Experimental realization and characterization of an optomechanical isolator

F. Ruesink\(^1\), M.A. Miri\(^2\), A. Alu\(^2\) & E. Verhagen\(^1\)

\(^1\) FOM Institute AMOLF, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
\(^2\) The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, United States

Lorentz reciprocity is one of the fundamental principles in optics and photonics, governing the behaviour of the vast majority of photonic systems. Breaking it is a prerequisite for effective optical isolation, as well as the creation of photonic topological insulators. Current implementations achieve such non-reciprocity using bulky Faraday-rotators, correspondingly limiting their use in small scale devices. Here we present experimental results that show how the toolbox of cavity optomechanics\(^1\) can be used to achieve optomechanically induced non-reciprocity\(^2\). We study optomechanically induced non-reciprocity of a probe laser that passes through a minimal system based on a whispering gallery resonator, where the strength and nature of the non-reciprocal light transmission can be adjusted via the detuning and optical power of an optical control beam. Our results show the successful experimental implementation and full-characterization of a non-reciprocal optical device, which, by precise adjustment of the detuning of the control beam allows for optical isolation as well as non-reciprocal amplification of light.

![Optical power transmission](image)

Left : Optical power transmission when a (blue-detuned) control and probe beam co-propagate (blue) or counter-propagate (orange). It is clearly visible that co-propagating control and probe beams yield amplification of the probe power, while in the counter propagating situation amplification is absent. Right : Quantifying the resulting non-reciprocal optical power transmission, showing an asymmetry in transmission which exceeds 20 dB.

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2. Hafezi, M. Rabl, P. Optomechanically induced non-reciprocity in microring resonators, Opt. Express 20, 7672-7684