

1-1-2018

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### Recommended Citation

BHUPAL, SELMA ALTINOK and BHUPAL, MOHAN LAL (2018) "On the monodromy of Milnor open books," *Turkish Journal of Mathematics*: Vol. 42: No. 3, Article 22. <https://doi.org/10.3906/mat-1706-41>  
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## On the monodromy of Milnor open books

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Received: 13.06.2017

Accepted/Published Online: 21.09.2017

Final Version: 08.05.2018

**Abstract:** We present some techniques that can be used to factorize the monodromy of certain Milnor open books. We also describe a class of Milnor open books for which we can explicitly express the monodromy as a product of Dehn twists.

**Key words:** Canonical contact structures, surface singularities, Milnor open books, monodromy

### 1. Introduction

Let  $(X, x)$  be the germ of a normal complex analytic surface having a singularity at  $x$ . Assuming that the link  $M_X$  of  $(X, x)$  is a rational homology sphere, we can apply, without change, the construction in [1] to explicitly construct Milnor open books on  $M_X$ , which support the canonical contact structure. Although the action of the monodromy of the open book on a certain decomposition of the page was described in [1], a general method for explicitly presenting the monodromy as a product of Dehn twists was not given. Nevertheless, using the description therein, such a presentation for the monodromy of an open book decomposition supporting the canonical contact structure on the link of each type of simple singularity was given. In [10], by using a theorem of Bonatti and Paris [2], Yılmaz was able find a similar presentation of the monodromy of an open book decomposition supporting the canonical contact structure on the link of each type of quotient singularity. In that work, it should be noted that all the Milnor open books had pages of genus 1. In the present work, we present some techniques that, used in conjunction with the aforementioned result of Bonatti and Paris, allow one to explicitly present the monodromy of Milnor open books as products of Dehn twists for a wider class of examples. In particular, the pages are allowed to have genus greater than 1. These techniques are illustrated on certain Milnor open books on links of minimally elliptic singularities [5].

### 2. Milnor open book decompositions

In this section, for the purpose of fixing notation and giving conventions, we collect some background results on Milnor open book decompositions. For further background results and an extensive survey of the literature, the reader may refer to the notes of Popescu-Pampu [9].

Given an embedding of the normal complex analytic surface singularity germ  $(X, x)$  in  $(\mathbb{C}^N, 0)$ , the link of  $(X, x)$  is defined to be the 3-manifold  $M_X = X \cap S_\epsilon^{2N-1}$  obtained by intersecting a sufficiently small Euclidean

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2000 AMS Mathematics Subject Classification: 57R17, 53D10, 32S25, 32S55

sphere centered at the origin in  $\mathbb{C}^N$  with  $X$ . The complex hyperplane distribution  $\xi_X = TM_X \cap JTM_X$ , where  $J$  denotes the complex structure on  $\mathbb{C}^N$ , is called the *canonical* contact structure on the link  $M_X$ . It is known that  $\xi_X$  is independent of the embedding and  $\epsilon$  for  $\epsilon$  sufficiently small.

Suppose that  $f: (X, x) \rightarrow (\mathbb{C}, 0)$  is a germ of a holomorphic function that defines an isolated singularity at  $x$ . Then the pair  $N(f) = f^{-1}(0) \cap M_X$ ,  $\theta(f) = \arg f: M_X \setminus N(f) \rightarrow S^1$  defines an open book decomposition  $\mathcal{OB}(f)$  of  $M_X$ . Such open book decompositions of  $M_X$  are called *Milnor open book* decompositions. According to a theorem of Caubel et al. [3], each Milnor open book decomposition of  $M_X$  supports the canonical contact structure  $\xi_X$ .

Let  $\pi: \tilde{X} \rightarrow X$  be a good resolution of  $X$ . This means that  $\tilde{X}$  is smooth,  $\pi$  is biholomorphic away from the exceptional divisor  $E = \pi^{-1}(x)$ , and  $E$  is a normal crossing divisor. The dual resolution graph  $\Gamma = \Gamma(\pi) = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E})$  of  $\pi$  is given as follows: the vertices  $\mathcal{V} = \{A_1, \dots, A_r\}$  of  $\Gamma$  are in one-to-one correspondence with the irreducible components  $E_1, \dots, E_r$  of  $E$ ; there is an edge  $(A_i, A_j) (= (A_j, A_i)) \in \mathcal{E}$  for each transverse intersection between  $E_i$  and  $E_j$ ; and each vertex  $A_i$  is decorated by a pair  $(g_i, e_i)$ , where  $g_i$  is the genus of  $E_i$  and  $e_i = E_i^2$ . The link  $M_X$  of  $(X, 0)$  is diffeomorphic to the 3-manifold  $M(\Gamma)$  obtained by the plumbing construction. That is, associating to each vertex  $A_i$  the circle bundle  $\pi_i: M_i \rightarrow S_i$  of Euler number  $e_i$  over a surface of genus  $g_i$ , the 3-manifold  $M(\Gamma)$  is obtained by plumbing the circle bundles  $\pi_i$  according to the edges of the graph  $\Gamma$ .

Note that the condition that  $M_X$  is a rational homology sphere implies that  $\Gamma$  is a tree and  $g_i = 0$  for all  $i$ . In this case, open book decompositions of  $M_X \cong M(\Gamma)$  are determined up to isotopy by the topological type of the binding; see [4].

Let  $f: (X, x) \rightarrow (\mathbb{C}, 0)$  be a germ of a holomorphic function that defines an isolated singularity at  $x$  and consider the decomposition of the divisor  $(f \circ \pi) = (f \circ \pi)_e + (f \circ \pi)_s \in \text{Div} \tilde{X}$  into its exceptional and strict parts. Here  $(f \circ \pi)_e$  is supported on  $E$  and  $\dim |(f \circ \pi)_s| \cap E < 1$ . Since, for each  $i$ ,  $(f \circ \pi) \cdot E_i = 0$  and  $(f \circ \pi)_s \cdot E_i \geq 0$ , which is implied by positivity of intersections, it follows that  $(f \circ \pi)_e \cdot E_i \leq 0$ . Following Lipman [6], let  $\mathcal{E}^+$  denote the set of nonzero effective divisors  $Y = \sum m_i E_i$  supported on  $E$  such that  $Y \cdot E_i \leq 0$  for all  $i$ . Then  $(f \circ \pi)_e \in \mathcal{E}^+$ . On the other hand, even though each divisor  $Y \in \mathcal{E}^+$  may not arise in this way, any such divisor  $Y$  can be realized in this way by choosing a suitable analytic structure on the cone over  $M_X$ ; see [7, 8].

Let  $I(\Gamma)$  denote the intersection matrix of the dual resolution graph of  $\pi$ . Given  $Y = \sum m_i E_i \in \mathcal{E}^+$ , let  $\underline{n} = (n_1, \dots, n_r)$  be the  $r$ -tuple of nonnegative integers satisfying

$$I(\Gamma)\underline{m}^t = -\underline{n}^t, \tag{2.1}$$

where  $\underline{m} = (m_1, \dots, m_r)$ . Then any Milnor open book corresponding to the divisor  $Y = \sum m_i E_i$  will have binding consisting of  $n_i$  fibers of the circle bundle  $\pi_i: M_i \rightarrow S_i$  for each  $i$ . For rational homology sphere links, by uniqueness, it follows that there is precisely one such Milnor open book, up to isotopy, which we will denote by  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$ . A description of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  in the setting we are considering is provided in [1]. To fix the notation, we provide some details of the construction below.

For each vertex  $A_i$  of  $\Gamma$  take a copy of  $S^2$  with  $v_i + n_i$  small disks removed, where  $v_i$  is the valency of  $A_i$ . Call this surface  $\bar{S}_i$  and label the boundary components of  $\bar{S}_i$ ,  $\gamma_1^i, \dots, \gamma_{v_i+n_i}^i$ . Pick a base point  $q_i \in \bar{S}_i$  and, for  $k = 1, \dots, v_i + n_i$ , choose a loop  $\alpha_k^i$ , based at  $q_i$ , having winding number  $\delta_{kl}$  around the boundary

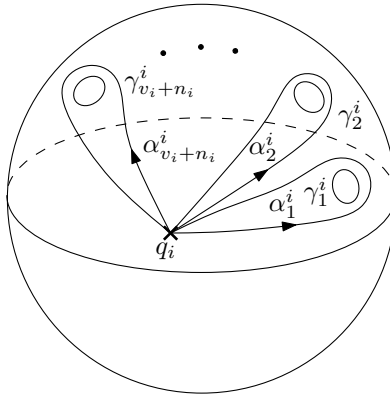


Figure 1. The surface  $\bar{S}_i$ .

component  $\gamma_l^i$ ; see Figure 1. Here  $\delta_{kl}$  denotes the Kronecker delta function. Now let  $p_i: F_i \rightarrow \bar{S}_i$  denote the degree  $m_i$  regular covering associated to the monodromy representation  $\rho_i: \pi_1(\bar{S}_i, q_i) \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}/m_i\mathbb{Z}$  given by  $\rho_i([\alpha_k^i]) = -\mu_k + m_i\mathbb{Z}$ , where

$$\mu_k = \begin{cases} m_{i_k} & \text{if } 1 \leq k \leq v_i \\ 1 & \text{if } k > v_i. \end{cases} \tag{2.2}$$

Here  $i_1, \dots, i_{v_i}$  denote the indices of the vertices that are connected to  $A_i$  by an edge.

As explained in [1], a page  $\Sigma$  of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  is given by gluing together the possibly disconnected surfaces  $F_i$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, r$ ; an annulus  $U_t^i$ , for  $i = 1, \dots, r$  and  $t = 1, \dots, n_i$ , for each binding component of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$ ; and a collection of annuli  $U_l^{i,j}$ ,  $l = 1, \dots, (m_i, m_j)$  for each pair  $(i, j)$  with  $1 \leq i < j \leq r$  such that  $(A_i, A_j) \in \mathcal{E}$ . We recall here the action of the monodromy  $\phi$  of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  restricted to the surfaces  $F_i$ . Note that there is a canonical  $\mathbb{Z}/m_i\mathbb{Z}$ -action on each fiber of  $p_i: F_i \rightarrow \bar{S}_i$ . For  $x \in F_i$ ,  $\phi(x)$  is defined to be the image of  $x$  under the action of  $1 + m_i\mathbb{Z}$ .

We close this section by quoting the following theorem of Bonatti and Paris [2], which will play an important role in the computation of the monodromy of Milnor open books.

**Theorem 1** *Let  $\Sigma$  be a surface of genus 1 with nonempty boundary. If  $f$  and  $g$  are elements of the mapping class group  $\text{Mod}(\Sigma)$  of  $\Sigma$  such that  $f^m = g^m$  for some  $m \geq 1$ , then  $f$  is conjugate to  $g$ .*

### 3. Monodromy of Milnor open books

In this section, we present some techniques that can be used to factorize the monodromy of certain Milnor open books. In particular, in Theorem 3, we give a class of dual resolution graphs  $\Gamma$  and divisors  $Y = \sum m_i E_i \in \mathcal{E}^+$  for which we can explicitly write the monodromy of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  as a product of Dehn twists.

We begin with a definition.

**Definition 2** *Let  $\Gamma = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E})$  be a dual resolution graph and  $\underline{m}$  be an  $r$ -tuple of positive integers corresponding to a divisor  $Y = \sum m_i E_i \in \mathcal{E}^+$ . Let  $\underline{n}$  be given by (2.1). A vertex  $A_i$  of  $\Gamma$  is called a rupture vertex of the pair  $(\Gamma, \underline{m})$  if  $n_i + v_i \geq 3$ . A rupture vertex  $A_i$  is called simple if  $n_i > 0$  or  $\gcd(\{m_i\} \cup \{m_j \mid (A_i, A_j) \in \mathcal{E}\}) = 1$ ,*

and is called good if, in addition,  $m_i = 2$  or  $m_i > 2$  and the following conditions are satisfied:  $m_i \nmid m_j$  for all  $j$  such that  $(A_i, A_j) \in \mathcal{E}$ ;  $v_i + n_i = g_i + 2$ , where

$$g_i = 1 + \frac{(v_i + n_i - 2)m_i - \sum_{(A_i, A_j) \in \mathcal{E}} (m_i, m_j) - n_i}{2}$$

is the genus of  $F_i$ ; and there is a filtration  $I_1 \subset I_2 \subset \dots \subset I_{v_i+n_i-3}$  of the set  $\{1, 2, \dots, v_i + n_i\}$  such that  $|I_j| = j + 1$  and  $(m_i, \sum_{k \in I_j} \mu_k) = 1$  for every  $j$ , where  $\mu_k$  is given by (2.2).

Our main result is the following theorem.

**Theorem 3** *Let  $\Gamma$  be a dual resolution graph corresponding a normal surface singularity with rational homology sphere link and  $Y = \sum m_i E_i$  be an element of  $\mathcal{E}^+$ . Suppose that each rupture vertex of  $(\Gamma, \underline{m})$  is good. Suppose further that each path  $\Gamma_t$  in  $\Gamma$  that connects a pair of rupture vertices and does not contain any rupture vertex in its interior satisfies either*

- (i)  $(m_i, m_j) = 1$  for some pair  $A_i, A_j$  of adjacent vertices of  $\Gamma_t$ ;
- (ii)  $(m_i, m_j) = 2$  for some pair  $A_i, A_j$  of adjacent vertices of  $\Gamma_t$ , and  $\Gamma_t$  connects rupture vertices  $A_k$  and  $A_l$  with  $m_k = m_l = 2$ .

Then there is an algorithm to present the monodromy of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  explicitly in terms of Dehn twists.

Our proof of Theorem 3 rests on two observations. The first observation is that the monodromy  $\phi$  of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  can be decomposed along the collection of annuli in a page  $\Sigma$  of the open book  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  that correspond to the paths  $\Gamma_t$  in  $\Gamma$ , between rupture vertices, that satisfy condition (i) of the theorem. Presently, we explain this.

To begin with, note that if  $(A_i, A_j)$  is an edge of  $\Gamma$  with  $(m_i, m_j) = 1$ , then the edge  $(A_i, A_j)$  corresponds to a single boundary component, which we shall denote by  $c_{i,j}$ , of  $F_i$ . Observe, however, that the monodromy  $\phi$  of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  does not fix the boundary component  $c_{i,j}$  pointwise; rather, it rotates  $c_{i,j}$  by  $a_{i,j}/m_i$  of a full turn, where  $0 \leq a_{i,j} < m_i$  satisfies  $a_{i,j}m_j \equiv -1 \pmod{m_i}$ . (Note that by a “rotation of a boundary component by  $a/b$  of a full turn” we simply mean that, for some identification of an invariant neighborhood of the boundary component with  $[0, 1) \times \mathbb{R}/2\pi\mathbb{Z}$ , the map in question corresponds to the diffeomorphism  $(t, \theta) \mapsto (t, \theta + 2a\pi/b)$ .) To see this, observe from the definition of the covering  $p_i: F_i \rightarrow \overline{S}_i$  that a rotation of  $c_{i,j}$  by  $1/m_i$  of a full turn (which is obtained by a lifting of the circle  $\alpha_k^i$  in the base to the covering, where  $i_k = j$ ) corresponds to moving in the negative direction of the fibers  $m_j$  sheets (from the definition of the monodromy representation). (Note that we orient  $c_{i,j}$  by the orientation coming from  $\alpha_k^i$ , where  $i_k = j$ ; this is the negative of the usual boundary orientation.) Since the restriction of the monodromy  $\phi|_{F_i}$  is given by mapping the point  $x \in F_i$  to the image of  $x$  under the action of  $1 + m_i\mathbb{Z}$ , which corresponds to moving in the positive direction of the fibers 1 sheet, it follows that  $\phi$  corresponds to an  $a/m_i$ -turn about  $c_{i,j}$ , where  $a(m_j/m_i) = [(m_i - 1)/m_i] + n$  for some  $n \in \mathbb{Z}$  and  $0 \leq a < m_i$ . The assertion follows.

We now give a convenient formula for the twist induced by the monodromy in an annulus in the page  $\Sigma$  if it corresponds to a sequence of edges.

**Lemma 4** Let  $A$  and  $A'$  be two vertices of  $\Gamma$ . Suppose that, after relabeling the vertices, if necessary, there is a path  $A = A_1, A_2, \dots, A_l = A'$  such that  $v_i + n_i \leq 2$  for  $i = 2, \dots, l - 1$  and  $(m_1, m_2) = 1$ . Then the monodromy  $\phi$  of  $\mathcal{OB}(\underline{m})$  twists the annulus  $U^{1,l}$  connecting  $F_1$  to  $F_l$  by

$$1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1} - \frac{a_{l,l-1}}{m_l} + \#\{m_i \mid 1 < i < l, m_i = 1\} \tag{3.1}$$

full twists relative to the ends, where  $0 \leq a_{i,j} < m_i$  satisfies  $a_{i,j}m_j \equiv -1 \pmod{m_i}$ .

**Proof** Note that  $v_i + n_i \leq 2$  for  $2 \leq i \leq l - 1$  implies that for each  $i$  in this range  $v_i = 2$  and  $n_i = 0$ . We thus have  $e_i m_i = m_{i-1} + m_{i+1}$  for  $2 \leq i \leq l - 1$ . Since  $(m_1, m_2) = 1$ , it follows that  $(m_i, m_{i+1}) = 1$  for all  $1 \leq i \leq l - 1$ . Hence, there is precisely one annulus connecting  $F_1$  to  $F_l$ . By the discussion in [1], the monodromy twists this annulus by  $\sum_{i=1}^{l-1} 1/m_i m_{i+1}$  full twists relative to the ends. It suffices thus to show that the value of (3.1) is equal to  $\sum_{i=1}^{l-1} 1/m_i m_{i+1}$ . We will show this by induction on the number of vertices  $l \geq 2$  in the path joining  $A$  and  $A'$ .

First suppose that  $l = 2$ . Since, by definition,  $a_{2,1}m_1 \equiv -1 \pmod{m_2}$  with  $0 \leq a_{2,1} < m_2$ , there exists an integer  $k \geq 1$  such that

$$a_{2,1}m_1 = km_2 - 1.$$

Similarly, there exists an integer  $t \geq 1$  such that

$$a_{1,2}m_2 = tm_1 - 1.$$

Multiplying these two expressions together and rearranging gives

$$a_{2,1}m_1 + a_{1,2}m_2 = hm_1m_2 - 1,$$

where  $h = kt - a_{2,1}a_{1,2}$ . The result will follow once we show that  $h = 1$ .

Clearly  $h \geq 1$ . To see that we also have  $h \leq 1$ , note that, since  $a_{2,1} < m_2$ ,  $a_{2,1}m_1 \leq m_1m_2 - 1$ . Similarly,  $a_{1,2}m_2 \leq m_1m_2 - 1$ . It thus follows that

$$hm_1m_2 - 1 = a_{2,1}m_1 + a_{1,2}m_2 \leq 2m_1m_2 - 2$$

and hence  $h \leq 1$ .

We now check the induction step. Let  $k \geq 2$  and suppose that the result is true for all  $l \leq k$ . Consider the case  $l = k + 1$ . We note that

$$\begin{aligned} 1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1} - \frac{a_{k+1,k}}{m_{k+1}} + \#\{m_i \mid 1 < i < k + 1, m_i = 1\} &= 1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1} - \frac{a_{k,k-1}}{m_k} + \#\{m_i \mid 1 < i < k, m_i = 1\} \\ &\quad + \left( \frac{a_{k,k-1}}{m_k} + \frac{a_{k,k+1}}{m_k} - 1 + \delta_k \right) + \left( 1 - \frac{a_{k,k+1}}{m_k} - \frac{a_{k+1,k}}{m_{k+1}} \right), \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\delta_k = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } m_k = 1 \\ 0 & \text{if } m_k \neq 1. \end{cases}$$

By the induction hypothesis

$$1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1} - \frac{a_{k,k-1}}{m_k} + \#\{m_i \mid 1 < i < k, m_i = 1\} = \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \frac{1}{m_i m_{i+1}}$$

and

$$1 - \frac{a_{k,k+1}}{m_k} - \frac{a_{k+1,k}}{m_{k+1}} = \frac{1}{m_k m_{k+1}}.$$

Hence, it suffices to show that

$$\frac{a_{k,k-1}}{m_k} + \frac{a_{k,k+1}}{m_k} - 1 + \delta_k = 0. \tag{3.2}$$

Note that (3.2) is clear if  $m_k = 1$  and hence assume that  $m_k \neq 1$ . Now

$$a_{k,k-1} m_{k-1} = x m_k - 1,$$

$$a_{k,k+1} m_{k+1} = y m_k - 1$$

for some integers  $x, y \geq 1$ . Also,

$$e_k m_k = m_{k-1} + m_{k+1}.$$

Hence,

$$(a_{k,k+1} + a_{k,k-1}) m_{k+1} = (y - x + a_{k,k-1} e_k) m_k.$$

Since  $(m_k, m_{k+1}) = 1$ ,

$$a_{k,k+1} + a_{k,k-1} = t m_k$$

for some  $t \geq 0$ , and thus it suffices to check that  $t = 1$ . The latter follows immediately from the fact that  $0 \leq a_{k,j} < m_k$  for  $j = k - 1, k + 1$ .  $\square$

Now note that, under the hypotheses of Lemma 4, if  $m_i \neq 1$  for  $i = 1$  and  $l$ , the monodromy  $\phi$  twists the annulus connecting  $F_1$  and  $F_l$  by

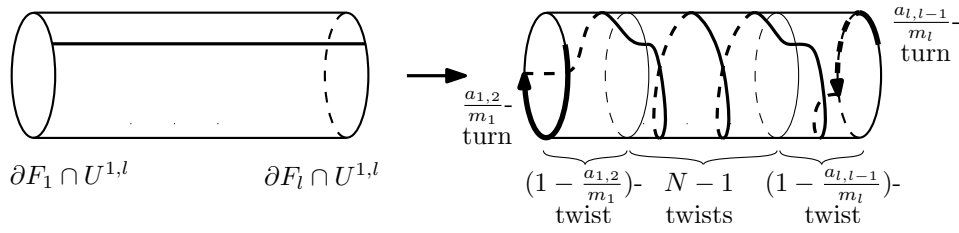
$$1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1} - \frac{a_{l,l-1}}{m_l} + N = \left(1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1}\right) + (N - 1) + \left(1 - \frac{a_{l,l-1}}{m_l}\right)$$

full twists relative to the ends, where  $N = \#\{m_i \mid 1 < i < l, m_i = 1\}$ . Also notice that the monodromy restricted to  $F_1$  followed by a twist of  $1 - \frac{a_{1,2}}{m_1}$  along the boundary component of  $F_1$  connected to  $U^{1,l}$  fixes that boundary component of  $F_1$ . Similarly, the monodromy restricted to  $F_l$  followed by a twist of  $1 - \frac{a_{l,l-1}}{m_l}$  along the boundary component of  $F_l$  connected to  $U^{1,l}$  fixes the corresponding boundary component of  $F_l$ . This allows one to cut along the cylinder  $U^{1,l}$ , putting the  $N - 1$  twists to one side of the cut; see Figure 2.

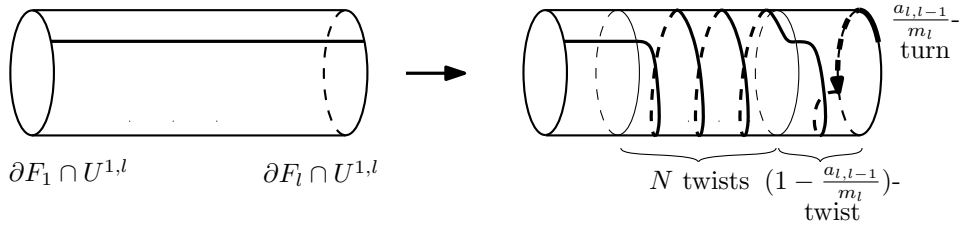
If  $m_1 = 1$  and  $m_l \neq 1$ , then  $a_{1,2} = 0$  and  $\phi$  twists the annulus connecting  $F_1$  and  $F_l$  by

$$\left(1 - \frac{a_{l,l-1}}{m_l}\right) + N$$

full twists relative to the ends. Again this allows one to cut along the cylinder  $U^{1,l}$ . The situation is illustrated in Figure 3. The situation is similar if  $m_l = 1$ .



**Figure 2.** The action of the monodromy on the cylinder connecting  $F_1$  to  $F_l$  if  $m_i \neq 1$  for  $i = 1$  and  $l$ .

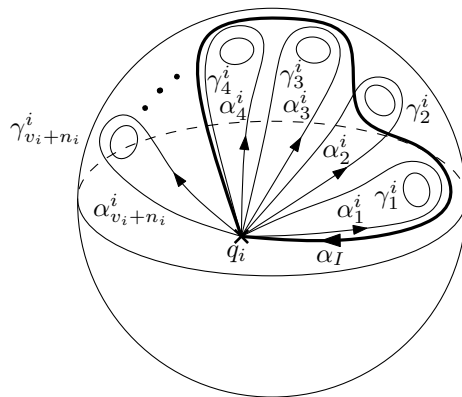


**Figure 3.** The action of the monodromy on the cylinder connecting  $F_1$  to  $F_l$  if  $m_1 = 1$  and  $m_l \neq 1$ .

The second observation concerns the possibility of decomposing the monodromy  $\phi$  along some closed curve in a piece  $F_i$  of the page  $\Sigma$  corresponding to a simple rupture vertex  $A_i$ . For this, suppose that  $v_i + n_i \geq 4$  and let  $I$  be any subset of  $\{1, 2, \dots, v_i + n_i\}$  of size  $2 \leq |I| \leq v_i + n_i - 2$ . Let  $\alpha_I$  be a loop in  $S_i$  based at  $q_i$  that has winding number  $-1$  around  $\gamma_j^i$  if  $j \in I$  and winding number  $0$  around  $\gamma_j^i$  otherwise (see Figure 4). Then, since  $\alpha_I$  is homotopic to the product of, possibly, conjugates of the loops  $\overline{\gamma_k^i}$ ,  $k \in I$ , in some order,

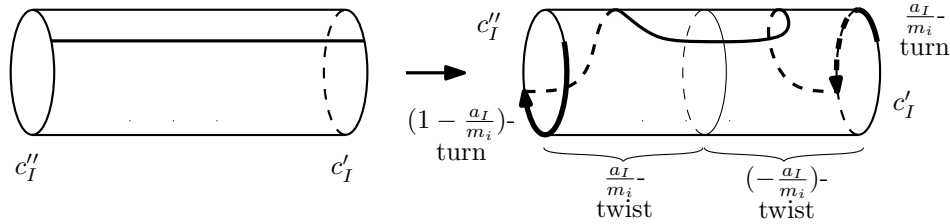
$$\rho([\alpha_I]) = \sum_{k \in I} \mu_k + m_i \mathbb{Z},$$

where  $\mu_k$  is given by (2.2). Here  $\overline{\gamma_k^i}$  denotes the curve  $\gamma_k^i$  with the orientation reversed. Thus, in  $F_i$ , the preimage  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_I)$  will consist of  $(m_i, \sum_{k \in I} \mu_k)$  components, which are cyclically permuted by the restriction of the monodromy  $\phi|_{F_i}$ . In particular, if  $(m_i, \sum_{k \in I} \mu_k) = 1$ , then  $F_i$  will necessarily be connected and  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_I)$  will consist of 1 component.



**Figure 4.** The surface  $\overline{S}_i$  and a curve  $\alpha_I$ . In the drawing,  $I = \{1, 3, 4\}$ .





**Figure 5.** The action of the monodromy on the cylinder  $U_I$ .

Assume now that  $(m_i, \sum_{k \in I} \mu_k)$  and let  $U_I$  denote a closed regular neighborhood of  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_I)$ . Then the closure  $\overline{F_i \setminus U_I}$  will consist of two connected components  $F'_i, F''_i$  whose genera may be computed using the Riemann–Hurwitz formula. For definiteness, let  $F'_i$  denote the component of  $\overline{F_i \setminus U_I}$  that contains the preimages of the boundary curves  $\alpha_k^i, k \in I$ . Let  $c'_I$  (resp.  $c''_I$ ) denote  $\partial F'_i \cap U_I$  (resp.  $\partial F''_i \cap U_I$ ). Note that, as we observed before, the restriction of the monodromy  $\phi$  to  $F'_i$  rotates  $c'_I$  by  $a_I/m_i$  of a full turn, where  $0 \leq a_I < m_i$  satisfies  $a_I \sum_{k \in I} \mu_k \equiv 1 \pmod{m_i}$ . Thus, the restriction of the monodromy  $\phi$  to the cylinder  $U_I$  can be decomposed as indicated in Figure 5. Note, in particular, that the monodromy restricted to  $F'_i$  followed by a  $(-a_I/m_i)$ -twist along  $c'_I$  fixes the boundary component  $c'_I$  of  $F'_i$ . Similarly, the monodromy restricted to  $F''_i$  followed by an  $a_I/m_i$ -twist along  $c''_I$  fixes the boundary component  $c''_I$  of  $F''_i$ .

With these observations in hand, we now prove Theorem 3.

**Proof** [Proof of Theorem 3] First decompose the monodromy  $\phi$  along meridian circles in the annuli in  $\Sigma$  corresponding to the paths  $\Gamma_t$  in  $\Gamma$ , between rupture vertices, that satisfy (i) of the theorem, as in the first observation above.

Next consider one factor  $\phi_\nu$  of the decomposition of the monodromy considered above and suppose that the part  $F_i$  of the page  $\Sigma$  corresponding to the rupture vertex  $A_i$  is in the domain of  $\phi_\nu$ . We now decompose  $\phi_\nu$  along certain curves in  $F_i$ . For this there are two cases to consider. Suppose first that  $m_i = 2$ . Letting  $\mu_k, 1 \leq k \leq v_i + n_i$  be defined by (2.2), note that  $|\{k \mid \mu_k \equiv 1 \pmod{2}\}|$  is nonzero and even since  $A_i$  is simple. Assume, after relabeling the  $\mu_k$ , if necessary, that  $\mu_1 \equiv \mu_2 \equiv \dots \equiv \mu_{2l} \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$  and  $\mu_{2l+1} \equiv \mu_{2l+2} \equiv \dots \equiv \mu_{v_i+n_i} \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ . Consider the filtration of the set  $\{1, 2, \dots, v_i + n_i\}$  given by  $I_k = \{2, 3, \dots, k + 2\}$  for  $1 \leq k \leq v_i + n_i - 3$  if  $l = 1$ , and

$$I_k = \begin{cases} \{2, 3, \dots, 2k + 2\} & \text{if } 1 \leq k \leq l - 2 \\ \{2, 3, \dots, l + k + 1\} & \text{if } l - 1 \leq k \leq v_i + n_i - l - 2 \end{cases}$$

if  $l > 1$ . Note that  $(m_i, \sum_{s \in I_k} \mu_s) = 1$  for each  $k$ . Thus,  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_{I_k})$  has a single component for each  $k$ . The second observation above shows how to decompose the monodromy along the curves  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_{I_k})$ . Note that, after cutting along the curves  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_{I_k})$ , each piece of  $F_i$  has genus at most 1 and the pieces corresponding to edges  $(A_i, A_{i_k})$  with  $(m_i, m_{i_k}) = 2$  have genus 0.

Now suppose that  $m_i > 2$ . Then, by assumption, there is a filtration  $I_1 \subset I_2 \subset \dots \subset I_{v_i+n_i-3}$  of the set  $\{1, 2, \dots, v_i + n_i\}$  such that  $|I_k| = k + 1$  and  $(m_i, \sum_{s \in I_k} \mu_s) = 1$  for all  $k$ .

**Claim.** Each piece of  $F_i$  cut out by the curves  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_{I_k})$  has genus 1.

*Proof of Claim.* After capping off the boundary components, the restriction of  $p_i$  to each piece of  $F_i$  corresponds

to an  $m_i$ -sheeted branched covering of a sphere branched over three values given by a group action  $G_\tau: S_\tau \rightarrow S_\tau$ . Fix one such covering  $p_\tau: S_\tau \rightarrow S_\tau/G_\tau$  and let  $x_1, x_2, x_3$  denote three fixed points of  $G_\tau$  that are inequivalent under the group action. Let  $s_i$  denote the order of the stabilizer of  $x_i$  in  $G_\tau$  for  $1 \leq i \leq 3$ . Then the Riemann–Hurwitz formula can be written as

$$\frac{2\sigma_\tau - 2}{|G_\tau|} = -2 + \sum_{j=1}^3 \left(1 - \frac{1}{s_j}\right), \tag{3.3}$$

where  $\sigma_\tau$  denotes the genus of  $S_\tau$ . We will show that  $\sigma_\tau = 1$ .

We first check that  $\sigma_\tau \geq 1$ . Suppose for a contradiction that  $\sigma_\tau < 1$ . It follows that  $(s_1, s_2, s_3)$  is either equal to  $(2, 2, s)$  for  $s \geq 2$  or  $(2, 3, s)$  for  $s = 3, 4$  or  $5$ . Since  $p_i^{-1}(\alpha_{I_k})$  is connected for each  $k$ , it follows that  $s_j = |G_\tau|$  for at least one  $j$ . Since  $s_1, s_2$ , and  $s_3$  must divide  $|G_\tau|$ , this immediately rules out the case  $(s_1, s_2, s_3) = (2, 3, s)$  for  $s = 3, 4$ , or  $5$ . In case  $(s_1, s_2, s_3) = (2, 2, s)$  for  $s \geq 2$ , from (3.3) we have

$$|G_\tau| = \frac{-2}{1 - (\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{s})} = 2s.$$

Hence  $s_1, s_2, s_3$  are all different from  $|G_\tau|$ , a contradiction. Thus,  $\sigma_\tau \geq 1$ .

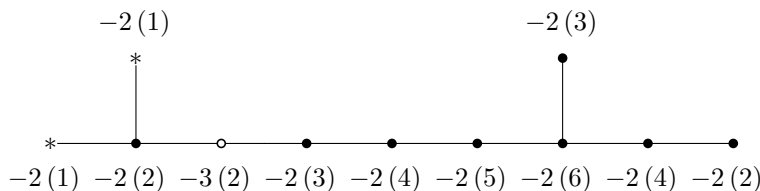
Since, by assumption, the genus of  $F_i$  is equal to  $v_i + n_i - 2$  and the filtration  $\{I_k\}$  cuts  $F_i$  into exactly  $v_i + n_i - 2$  pieces, the genus of each piece must be 1.

Proceeding in this way for each factor  $\phi_\nu$  of the decomposition of the monodromy, we see that the page  $\Sigma$  will break up into a finite number of pieces, each with genus at most 1, and the monodromy will restrict to a periodic mapping class for each piece. These can be described explicitly in terms of Dehn twists with the help of Bonati and Paris’ theorem and the results can be pieced together giving the conclusion.  $\square$

### 4. Examples

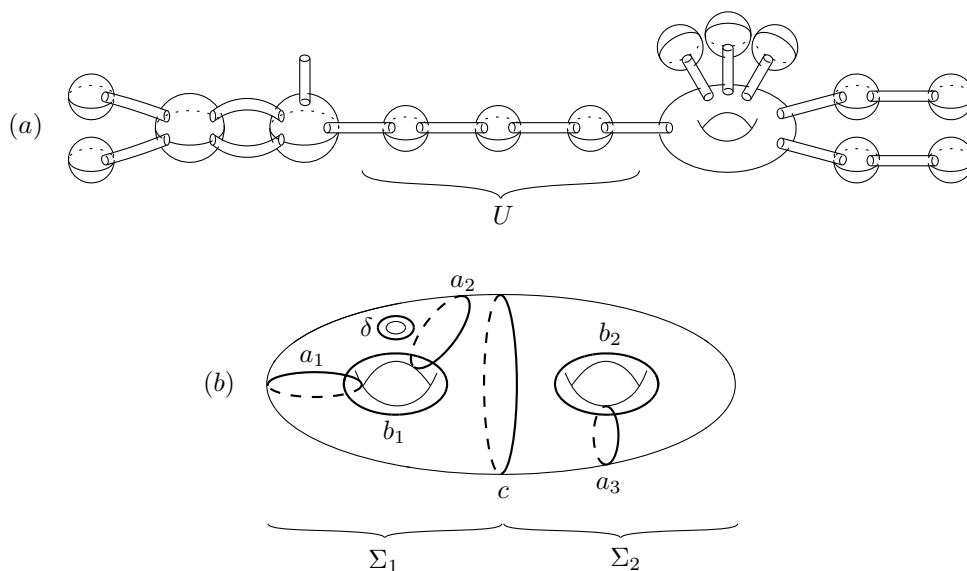
We illustrate the use of Theorem 3 to compute the monodromy of Milnor open books with three examples from the list of weighted dual graphs for minimally elliptic singularities in [5]. For simplicity, if  $c$  is a simple closed curve in a surface, we denote a right-handed (resp. left-handed) Dehn twist about  $c$  by the  $c$  (resp.  $c^{-1}$ ).

**Example 5** Consider the entry  $A_{n,*,*,o} + E_{7,o}$  in Table 2 in [5] with  $n = 1$  and weights  $A_* \cdot A_*$  given by  $-2, -2$ . This corresponds to the weighted dual graph



The weights are the numbers without parentheses and the numbers in parentheses are the coefficients of the fundamental cycle. Note that a page  $\Sigma$  of the corresponding Milnor open book is built up as shown in Figure 6a.

Consider the action of the monodromy on the cylinder  $U$ . By Lemma 4, the monodromy twists  $U$  by  $1 - 1/2 - 1/6 = (1 - 1/2) + (-1) + (1 - 1/6)$  of a full twist relative to the ends. Cut  $\Sigma$  along a meridian  $c$

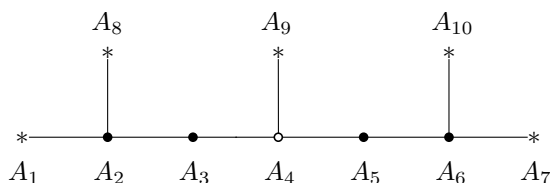


**Figure 6.** (a) A page  $\Sigma$  of the open book corresponding to the fundamental cycle of a singularity with weighted dual graph  $A_{n,*,*,o} + E_{7,o}$ ,  $n = 1$ ,  $A_* \cdot A_* = -2, -2$ . (b) A decomposition of the page  $\Sigma$ .

of  $U$  to obtain two subsurfaces  $\Sigma_1$  and  $\Sigma_2$ ; see Figure 6b. By the discussion following Lemma 4, if the total twist along  $U$  is divided into a  $1/2$ -twist and a  $(-1/6)$ -twist, then monodromy may be written as a product  $\phi = \phi_1\phi_2$ , where  $\phi_i$  is in the image of the homomorphism  $\eta_i: \text{Mod}(\Sigma_i) \rightarrow \text{Mod}(\Sigma)$  induced by the inclusion map  $\iota_i: \Sigma_i \rightarrow \Sigma$ . Let  $a_1, a_2, a_3, b_1, b_2, \delta$  be the curves indicated in Figure 6b. Arguing as in [1], we can now check that  $\phi_1^2 = \delta ca_1^2$  and  $\phi_2^6 = c^{-1}$ . Using Theorem 1, we may check that, up to conjugacy,  $\phi_1 = a_1^2 a_2 b_1 a_1^2 b_1$  and  $\phi_2 = c^{-1} (a_3 b_2)^5$ . Thus, we find that the monodromy is given by

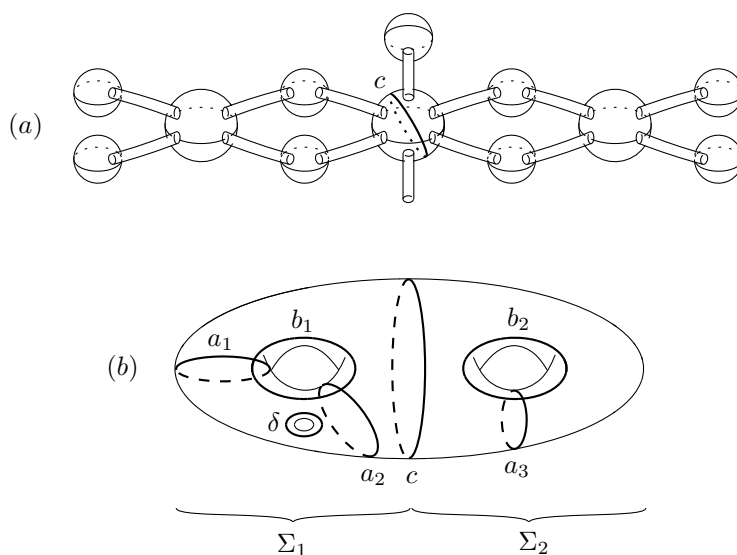
$$\phi = a_1^2 a_2 b_1 a_1^2 b_1 c^{-1} (a_3 b_2)^5.$$

**Example 6** Consider the entry  $A_{*,o} + A_{n,*,*,o} + A_{m,*,*,o}$  in Table 2 in [5] with  $n = m = 2$  and weights  $A_* \cdot A_*$  given by  $-2, -2, -2, -2, -2$ . This corresponds to the weighted dual graph



where the weights of all vertices except  $A_4$  are  $-2$  and the weight of  $A_4$  is  $-3$ . The fundamental cycle corresponds to the 10-tuple of positive integers  $\underline{m} = (1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1)$ . A page  $\Sigma$  of the corresponding Milnor open book is built up as shown in Figure 7a.

Consider the rupture vertex  $A_4$  of the weighted dual graph and let  $I$  be a subset of  $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$  such that the preimage of  $\alpha_I$  is the curve  $c$  indicated in Figure 7a. Explicitly, if we order the vertices adjacent to  $A_4$  by increasing index, then we can assume that  $I = \{2, 3\}$ . As discussed above, introducing a  $+(1/2)$  and a  $-(1/2)$ -twist on the two sides of  $c$ , we may assume that the monodromy fixes the curve  $c$  pointwise. Now cut the page  $\Sigma$  along  $c$  to obtain two subsurfaces  $\Sigma_1$  and  $\Sigma_2$  as indicated in Figure 7b. It follows that the monodromy may

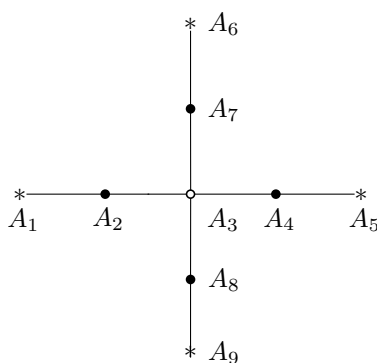


**Figure 7.** (a) A page  $\Sigma$  of the open book  $\mathcal{OB}(1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1)$  for a singularity with weighted dual graph  $A_{*,o} + A_{n,**,o} + A_{m,**,o}$ ,  $n = m = 2$ ,  $A_* \cdot A_* = -2, -2, -2, -2, -2$ . (b) A decomposition of the page  $\Sigma$ .

be written as a product  $\phi = \phi_1\phi_2$ , where  $\phi_i$  is in the image of the homomorphism  $\eta_i: \text{Mod}(\Sigma_i) \rightarrow \text{Mod}(\Sigma)$  induced by the inclusion map  $\iota_i: \Sigma_i \rightarrow \Sigma$ . Let  $a_1, a_2, a_3, b_1, b_2, \delta$  be the curves indicated in Figure 7b. Arguing as in [1], we can check that  $\phi_1^2 = a_1^4 c \delta$  and  $\phi_2^2 = c^{-1} a_3^4$ . Now using Theorem 1, we find that, up to conjugation,  $\phi_1 = a_1^3 a_2 b_1 a_1^2 b_1$  and  $\phi_2 = c^{-1} (a_3 b_2)^3 a_3^2$ . Hence,

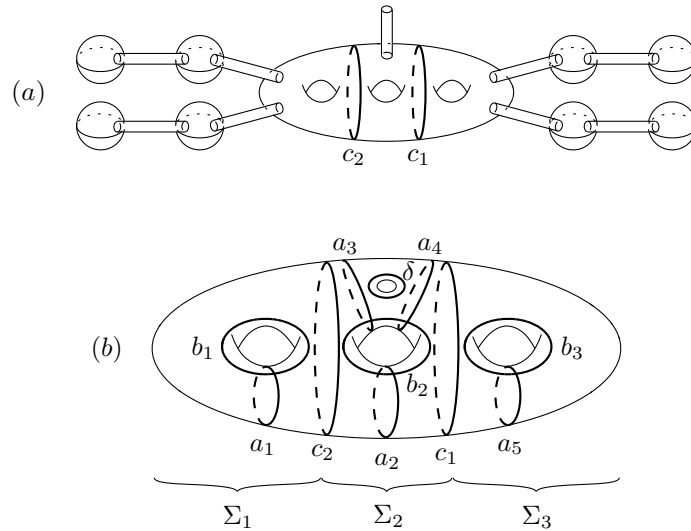
$$\phi = a_1^3 a_2 b_1 a_1^2 b_1 c^{-1} (a_3 b_2)^3 a_3^2.$$

**Example 7** Consider the entry  $A_{1,*,o} + A_{1,*,o} + A_{1,*,o} + A_{1,*,o}$  in Table 3 in [5] with weights  $A_* \cdot A_*$  given by  $-2, -2, -2, -2$ . This corresponds to the weighted dual graph



where the weights of all vertices except  $A_3$  are  $-2$  and the weight of  $A_3$  is  $-3$ . The fundamental cycle corresponds to the 9-tuple of positive integers  $\underline{m} = (1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1)$ . A page  $\Sigma$  of the corresponding Milnor open book is built up as shown in Figure 8a.

Consider the rupture vertex  $A_3$  of the dual graph and order the vertices adjacent to  $A_3$  arbitrarily. Let  $I_1$  and  $I_2$  be the subsets  $\{1, 2\}$  and  $\{1, 2, 5\}$ , respectively, of  $\{1, 2, \dots, 5\}$ . Then the preimages of the  $\alpha_{I_1}$  and  $\alpha_{I_2}$  can be assumed to be the curves  $c_1$  and  $c_2$ , respectively, indicated in Figure 8a. Now the curves



**Figure 8.** (a) A page  $\Sigma$  of the open book  $\mathcal{OB}(1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 1)$  for a singularity with weighted dual graph  $A_{1,*},o + A_{1,*},o + A_{1,*},o + A_{1,*},o, A_* \cdot A_* = -2, -2, -2, -2$ . (b) A decomposition of the page  $\Sigma$ .

$c_1$  and  $c_2$  separate the page  $\Sigma$  into the three subsurfaces  $\Sigma_1, \Sigma_2$ , and  $\Sigma_3$  as indicated in Figure 8b. Let  $a_1, \dots, a_5, b_1, b_2, b_3, \delta$  be the curves indicated in Figure 8b. Arguing as before, we can write the monodromy  $\phi$  as a product  $\phi_1\phi_2\phi_3$ , where  $\phi_i$  is in the image of the homomorphism  $\eta_i: \text{Mod}(\Sigma_i) \rightarrow \text{Mod}(\Sigma)$  induced by the inclusion map  $\iota_i: \Sigma_i \rightarrow \Sigma$ . It is now easy to check using Theorem 1 that

$$\phi = (a_1b_1)^4c_2^{-1}a_2a_3a_4b_2c_1^{-1}(a_5b_3)^4.$$

### 5. Final remark

According to a theorem of Giroux, a contact structure on a 3-manifold  $(Y, \xi)$  is Stein fillable if and only if it admits a compatible open book decomposition with monodromy a product of right-handed Dehn twists. As the canonical contact structures on links of normal surface singularity are Stein fillable, and the monodromy factorizations we give above of a supporting Milnor open book decompositions often involve left-handed Dehn twists, it would be interesting to know if the monodromy of Milnor open book decompositions can always be expressed as products of right-handed Dehn twists.

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