

**Experiments on Time Reversal Focusing of Acoustic Energy at a Crack  
Location in One Dimension**

by

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## Abstract

Place your abstract here

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Motivation

Each day, more than 100 billion meteoroids larger than a microgram come speeding through Earth's atmosphere [1]. A large number of debris objects are presently in orbit around the earth (see Figure 1.1). NASA states that there are over 21,000 debris objects larger than a softball, 500,000 particles larger than a marble, and over 100 million smaller pieces that cannot be tracked. Due to the large number of objects traversing the space surrounding earth, it is likely that impact will occur with lightweight, low orbiting space structures and satellites which can result in varying degrees of damage [2]. The most likely impact will come from the smallest pieces as they occur in the largest numbers and are hard to avoid since they are hard to detect. These smaller particles will cause damage in the form of surface cracks and abrasions. Technologies exist such as the Whipple Shield (or meteor bumper) which help to mitigate the effects of impacts by absorbing some of the energy or breaking larger objects into smaller pieces [3]. However, it is still likely that particles can make it all the way to the underlying structure and cause damage which will build up over time. Access to these structures is difficult, costly, and dangerous. Repair missions will inevitably leave behind more debris which will increase the likelihood of future damage occurring to the structure being repaired as well as other structures in orbit. Materials with the ability to automatically heal damage as it occurs are very desirable

for these applications [4].

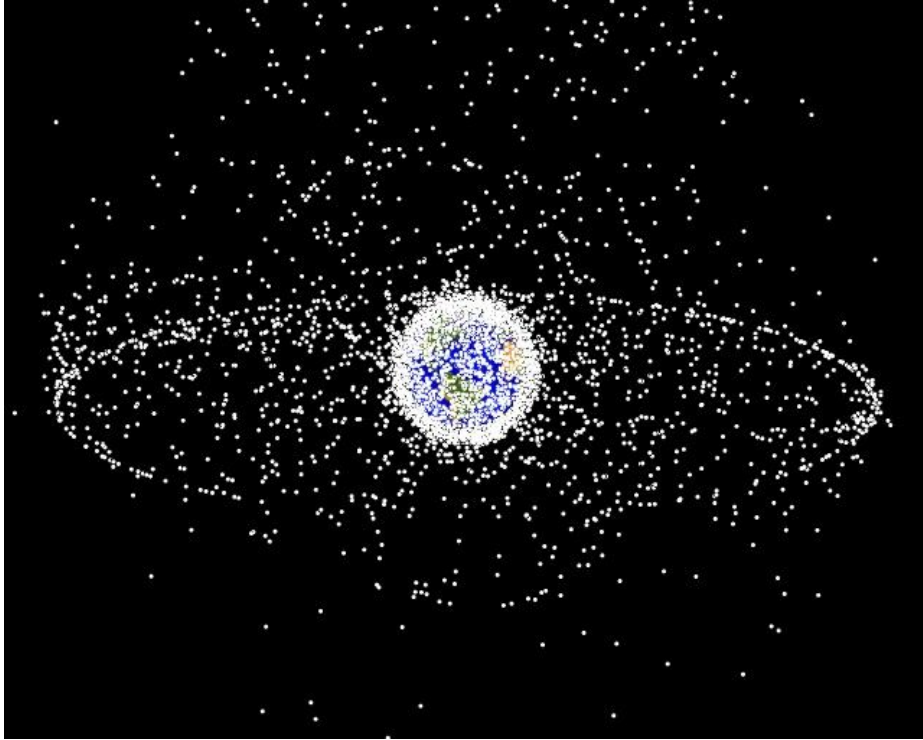


Figure 1.1: Image from NASA which depicts the debris objects that are currently orbiting the Earth. Some examples of debris objects include: broken spacecraft, upper stages of launch vehicles, debris that is intentionally released from missions, debris from collisions, and paint flecks. Much of the debris seems benign due to its size but is made dangerous by its high velocity (up to 60km/s for smaller pieces).  
 imagesource:[<http://orbitaldebris.jsc.nasa.gov/photogallery/beehives/GEO640.jpg>]

## 1.2 Self-Healing

Crack healing in materials owes some of its early studies to Wool and O'Connor who modeled crack healing in polymers and experimented with cantilever beams [5,6]. They found that polymer crack healing occurs in the following five stages: a) surface rearrangement, b) surface approach, c) wetting, d) diffusion, and e) randomization. Sloof, Song, and others have developed materials in which thermal activation caused a mending of cracks [7–11]. Caruso et. al. reported on material strength recovery in

thermoplastics by using solvent-based healing agents [12]. Inspired by the idea of biological entities being able to automatically heal wounds, a self-healing material was made by White et. al. in which a catalyst and microcapsules filled with a reactive fluid were distributed throughout a material [13]. When the material was cracked, the capsules released their fluid which polymerized upon contacting the catalyst and effectively fused the faces of the crack together (Figure 1.2). Sottos et. al. have improved this self-healing implementation and found that damaged materials recovered up to 90% of their original strength [14]. The White and Sottos group have also studied crack healing by introducing hardener filled microcapsules into an epoxy that was molded into a double cantilever beam fracture specimen [15]. This concept has been extended to a self-healing coating that contained epoxy filled microcapsules and was tested on cold rolled steel sheets with good results [16]. Manuel et. al. created a matrix containing wires that could apply a force to the material to close a crack and then the material was heated to weld the crack together [17]. Adhesives with self-healing properties have been created by Jin et. al. and tested on composite laminates where they were found to increase the life of specimens subject to fatigue [18]. Self repairing chemicals have been successfully implemented on composite airplane components and were able to return to 88% of their original strength after impact and shear testing [19]. Recently, there has been a large interest in applying self-healing methods to help prolong the life of concrete which is very prone to cracks [20].

### 1.3 Accelerating the Self-Healing Process

Typically, the damaging process will continue to occur as the material attempts to mend itself together. It is therefore important that the material heals itself quickly so that the damage process does not dominate and prevent the material from reaching a full mechanical recovery. Studies have been performed on fatigue crack propagation in a self healing material [21]. Sheng, Burattini, and many others reported on increasing the healing rate by improving the materials that are used [22–26]. The use of U.V. light has been researched as a way to accelerate the healing process in metalopolymers and ethyl cellulose based copolymers [27,28]. Wool and O’Connor found in their work

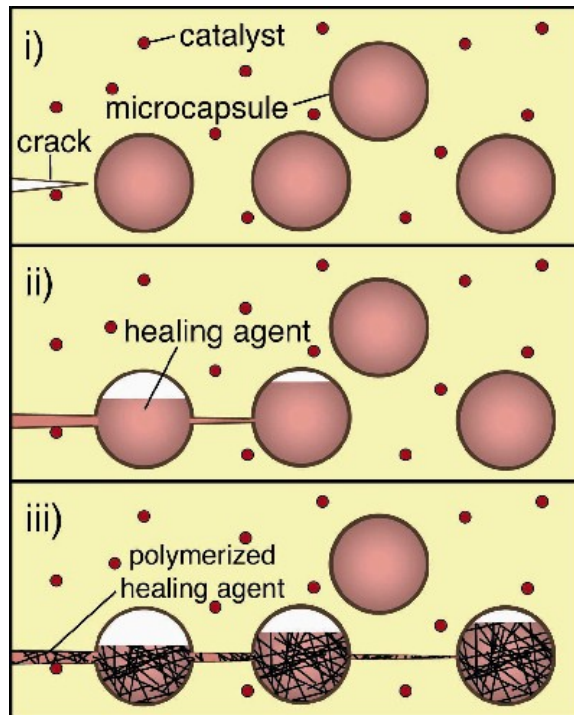


Figure 1.2: Concept drawing of a self-healing material in which microcapsules filled with a reactive fluid and a catalyst are spread throughout that material. The drawing depicts the stages of damage, fluid release, and polymerization.

source:[<http://www.howstuffworks.com/self-healing-spacecraft1.htm>]

that an increase in pressure at the crack interface during the early stages of healing or an increase in temperature at any stage can increase the rate at which the material recovers [5]. Murphy et. al. have studied direct heating as a method to increase healing capabilities [29]. Direct heating to improve healing has also been applied to concrete [30, 31]. Applying pressure to a crack location via acoustic energy was studied by Korde et al. both theoretically and experimentally which found that acoustic energy can accelerate the healing process [32–34]. Fettig et. al. have also found that healing is optimized by ensuring good mixing in the early stages which can be brought about by localized pressure [35]. Sarrazin treated cracked nylon dog-bone specimens with ultrasonic probes which increased the temperature within the specimen and caused a fusing of the crack faces [36]. By using ultrasonic waves both the temperature and pressure at a recovery site could be increased which results in a



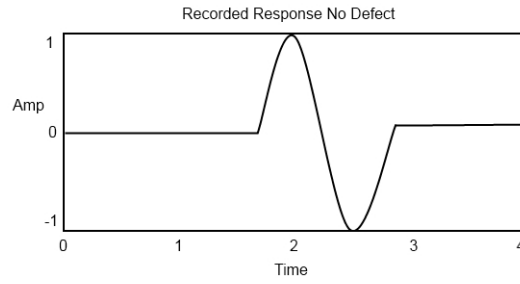
faster healing time.

## 1.4 Implementation

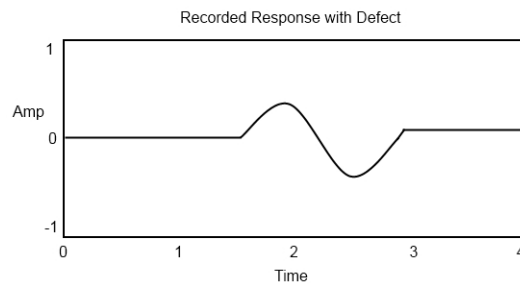
Two main problems arise when implementing any of the previously described external stimulation methods to accelerate the healing process; i) detecting when damage has actually occurred and ii) applying the stimulation energy only to the damage location. In regards to i), it would be highly inefficient and potentially damaging to continually introduce energy if healing is not taking place. Along similar lines of reasoning, one would want only to apply energy to the actual recovery location for increased efficiency and so that unintended damage to the system does not occur. Acoustic energy is the method chosen here as it offers solutions to both problems.

### 1.4.1 Damage Sensing

Picture a rod with transducers on either end that are capable of playing and recording sound. First, one transducer propagates a low energy acoustic stress-waves through the material and the other records the response of the material. If this process is repeated periodically and the response is monitored then a change in the response is observed if there is a change in the medium (e.g., damage has occurred; Figure 1.3). The acoustic energy could then be applied after this change in response has been detected and cease once the system determines that the response has returned to its initial state within some tolerance level. Imaging using ultrasonics has been around for some time now and is probably most recognized in ultrasounds that are used during pregnancy [37]. Ultrasonic imaging has been widely used in nondestructive testing to find cracks within structures. Harris et. al. used acoustic emission to monitor the fatigue crack growth in both aluminum and steel samples [38]. Detecting cracks in concrete by using ultrasound was reported by Zinin et. al. [39]. Acoustic waves have also been used to detect cracks in very fragile materials such as eggshells [40]. Recently, ultrasound has been used in dentistry to detect microcracks within teeth [41].



(a) Acoustic wave propagating through medium with no defect



(b) Acoustic wave propagating through medium with a crack

Figure 1.3: a) A transducer sends an acoustic wave through a medium and a transducer on the opposite end records the response. This material is seen without a defect and the simulated response is shown; b) Same as a), but a defect is now present in the medium which causes a change in the response recorded on the opposite end and is seen in the simulated recorded response.

### 1.4.2 Time Reversal Focusing

Besides the mechanics of focusing the energy at the crack location, the problem arises that the location of the defect is not necessarily known. A method is needed that not only localizes the energy at the healing site but it does so without knowledge of the physical location of that site. Acoustic time reversal signal processing is one such method that possesses the aforementioned qualities. Picture again the cracked medium with transducers on either end. As before, a stress-wave is played by one

transducer. This time, however, both transducers record signals. The stress-wave propagates through the medium and strikes the crack which causes the wave to split into multiple components that transmit to the opposite transducer and reflect back to the original sending transducer where they are recorded. If the transducers re-amplify and playback these signals in a time reversed fashion then the waves meet at the point where they split (here, the crack) which causes a focusing of their energy at that point. The focused wave splits again into multiple components that are recorded by each transducer and the time reversal process is repeated iteratively with a better focusing being achieved on each iteration until limits due to dissipation are reached (Figure 1.4 illustrates this concept). The time reversal concept can be extended to multiple dimensions in which the transducers are placed around the boundary. In a self-healing material, the focusing of energy at a crack location would accelerate the healing process at that site.

Mathematically, time reversal is the time domain analog of phase conjugation which has been used in adaptive optics to correct for wavefront phase aberrations by forming a mirror to produce the conjugate phase aberrations of the incoming wave which results in a corrected wavefront [42]. Acoustic time reversal has been studied extensively by Fink et. al. in which he first setup an array of transducers to send and receive ultrasonic waves through a rubber medium with random thicknesses and a hydrophone embedded as a reflector/receiver. Fink also has shown iterative focusing by experimenting with an array of transducers and two metal wires as reflectors. In the iterative experiments, it was shown that the energy focused on the strongest reflector after successive iterations [43]. Experiments were performed by Derode et. al. in which a transducer played a signal through a liquid containing over 2000 rods and an array of transducers located on the opposite side of the rods played the captured signals back and it was found that the replayed signals converged on the original source [44]. Time reversal has been applied to acoustic communications in both the ocean and air to achieve better signal to noise ratio by focusing the signal at the desired receiver [45–47]. Great promise has also been shown with applying time reversal to biomedical application such as the focusing of ultrasonic waves to destroy kidney stones or hyperthermia brain treatment [48]. The concept of time reversal is

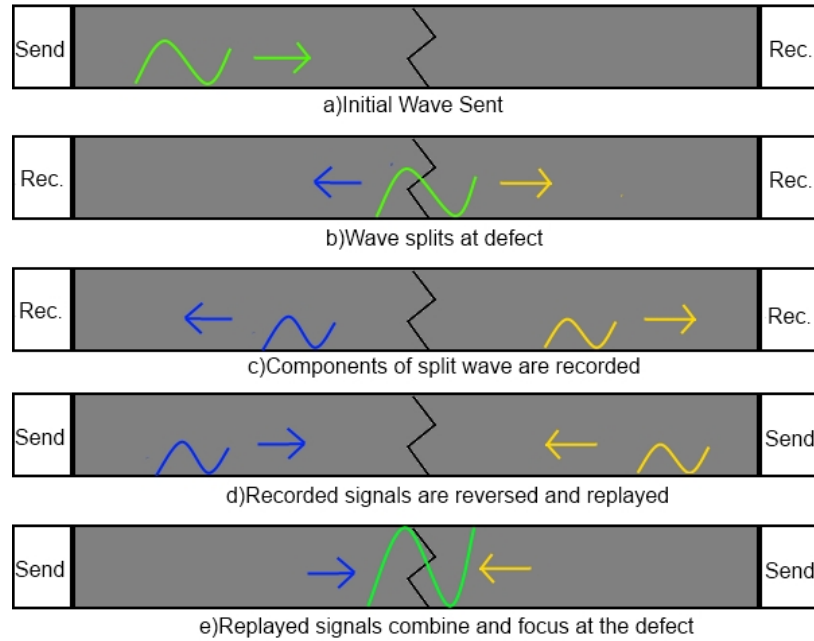


Figure 1.4: Concept drawing of time reversal in one dimension; a) An initial wave is sent out by a transducer; b) The wave travels down the rod until it hits the crack and splits into multiple components; c) The components of the incident wave travel towards each transducer where they are recorded; d) The recorded signals are amplified and replayed in a time reversed fashion; e) The wave components simultaneously reach the crack location where they first split and combine to cause a focusing of their amplitude at that point.

not only applicable to acoustics but can also be used with electromagnetic waves [49]. Liu et. al. have shown experimentally that bit-rate-errors in radio communications can be reduced by applying time reversal [50]. MIT has effectively created a microwave cannon by using the time reversal process to focus microwave energy [51].

## 1.5 Objectives

The overall goal, as devised by Dr. Korde, is to use time reversal acoustic focusing to accelerate the crack recovery process of a self-healing polymer by locally increasing the temperature and pressure. The work presented here looks at a subsection of that project which is the time reversal focusing at a crack location. There has been much

theoretical and experimental work performed on applying time reversal in multiple dimensions. Here, the case of time reversal in one dimension is explored. Fouque et. al. performed calculations and simulations on one dimensional time reversal in random media with an embedded reflector to determine the reflector's location [52]. Korde performed calculations on focusing at a crack with piezoelectric transducers and time reversal processing [53]. To the author's knowledge, time reversal focusing at a defect location in one dimension has not been performed experimentally. In this work experiments are performed on circular steel and nylon rods with piezoelectric transducers to send and receive signals. This could have direct applications to the rods used in deployable space structures that may become cracked over time. Although the analysis is eased in this scenario, there are difficulties introduced in performing the experiments in one dimensional structures of finite length that are not present when performing time reversal in multiple dimensions. For instance, it is required that a transducer both sends a signal and reads a signal in the same iteration such that the ringing of the transducer may interfere with the signal being read.

The specific objectives of this work are to show:

1. Modeling and experimental verification of acoustic time reversal crack focusing in one dimension
2. Experimental verification of acoustic crack detection in one dimension
3. Experimental verification of iterative focusing and convergence of acoustic time reversal crack focusing in one dimension
  - (a) Show that with each iteration, the amplitude seen at the defect increases until a convergence point is reached

## Chapter 2

## Modeling

## Chapter 3

## Experiments

## Chapter 4

### Results



## Chapter 5

### Recommended Future Work

## Chapter 6

## Conclusion

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