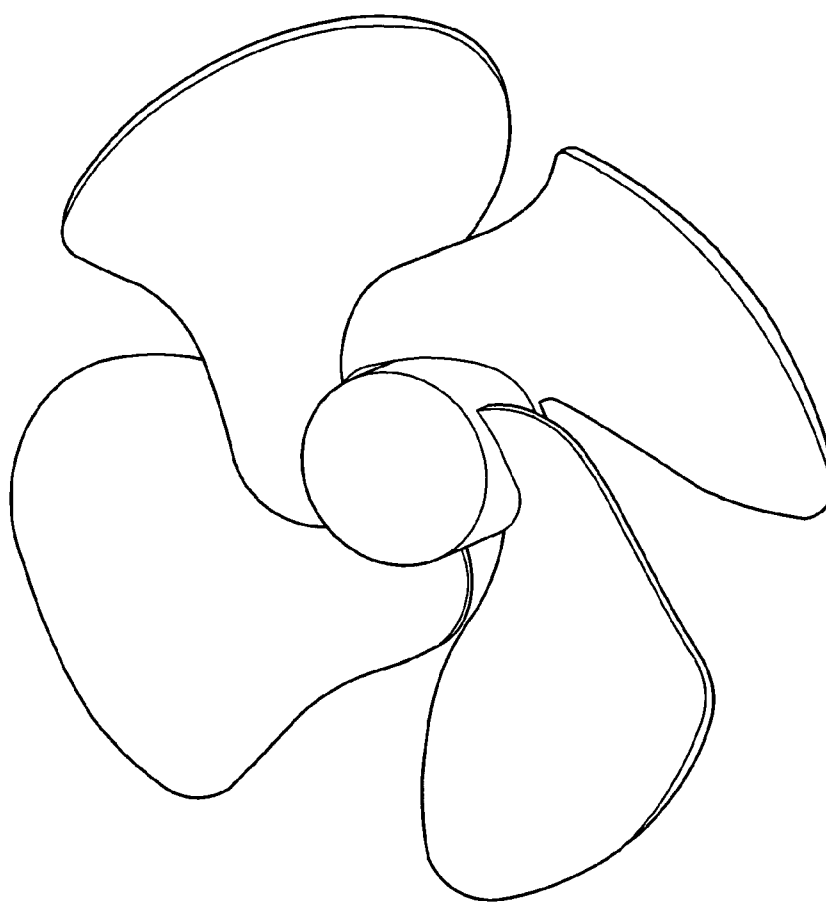


FIG. 10E