The absorptive ring cavity: Dynamics & patterns beyond the mean-field limit

Readman, SL, Christian, JM, Bostock, C and McDonald, GS

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The absorptive ring cavity: dynamics & patterns beyond the mean-field limit

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An optical ring cavity filled with an absorptive material is a fundamental spontaneous pattern-forming system [1]. Analyses of Turing bifurcations in these (uni-directional) cavity configurations [see Fig. 1(a)] can be simplified by deploying the thin-slice limit, wherein the host nonlinear medium (typically of the Maxwell-Bloch type) has a near-negligible thickness [2]. Our most recent research has investigated the emergence of spontaneous simple [see Fig. 1(b)] and fractal patterns (which are defined by the presence of a single dominant scale length and multiple scale lengths of proportional amplitude, respectively) in absorptive thin-slice cavities [3]. Extensive simulations have demonstrated that the plane-wave limit of our model (where transverse effects are neglected) tends to be stable and well behaved: the cavity dynamics lack the Ikeda-type instabilities that can dominate purely-dispersive systems [4]. We have also started to generalize earlier analyses [3] by accommodating a finite light-medium interaction length. Such considerations will, potentially, facilitate the description of fully-nonparaxial fractal light patterns in bulk-medium geometries [5].

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** (a) A typical multi-Turing threshold spectrum for an absorptive ring cavity containing a thin slice of saturable absorber material [3]. (b) Simulation showing the spontaneous emergence of a spatial pattern whose most-unstable wavelength is $\lambda_0 = 2\pi/K_0$, where $K_0$ corresponds to the minimum of the first instability lobe [see part (a)].

**References**