ANNALES

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Tome 58, nº 1 (2008), p. 337-362.

<http://aif.cedram.org/item?id=AIF_2008__58_1_337_0>

Ann. Inst. Fourier, Grenoble
58, 1 (2008) 337-362

A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NON-ACYCLIC REIDEMEISTER TORSION AND A ZERO OF THE ACYCLIC REIDEMEISTER TORSION

by Yoshikazu YAMAGUCHI (*)

Abstract. — We show a relationship between the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion and a zero of the acyclic Reidemeister torsion for a λ-regular SU(2) or $SL(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation of a knot group. Then we give a method to calculate the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion of a knot exterior. We calculate a new example and investigate the behavior of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion associated to a 2-bridge knot and SU(2)-representations of its knot group.

Résumé. — Nous montrons une relation entre la torsion de Reidemeister non-acyclique et un zéro de la torsion de Reidemeister acyclique pour une représentation λ-régulière dans SU(2) ou $SL(2,\mathbb{C})$ du groupe d'un nœud. Alors nous pouvons donner une méthode pour calculer la torsion de Reidemeister non-acyclique de l'extérieur d'un nœud. Nous calculons un nouvel exemple et étudions le comportement de la torsion de Reidemeister non-acyclique associée à un nœud à deux-ponts et une SU(2)-représentations du groupe du nœud.

1. Introduction

The Reidemeister torsion is an invariant for a CW-complex and a representation of its fundamental group. In other words, this invariant associates with the local system for a representation of the fundamental group. Originally the Reidemeister torsion is defined if the local system is *acyclic*, *i.e.*, all homology groups vanish. However we can extend the definition of the Reidemeister torsion to non-acyclic cases [12, 19]. In this paper, we focus on the non-acyclic cases.

Keywords: Reidemeister torsion, twisted Alexander invariant, knots, representation spaces.
Math. classification: 57Q10, 57M05, 57M27.
(*) This research is partially supported by the 21st century COE program at Graduate School of Mathematical Sciences, the University of Tokyo.

It is known that the Fox calculus plays important roles in the study of the Reidemeister torsion [4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 19]. The many results were obtained by using the Fox calculus for the acyclic Reidemeister torsion. In particular, there are important results related to the Alexander polynomial in the knot theory [9, 10, 13, 19]. The Fox calculus is also important for non-acyclic cases [4, 15]. It is related to the cohomology theory of groups.

This paper contributes to the study of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion by using the Fox calculus. Our purpose is to apply the Fox calculus for the acyclic cases to the study of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion by using a relationship between the acyclic Reidemeister torsion and the non-acyclic one. Our main theorem says that the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion for a knot exterior is given by the differential coefficients of the twisted Alexander invariant of the knot. The twisted Alexander invariant of a knot is the acyclic Reidemeister torsion and expressed as a one variable rational function [10]. A conjecture due to J. Dubois and R. Kashaev [6] will be solved in [22] by using our main theorem.

In the latter of this paper, we apply this relationship to study the Reidemeister torsion for the pair of a 2-bridge knot and SU(2)-representation of its knot group. We give an explicit expression of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion associated to 5_2 knot. This is a new example of calculation of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion. Furthermore, we investigate where the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion associated to a 2-bridge knot has critical points. Note that the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion is parametrized by the representations of a knot group. Moreover this Reidemeister torsion turns into a function on the character variety of the knot group. We will see that the critical points of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion associated to a 2-bridge knot are binary dihedral representations and these representations are related to the geometry of the character variety of a 2-bridge knot group.

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we review the Reidemeister torsion. In particular, we give the notion of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion of knot exteriors [4, 15].

Section 3 includes our main theorem on a relationship between the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion and the twisted Alexander invariant for knot exteriors. We give a formula of the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion for a knot exterior by using a Wirtinger presentation of a knot group.

In Section 4, we apply the results of Section 3 to study the non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion for a 2-bridge knot group and SU(2)-representation of its knot group.

2. Review on the non-abelian twisted Reidemeister torsion

2.1. Notation

In this paper, we use the following notations.

- $\mathbb{F}$ is the field $\mathbb{R}$ or $\mathbb{C}$.
- G is the Lie group $\mathrm{SU}(2)$ (resp. $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$) if $\mathbb{F}$ is $\mathbb{R}$ (resp. $\mathbb{C}$). The symbol $\mathfrak{g}$ denotes the Lie algebra of G.
- Ad denotes the adjoint action of G to the Lie group $\mathfrak{g}$.
- $(\ ,\ )_{\mathfrak{g}} : \mathfrak{g}\times\mathfrak{g} \to \mathbb{F}$ is a product on the $\mathfrak{g}$, which is defined by $(X,Y)_{\mathfrak{g}} = \mathrm{Tr}({}^t X\bar{Y})$.
- V denotes an n-dimensional vector space over $\mathbb{F}$.
- For two ordered bases $\mathbf{a}$ and $\mathbf{b}$ in a vector space, we denote by $(\mathbf{a}/\mathbf{b})$ the base-change matrix from $\mathbf{b}$ to $\mathbf{a}$ satisfying $\mathbf{a} = \mathbf{b}(\mathbf{a}/\mathbf{b})$. We write simply $[\mathbf{a}/\mathbf{b}]$ for the determinant $\det(\mathbf{a}/\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma\mathbf{b})$ of $(\mathbf{a}/\mathbf{b})$. We deal with ordered bases in this paper.

2.2. Torsion of a chain complex

We recall the definition of the torsion.

Let $C_* = (0 \to C_n \xrightarrow{\partial_n} C_{n-1} \xrightarrow{\partial_{n-1}} \cdots \xrightarrow{\partial_1} C_0 \to 0)$ be a chain complex over $\mathbb{F}$. For each i let Z_i denote the kernel of ∂_i, B_i the image of ∂_{i+1} and H_i the homology group Z_i/B_i. We say that C_* is *acyclic* if H_i vanishes for every i.

Let c^i be a basis of C_i and c be the collection $\{c^i\}_{i\geqslant 0}$. We call the pair (C_*, c) a *based chain complex*, c the preferred basis of C_* and c^i the preferred basis of C_i. Let h^i be a basis of H_i.

We construct another basis as follows. By the definitions of Z_i, B_i and H_i, the following two split exact sequences exist.

$$0 \to Z_i \to C_i \xrightarrow{\partial_i} B_{i-1} \to 0,$$
$$0 \to B_i \to Z_i \to H_i \to 0.$$

Let $\widetilde{B}_{i-1}$ be a lift of B_{i-1} to C_i and $\widetilde{H}_i$ a lift of H_i to Z_i. Then we can decompose C_i as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} C_i &= Z_i \oplus \widetilde{B}_{i-1} \\ &= B_i \oplus \widetilde{H}_i \oplus \widetilde{B}_{i-1} \\ &= \partial_{i+1}\widetilde{B}_i \oplus \widetilde{H}_i \oplus \widetilde{B}_{i-1}. \end{aligned}$$

We choose b^i a basis of B_i. We write $\widetilde{b}^i$ for a lift of b^i and $\widetilde{h}^i$ for a lift of h^i. By the construction, the set $\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i) \cup \widetilde{h}^i \cup \widetilde{b}^{i-1}$ forms another ordered basis of C_i. We denote simply this new basis by $\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\widetilde{h}^i\widetilde{b}^{i-1}$. Then the definition of $\mathrm{tor}(C_*, c, h)$ is as follows.

$$\mathrm{tor}(C_*, c, h) = \prod_i^n \left[\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\widetilde{h}^i\widetilde{b}^{i-1}/c^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}} \in \mathbb{F}^*.$$

It is well known that $\mathrm{tor}(C_*, c, h)$ is independent of the choices of $\{b^i\}_{i\geqslant 0}$, the lifts $\{\widetilde{b}^i\}_{i\geqslant 0}$ and $\{\widetilde{h}^i\}_{i\geqslant 0}$.

We also define the torsion $\mathrm{Tor}(C_*, c, h)$ with the sign term $(-1)^{|C_*|}$ as follows [19]

$$\mathrm{Tor}(C_*, c, h) = (-1)^{|C_*|} \cdot \mathrm{tor}(C_*, c, h).$$

Here

$$|C_*| = \sum_{i\geqslant 0} \alpha_i(C_*) \cdot \beta_i(C_*),$$

where $\alpha_i(C_*) = \sum_{k=0}^i \dim C_k$ and $\beta_i(C_*) = \sum_{k=0}^i \dim H_k$.

2.3. Twisted chain complex and twisted cochain complex for CW-complex

Let W be a finite connected CW-complex and $\widetilde{W}$ its universal covering with the induced CW-structure. Since the fundamental group $\pi_1(W)$ acts on $\widetilde{W}$ by the covering transformation, the chain complex $C_*(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z})$ has a natural structure of a left $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W)]$-module. We denote by ρ a homomorphism from $\pi_1(W)$ to G. We regard the Lie group $\mathfrak{g}$ as a right $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W)]$-module by $\mathfrak{g} \times \pi_1(W) \ni (v, \gamma) \mapsto \mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(\gamma^{-1})}(v) \in \mathfrak{g}$. We use the notation $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$ for $\mathfrak{g}$ with the right $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W)]$-module structure. Following [9, 15], we introduce the following notations. Set

$$C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g} \otimes_{\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho} C_*(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z}),$$
$$C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g}(t) \otimes_{\alpha\otimes\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho} C_*(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z})$$

where $\mathfrak{g}(t)$ is $\mathbb{F}(t)\otimes\mathfrak{g}$ and α is a surjective homomorphism from $\pi_1(W)$ to the multiplicative group $\langle t\rangle$. Note that $f\otimes v\otimes(\gamma\cdot\sigma) = f\cdot t^{\alpha(\gamma)}\otimes\mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(\gamma^{-1})}(v)\otimes\sigma$. We call $C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ *the* $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$*-twisted chain complex* and $C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ *the* $\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho$*-twisted chain complex* of W. We also denote by $C^*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ the $\mathbb{F}$-module consisting of the $\pi_1(W)$-equivalent homomorphisms from $C_*(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z})$ to $\mathfrak{g}$, *i.e.*, a homomorphism h satisfies $h(\gamma\cdot\sigma) = h(\sigma)\cdot\gamma^{-1}$ for $\gamma\in\pi_1(W)$. We call $C^*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ *the* $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$*-twisted cochain complex* of W. $H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ and

$H^*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ denote the homology and cohomology groups of the $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted chain and cochain complexes.

2.4. The Reidemeister torsion for twisted chain complex

We keep the notation of the previous subsection. Let $e_1^{(i)},\dots,e_{n_i}^{(i)}$ be the set of i-dimensional cells of W. We take a lift $\widetilde{e}_j^{(i)}$ of the cell $e_j^{(i)}$ in $\widetilde{W}$. Then, for each i, $\widetilde{c}^i=\{\widetilde{e}_1^{(i)},\dots,\widetilde{e}_{n_i}^{(i)}\}$ is a basis of the $\mathbb{Z}[\pi_1(W)]$-module $C_i(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z})$. Let $\mathbf{B}=\{\mathbf{a},\mathbf{b},\mathbf{c}\}$ be a basis of $\mathfrak{g}$. Then we obtain the following basis of $C_i(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$:

$$\mathbf{c_B}=\Big\{\dots,\mathbf{a}\otimes\widetilde{e}_1^{(i)},\mathbf{b}\otimes\widetilde{e}_1^{(i)},\mathbf{c}\otimes\widetilde{e}_1^{(i)},\dots,\mathbf{a}\otimes\widetilde{e}_{n_i}^{(i)},\mathbf{b}\otimes\widetilde{e}_{n_i}^{(i)},\mathbf{c}\otimes\widetilde{e}_{n_i}^{(i)},\dots\Big\}.$$

When $\mathbf{h}^i=\{h_1^i,\dots,h_{k_i}^i\}$ is a basis of $H_i(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$, we denote by $\mathbf{h}$ the basis $\{\mathbf{h}^0,\dots,\mathbf{h}^{\dim W}\}$ of $H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. Then $\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho),\mathbf{c_B},\mathbf{h})\in\mathbb{F}^*$ is well defined. Furthermore adding a sign-refinement term into $\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho),\mathbf{c_B},\mathbf{h})$, we define *the Reidemeister torsion* of (W,ρ) as a vector in some 1-dimensional vector space as follows.

Definition 2.4.1 ([4, 5]). — *Let $c_\mathbb{R}$ be the basis over $\mathbb{R}$ of $C_*(W;\mathbb{R})$. Choose an orientation $\mathfrak{o}$ of the real vector space $\oplus_{i\geqslant 0}H_i(W;\mathbb{R})$ and provide $H_*(W;\mathbb{R})$ with a basis $h_\mathfrak{o}=\{h^0,\dots,h^{\dim W}\}$ such that each h^i is a basis of $H_i(W;\mathbb{R})$ and the orientation determined by $h_\mathfrak{o}$ agrees with $\mathfrak{o}$. Let τ_0 be either $+1$ or -1 according to the sign of $\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\mathbb{R}),c_\mathbb{R},h_\mathfrak{o})$. Then we define the Reidemeister torsion $\mathcal{T}(W,\mathfrak{g}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$ by*

$$\mathcal{T}(W,\mathfrak{g}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})=\tau_0\cdot\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho),\mathbf{c_B},\mathbf{h})\otimes_{i\geqslant 0}\det\mathbf{h}^i\in\mathrm{Det}\,H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho),$$

where $\det\mathbf{h}^i=h_1^{(i)}\wedge\dots\wedge h_{k_i}^{(i)}$ and

$$\mathrm{Det}\,H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)=\otimes_{i=0}^{\dim W}(\wedge^{\dim H_i}H_i(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho))^{(-1)^i}.$$

Here V^{-1} means the dual space of a vector space V and the dual basis of $\det\mathbf{h}^i=h_1^{(i)}\wedge\dots\wedge h_{k_i}^{(i)}$ is $h_1^{(i)*}\wedge\dots\wedge h_{k_i}^{(i)*}$ where $h_j^{(i)*}$ is the dual element of $h_j^{(i)}$.

We made some choices in the definition of $\mathcal{T}(W,\mathfrak{g}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$. However the following well-definedness is known [15, p. 10]:

- The sign of $\mathcal{T}(W,\mathfrak{g}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$ is determined by the homology orientation $\mathfrak{o}$ *i.e.*, if we choose the other homology orientation, then the sign of $\mathcal{T}(W,\mathfrak{g}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$ changes;

- $\mathcal{T}(W, \mathfrak{g}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ does not depend on the choice of the lift $\widetilde{e}_j^{(i)}$ for each cell $e_j^{(i)}$;
- $\mathcal{T}(W, \mathfrak{g}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ does not depend on the choice of the basis $\mathbf{h}$ in $\oplus_{i \geqslant 0} H_i(W; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$.

We also have the following well-definedness.

Lemma 2.4.2. — *If the Euler characteristic of W is equal to zero, then $\mathcal{T}(W, \mathfrak{g}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ does not depend on the choice of the basis of $\mathfrak{g}$.*

Proof. — This follows from the definition. □

Similarly we define the Reidemeister torsion of the twisted $\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho$-chain complex.

Definition 2.4.3. — *We define $\mathcal{T}(W, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ by*

$$\mathcal{T}(W, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o}) = \tau_0 \cdot \mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}), \mathbf{1} \otimes c_{\mathbf{B}}, \mathbf{h}) \otimes_{i \geqslant 0} \det \mathbf{h}^i.$$

$\mathcal{T}(W, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ has the indeterminacy of t^m where $m \in \mathbb{Z}$. This indeterminacy is caused by the choice of the lifts $\{\widetilde{e}_j^{(i)}\}$ and the action of α.

It is also known that the sign refined torsion $\tau_0 \cdot \mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W; \mathfrak{g}_\rho), \mathbf{c}_{\mathbf{B}}, \mathbf{h})$ has the invariance under simple homotopy equivalences, and that it satisfies the following *Multiplicativity property*. Suppose we have the following exact sequence of based chain complexes:

$$0 \to (C'_*, c') \to (C_*, c' \cup \bar{c}'') \to (C''_*, c'') \to 0 \tag{1}$$

where these chain complexes are based chain complexes which consist of vector spaces with bases. Here we denote bases of C'_*, C''_* by c', c'' and a lift of c'' to C_* by $\bar{c}''$. For each i, fix the volume forms on C'_i, C_i, C''_i by using given bases and choose volume forms on $H_i(C'_*), H_i(C_*)$ and $H_i(C''_*)$. There exists the long exact sequence in homology associated to the short exact sequence (1):

$$\cdots \to H_i(C'_*) \to H_i(C_*) \to H_i(C''_*) \to H_{i-1}(C'_*) \to \cdots .$$

We denote by $\mathcal{H}_*$ this acyclic complex. Note that this acyclic complex is a based chain complex.

Proposition 2.4.4 (Multiplicativity property [12, 20]). — *We have*

$$\mathrm{Tor}(C_*) = (-1)^{\alpha(C'_*, C''_*) + \varepsilon(C'_*, C_*, C''_*)} \, \mathrm{Tor}(C'_*) \cdot \mathrm{Tor}(C''_*) \cdot \mathrm{tor}(\mathcal{H}_*),$$

where

$$\alpha(C'_*, C''_*) = \sum_{i \geqslant 0} \alpha_{i-1}(C'_*)\alpha_i(C''_*) \in \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z},$$

$$\varepsilon(C'_*, C_*, C''_*) = \sum_{i \geqslant 0} \Big[(\beta_i(C_*) + 1)(\beta_i(C'_*) + \beta(C''_*)) + \beta_{i-1}(C'_*)\beta(C''_*)\Big] \in \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}.$$

2.5. On the representation spaces

Let π be a finitely generated group and we denote by $R(\pi, G)$ the space of G-representations of π. We define the topology of this space by compact-open topology. Here we assume that π has the discrete topology and the Lie group G has the usual one. A representation $\rho : \pi \to G$ is called *central* if $\rho(\pi) \subset \{\pm \mathbf{1}\}$.

A representation ρ is called *abelian* if its image $\rho(\pi)$ is an abelian subgroup of G. A representation ρ is called *reducible* if there exists a proper non-trivial subspace U of $\mathbb{C}^2$ such that $\rho(g)(U) \subset U$ for any $g \in \pi$. A representation ρ is called *irreducible* if it is not reducible. We denote by $R^{\mathrm{red}}(\pi, G)$ the subset of reducible representations and by $R^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi, G)$ the subset of irreducible ones. Note that all abelian representations are reducible. The Lie group G acts on $R(\pi, G)$ by conjugation. We write $[\rho]$ for the conjugacy class of $\rho \in R(\pi, G)$, and we denote by $\widehat{R}(\pi, G)$ the quotient space $R(\pi, G)/G$.

If G is $\mathrm{SU}(2)$, then one can see that the reducible representations are exactly abelian ones. Note that this does not hold for the case of $\mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$-representations. The action by conjugation of $\mathrm{SU}(2)$ on $R(\pi, \mathrm{SU}(2))$ factors through $\mathrm{SO}(3) = \mathrm{SU}(2)/\{\pm \mathbf{1}\}$. This action is free on the $R^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi, \mathrm{SU}(2))$. We set $\widehat{R}^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi, \mathrm{SU}(2)) = R^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi, \mathrm{SU}(2))/\mathrm{SO}(3)$.

If G is $\mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$, then the quotient space $\widehat{R}(\pi, \mathrm{SL}(2, C))$ is not Hausdorff in general. Following [14], we will focus on the *character variety* $X(\pi; \mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}))$ which is the set of *characters* of π. Associated to the representation $\rho \in R(\pi, \mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}))$, its character $\chi_\rho : \pi \to \mathbb{C}$, defined by $\chi_\rho(g) = \mathrm{Tr}(\rho(g))$. In some sense, $X(\pi, \mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}))$ is the "algebro quotient" of $R(\pi, \mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}))$ by $\mathrm{PSL}(2, \mathbb{C})$. It is well known that $R(\pi, \mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C}))$ and $X(\pi)$ have the structure of complex algebraic affine sets and two irreducible representations of π in $\mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$ with the same character are conjugate by an element of $\mathrm{SL}(2, \mathbb{C})$. (For the details, see [14].)

2.6. The Reidemeister torsion for knot exteriors

In this subsection, we recall λ-regular representations and how to construct distinguished bases of $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted homology groups of knot exteriors for a λ-regular representation ρ. These definitions have originally been given in [15]. The original definitions are written in terms of the $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted cohomology group. We introduce the homology version by using the duality between the twisted homology and cohomology associated to *the Kronecker pairing* $C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) \times C^*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) \ni (\xi \otimes \sigma, v) \mapsto (v(\sigma), \xi)_\mathfrak{g} \in \mathbb{F}$ [15, p. 11].

Let K be a knot in a homology three sphere M. We give a knot exterior M_K the canonical homology orientation defined as follows. It is well known that the $\mathbb{R}$-vector space

$$H_*(M_K;\mathbb{R}) = H_0(M_K;\mathbb{R}) \oplus H_1(M_K;\mathbb{R})$$

has the basis $\{[pt],[\mu]\}$. Here $[pt]$ is the homology class of a point and $[\mu]$ is the homology class of a meridian of K. We denote by $\mathfrak{o}$ the orientation induced by $\{[pt],[\mu]\}$.

We calculate the twisted homology groups of a circle and a 2-dimensional torus before giving the definition of a natural basis of $H_*(M_K;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. Here S^1 consists of one 0-cell $e^{(0)}$ and one 1-cell $e^{(1)}$.

Lemma 2.6.1. — *Suppose that G is* $\mathrm{SU}(2)$. *If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(S^1), G)$ is central, then $H_*(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g} \otimes H_*(S^1;\mathbb{R})$. If ρ is non-central, then we have*

$$H_1(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{R}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{e}^{(1)}],$$

and

$$H_0(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{R}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{e}^{(0)}]$$

where P_ρ is a vector in $\mathfrak{g}$, which satisfies that $\mathrm{Ad}(\rho(\gamma))(P_\rho) = P_\rho$ for any $\gamma \in \pi_1(S^1)$.

Suppose that G is $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$. If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(S^1), G)$ is central, then $H_*(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g} \otimes H_*(S^1;\mathbb{C})$. If ρ is non-central and $\rho(\pi_1(S^1))$ has no parabolic elements, then we have

$$H_1(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{e}^{(1)}],$$

and

$$H_0(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{e}^{(0)}]$$

where P_ρ is a vector in $\mathfrak{g}$, which satisfies that $\mathrm{Ad}(\rho(\gamma))(P_\rho) = P_\rho$ for any $\gamma \in \pi_1(S^1)$. If ρ is non-central and the subgroup $\rho(\pi_1(S^1))$ is contained in a subgroup which consists of parabolic elements, then we have

$$H_1(S^1;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{e}^{(1)}].$$

Proof. — This is a consequence of the following fact of homology of groups. For $G = \mathbb{Z}$, it follows that $H_0(G;N) = H^1(G;N) = N_G$ and $H^0(G;N) = H_1(G;N) = N^G$ where G is a group, N is a N-module, N_G is the group of invariants of N and N^G is the group of co-invariants of N (for the details, see [1]). □

We denote by T^2 a 2-dimensional torus. Here T^2 consists of one 0-cell $e^{(0)}$, two 1-cells $e_1^{(1)}, e_2^{(1)}$ and one 2-cell $e^{(2)}$. We denote each cell $e^{(0)}, e_1^{(1)}, e_2^{(1)}$ and $e^{(2)}$ by pt, μ, λ and T^2. One can also calculate the $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted homology groups of $C_*(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ as follows.

Lemma 2.6.2. — *Suppose that G is* SU(2). *If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(T^2), G)$ is central, then $H_*(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g} \otimes H_*(T^2;\mathbb{R})$. If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(T^2), G)$ is non-central, then we have*

$$H_2(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{R}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{T}^2],$$
$$H_1(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{R}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\mu}\,] \oplus \mathbb{R}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\lambda}\,],$$
$$H_0(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{R}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{pt}\,]$$

where P_ρ is a vector of $\mathfrak{g}$ such that $\mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(\gamma)}(P_\rho) = P_\rho$ for any $\gamma \in \pi_1(T^2)$.

Suppose that G is $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$. *If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(T^2), G)$ is central, then $H_*(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathfrak{g} \otimes H_*(T^2;\mathbb{C})$. If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(T^2), G)$ is non-central and $\rho(\pi_1(T^2))$ contains a non-parabolic element, then we have*

$$H_2(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{T}^2],$$
$$H_1(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\mu}\,] \oplus \mathbb{C}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\lambda}\,],$$
$$H_0(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[\,P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{pt}\,]$$

where P_ρ is a vector of $\mathfrak{g}$ such that $\mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(\gamma)}(P_\rho) = P_\rho$ for any $\gamma \in \pi_1(T^2)$.

If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(T^2), G)$ is non-central and the subgroup $\rho(\pi_1(T^2))$ is contained in a subgroup which consists of parabolic elements, then we have

$$H_2(T^2;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{C}[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{T}^2]$$

and $[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\lambda}]$ is a non-zero class in $H_1(M_K;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$.

Proof. — This is a consequence of [15, Proposition 3.18]. □

Next we give the definition of regular representations for $\pi_1(M_K)$ in terms of the twisted $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-chain complex.

Definition 2.6.3 (regular representations [15, p. 83]). — *We say that ρ is* regular *if ρ is irreducible and $\dim_{\mathbb{F}} H_1(M_K;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = 1$.*

We let γ be a simple closed curve in ∂M_K. We say that ρ is γ-regular *if:*

(1) *ρ is regular;*

(2) *an inclusion* $\iota : \gamma \hookrightarrow M_K$ *induces the surjective homomorphism*

$$\iota_* : H_1(\gamma; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) \to H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho);$$

and

(3) *if* $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\pi_1(\partial M_K))) \subset \{\pm 2\}$, *then* $\rho(\gamma) \neq \pm \mathbf{1}$.

We fix an invariant vector $P_\rho \in \mathfrak{g}$ as above. Let γ be a simple closed curve in ∂M_K. An inclusion $\iota : \gamma \hookrightarrow M_K$ and the the Kronecker pairing between homology and cohomology induce the linear form $f^\rho_\gamma : H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) \to \mathbb{F}$. By Lemma 2.6.1, it is explicitly described by

$$f^\rho_\gamma(v) = (\iota_*([\widetilde{\gamma} \otimes P_\rho]), v) = (P_\rho, v(\widetilde{\gamma}))_{\mathfrak{g}} \quad \text{for any } v \in H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho).$$

An alternative formulation of γ-regular representations is given in [5, 15]. Similarly, we can also give the following alternative formulation of the γ-regularity in our conventions.

Proposition 2.6.4. — *A representation* $\rho \in R^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi_1(M_K), G)$ *is* γ-*regular if and only if the linear form* $f^\rho_\gamma : H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) \to \mathbb{F}$ *is an isomorphism.*

Proof. — If f^ρ_γ is an isomorphism, then we have that $\dim_{\mathbb{F}} H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) = 1$ and $\iota_*([P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}])$ is a non-zero class in $H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. It follows from the Kronecker pairing between the $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted homology and cohomology that $\dim_{\mathbb{F}} H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is also one. Hence ι_* is surjective. If ρ is γ-regular, then we have that $\dim_{\mathbb{F}} H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) = 1$ and $\iota_* : H_1(\gamma; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) \to H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is surjective. We denote a generator of $H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by σ. There exists an element $[v \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}]$ of $H_1(\gamma; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ such that $\iota_*([v \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}]) = \sigma$.

If $\rho(\gamma)$ is central, then v satisfies that $\mathrm{Ad}(\rho(\gamma'))(v) = v$ for any $\gamma' \in \pi_1(\partial M_K)$. Therefore $\iota_*([v \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}])$ induces the isomorphism f^ρ_γ.

Suppose that $\rho(\gamma)$ is non-central, then $H_1(\gamma; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is generated by $[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}]$. There exists an element $c \in \mathbb{F}^*$ such that $[v \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}] = c[P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}]$. Hence $\iota_*([P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}])$ is a non-zero class in $H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. Therefore $\iota_*([P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\gamma}])$ induces the isomorphism f^ρ_γ. □

We define a reference generator of $H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by using the above isomorphism f^ρ_γ.

Let ρ be a λ-regular representation of $\pi_1(M_K)$. By Lemma 2.6.2, the reference generator of $H_1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is defined by

$$h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda) = \iota_* \left([P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\lambda}] \right).$$

Moreover the reference generator of $H_2(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is defined as follows.

LEMMA 2.6.5 (Cor. 3.23 [15]). — *Let $i : \partial M_K \hookrightarrow M_K$ be an inclusion map. If $\rho \in R(\pi_1(M_K), G)$ is γ-regular, then we have the isomorphism $i_* : H_2(\partial M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho) \to H_2(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$.*

Using this isomorphism i_*, we define the reference generator of $H_2(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by

$$h^{(2)}_\rho = i_*([P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\partial M_K}]).$$

Remark 2.6.6. — The reference generators of $H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ and $H^2(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ have been defined in [4, 5, 15] by using another metric of $\mathfrak{g}$. If we define reference generators of $H^1(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ and $H^2(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by using our metric $(\ ,\ )_{\mathfrak{g}}$, then the resulting generators become the dual bases of $h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda)$ and $h^{(2)}_\rho$ from the above propositions. (For the details, see [5, 15].)

We recall the definition of *the twisted Reidemeister torsion* for knot exteriors. Let $\rho : \pi_1(M_K) \to G$ be a λ-regular representation. We define $\mathbb{T}^K_\rho$ by the coefficient of the Reidemeister torsion $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \mathfrak{g}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ where we choose the reference generators $h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}_\rho$ as a basis of $H_*(M_K; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}})$, *i.e.*, $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is given explicitly by

$$\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho) = \tau_0 \cdot \mathrm{Tor}\left(C_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho), \mathbf{c_B}, \left\{h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}_\rho\right\}\right) \in \mathbb{F}^*.$$

Given the reference generator of $H_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$, the basis of the determinant line $\mathrm{Det}\, H_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is also given. This means that a trivialization of the line bundle $\mathrm{Det}\, H_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ at ρ is given. The Reidemeister torsion $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \mathfrak{g}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ is a section of the line bundle $\mathrm{Det}\, H_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. We can regard $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ as a section of the line bundle $\mathrm{Det}\, H_*(M_K; \mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ over λ-regular representations with respect to the trivialization by $\{h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}_\rho\}$. We also call $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ *the twisted Reidemeister torsion*.

3. A relationship between acyclic Reidemeister torsion and non-acyclic Reidemeister torsion

3.1. The statement of main theorem

Our purpose is to express the twisted Reidemeister torsion by using a limit of the acyclic Reidemeister torsion.

Let K be a knot in a homology three sphere M and M_K its exterior. One of the invariants which we will investigate is the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$. The other is the acyclic Reidemeister torsion $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$. This invariant coincides with the twisted Alexander invariant of $\pi_1(M_K)$

[10]. The twisted Alexander invariant is computed by using the Fox calculus [9, 10]. We prove that the twisted Reidemeister torsion may be expressed as the differential coefficient of the twisted Alexander invariant of $\pi_1(M_K)$.

The invariant $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ is only defined when the local system $C_*(M_K; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is acyclic. On the other hand, the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is defined on the set of λ-regular representations of $\pi_1(M_K)$. We need to check whether the local system $C_*(M_K; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is acyclic for a λ-regular representation ρ.

Proposition 3.1.1. — *Let ρ be an $\mathrm{SU}(2)$ or $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation of a knot group. If ρ is λ-regular, then the twisted chain complex $C_*(M_K; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is acyclic.*

Note that for a knot exterior in a homology 3-sphere, the homomorphism α satisfies $\alpha(\mu) = t$ where μ is the meridian of the knot.

Therefore $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ and $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ are well defined on λ-regular representations. By the definitions, the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is an element of $\mathbb{F}^*$ and the twisted Alexander invariant $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ is an element of $\mathbb{F}(t)^*$. Actually the following relation between $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda \in \mathbb{F}^*$ and the rational function $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o}) \in \mathbb{F}(t)^*$.

Theorem 3.1.2. — *If ρ is a λ-regular representation, then the acyclic Reidemeister torsion $\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ for ρ has a simple zero at $t = 1$. Moreover the following holds:*

$$\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho) = -\lim_{t\to 1} \frac{\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})(t)}{t-1} = -\left.\frac{d}{dt}\mathcal{T}(M_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})\right|_{t=1}.$$

This says that we can compute the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ algebraically by using Fox calculus of the twisted Alexander invariant of K.

3.2. Proof of Proposition 3.1.1

We prove Proposition 3.1.1 by using the λ-regularity of ρ.

Proof of Proposition 3.1.1. — It is well known that any compact connected triangulated 3-manifold whose boundary is non-empty and consists of tori can be collapsed into a 2-dimensional sub-complex (see II. Cor. 11.9 in [19]). Moreover, by the simple-homotopy extension theorem, every CW-complex has the simple-homotopy type of a CW-complex which has only one vertex. We denote this 2-dimensional CW-complex by W and this deformation from M_K to W by φ. Since two $\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho$-twisted homology groups

$H_*(M_K;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ and $H_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ are isomorphic, we prove that $H_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ vanishes in the following.

The fact that $H_0(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)=0$ is proved in [9, Proposition 3.5]. Since the Euler characteristic of W is zero, the dimension of $H_1(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is equal to that of $H_2(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$. We must prove that the dimension of $H_2(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ over $\mathbb{F}(t)$ is zero. It is enough to prove that the rank over $\mathbb{F}[t,t^{-1}]$ of the second homology group of the following local system is zero:

$$C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}]) = \mathfrak{g}[t,t^{-1}] \otimes_{\alpha\otimes\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho} C_*(\widetilde{W};\mathbb{Z})$$

where $\mathfrak{g}[t,t^{-1}]$ is $\mathbb{F}[t,t^{-1}]\otimes\mathfrak{g}$. We denote the homology group of this chain complex by $H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}])$. Suppose that the rank of $H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}])>0$.

There exists the long exact homology sequence [18]:

$$0 \to H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}]) \xrightarrow{(t-1)\cdot} H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}]) \xrightarrow{t=1} H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) \xrightarrow{\Delta} H_1(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}]) \to \cdots$$

associated to the short exact sequence:

$$0 \to \mathfrak{g}[t,t^{-1}] \xrightarrow{(t-1)\cdot} \mathfrak{g}[t,t^{-1}] \xrightarrow{t=1} \mathfrak{g} \to 0.$$

Since the rank of $H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}])$ is not zero, the multiplication with $(t-1)$ is not surjective. Hence the image of the evaluation map $(t=1)$ is not trivial and therefore surjective since the dimension of $H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ is only one. This implies that Δ is trivial. On the other hand the equation

$$\partial(1\otimes P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\partial M_K)}) = (t-1)\cdot(1\otimes P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)})$$

implies that $\Delta([P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\partial M_K)}]) = [1\otimes P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}]$. But $[1\otimes P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}]$ can not be trivial since it is mapped under the evaluation map $(t=1)$ to $[P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}]$ and the chain $P_\rho\otimes\widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}$ represents a non-zero homology class in $H_1(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. This is a contradiction. Therefore the rank of $H_2(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho[t,t^{-1}])$ over $\mathbb{F}[t,t^{-1}]$ is zero. Hence we have that $\dim_{\mathbb{F}(t)} H_2(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)=0$. Also $\dim_{\mathbb{F}(t)} H_1(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is zero. □

3.3. Proof of Theorem 3.1.2

At first, we prepare some notations and an algebraic proposition.

Let C_* is an n-dimensional chain complex which consists of left G-modules $M_i\,(1\leqslant i\leqslant n)$ where G is a group. We denote by $C_*(V)$ the chain complex which consists of the vector spaces $V\otimes_\rho M_i$ where V is a right G-vector space over $\mathbb{F}$ and ρ is a homomorphism from G to $\mathrm{Aut}(V)$.

Let $H_*(V)$ be the homology groups of $C_*(V)$, $C'_*(V)$ the subchain complex which consists of a lift of $H_*(V)$ to $C_*(V)$ and $C''_*(V)$ the quotient of $C_*(V)$ by $C'_*(V)$. We denote by $h(V), c'$ and c'' the bases of $H_*(V), C'_*(V)$ and $C''_*(V)$. Note that c' is a lift of $h(V)$ to $C_*(V)$. If there exists a homomorphism α from G to the multiplicative group $\langle t\rangle$, we denote by $C_*(V(t))$ which consists of vector spaces $V(t) \otimes_{\alpha\otimes\rho} M_i$. Here we denote $\mathbb{F}(t) \otimes V$ by $V(t)$. Moreover let $C'_*(V(t))$ be the subchain complex which is given by extending the coefficients of $C'_*(V)$ to $\mathbb{F}(t)$ by using α and $C''_*(V(t))$ the quotient of $C_*(V(t))$ by $C'_*(V(t))$.

Proposition 3.3.1. — *We assume that $C_*(V(t))$ and $C'_*(V(t))$ are acyclic. The following relation holds:*

$$(1)\quad \lim_{t\to 1}(-1)^{\alpha'} \frac{\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c' \cup 1\otimes \bar{c}'')}{\mathrm{Tor}(C'_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c')} = (-1)^{\varepsilon' + |C_*(V)|}\,\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(V), c'\cup \bar{c}'', h(V))$$

where $\bar{c}''$ is a lift of c'' to $C_*(V)$, α' is $\alpha(C'_*(V(t)), C''_*(V(t)))$ in Proposition 2.4.4, and $\varepsilon' \in \mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ is given by $\sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \dim_{\mathbb{F}} C''_i(V)\cdot \beta_i(C_*(V))$.

Proof. — The chain complex $C''_*(V(t))$ is also acyclic from the long exact sequence of the pair $(C_*(V(t)), C'_*(V(t)))$. We can apply Proposition 2.4.4 for the short exact sequence:

$$0 \to (C'_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c') \to (C_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c' \cup 1\otimes \bar{c}'') \to (C''_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c'') \to 0.$$

Then, we obtain the following equation of the torsions.

$$(2)\quad (-1)^{\alpha'}\,\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c' \cup 1\otimes \bar{c}'') = \mathrm{Tor}(C'_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c')\cdot \mathrm{Tor}(C''_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c'').$$

Note that $\varepsilon(C'_*(V(t)), C_*(V(t)), C''_*(V(t))) = 0$ because $C_*(V(t))$, $C'_*(V(t))$ and $C''_*(V(t))$ are acyclic.

Next we consider $\mathrm{Tor}(C''_*(V(t)), c'')$. It follows from the long exact sequence of the pair $(C_*(V), C'_*(V))$ and the definition of $C'_*(V)$ that the chain complex $C''_*(V)$ is also acyclic. Since $C''_*(V)$ is acyclic, we can choose a basis $\widetilde{b}''^i$ of $\widetilde{B}''_i$ for each i. Here $\widetilde{B}''_i$ is a lift of $B''_i = \mathrm{Im}\,\partial_{i+1}(C''_{i+1}(V))$ to $C''_{i+1}(V)$.

Claim 3.3.2. — *A subset $1\otimes \widetilde{b}''^i$ in $C''_{i+1}(V(t))$ generates a subspace on which the boundary operator ∂_{i+1} is injective.*

Proof of Claim 3.3.2. — If the determinant of the boundary operator restricted on $\mathbb{F}(t)\langle 1\otimes \widetilde{b}''^i\rangle$ is zero, then substituting 1 for the parameter t

we have that the determinant of the boundary operator restricted on $\mathbb{F}\langle\widetilde{b}''^i\rangle$ is also zero. This is a contradiction to the choices of $\widetilde{b}''^i$. □

Therefore $\mathrm{Tor}(C''_*(V(t)), 1\otimes c'')$ is represented as

$$\prod_{i=0}^{n}\left[\partial_{i+1}(1\otimes\widetilde{b}''^i)1\otimes\widetilde{b}''^{i-1}/1\otimes c''^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}}.$$

We denote by $\widetilde{b}^i$ a lift $1\otimes\widetilde{b}''^i$ to $C_*(V(t))$ simply. Note that

$$\prod_{i=0}^{n}\left[\partial_{i+1}(1\otimes\widetilde{b}''^i)\,1\otimes\widetilde{b}''^{i-1}/1\otimes c''^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}} = \prod_{i=0}^{n}\left[(1\otimes c'^i)\,\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\,\widetilde{b}^{i-1}/1\otimes c'^i\cup 1\otimes \bar{c}''^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}}.$$

We substitute these results into the equation (2) Then we have

$$\begin{aligned}(3)\quad \frac{\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(V(t)),1\otimes c'\cup 1\otimes\bar{c}'')}{\mathrm{Tor}(C'_*(V(t)),1\otimes c')} &= \mathrm{Tor}(C''_*(V(t)),1\otimes c'')\\ &=\prod_{i=0}^{n}\left[(1\otimes c'^i)\,\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\,\widetilde{b}^{i-1}/1\otimes c'^i\cup 1\otimes\bar{c}''^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}}\\ &=\prod_{i=0}^{n}(-1)^{\dim_{\mathbb{F}}B''_i\cdot\dim_{\mathbb{F}}H_i(V)}\Big[\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\,(1\otimes c'^i)\,\widetilde{b}^{i-1}/1\\ &\qquad\otimes c'^i\cup 1\otimes\bar{c}''^i\Big]^{(-1)^{i+1}}.\end{aligned}$$

The acyclicity of $C''_*(V)$ shows that

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n}\dim_{\mathbb{F}}B''_i\cdot\dim_{\mathbb{F}}H_i(V)\equiv\sum_{i=0}^{n-1}\dim_{\mathbb{F}}C''_i(V)\cdot\beta_i(C_*(V))\pmod 2.$$

Substituting 1 for t, the right hand side (3) turns into

$$(-1)^{\varepsilon'}\prod_{i=0}^{n}\left[\partial_{i+1}(\widetilde{b}^i)\,\widetilde{h}^i\,\widetilde{b}^{i-1}/c'^i\cup\bar{c}''^i\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}}.$$

This is equal to $(-1)^{\epsilon'+|C_*(V)|}\,\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(V),c'\cup\bar{c}'',h(V))$.

Although the left hand side is determined up to a factor $t^m (m\in\mathbb{Z})$, the limit at $t=1$ is determined because the factor t^m does not affect taking a limit at $t=1$. □

We can prove Theorem 3.1.2 as an application of Proposition 3.3.1.

Proof of Theorem 3.1.2. — As in the proof of Proposition 3.1.1, let W be a 2-dimensional CW-complex with a single vertex which has the same simple-homotopy type as M_K. We denote the deformation from M_K to W by φ. The compact 3-manifold M_K is simple homotopy equivalent to W. It is enough to prove the theorem for W because of the invariance of the simple homotopy equivalence for the Reidemeister torsion. Let ρ be a λ-regular representation of $\pi_1(M_K)$. We denote by the same symbols ρ and $\mathfrak{o}$ the representation of $\pi_1(W)$ and the homology orientation of $H_*(W;\mathbb{R})$ induced from that of M_K under the map φ.

We define the subchain complex $C'_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ of the $\mathfrak{g}_\rho$-twisted chain complex $C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by

$$C'_2(M_K;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{F}\langle P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\partial M_K)}\rangle, \quad C'_1(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = \mathbb{F}\langle P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}\rangle$$

and $C_i(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho) = 0\,(i \neq 1,2)$ where P_ρ is an invariant vector of $\mathfrak{g}$ such that $\mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(\gamma)}(P_\rho) = P_\rho$ for any $\gamma \in \pi_1(\varphi(\partial M_K))$. The modules of this subchain complex are lifts of homology groups $H_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. By the definition, the boundary operators of $C'_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ are zero homomorphisms. Let $C''_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ be the quotient of $C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ by $C'_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. Similarly, we define the subcomplex $C'_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ of $C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ to be

$$C'_2(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho) = \mathbb{F}(t)\langle 1 \otimes P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\partial M_K)}\rangle, \quad C'_1(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho) = \mathbb{F}(t)\langle 1 \otimes P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}\rangle$$

and $C'_i(W) = 0$ for $i \neq 1,2$. The boundary operators of $C'_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is given by

$$0 \to C'_2(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho) \xrightarrow{(t-1)\cdot} C'_1(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho) \to 0.$$

This shows that the subchain complex $C'_*(M_K;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is acyclic. By Proposition 3.1.1, the $\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho$-twisted chain complex $C_*(M_K;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is also acyclic.

The twisted chain complex $C'_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ has the natural basis:

$$c' = \{P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\partial M_K)},\, P_\rho \otimes \widetilde{\varphi(\lambda)}\}.$$

Let c'' be a basis of $C''_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$ and $\bar{c}''$ a lift of c'' to $C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)$. Applying Proposition 3.3.1, we have

$$\text{(4)} \quad \lim_{t \to 1} \frac{(-1)^{\alpha'}\,\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho), 1\otimes c' \cup 1 \otimes \bar{c}'')}{\mathrm{Tor}(C'_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho), 1 \otimes c')}$$
$$= (-1)^{\varepsilon' + |C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)|}\,\mathrm{Tor}\left(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho), c' \cup \bar{c}'', \{h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}\rho\}\right).$$

Claim 3.3.3.

(1) $\mathrm{Tor}(C'_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho), 1 \otimes c') = t-1$.
(2) $\alpha' \equiv 0 \pmod 2$.
(3) $\varepsilon' + |C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)| \equiv 1 \pmod 2$.

Proof of Claim 3.3.3.

(1) It follows by the definition.
(2) If we denote the number of 1-cells of W by k, the CW-complex W has one 0-cell, k 1-cells and $(k-1)$ 2-cells. We have $\alpha' = 0\cdot(3k+2)+1\cdot(6k-2)+2\cdot(6k-2) \equiv 0 \pmod 2$.
(3) This follows from $\varepsilon' = (3k-4)\cdot 1 \equiv 3k-4 \pmod 2$ and $|C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho)| = 3\cdot 0 + (3k+3)\cdot 1 + (3k+3+3k-3)\cdot 2 \equiv 3k+3 \pmod 2$.

□

The equation (4) turns into

$$\lim_{t\to 1}\frac{\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho), 1\otimes c' \cup 1\otimes \bar{c}'')}{t-1} = -\,\mathrm{Tor}\left(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho), c'\cup\bar{c}'', \left\{h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}\rho\right\}\right).$$

Multiplying the both sides by the alternative products of the determinants of the base-change matrices

$$\prod_{i=0}^{2}\left[c'^i \cup \bar{c}''^i/\mathbf{c_B}\right]^{(-1)^{i+1}},$$

we obtain the following equation:

$$\lim_{t\to 1}\frac{\mathrm{Tor}(C_*(W;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho), \mathbf{c_B})}{t-1} = -\,\mathrm{Tor}\left(C_*(W;\mathfrak{g}_\rho), \mathbf{c_B}, \left\{h^{(1)}_\rho(\lambda), h^{(2)}\rho\right\}\right).$$

Finally multiplying the both sides by the sign τ_0 gives

$$\lim_{t\to 1}\frac{\mathcal{T}(W,\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})}{t-1} = -\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho).$$

Summarizing the above calculation, we have shown that the rational function $\mathcal{T}(M_K,\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$ has a simple zero at $t=1$ and its differential coefficient at $t=1$ agrees with minus the twisted Reidemeister torsion $-\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho)$. □

3.4. A description of $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ using a Wirtinger representation

Let K be a knot in S^3 and E_K its exterior. We assume that $\rho \in R(\pi_1(E_K), G)$ is λ-regular. From Theorem 3.1.2 we can describe $-\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho)$ by using the differential coefficient of $\mathcal{T}(E_K,\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$. We will describe the differential coefficient of $\mathcal{T}(E_K,\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho,\mathfrak{o})$ more explicitly by using a Wirtinger representation of $\pi_1(E_K)$.

For a Wirtinger representation:

$$\pi_1(E_K) = \langle x_1, \ldots, x_k \,|\, r_1, \ldots, r_{k-1} \rangle\,,$$

we obtain a 2-dimensional CW-complex W which consists of one 0-cell p, k 1-cells $x_1, \ldots, x_k$ and $(k-1)$ 2-cells $D_1, \ldots, D_{k-1}$ attached by the relation $r_1, \ldots, r_{k-1}$. This CW-complex W is simple homotopy equivalent to E_K. Let $\alpha : \pi_1(E_K) \to \mathbb{Z} = \langle t \rangle$ such that $\alpha(\mu) = t$. Here μ is a meridian of K. Note that for all i, $\alpha(x_i)$ is equal to t in $\mathbb{Z} = \langle t \rangle$.

The following calculation is due to the result of [9, 10]. This chain complex $C_*(W; \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ is as follows:

$$0 \to \mathfrak{g}(t)^{k-1} \xrightarrow{\partial_2} \mathfrak{g}(t)^k \xrightarrow{\partial_1} \mathfrak{g}(t) \to 0$$

where

$$\partial_2 = \begin{pmatrix} \Phi(\frac{\partial r_1}{\partial x_1}) & \ldots & \Phi(\frac{\partial r_{k-1}}{\partial x_1}) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \Phi(\frac{\partial r_1}{\partial x_k}) & \ldots & \Phi(\frac{\partial r_{k-1}}{\partial x_k}) \end{pmatrix},$$

$$\partial_1 = (\Phi(x_1 - 1),\, \Phi(x_2 - 1),\, \ldots,\, \Phi(x_k - 1))\,.$$

Here we briefly denote the l-times direct sum of $\mathfrak{g}(t)$ by $\mathfrak{g}(t)^l$.

We denote by $A^1_{K, \mathrm{Ad} \circ \rho}$ $3(k-1) \times 3(k-1)$ matrix:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Phi(\frac{\partial r_1}{\partial x_2}) & \ldots & \Phi(\frac{\partial r_{k-1}}{\partial x_2}) \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ \Phi(\frac{\partial r_1}{\partial x_k}) & \ldots & \Phi(\frac{\partial r_{k-1}}{\partial x_k}) \end{pmatrix}.$$

Under this situation, the twisted Alexander invariant $\mathcal{T}(W, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ is given by

$$\tau_0 \cdot \frac{\det A^1_{K, \mathrm{Ad} \circ \rho}}{\det(\Phi(x_1 - 1))}$$

up to a factor t^m ($m \in \mathbb{Z}$).

If $\rho(x_i)$ is conjugate to the upper triangulate matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & * \\ 0 & a^{-1} \end{pmatrix},$$

then $\mathrm{Ad}_{\rho(x_i^{-1})}$ is conjugate to the upper triangulate matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & * & * \\ & a^2 & * \\ & & a^{-2} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Calculating $\det(\Phi(x_1 - 1))$, we have that

$$\det(\Phi(x_1-1)) = (t-1)\big(t^2 - \mathrm{Tr}(\rho(x_1^2))t + 1\big).$$

Since $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ has zero at $t=1$,

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{d}{dt}\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})\bigg|_{t=1} &= \lim_{t\to 1}\frac{\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})}{t-1} \\ &= \lim_{t\to 1}\tau_0\cdot t^m \frac{\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)}{(t-1)^2(t^2-\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(x_1^2))t+1)}.\end{aligned}$$

Lemma 3.4.1. — *If* $\mathrm{Tr}\,\rho(\partial E_K) \not\subset \{\pm 2\}$, *then we have*

$$\lim_{t\to 1}\tau_0\cdot t^m\frac{\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)}{(t-1)^2} = \frac{\tau_0}{2}\,\frac{d^2}{dt^2}\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)\bigg|_{t=1}.$$

Proof. — The function $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ has a simple zero at $t=1$ and the numerator $\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)$ is an element of $\mathbb{F}[t,t^{-1}]$. Hence $(t-1)^2$ divides $\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)$. We write $(t-1)^2 f(t)$ for $\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)$. Then the left hand side turns into $\lim_{t\to 1}\tau_0\cdot t^m f(t)$, *i.e.*, $\tau_0 f(1)$. On the other hand, the right hand side becomes as follows.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\tau_0}{2}\,\frac{d^2}{dt^2}\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)\bigg|_{t=1} &= \frac{\tau_0}{2}\,\frac{d^2}{dt^2}(t-1)^2 f(t)\bigg|_{t=1} \\ &= \frac{\tau_0}{2}\frac{d}{dt}\left\{2(t-1)f(t) + (t-1)^2 f'(t)\right\}\bigg|_{t=1} \\ &= \frac{\tau_0}{2}\left[2f(t) + 4(t-1)f'(t) + (t-1)^2 f''(t)\right]_{t=1} \\ &= \tau_0 f(1).\end{aligned}$$

□

The numerator $\det A^1_{K,\mathrm{Ad}\circ\rho}(t)$ is called *the first homology torsion* of $C_*(E_K;\widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho)$ [9]. We denote the first homology torsion by $\Delta_1(t)$. By the above calculations, we obtain the following description of $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho)$.

Proposition 3.4.2. — *If* $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\partial E_K)) \not\subset \{\pm 2\}$, *then we have the following expression.*

$$\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho) = -\frac{d}{dt}\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})\bigg|_{t=1} = \frac{\tau_0\Delta_1''(1)}{2}\cdot\frac{1}{\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(x_1^2))-2}.$$

Remark 3.4.3. — If G is $\mathrm{SU}(2)$ and ρ is λ-regular, then $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\partial E_K)) \not\subset \{\pm 2\}$.

Remark 3.4.4. — We use a Wirtinger representation of $\pi_1(E_K)$ to describe $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ in the above calculation. The twisted Alexander invariant $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ does not depend on the representation of $\pi_1(E_K)$ [21].

Since $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$ is determined by the finite presentable group $\pi_1(E_K)$ and $\rho \in R(E_K, G)$, we do not necessarily need to use a Wirtinger representation on calculating $\mathcal{T}(E_K, \widetilde{\mathfrak{g}}_\rho, \mathfrak{o})$.

4. Applications.

In this section, we deal with a 2-bridge knot K in S^3 and SU(2)-representations of its knot group. In this case $\rho \in R(\pi_1(E_K), \mathrm{SU}(2))$ is irreducible if and only if $\rho(\pi_1(E_K))$ is a non-abelian subgroup of SU(2). We will show the explicit calculation of SU(2)-twisted Reidemeister torsion associated to 5_2 knot and study the critical points of the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$. If K is hyperbolic and G is $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$, then some features of $\mathbb{T}^K_\mu(\rho)$, given in this section, have appeared in [15, Section 4.3].

4.1. A review of a representation of a 2-bridge knot group

It is well known that $\pi_1(E_K)$ has the representation:

$$\langle x, y \,|\, wx = yw \rangle,$$

where w is a word in x and y. Here x and y represent the meridian of the knot. The method we use to describe the space of $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$ and SU(2)-representations is due to R. Riley ([16]). He shows how to parametrize conjugacy classes of irreducible $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$ and SU(2)-representations of any 2-bridge knot group. We review his method ([8, 16]).

Given $s, u \in \mathbb{C}$, we consider the assignment as follows:

$$x \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} s & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad y \mapsto \begin{pmatrix} s & 0 \\ -su & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Let W be the matrix obtained by replacing x and y by the above two matrices in the word w. This assignment defines a $\mathrm{GL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation if and only if $\phi(s,u) = 0$ where $\phi(s,u) = W_{11} + (1-s)W_{12}$.

One can obtain an $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation from this $\mathrm{GL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation by dividing the above two matrices by some square root of s. If we give a path $(s(a), u(a))$ in $\mathbb{C}^2$ with $\phi(s(a), u(a)) = 0$ and some continuous branch of the square root along $s(a)$, then we obtain a path of $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representations. Furthermore, all conjugacy classes of non-abelian $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representations arise in this way.

According to Proposition 4 of Riley's paper [16], a pair (s, u) with $\phi(s,u) = 0$ corresponds to an SU(2)-representation if and only if $|s| = 1$, and u is real number which lies in the interval $[s+s^{-1}-2, 0] = [2\cos\theta - 2, 0]$ where $s = e^{i\theta}$. This correspondence means that the $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$-representation resulting from such a pair (s, u) and some square root of s is conjugate to an $\mathrm{SU}(2)$-representation in $\mathrm{SL}(2,\mathbb{C})$.

We take the ordered basis E, H, F of $\mathfrak{sl}(2,\mathbb{C})$ as follows.

$$E = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad H = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad F = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 0 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

The Lie algebra $\mathfrak{su}(2)$ is a subspace of $\mathfrak{sl}(2,\mathbb{C})$. The vectors E, H, F also form a basis of $\mathfrak{su}(2)$. Since the Euler characteristic of E_K is zero, the non-abelian Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho)$ does not depend on a choice of a basis of $\mathfrak{su}(2)$. We can use E, H, F as an ordered basis of $\mathfrak{su}(2)$. We denote by $\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}$ the representation corresponding to the pair $(\sqrt{s}, u)$. The representation matrices of $\mathrm{Ad}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(x))$ and $\mathrm{Ad}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(y))$ for this ordered basis are given as follows.

Lemma 4.1.1.

$$\mathrm{Ad}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(x)) = \begin{pmatrix} s & -2 & -\frac{1}{s} \\ 0 & 1 & \frac{1}{s} \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{s} \end{pmatrix}, \quad \mathrm{Ad}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(y)) = \begin{pmatrix} s & 0 & 0 \\ su & 1 & 0 \\ -su^2 & -2u & \frac{1}{s} \end{pmatrix}.$$

Note that even if we choose another square root of s, we obtain the same representation matrices of the adjoint actions of $\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(x)$ and $\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(y)$.

4.2. SU(2)-twisted Reidemeister torsion associated to 5_2 knot

We consider 5_2 knot in the knot table of Rolfsen [17]. Note that this knot is not fibered, since its Alexander polynomial is not monic. This is the simplest example such as non-fibered in 2-bridge knots. Let K be 5_2 knot. A diagram of K is shown as in Figure 4.1.

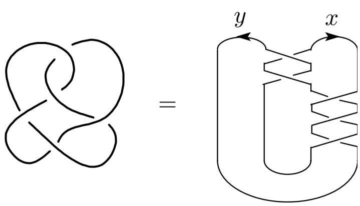

Figure 4.1. A diagram of 5_2 knot.

This knot is also called 3-twist knot. It follows from Theorem 3 of [11] that $\widehat{R}^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi_1(E_K), \mathrm{SU}(2))$ consists of one circle and one open arc.

The knot group $\pi_1(E_K)$ has the following representation:

$$\langle x, y \,|\, wx = yw \rangle$$

where $w = x^{-1}y^{-1}xyx^{-1}y^{-1}$. From this representation, the Riley's polynomial of 5_2 is given by

$$W_{11} + (1-s)W_{12} \\ = \frac{-u^3+(2(s+1/s)-3)u^2+(-(s^2+1/s^2)+3(s+1/s)-6)u+2(s+1/s)-3}{s}.$$

We may take Riley's polynomial $\phi(s,u)$ as

$$u^3 - (2(s+1/s)-3)u^2 + ((s^2+1/s^2) - 3(s+1/s)+6)u - (2(s+1/s)-3).$$

We want to know pairs (s,u) such that $s = e^{i\theta}$, u is a real number in the interval $[2\cos\theta - 2, 0]$ and $\phi(s,u) = 0$. When we regard $\phi(s,u) = 0$ as the equation of u, the relation between the number of solutions of $\phi(s,u) = 0$ and s is as follows.

(1) If $-2 \leqslant s + 1/s < (3 - \sqrt{13+16\sqrt{2}})/2$, then $\phi(s,u) = 0$ has three different simple root in $[s+1/s-2, 0]$.
(2) If $s + 1/s = (3 - \sqrt{13+16\sqrt{2}})/2$, then $\phi(s,u) = 0$ has a simple root and a multiple root in $[s+1/s-2, 0]$.
(3) If $(3 - \sqrt{13+16\sqrt{2}})/2 < s + 1/s < 3/2$, then $\phi(s,u) = 0$ has a simple root in $[s+1/s-2, 0]$.

The figure of $\widehat{R}^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi_1(E_K), \mathrm{SU}(2))$ is given as in Figure 4.2.

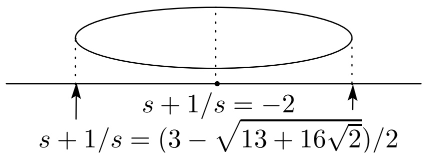

Figure 4.2. $\widehat{R}^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi_1(E_K), \mathrm{SU}(2))$ *where* K *is* 5_2 *knot.*

We denote the SU(2)-representation corresponding to (s,u) by $\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}$. Then we can express $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u})$ from Proposition 3.4.2 as follows.

$$\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}) = \frac{\tau_0 \Delta''_1(1)}{2} \cdot \frac{1}{s+1/s-2}$$

Using a computer, we calculate a half of the differential coefficient of the second order of the numerator and simplify with the equation $\phi(s,u)=0$. Then we have

$$\frac{\tau_0\Delta_1''(1)}{2} = \tau_0(s+1/s-2)\big(-(5(s+1/s)+3)u^2+(5(s+1/s)^2 - 7(s+1/s)+1)u+1-10(s+1/s)\big).$$

Therefore we have

$$\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}) = \tau_0\big(-(5(s+1/s)+3)u^2+(5(s+1/s)^2 - 7(s+1/s)+1)u+1-10(s+1/s)\big),$$

where (u,s) satisfies $\phi(u,s)=0$.

4.3. On critical points of the SU(2)-twisted Reidemeister torsion associated to 2-bridge knots

From the example in the previous subsection, one can guess that the SU(2)-twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ associated to a 2-bridge knot K is a function for the parameter $s+1/s$. Indeed the following holds.

Proposition 4.3.1. — *Let K be a 2-bridge knot and γ a simple closed curve in the boundary torus of E_K. Suppose that γ-regular* SU(2)*-representations are parametrized by $(s,u)\in \mathrm{U}(1)\times\mathbb{R}$ of Riley's method. If the trace of the meridian, $\sqrt{s}+1/\sqrt{s}$, gives a local parameter of the* SU(2)*-character variety, then the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma$ is a smooth function for $s+1/s$.*

Proof. — If we denote by $\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}$ a γ-regular representation corresponding to $\sqrt{s}+1/\sqrt{s}$, then there exists some homomorphism $\varepsilon:\pi_1(E_K)\to\{\pm1\}$ such that $\varepsilon\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}$ is a γ-regular representation corresponding to $-\sqrt{s}-1/\sqrt{s}$. By the construction of $\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma$, $\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma(\rho)$ is equal to $\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma(\varepsilon\rho)$. Since $\sqrt{s}+1/\sqrt{s}$ is a square root of $s+1/s+2$ and regular representations are irreducible, the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\gamma$ is a smooth function for $s+1/s$. □

Corollary 4.3.2. — *If the trace of the meridian gives a local parameter of the* SU(2)*-character variety and the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is defined, then $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is a smooth function for $s+1/s$.*

Remark 4.3.3. — All representations ρ of 2-bridge knot groups into SU(2) such that $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\mu))=0$ are binary dihedral representations. It follows from [7] that there exists a neighbourhood of the character of each binary dihedral representation for any 2-bridge knot, which is diffeomorphic to an open interval. From [2], the trace of the meridian gives a local parameter on a neighbourhood of the character of each dihedral representation for 2-bridge knots.

We can regard the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ as a smooth function on a neighbourhood of the character of each binary dihedral representation. Moreover these characters can be critical points of $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ as follows.

Corollary 4.3.4. — *Let K be a 2-bridge knot. If a λ-regular component of the $\mathrm{SU}(2)$-character variety of $\pi_1(E_K)$ contains the characters of dihedral representations, then the function $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ has a critical point at the character of each dihedral representation.*

Proof. — By Corollary 4.3.2 and Remark 4.3.3, the twisted Reidemeister torsion $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ is a smooth function for $s+1/s$. When we substitute $e^{i\theta}$ for s, we can describe $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda(\rho)$ as

$$\frac{f(2\cos\theta)}{2\cos\theta-2}$$

where $f(2\cos\theta)$ is a smooth function for $2\cos\theta$. This is a description of $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ with respect to the local coordinate θ of $\widehat{R}^{\mathrm{irr}}(\pi_1(E_K), \mathrm{SU}(2))$. The derivation of this function for θ becomes

$$\frac{\{-2f'(2\cos\theta)(2\cos\theta-2)+2f(2\cos\theta)\}\sin\theta}{(2\cos\theta-2)^2}.$$

We recall that $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(\mu)) = \mathrm{Tr}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(x)) = 2\cos(\theta/2)$. If $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho_{\sqrt{s},u}(\mu)) = 2\cos(\theta/2) = 0$, then $\sin\theta = 0$. Hence the derivation of $\mathbb{T}^K_\lambda$ vanishes if ρ satisfies $\mathrm{Tr}(\rho(\mu)) = 0$. □

Remark 4.3.5. — From [2], for 2-bridge knots, the character of a binary dihedral representation is a branch point of the two-fold branched cover from the SU(2)-character variety to the SO(3)-character variety. Moreover, every algebraic component of the SU(2)-character variety contains the character of such a representation.

Remark 4.3.6. — By [11, Theorem 10], for a knot K, the number of conjugacy class of binary dihedral representations is given by $(|\Delta_K(-1)| - 1)/2$ where $\Delta_K(t)$ is the Alexander polynomial of K. In particular, for a 2-bridge knot $b(\alpha,\beta)$ (Schubert's notation, see for example [3]), this number is given by $(\alpha-1)/2$.

Acknowledgements. — The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Mikio Furuta for his suggestions and helpful discussions. He is thankful to Hiroshi Goda, Takayuki Morifuji, Teruaki Kitano for helpful suggestions. Especially the author gratefully acknowledges the many helpful suggestions of Hiroshi Goda during the preparation of the paper. Our main theorem was written as the statement for knots in S^3 at first. Jérôme Dubois pointed out that our main theorem can hold for knots in homology three spheres. The author is thankful to Jérôme Dubois for his pointing out. He also would like to thank the referee for his/her careful reading and appropriate advices. He/She has given suggestions to improve the proofs of Proposition 3.1.1 and Proposition 4.3.1. He/She also suggested the fact that critical points of Reidemeister torsion are related to the dihedral representations.

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Manuscrit reçu le 6 avril 2006,
révisé le 1er décembre 2006,
accepté le 15 mars 2007.

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