Supplementary Information

Closed-Loop Recycling of Sulfur-Rich Polymers with Tunable Properties Spanning Thermoplastics, Elastomers, and Vitrimers

Jin-Zhuo Zhao, Tian-Jun Yue, Bai-Hao Ren, Xiao-Bing Lu, and Wei-Min Ren*

¹State Key Laboratory of Fine Chemicals, Frontiers Science Center for Smart Materials, Dalian University of Technology, 2 Linggong Road, Dalian, 116024, China.

*E-mail: <u>wmren@dlut.edu.cn.</u>

Corresponding Author

*Wei-Min Ren – State Key Laboratory of Fine Chemicals, Frontiers Science Center for Smart Materials, Dalian University of Technology, 2 Linggong Road, Dalian, 116024, China; orcid.org/0000-0003-4425-1453; E-mail: <u>wmren@dlut.edu.cn</u>.

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1.Synthesis of dimethyl trithiocarbonate and dithiols

1.1 General procedure for the synthesis of dimethyl trithiocarbonate (DMTC) Synthesis of DMTC.

CH₃I
$$\xrightarrow{NH_4OAc, CS_2}$$
 S

The dimethyl trithiocarbonate (DMTC) was synthesized according to the literature¹ after minor optimization as follows: To a solution of NH₄OAc (40 g, 520 mmol, 2.6 equiv.) in dimethyl sulfoxide (160 mL), CS₂ (14.4 g, 240 mmol, 1.2 equiv.) was added, followed by the vigorous stirring at room temperature for 15 min. The color of the solution turned into dark red. Then, Iodomethane (28.4 g, 200 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) was added, followed by stirring for 8 h at room temperature where the color of the solution gradually fades. Dichloromethane (240 mL) was added to quench the reaction. The reaction mixture was washed by water (800 mL × 2). The organic phase was collected and dried over Na₂SO₄ for 4 h, followed by removing out volatile via rotary evaporated under vacuum. The residue was further purified by column chromatography (PE/DCM=100/1) to afford pure DMTC as an orange oil (15.2 g, yield 66%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 2.76 (s, 1H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 225.50 (d, *J* = 2.1 Hz), 20.05.

1.2 General procedure for the synthesis of dithiols

Synthesis of 1,12-dodecanedithiol

The 1,12-dodecanedithiol was synthesized according to the literature² after minor optimization as follows: A mixture of 1,12-dibromododecane (45 mmol, 14.7 g, 1 equiv.), thiourea (95 mmol 7.2 g, 2.1 equiv.), and 400 mL of ethanol was refluxed under N₂ atmosphere for 18 h. Then, the solution of sodium hydroxide (250 mmol, 10 g, 5.5 equiv.) in 300 mL of water was added. The resulting mixture was further refluxed under N₂ atmosphere for 4 h. After cooling to room temperature, the solution was extracted with diethyl ether (350 mL × 2), and combined organic extracts were dried over anhydrous MgSO₄ for 4 h. The solvent was removed under the vacuum, and the crude product was recrystallized twice from methanol to yield a white solid (39.6 mmol, 9.3g yield 89%). ¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 2.52 (q, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 4H), 1.61 (p, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 4H), 1.38 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 4H), 1.33 (t, *J* = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.25 (s,12H). ¹³C NMR (10 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 34.05, 29.52 (d, *J* = 4.6 Hz), 29.07, 28.38, 24.66.

Synthesis of 1,16-hexadecanedithiol

1,16-hexadecanedithiol was prepared in a similar method as 1,12-dodecanedithiol. (38.3 mmol, 11.1 g, white solid, yield 85%).¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 2.52 (q, J = 7.4 Hz, 4H), 1.61 (p, J = 7.3 Hz, 4H), 1.38 (q, J = 7.4 Hz, 4H), 1.33 (t, J = 7.8 Hz, 2H), 1.26 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 20H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 34.07, 30.01 – 29.37 (m), 29.09, 28.40, 24.68.

Synthesis of 1,18-octadecanedithiol

1,18-octadecanedithiol was prepared in a similar method as 1,12-dodecanedithiol. (39.2 mmol, 12.5 g, white solid, yield 87%).¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 2.52 (q, J = 7.4 Hz, 4H), 1.61 (p, J = 7.3 Hz, 4H), 1.37 (t, J = 7.5 Hz, 4H), 1.33 (t, J = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 1.26 (d, J = 6.9 Hz, 24H). ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 34.07, 30.29 – 29.33 (m), 29.09, 28.40, 24.68.

2 General procedure for the polycondensation of dithiols and dimethyl trithiocarbonate.



In a typical polycondensation procedure: Dithiol (50 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) and DMTC (50 mmol, 1.0 equiv.) were added to the three-necked flask (~50 mL) of the polycondensation device, which is consisted by a three-necked flask (~50 mL) equipped with a mechanical stirrer, distillation apparatus, and a manifold equipped with vacuum and N₂ gas lines. After degassing by bubbling with N₂ for 30 min, KH (0.25 mmol, 0.005 equiv.) was added and the flask was immersed in a hot-oil bath (120 °C). The reaction was started and continued for 2.0 h with the pressure gradually reduced to 70000 Pa, followed by gradually reducing the pressure to 2000 Pa, accompanied with the bath temperature improving to 150 °C and maintaining for 2.0 h. Then, the bath temperature was further elevated to 50 Pa. The polycondensation procedure was finished after the Weissenberg phenomenon appeared for 2.0 h. The polymer melt was diluted with xylene at 120 °C followed by pouring the solution into large volume of MeOH to give the polymer precipitated, which was washed with MeOH and dried in a vacuum oven at 50 °C to afford polytrithiocarbonate.

Entry	Cat.	[Dithiol]/[DMTC]/[Cat.]	Temp. ^[b]	Conv.[c]	Time ^[d]	Yield ^[e]	$M_{n}^{[f]}$	$D^{[f]}$
			(°C)	(%)	(h)	(%)	(kg/mol)	
1	LiH	200/200/1	40	1	12 ^[g]	30	3.4	2.92
2	NaH	200/200/1	40	2	12 ^[g]	60	3.9	3.18
3	KH	200/200/1	40	4	12 ^[g]	70	9.1	2.63
4	KH	200/200/1	80	7	12 ^[g]	85	16.0	2.31
5	KH	200/200/1	120	50	10	95	44.0	2.55
6	KH	100/100/1	120	50	9	98	41.9	2.47
7	KH	1000/1000/1	120	47	15	98	39.4	2.63

Supplementary Table 1 The polycondensation of 1,10-decanedithiol with dimethyl trithiocarbonate.^[a]

[a] Polycondensation was conducted in a two-steps procedure: the first step was transesterification under 70000 Pa for 2.0 h; the second step was polycondensation at 150 °C, 2000 Pa for 2.0 h, and then 180 °C, 50 Pa until the viscosity of the system no longer changes. [b] Reaction temperature of transesterification process. [c] The conversion of $-CH_2SH$ was determined by the signals observed in the ¹H NMR spectra of the oligomers generated in transesterification. [d] The time the reaction terminated when the viscosity of the system no longer changes. [e] The yield calculated by the precipitated polymers. [f] Molecular weight and molecular weight distribution of the polymers with low solubility at room temperature were determined by gel permeation chromatography (GPC) at 150 °C using 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene as the eluent and calibrated with polystyrene standards. [g] n.d. = not determined.

3. Thermal properties of polytrithiocarbonates: P1–P11



Supplementary Fig. 1 DSC thermogram of P1 with $T_m = 98.3$ °C and $T_c = 69.1$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 2 DSC thermogram of **P2** with $T_{\rm m} = 106.1$ °C and $T_{\rm c} = 85.5$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 3 DSC thermogram of **P3** with $T_m = 105.6$ °C and $T_c = 85.9$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 4 DSC thermogram of P4 with $T_m = 93.2$ °C and $T_c = 76.2$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 5 DSC thermogram of **P5** with $T_m = 92.3$ °C and $T_c = 73.4$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 6 DSC thermogram of P6 with $T_m = 93.7$ °C and $T_c = 76.1$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 7 DSC thermogram of P7 with $T_{\rm m} = 96.8$ °C and $T_{\rm c} = 88.0$ °C.

4. Crystallinity values of polytrithiocarbonates: P1–P7



Supplementary Fig. 8 Powder XRD profiles of P1–P7. The Crystallinity values (Φc) of P1–P7 determined by deconvolution of WAXS diffractograms were indicated.

5. Thermal properties of polytrithiocarbonates: P8–P11



Supplementary Fig. 9 DSC thermogram of P8 with $T_g = -18.3$ °C and $T_m = 56.2$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 10 DSC thermogram of **P9** with $T_g = -37.2$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 11 DSC thermogram of **P10** with $T_g = 14.4$ °C and $T_m = 114.3$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 12 DSC thermogram of P11 with $T_g = 66.1$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 13 TGA thermograms of P1-P7.



Supplementary Fig. 14 TGA thermograms of P8–P11.



Supplementary Fig. 15 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P1 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 16 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for **P2** characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 17 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P3 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 18 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P4 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 19 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P5 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 20 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P6 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 21 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for **P7** characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 22 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for **P8** characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 23 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P10 characterized by DMA.

7. Synthesis of polytrithiocarbonate-based thermoplastic elastomer



Representative procedure for the synthesis of copolymers is given with copolymer **P12** as example:

3 (37.5 mmol, 6.7 g, 3 equiv.), together with DMTC (37.5 mmol, 5.2 g, 3 equiv.) and **9** (12.5 mmol, 2.3 g, 1 equiv.), together with DMTC (12.5 mmol, 1.7 g, 1 equiv.) were added to two sets of polycondensation devices, respectively. After degassing through N_2 bubbling for 30 min, KH (0.5% equiv.) was added to these two reaction systems, respectively, followed by immersing the flasks into the hot-oil bath (120 °C), respectively. The reaction was conducted for 2.0 h with the pressure gradually reduced to70000 Pa. After switching the reaction system to a nitrogen atmosphere, **P9** oligomer was transferred to the reaction system of synthesizing **P3** oligomer. Then, the polycondensation was continued as the representative polycondensation procedures described above. **P13** and **P14** were synthesized in the same procedure with different feed ratio of **3** to **9**, as shown in Supplementary Table 2.

Entry	Polymer	[3]/[9]/[Cat.]	$M_{\rm n}^{\rm [b]}$	$D^{[b]}$	$T_{\rm g}^{[{\rm c}]}$	$T_{\rm m}^{\rm [c]}$	$T_{c}^{[c]}$	$T_{d5\%}^{[d]}$	$\sigma_{ m B}{}^{[e]}$	$\mathcal{E}_{B}^{[e]}$	$E'^{[f]}$	$E^{[g]}$	Yield ^[f]
			(kg/mol)		(°C)	(°C)	(°C)	(°C)	(MPa)	(%)	(MPa)	(MPa)	(%)
1	P12	150/50/1	50.2	2.00	-46.0	78.7	52.8	290	14.3	320	122	182	98
2	P13	100/100/1	48.3	2.01	-45.7	38.1	-8.6	261	6.6	332	24	13	98
3	P14	50/150/1	42.6	2.02	-45.9	n.d.	n.d.	251	n.d. ^[h]	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	96

Supplementary Table 2 The copolymerization of 3 and 9.^[a]

[a] Polymerization performed at 120 °C and 70000 Pa for 2.0 h, followed by the polycondensation at 150 °C and 2000 Pa for 2.0 h, then 180 °C and 50 Pa until 2.0 h after the Weissenberg phenomenon. [b] Molecular weight and molecular weight distribution of the polymers with low solubility at room temperature were determined by gel permeation chromatography (GPC) equipped with a triple detection array, including a differential refractive index (RI) detector, a two-angle light scattering (LS) detector, and a fourbridge capillary viscometer at 150 °C using 1,2,4-trichlorobenzene as the solvent. [c] Glass transition temperature (T_g), melting temperature (T_m) and crystalline temperature (T_c) were determined using DSC. [d] Temperature at a molecular weight loss of 5% determined using TGA. [e] Breaking strength (σ_B) and elongation at break (ε_B) determined by Uniaxial tensile elongation testing. [f] Storage modulus at 25 °C determined using DMA. [g] Young's modulus (*E*) calculated as the slope from 0 to 1% strain. [h] Not determined. [f] The yield calculated by the precipitated polymers.

8. Thermal properties and dynamic mechanical properties of copolymers: P12–P14



Supplementary Fig. 24 DSC thermogram of P12 with $T_g = -46.0$ °C, $T_m = 78.7$ °C and $T_c = 52.8$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 25 DSC thermogram of P13 with $T_g = -45.7$ °C, $T_{cc} = -24.7$ °C, $T_m = 38.1$ °C and $T_c = -8.6$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 26 DSC thermogram of P14 with $T_g = -45.9$ °C.



Supplementary Fig. 27 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P12 characterized by DMA.



Supplementary Fig. 28 Overlay of storage modulus E', loss modulus E'', and $\tan \delta$ for P13 characterized by DMA.





Supplementary Fig. 29 ¹H NMR spectrum of P2 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 30 ¹H NMR spectrum of P3 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 31 ¹H NMR spectrum of P4 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 32 ¹H NMR spectrum of P5 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 34 ¹H NMR spectrum of P7 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 35 ¹H NMR spectrum of P8 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 36 ¹H NMR spectrum of P9 containing disulfide bonds at 40 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 37 Overlay of ¹H NMR spectra (25 °C, $CDCl_3$) of P4 with different disulfide linkage content ranging from 1% to 18%.



9 (20.0 mmol, 3.64 g, 1.0 equiv.) and DMTC (20.4 mmol, 2.82 g, 1.02 equiv.) were added to the pre-built polycondensation device, followed by charging O₂ (1.0 L) into reaction system through bubbling for 5 min. Then, KH (0.5% equiv.) was added and the flask was immersed in a hot-oil bath (120 °C), the reaction was conducted for 2.0 h with the pressure gradually reduced to70000 Pa. Then, pentaerythritol *tetrakis* (3-mercapto-propionate) (0.2 mmol, 97.3 mg, 0.01 equiv.) was added to the reaction system. The polycondensation was continued as the representative polycondensation procedures described above.



Supplementary Fig. 38 ¹H NMR spectrum of **P9** oligomers with 18% disulfide linkage content at 25 °C in CDCl₃.

11. Closed-loop recycling of polytrithiocarbonates

General procedure for the depolymerization of polytrithiocarbonates

Taking **P6** as an example, the recycling of **P6** (4.5 g) was performed in a 35 mL pressure-resistant bottle in the presence of KOH (230 mg, 10 wt%) and CH₃SH (14 g, 300 wt%) under nitrogen atmosphere at 50 °C for 24 h. Upon cooling, the mixture of DMTC and 1,16-hexadecanedithiol were obtained after washing by water and rotary evaporating. Pure dithiols and DMTC could be recovered with a yield of no less than 97% after recrystallization. **P6** can be synthesize from the recovered two monomers or the directly mixture without separation.



Supplementary Fig. 39 Use of a mixture of PP (polypropylene), HDPE and **P4** as an example of a potential polyolefin waste stream. After being treated with potassium hydroxide in MeSH at 50 °C for 24 h, DMTC and dithiols were recovered from mixed polyolefin plastics waste, yields 96%.





230 220 210 200 190 180 170 160 150 140 130 120 110 100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 (Chemical Shift (ppm) Supplementary Fig. 41 ¹³C NMR spectrum of DMTC at 25 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 42 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1,12-dodecanedithiol at 25 °C in CDCl₃.





Supplementary Fig. 44 ¹H NMR spectrum of 1,16-hexadecanedithiol at 25 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 45 13 C NMR spectrum of 1,16-hexadecanedithiol at 25 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 46¹H NMR spectrum of 1,18-octadecanedithiol at 25 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 47 13 C NMR spectrum of 1,18-octadecanedithiol at 25 °C in CDCl₃.



Supplementary Fig. 48 ¹H NMR spectrum of P1 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 49 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P1 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Supplementary Fig. 50 ¹H NMR spectrum of P2 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 51 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P2 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 52 ¹H NMR spectrum of P3 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Supplementary Fig. 53 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P3 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Supplementary Fig. 54 ¹H NMR spectrum of P4 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



260 240 220 200 180 160 140 120 100 80 60 40 20 0 Chemical Shift (ppm)

Supplementary Fig. 55 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P4 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-d₂.



Supplementary Fig. 56 ¹H NMR spectrum of P5 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Chemical Shift (ppm)

Supplementary Fig. 57 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P5 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 58 ¹H NMR spectrum of P6 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Supplementary Fig. 59 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P6 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane-*d*₂.



Supplementary Fig. 60 ¹H NMR spectrum of P7 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 61 ¹³C NMR spectrum of P7 at 120 °C in tetrachloroethane- d_2 .



Supplementary Fig. 62 ¹H NMR spectrum of P8 at 40 °C in CDCl₃.













Supplementary Fig. 70 The ¹H NMR spectrum of P12 at 40 °C in CDCl₃.







13. GPC traces of P1–P7





Supplementary Fig. 75 GPC trace of P3.



Supplementary Fig. 76 GPC trace of P4.



Supplementary Fig. 77 GPC trace of P5.



Supplementary Fig. 78 GPC trace of P6.



Supplementary Fig. 79 GPC trace of P7.

14.Reference

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