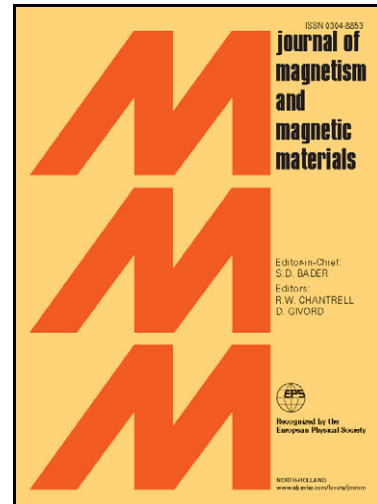


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Emil Petrescu, Rodica Eleonora Bena, Cristina Ci\u0159widehatrtoaje



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Polarization gratings using ferronematics - an elastic continuum theory

Emil Petrescu, Rodica Eleonora Bena and Cristina Cîrtoaje

*University "Politehnica", Department of Physics, Splaiul Independentei 313,
060042, Bucharest, Romania, telephone: (40) 021 4103603, e-mail:
cristina_cirtoaje@yahoo.com*

Abstract

In our paper we apply the elastic continuum theory in order to describe the working of a polarization grating device based on the ferronematic liquid crystal and driven by magnetical field. Solving the Euler-Lagrange equations we obtain analytical expressions for the critical thickness and threshold magnetic field in strong and weak anchoring conditions. We discuss the influence of the ferroparticle presence and properties on the behavior of a device based on the ferronematic liquid crystal polarization gratings. We study also the dynamic behavior of this kind of device and we find the expression for switching *on* and *off* times. Our study may be useful in designing magneto-optical devices which include nanoparticles or microprocessed surfaces.

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Key words: polarisation gratings, ferronematics, critical thickness, threshold field.

1 Introduction

Liquid crystal gratings are optical elements characterized by periodic, spatially-varying, optically-anisotropic profiles, whose diffractive properties are useful in many optoelectronic devices such as displays, light modulators, optical storage devices and polarized beam splitters [1], [2], [3].

Liquid crystal polarization gratings (LCPGs) use liquid crystals as orientationally anisotropic media in which the eigenvectors of the dielectric tensor vary along the path of the light. Consequently, the polarization vector of the light emerging from the gratings can be changed periodically on the surface of the device. Liquid crystals are one of the best media for making polarization gratings because they are composed of highly anisotropic molecules

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