# **Integral Materials Modeling**

Towards Physics-Based Through-Process Models

Edited by Günter Gottstein



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#### Prof. Dr. Günter Gottstein

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### Contents

List of Contributors XV

1 Introduction 1 G. Gottstein

2 Integral Materials Modeling 5

G. Gottstein

Abstract 5

- 2.1 Introduction 5
- 2.2 The Collaborative Research Center on "Integral Materials Modeling" 9

v

- 2.3 Through-Process Modeling 12
- 2.4 Outlook 13 References 15

#### 3 Aluminum Through-Process Modeling: From Casting to Cup Drawing (TP C6) 17

L. Neumann, R. Kopp, G. Hirt, E. Jannot, G. Gottstein, B. Hallstedt, J. M. Schneider, B. Pustal, and A. Bührig-Polaczek

- 3.1 Introduction 17
- 3.2 Casting and Solidification 18
- 3.2.1 The Casting Alloys 18
- 3.2.1.1 Casting 18
- 3.2.2 Simulation of the Casting Process 19
- 3.2.2.1 Thermodynamic Description of the Model Alloy 19
- 3.2.2.2 Simulation of Grain Nucleation and Growth Using a Multiphase Flow and Solidification Model 20
- 3.2.2.3 Simulation of Phase Fractions, Dendrite Arm Spacing, and Concentration Profiles Using a Microsegregation Model 21
- 3.3 Homogenization 23
- 3.3.1 Homogenization of Alloy AA3104 23
- 3.3.2 Simulation Methods 25

- /I Contents
  - 3.3.2.1 DICTRA Calculations 25
  - 3.3.2.2 ClaNG Model 26
  - 3.3.3 Experimental Procedure 26
  - 3.3.4 Comparison between Experimental and Simulation Results 26
  - 3.3.4.1 Primary Phases 26
  - 3.3.4.2 Solute Concentrations 26
  - 3.3.4.3 Dispersoid Precipitation 27
  - 3.4 Hot and Cold Rolling 28
  - 3.4.1 Flow Stress Modeling 28
  - 3.4.2 Texture Simulation 28
  - 3.4.3 Recrystallization 28
  - 3.5 Cup Drawing 29
  - 3.5.1 Anisotropy Update 29
  - 3.5.2 Results 30
  - 3.6 Conclusions and Outlook 31
    - References 32
  - From Casting to Product Properties: Modeling the Process Chain of Steels (TP C7) 33
     U. Prahl, W. Bleck, A.-P. Hollands, D. Senk, X. Li, G. Hirt, R. Kopp, V. Pavlyk, and U. Dilthey

Abstract 33

- 4.1 Introduction *33*
- 4.2 Continuous Casting Simulation 35
- 4.3 Hot Rolling Simulation 36
- 4.4 Simulation of Phase Transformation 38
- 4.4.1 Physical Modeling of Isothermal Proeutectoid Ferrite Transformation *38*
- 4.4.2 Semiempirical Modeling of Phase Transformation 39
- 4.5 Simulation of Mechanical Properties 40
- 4.6 Welding Simulation 42
- 4.7 Application 44
- 4.8 Summary 46
  - References 47

5 Status of Through-Process Simulation for Coated Gas Turbine Components (TP C8) 49

> R. Herzog, N. Warnken, I. Steinbach, B. Hallstedt, C. Walter, J. Müller, D. Hajas, E. Münstermann, J.M. Schneider, R. Nickel, D. Parkot, K. Bobzin, E. Lugscheider, P. Bednarz, O. Trunova, and L. Singheiser

- 5.1 Introduction 49
- 5.2 Solidification and Heat Treatment of the Nickel-Based Superalloy 51
- 5.3 CVD Processing of an Alumina Interdiffusion Barrier 54

- 5.4 Magnetron Sputter Process of NiCoCrAlY Corrosion-Protective Coating 55
- 5.5 Atmospheric Plasma Spraying of Ceramic TBC 56
- 5.6 Stress Response and Crack Formation at the Bond Coat/TBC Interface During Cyclic Thermal Loading 57
- 5.7 Conclusions 60 References 60

#### 6 Deformation Behavior of a Plastic Pipe Fitting (TP C9) 63

W. Michaeli, E. Schmachtenberg, M. Brinkmann, M. Bussmann, and B. Renner

Abstract 63

- 6.1 Introduction 63
- 6.2 Aims and Procedure 64
- 6.3 Calculation of Local Inner Part Properties Using Extended Process Simulation 65
- 6.3.1 Developed Software 65
- 6.3.2 Temperature Field Calculation 66
- 6.3.3 Calculation of Inner Properties 67
- 6.3.4 Procedure of Simulating Inner Properties 69
- 6.4 Integration of Inner Properties into Structural Analysis 70
- 6.5 Conclusions and Perspectives 72 References 72

#### 7 Modeling of Flow Processes During Solidification (TP A1) 75

M. Bussmann, B. Renner, W. Michaeli, B. Pustal, A. Bührig-Polaczek, V. Pavlyk, O. Mokrov, and U. Dilthey

- 7.1 Introduction 75
- 7.1.1 Aluminum Cup 76
- 7.1.2 Plastics Pipe Fitting 77
- 7.1.3 Steel Profile 77
- 7.2 Software Development 78
- 7.2.1 Aluminum Cup 78
- 7.2.2 Plastics Pipe Fitting 79
- 7.2.3 Steel Profile 80
- 7.3 Experiments and Results 80
- 7.3.1 Aluminum Cup 80
- 7.3.2 Plastics Pipe Fitting 81
- 7.3.3 Steel Profile 82
- 7.4 Discussion 83
- 7.4.1 Aluminum Cup 83
- 7.4.2 Plastics Pipe Fitting 83
- 7.4.3 Steel Profile 84 References 85

8

Microstructure Modeling During Solidification of Castings (TP A2) 87

B. Pustal, A. Bührig-Polaczek, N. Warnken, I. Steinbach, M. Bussmann,

B. Renner, W. Michaeli, A.-P. Hollands, D. Senk, C. Walter,

B. Hallstedt, and J. M. Schneider

Abstract 87

- 8.1 Introduction 87
- 8.2 Experiments 88
- 8.2.1 Turbine Blade 88
- 8.2.2 Aluminum Cup 89
- 8.2.3 Plastics Pipe Fitting 90
- 8.2.4 Steel Profile 91
- 8.3 Models 92
- 8.3.1 Turbine Blade 92
- 8.3.2 Aluminum Cup 92
- 8.3.3 Plastics Pipe Fitting 92
- 8.3.4 Steel Profile 93
- 8.4 Simulations and Results 94
- 8.4.1 Turbine Blade 94
- 8.4.2 Aluminum Cup 95
- 8.4.3 Plastics Pipe Fitting 96
- 8.4.4 Steel Profile 97
- 8.5 Summary 98
- 8.5.1 Turbine Blade 98
- 8.5.2 Aluminum Cup 99
- 8.5.3 Plastics Pipe Fitting 99
- 8.5.4 Steel Profile 99 References 100

## 9 Coating of Turbine Blades (TP A3) 103

B. Hallstedt, J. Müller, D. Hajas, E. Münstermann, J.M. Schneider, R. Nickel, D. Parkot, K. Bobzin, and E. Lugscheider

- 9.1 Introduction 103
- 9.2 Modeling and Simulation of Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> Chemical Vapor Deposition 103
- 9.3 Modeling and Simulation of the Magnetron Sputter Process 107
- 9.4 Modeling and Simulation of Atmospheric Plasma Spraying and Thermal Barrier Coating Characterization *110*
- 9.4.1 Plasma Torch/Plasma Free Jet Simulation 110
- 9.4.2 Powder Particles Characteristics 112
- 9.4.3 Coating Formation Simulation 113
- 9.4.4 APS Coating Properties/Homogenization Methods 119 References 122

#### 10 Hot and Cold Rolling of Aluminum Sheet (TP B1) 125

L. Neumann, R. Kopp, G. Hirt, M. Crumbach, C. Schäfer, V. Mohles, and G. Gottstein

Abstract 125

- 10.1 Introduction 125
- 10.2 Hot and Cold Rolling of Aluminum 126
- 10.2.1 Three-Internal-Variable Model (3IVM) 126
- 10.2.2 Full Constraints Taylor Texture Model 127
- 10.2.3 Grain Interaction Texture (GIA) Model 128
- 10.2.4 Recrystallization Nucleation (ReNuc) 128
- Statistical Recrystallization Texture Model (StaRT) 10.2.5 129
- 10.2.6 Coupling GIA and 3IVM 129
- 10.2.7 Through-Process Model (TPM) 129
- Texture Predictions 130 10.2.8
- 10.2.9 Hot Rolling 131
- 10.2.10 Cold Rolling 131
- Database "StoRaDat" and Interfaces 10.3 133
- 10.4 Conclusions and Outlook 136 References 136

#### 11 Modeling of the Hot Rolling Process of a C45 Steel (TP B1) 139

X. Li, R. Kopp, G. Hirt, B. Zeislmair, and W. Bleck

Abstract 139

- Introduction 139 11.1
- 11.2 Experimental Procedure 140
- Casting and Rolling in One Heat 140 11.2.1
- 11.2.2 Determination of Flow Curves 141
- 11.3 Modeling of the Hot Rolling Process 142
- 11.3.1 Phenomenological Modeling of the Grain Size Development During Hot Rolling 142
- Modeling Precipitation During Hot Rolling 143 11.3.2
- 11.3.3 Microstructure Simulation of the Hot Rolling Process 144
- 11.4 Summary 147 References 148

#### 12 Simulation of Phase Changes During Thermal Treatments of Various Metal Alloys (TP B2) 149

M. Schneider, E. Jannot, V. Mohles, G. Gottstein, C. Walter, B. Hallstedt, J. M. Schneider, N. Warnken, I. Steinbach, F. Gerdemann, U. Prahl, and W. Bleck

Abstract 149

12.1 Introduction 149

**X** Contents

12.2	Aluminum Sheet AA3104: Precipitation Kinetics and Solute Distribution During Homogenization 150			
12.2.1	Challenge 150			
12.2.2	DICTRA Calculations 151			
12.2.3	Statistical Precipitation Model: ClaNG 151			
12.2.4	Evolution of the Primary Phases 152			
12.2.5	Precipitation of Dispersoids 153			
12.2.6	Conclusion on Al Sheet AA3104 153			
12.3	Turbine Blades: Ni-Base Superalloys 154			
12.3.1	Challenge 154			
12.3.2	Simulation Models and Experiments 154			
12.3.3	Results 155			
12.4	C45 and S460 Steel: Isothermal Phase Transformation and Austenite Conditioning 157			
12.4.1	Challenge 157			
12.4.2	Simulation Models and Experiments 157			
12.4.3	Results 158			
	References 159			
13	Deep Drawing Properties of Aluminum Sheet (TP C6) 161			
	L. Neumann, R. Kopp, G. Hirt, M. Crumbach, and G. Gottstein			
	Abstract 161			
13.1	Introduction 161			
13.1 13.2	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 References 167			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b>	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i>			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 14	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b>	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> 14.1 14.2	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 14.1 14.2 14.3	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170 Finite Element Simulation 172			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> 14.1 14.2 14.3 14.3	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170 Finite Element Simulation 172 Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> 14.1 14.2 14.3 14.3.1 14.3.2	<ul> <li>Introduction 161</li> <li>Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163</li> <li>Update of the Yield Locus 164</li> <li>Results and Discussion 165</li> <li>Conclusions and Outlook 167</li> <li><i>References</i> 167</li> <li>Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169</li> <li><i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i></li> <li>Abstract 169</li> <li>Introduction 169</li> <li>Experimental 170</li> <li>Finite Element Simulation 172</li> <li>Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172</li> <li>Material Data and Bond Coat Oxidation 172</li> </ul>			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> .1 14.2 14.3 14.3.1 14.3.2 14.3.3	<ul> <li>Introduction 161</li> <li>Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163</li> <li>Update of the Yield Locus 164</li> <li>Results and Discussion 165</li> <li>Conclusions and Outlook 167</li> <li><i>References</i> 167</li> <li>Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169</li> <li><i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i></li> <li>Abstract 169</li> <li>Introduction 169</li> <li>Experimental 170</li> <li>Finite Element Simulation 172</li> <li>Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172</li> <li>Material Data and Bond Coat Oxidation 172</li> <li>Load Parameters 173</li> </ul>			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b>	<ul> <li>Introduction 161</li> <li>Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162</li> <li>Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163</li> <li>Update of the Yield Locus 164</li> <li>Results and Discussion 165</li> <li>Conclusions and Outlook 167</li> <li>References 167</li> </ul> Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170 Finite Element Simulation 172 Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172 Material Data and Bond Coat Oxidation 172 Load Parameters 173 Simulated Stress Response 174			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> <b>14</b> 14.2 14.3 14.3.1 14.3.2 14.3.3 14.3.4 14.4	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170 Finite Element Simulation 172 Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172 Material Data and Bond Coat Oxidation 172 Load Parameters 173 Simulated Stress Response 174 Conclusions 178			
13.1 13.2 13.2.1 13.2.2 13.2.3 13.3 13.4 <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> <b>14</b> 14.3 14.3.1 14.3.2 14.3.3 14.3.4 14.4	Introduction 161 Modeling Setup for Prediction of Texture-Induced Anisotropy 162 Interfacing Texture to Plastic Anisotropy 162 Orthotropic Viscous Flow Approach 163 Update of the Yield Locus 164 Results and Discussion 165 Conclusions and Outlook 167 <i>References</i> 167 Simulation of Stress Response to Cyclic Thermal Loading in Thermal Barrier Composites for Gas Turbines (TP C8) 169 <i>R. Herzog, P. Bednarz, E. Trunova, and L. Singheiser</i> Abstract 169 Introduction 169 Experimental 170 Finite Element Simulation 172 Mesh and Boundary Conditions 172 Material Data and Bond Coat Oxidation 172 Load Parameters 173 Simulated Stress Response 174 Conclusions 178 <i>Peferences</i> 179			

#### 15 Through-Process Multiscale Models for the Prediction of Recrystallization Textures 181

D. Raabe

Abstract 181

- 15.1 Introduction to Recrystallization Models for Process Simulation 181
- 15.2 Models for Predicting Recrystallization Textures with Discretization of Space and Time *183*
- 15.2.1 Introduction 183
- 15.2.2 Cellular Automaton Models of Recrystallization 183
- 15.2.3 Potts Monte Carlo Models of Recrystallization 189
- 15.3 Statistical Models for Predicting Recrystallization Textures 191
- 15.3.1 The Sebald–Gottstein Model 191
- 15.3.2 A New Texture Component-Based Avrami Model 192
- 15.4 Input to Recrystallization Models for Texture Prediction 194
- 15.4.1 Incorporation of Stored Deformation Energy into Recrystallization Models 194
- 15.4.2 Grain Boundary Input Parameters into Recrystallization Models for Texture Prediction 195 *References* 195

#### 16 Analytic Interatomic Potentials for Atomic-Scale Simulations of Metals and Metal Compounds: A Brief Overview 197 K. Albe, P. Erhart, and M. Müller

Abstract 197

- 16.1 Introduction 197
- 16.2 Overview of Established Potential Schemes 198
- 16.3 Analytic Bond-Order Potentials (BOP) 202
- 16.4 Concluding Remarks 204 References 205
- **17** Selected Problems of Phase-Field Modeling in Materials Science 207 H. Emmerich and R. Siquieri

- 17.1 Introduction to Phase-Field Modeling in Materials Science 207
- 17.2 Overview on Recent Issues in the Further Development of Phase-Field Modeling 209
- 17.2.1 Evolution of Nanostructures in Condensed Matter Systems 210
- 17.2.2 Dynamics in Soft-Matter Systems at the Micro- and Nanoscale 210
- 17.3 "Quantitative Phase-Field Simulations" of Nucleation and Growth in Peritectic Material Systems 211
- 17.3.1 A Quantitative Phase-Field Model for Peritectic Growth Taking Into Account Hydrodynamic Convection in the Molten Phase 213

XII Contents

17.3.2	Investigating Heterogeneous	Nucleation in	n Peritectic	Materials
	via the Phase-Field Method	215		

17.4 Conclusions and Outlook 217 References 217

 Prediction of Microstructure and Microporosity Development in Aluminum Gravity Casting Processes 219
 M. Schneider, W. Schaefer, G. Mazourkevitch, M. Wessén, I.L. Svensson, S. Seifeddine, J. Olsson, C. Beckermann, and K. Carlson

Abstract 219

- 18.1 Introduction 219
- 18.2 Microstructure Modeling 220
- 18.3 Microporosity Modeling 222
- 18.4 Results and Discussion 225
- 18.4.1 Microstructure and Properties 225
- 18.4.2 Microporosity 228
- 18.5 Conclusions 230 References 231

#### 19 Enhanced 3D Injection Molding Simulation by Implementing Applied Crystallization Models 233 M. Thornagel

Abstract 233

#### 19.1 Introduction 233

- 19.2 Current Situation and Motivation 234
- 19.3 Implementation of Crystallization Models Into 3D-SIGMA 236
- 19.4 Crystallization Results: Parameter Study 238
- 19.5 Conclusions 242 References 242
- **20** Modeling Shearing of  $\gamma'$  in Ni-Based Superalloys 243 C. Shen, J. Li, M.J. Mills, and Y. Wang

Abstract 243

- 20.1 Introduction 243
- 20.2 Method 244
- 20.2.1 Dislocation and Stacking Fault Modeling 244
- 20.2.2 Calculation of Activation Energy 245
- 20.3 Results 246
- 20.3.1 Nucleation of SISF from APB 246
- 20.3.2 Nucleation of SESF from CSF 249
- 20.4 Summary 251

References 251

21 Minimal Free Energy Density of Annealed Polycrystals 253 M. E. Glicksman and P. R. Rios

Abstract 253

21.1 Introduction 253

- 21.2 Construction and Properties of ANHs 255
- 21.3 Assessing Network Partitioning: Isoperimetric Quotient and Dimensionless Energy Cost 258
- 21.4 Conclusions 262 References 263
- 22 Modeling Dynamic Grain Growth and its Consequences 265 P. S. Bate

Abstract 265

22.1 Introduction 265

- 22.2 Mechanical Behavior in Superplasticity 266
- 22.3 Dynamic Grain Growth 268
- 22.4 Microstructural Modeling of Dynamic Grain Growth 270
- 22.5 Conclusion 272 References 274
- 23 Modeling of Severe Plastic Deformation: Evolution of Microstructure, Texture, and Strength 275 Y. Estrin

Abstract 275

- 23.1 Introduction 275
- 23.2 Fundamentals of the Model 276
- 23.3 Application of the Model to the ECAP Process 279
- 23.4 Conclusion 283 References 283

Subject Index 285

## List of Contributors

### G. Gottstein, E. Jannot, C. Schäfer,

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# 1 Introduction

This book comprises the proceedings of the final symposium of the Collaborative Research Center (SFB 370) of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft on "Integral Materials Modeling" which took place in Aachen, Germany, on December 1–2, 2005. It is composed of the final reports of the projects and complementary manuscripts of renowned scientists in the field of materials modeling, covering a broad range of current simulation activities.

The projects are identified by their project numbers in their title. The manuscripts are organized such that after a list of persons involved in the SFB 370 the final through-process modeling exercises (group C) are introduced by the reports on supporting process and materials models (groups A and B) and complemented by the invited contributions. The first article on "Integral Materials Modeling" gives an introduction into the philosophy, history, and structure of the collaborative research center.

With the final symposium the SFB officially ended but its core topic was continued in a transfer program of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (TFB 63) on "Industrially Relevant Modeling Tools".

As a chairman of the collaborative research center on "Integral Materials Modeling" (SFB 370) I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my colleagues for their continuous support and encouragement. As a university professor it was my great pleasure to see the interest and engagement of the young doctoral students in the research program, their fascination by the scientific challenge, and their natural openness to interdisciplinary cooperation, discussion, and information exchange. Last but not least my thanks go to the review panels for their valuable advice and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft which not only funded the collaborative research center for 12 years but also offered unbureaucratic support.

*Günter Gottstein* Chairman, SFB 370 Aachen, December 2006



#### 2 1 Introduction

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# 2 Integral Materials Modeling

#### G. Gottstein

#### Abstract

This chapter reviews the historical background of computational materials science and introduces the scientific concept of "integral materials modeling". The objectives of the collaborative research center on this topic are formulated and an overview is given on the structure development and achievements of the research program.

5

#### 2.1 Introduction

One of the ultimate dreams of materials science is the theoretical design of new materials. It would save tremendous costs that are currently invested in alloy development, e.g. for operating expensive pilot plants and conducting comprehensive materials testing, and in view of the fact that even today it takes more than 15 years before a new material eventually sees the market. That there is still need for research to develop new metallic materials although they have be successfully processed for more than 5000 years is not due to the large number of potential alloys that can be produced in multicomponent alloys out of 92 elements or even 70 elements with metallic character. On the contrary, if the properties of these alloys would only reflect the property mix of their components, it would be easy with current computer power to predict the properties of virtually any potential alloy system. However, the properties of a material do not reflect the properties of the constituent elements, rather the properties of a material are controlled by the spatial distribution of elements and crystal defects, which is also referred to as microstructure. The microstructure comprises phase distribution, elemental distribution, orientation distribution, as well as crystal defects like grain boundaries, dislocations, and point defects. What is more, the microstructure is seriously affected by materials processing. In essence, the properties of a material are not given by a superposition of elemental properties, but by a complex function of 2 Integral Materials Modeling



**Fig. 2.1** The scale problem of materials modeling: the macroscopic properties are defined by the microstructure which develops by atomic mechanisms.

its chemical composition and its processing history, and there is a virtually infinite number of possible microstructures and, therefore, of material properties. This is good news for alloy development since material properties can be changed by processing at constant chemistry in a wide range but it is a nightmare for materials modeling that aims at predicting material properties from the knowledge of materials chemistry and processing, and it appears hopeless to design computational strategies for optimization of materials chemistry and processing for a given desired property spectrum.

As a result, it is practically impossible to establish relations between materials properties and both processing parameters and the overall chemistry. This is because of the fact that the processing conditions are not the state variables of materials properties even though that would be desirable for the materials engineer who is used to formulate the properties of a product in terms of the engineering control parameters. Processing–property relationship may be most desirable for engineering practice, but unfortunately this approach cannot be successful. It is common in materials engineering to establish correlations between material properties and processing conditions. These correlations, however, are not equations of state for the material, and thus liable to fail when the chemistry or processing parameters are changed.

The only correct way to formulate equations of state for the terminal properties of a processed material is in terms of microstructure development during processing because the microstructure constitutes the state variable of the material. In fact, the microstructure is a fingerprint of the processing history of a material and determines the current properties of a material. That is why geologists hope to derive the history of rocks from today's microstructure to understand the formation of the Earth's crust. Consequently, the very problem of property predictions is to adequately quantify a microstructure and, in particular, to establish microstructure–property relationships. This requires an understanding of the controlling microstructural elements and the microscopic processes that determine a specific property.

An adequate characterization of the microstructure requires knowledge of the atomistic arrangement in a material. Therefore, a deeper physical understanding



**Fig. 2.2** During conventional processing of a metallic material to the final product (here a welded tube) the microstructure changes during each processing step.

of material properties and phenomena could only be developed after the discovery of X-rays and their application to crystallography in the beginning of the 20th century. This engendered an understanding of material behavior on the basis of its atomistic arrangements and atomistic transport processes. Application of X-ray diffraction and spectroscopy complemented much later by electron and neutron diffraction and spectroscopy revealed the importance of nanoscale configurations, notably the crystal structure, crystal defects, and nanoscale chemistry, in terms of solute distribution and dispersion of second phases, for an interpretation of material properties. In fact, materials science in the 20th century was essentially dedicated to an understanding of microstructure evolution and a formulation of microstructure–property relationships.

From this research it became clear, however, that there are only a few although complex physical processes that impact the microstructure of a bulk metallic material. The mechanisms of these processes have been the subject of investigations for many years, and the outcome of this research constitutes the foundations and concepts of modern materials science.

In essence, there are three major processes that affect the microstructure of a material, namely phase transformations, plastic deformation, and restoration processes like recovery, recrystallization, and grain growth. These processes and their impact on microstructure are complex in detail and interdependent in a highly nonlinear fashion. Their thermodynamics, kinetics, and atomic mechanisms have been subject of numerous investigations over the past 50 years, which have substantiated that microstructural evolution is strongly related to the properties

3 2 Integral Materials Modeling

Process Variable	T(x,y,z,t) T	(x,y,z,t); ε(e,y,z,t)	ε(e,y,z,t)	T(x,y,z,t)
→	<b>□</b> → ⇔	Rough Tandem	→ 0 <b>1</b> 0 →	
Casting - H	lomogenization	- Hot Rolling -	Cold Rolling -	Annealing
Micro- structure Process	Phase Transformation	Plasticity + Recrystallization + Phase Transformation	Plasticity	Recrystallization Phase Transformation

**Fig. 2.3** For simulation of microstructure evolution the microstructure processes have to be interfaced to the process variables; here for sheet fabrication of an aluminum alloy.

and behavior of crystal defects: deformation of crystals proceeds by the generation, motion, interaction, and storage of dislocations; phase transformations are controlled by diffusion, the fundamental atomic transport mechanism; and recrystallization and grain growth involve the motion of grain boundaries.

These three microstructural processes affect each other, e.g. precipitation of a second phase hinders dislocation and grain boundary motion and, therefore, influences hardening during crystal plasticity and softening by recrystallization and grain growth. A major complication for the mathematical treatment of these processes is the local inhomogeneity that is introduced or even imposed by processing, e.g. fluctuation of composition, segregation of elements, deformation inhomogeneities, etc.

The theoretical foundations that govern the thermodynamics and kinetics of these processes have been developed during the past 50 years [1–4]. The respective equations of motion and equations of state for these processes are generally formulated in terms of partial differential equations. An analytical solution of these equations was in the vast majority of cases beyond reach, even impossible. Even 20 years ago such mathematical problems could be solved only by experts for very special cases. This situation changed dramatically with the advent of powerful computers, which could be utilized to solve numerically these difficult equations. With the increasingly powerful computers at hand to everybody nowadays, virtually every scientist can tackle these mathematical problems by utilizing sophisticated software. Moreover, the availability of high-performance computers has engendered novel computational techniques to address microstructural changes and thus the option to simulate microstructural evolution on the computer [5].

While the simulation of microstructure evolution constitutes a remarkable progress in computational materials science it does not yet solve the engineering problem to predict the properties of a material. Since the microstructure controls materials properties but is affected by each processing step, the prediction of terminal material properties or the behavior of a part under service conditions requires one to follow microstructural evolution along the entire processing chain, i.e. conventionally from the liquid state to the final product. To simulate this on the computer, it is necessary to connect the microstructural evolution to the processing parameters, which essentially means to subject each microstructural volume element to a temporal change of strain and temperature. In engineering applications this temperature and strain history of a material is typically computed by finite element (FE) approaches. On the other hand, the results of an FE simulation depend on the current properties of a material; hence microstructural evolution along the processing history and the local processing parameters, strain and temperature, are interdependent. In essence, both approaches, processing in terms of FE codes and microstructure in terms of physics-based microstructure evolution codes, have to be connected and interfaced in space and time. This means accounting for local and temporal changes of chemical composition, segregation, defect densities, etc., under changing boundary conditions. Therefore, it also requires advanced interface tools and sophisticated numerical techniques to solve the respective sets of mathematical equations and places a substantial demand on computing power.

#### 2.2 The Collaborative Research Center on "Integral Materials Modeling"

In 1994 the collaborative research center on "Integral Materials Modeling" (SFB 370) of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft set out to tackle this problem and to develop strategies and techniques to predict terminal material properties from the knowledge of material chemistry and processing conditions. Since each processing step affects the microstructure, the microstructure evolution through the entire processing chain had to be traced to determine the final microstructure at the end of the processing chain in order to predict the properties associated with it. This though-process modeling approach on a physics-based microstructure definition was subject of research for a variety of materials and their processing. Two fundamental processing stages (A and B) were distinguished, which characterized virtually all materials fabrication procedures (Fig. 2.4):

(A) Generation of the solid state from the liquid phase (solidification) or gas phase (condensation).

(B) Processing of the solid by mechanical and thermal treatment.

They determined the properties of the product which constituted stage C:

(C) Determination of the specific properties of interest for a processed product.

10 2 Integral Materials Modeling



**Fig. 2.4** Coupling of microstructure and processing by interfacing FEM and physics-based microstructure models. For each volume element the microstructural information has to be updated in every time step.

Depending on the specific product considered these processing stages can be connected in various ways (Fig. 2.5). For a net shape cast metallic part or an injection molded polymer, stage A directly connects to stage C. Stage A itself may be subdivided in to several steps, e.g. if a cast part is coated. A homogenization anneal



Fig. 2.5 Topical structure of the collaborative research center (SFB 370) "Integral Materials Modeling" of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.