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Station C1200, Austin, TX 78712. *Identifying the Canonical Component for the Whitehead Link.*

Although character varieties have proven to be a useful tool in studying hyperbolic 3-manifolds, only recently have explicit models for the  $SL_2(\mathbb{C})$  character varieties of twist knot complements been constructed. As the twist knot complements can be obtained by Dehn filling one of the cusps of the Whitehead link complement, we are naturally interested in determining the canonical component of the Whitehead link character variety and studying the relationship among character varieties of manifolds obtained by Dehn surgery. In my talk I will show how the canonical component of the Whitehead link character variety is  $\mathbb{P}^2$  blown-up at 10 points and discuss the canonical components for a few other hyperbolic 2-component link complements. (Received September 17, 2010)