Improved Indentation Test for Measuring Nonlinear Elasticity

This technique is especially useful for characterizing thermal-barrier coating materials.

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A cylindrical-punch indentation technique has been developed as a means of measuring the nonlinear elastic responses of materials — more specifically, for measuring the moduli of elasticity of materials in cases in which these moduli vary with applied loads. This technique offers no advantage for characterizing materials that exhibit purely linear elastic responses (constant moduli of elasticity, independent of applied loads). However, the technique offers a significant advantage for characterizing such important materials as plasma-sprayed thermal-barrier coatings, which, in cyclic loading, exhibit nonlinear elasticity with hysteresis related to compaction and sliding within their microstructures.

A specimen to be tested by the cylindrical-punch indentation technique is prepared by standard metallographic procedures. The specimen is mounted on a load-versus-displacement-measuring apparatus, which could be any of a variety of indentation-type hardness testers or other conventional mechanical testing instruments. In the indentation test, the flat end of a round cylindrical punch is pushed into the polished, flat surface of the specimen. To minimize impression creep (a time-dependent plastic deformation that could contribute a large error to the modulus data), the specimen is preconditioned by pre-indenting it at a load greater than the load to be applied during the subse-