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where  $\equiv$  indicates that there is an orientation preserving diffeomorphism of pairs which is concordant to the identity map as a diffeomorphism of the ambient space  $M$ .

Our results suggest that  $I(M, L)$  and  $I_0(M, L)$  depend only on the order of a meridian of  $L$  in  $\pi_1(M-L)$  or  $H_1(M-L; \mathbb{Z})$ . Roughly speaking, according as the order is infinite, 1, or  $p$  ( $1 < p < \infty$ ), they can be distinguished by (at least) these three types:

$$\text{Type 1} \quad I(M, L) = \{0N\},$$

$$\text{Type 2} \quad I(M, L) = \mathcal{K}_n, \quad I_0(M, L) = \ker \sigma,$$

$$\text{Type 3} \quad \{0\} \subsetneq I(M, L) \subsetneq \mathcal{K}_n, \quad \{0\} \subsetneq I_0(M, L) \subsetneq \ker \sigma,$$

(see section 4 for  $\sigma(S^{n+2}, K)$ ).

We refer the reader to 1.1, 2.6, 3.4, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.8 for the precise statement.

This paper consists of five sections. In Section 1, we deduce a necessary condition for  $I_0(M, L)$ , which is valid for any  $(M, L)$ . We treat type 1 in Section 2. Type 2 is discussed in Sections 3, 4 and type 3 is discussed in Section 5. We will find that type 3 is closely related to the generalized Smith conjecture.

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## § 1. GENERAL REMARKS ON $I_0(M, L)$

It is known (and it is easily verified) that the signature of a Seifert surface of an oriented  $n$ -knot  $K$  in  $S^{n+2}$  is independent of the choice of a Seifert surface; so it is an invariant of the oriented knot  $K$ . The invariant is called the signature of the knot  $K$  and denoted by  $\text{Sign}(S^{n+2}, K)$ . We note that  $\text{Sign}(S^{n+2}, K)$  is trivially zero unless  $n+1 \equiv 0 \pmod{4}$ .

As is seen in Section 3, there is a pair  $(M^{n+2}, L^n)$  such that  $I(M, L) = \mathcal{K}_n$  for any  $n \geq 3$ . In contrast, we can deduce a necessary condition for  $I_0(M, L)$  which holds for any pair  $(M, L)$ .

**THEOREM 1.1.** *If  $(S^{n+2}, K) \in I_0(M, L)$ , then  $\text{Sign}(S^{n+2}, K) = 0$ .*

*Proof.* Let  $V$  be a Seifert surface of  $K$ . Since  $S^{n+2} = \partial D^{n+3}$ , we can push the interior of  $V$  into the interior of  $D^{n+3}$  so that  $V$  is transverse to  $S^{n+2}$ . This yields an oriented pair  $(D^{n+3}, V)$  having  $(S^{n+2}, K)$  as the boundary.

The boundary connected sum  $(M, L) \times I \natural (D^{n+3}, V)$  gives a cobordism between  $(M, L) \natural (S^{n+2}, K)$  and  $(M, L)$ . We note that the ambient space of the cobordism is diffeomorphic to  $M \times I$ . Since  $(S^{n+2}, K) \in I_0(M, L)$ , there is an orientation preserving diffeomorphism  $f: (M, L) \natural (S^{n+2}, K) \rightarrow (M, L)$  which is concordant to the identity when regarded as a diffeomorphism of the ambient space  $M$ . We paste together  $(M, L) \natural (S^{n+2}, K)$  and  $(M, L)$  by  $f$  to get an oriented pair of closed manifolds. Since  $f$  is concordant to the identity, the resulting ambient space is diffeomorphic to  $M \times S^1$ . We shall denote by  $X$  the resulting oriented closed submanifold of  $M \times S^1$ .

The additivity property of the signature (see [AS, p. 588]) says that

$$\text{Sign } X = \text{Sign } L \times I + \text{Sign } V = \text{Sign } V,$$

where  $\text{Sign } L \times I = 0$  follows easily from the definition of the signature of a manifold with boundary. By the Hirzebruch signature theorem (see [MS, § 19]) we have

$$\text{Sign } X = \mathcal{L}(X)[X]$$

where the right hand side means the Hirzebruch  $L$ -class  $\mathcal{L}(X)$  of  $X$  evaluated on the fundamental class  $[X]$  of  $X$ . In the sequel we shall show  $\mathcal{L}(X)[X] = 0$ .

Let  $j: X \rightarrow M \times S^1$  be the inclusion map. Then it is not difficult to see that

$$(1.2) \quad j_*[X] = [L \times S^1] \quad \text{in} \quad H_{n+1}(M \times S^1; \mathbb{Z})$$

where  $[L \times S^1]$  denotes the homology class represented by  $L \times S^1$ .

Let  $v$  be the normal bundle to  $X$  in  $M \times S^1$ . By the multiplicativity of  $L$ -class we have

$$(1.3) \quad \mathcal{L}(X) = \mathcal{L}(v)^{-1} j^* \mathcal{L}(M \times S^1)$$

$$\mathcal{L}(M \times S^1) = \mathcal{L}(M) \times \mathcal{L}(S^1) = \pi^* \mathcal{L}(M)$$

where  $\pi: M \times S^1 \rightarrow M$  is the projection map. Since  $\dim v = 2$ , we have

$$(1.4) \quad \mathcal{L}(v) = 1 + p_1(v)/3 = 1 + e(v)^2/3$$

where  $p_1$  and  $e$  denote the first Pontrjagin class and the Euler class respectively.

On the other hand it is known that

$$(1.5) \quad e(v) = j^* j_! (1)$$

where  $j_! : H^q(X; \mathbf{Z}) \rightarrow H^{q+2}(M \times S^1; \mathbf{Z})$  denotes the Gysin homomorphism and  $1 \in H^0(X; \mathbf{Z})$  is the unit element. Remember the definition of  $j_!$ . It is defined so that the following diagram commutes:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} H^q(X; \mathbf{Z}) & \xrightarrow{j_!} & H^{q+2}(M \times S^1; \mathbf{Z}) \\ \downarrow \cap [X] & & \downarrow \cap [M \times S^1] \\ H_{n+1-q}(X; \mathbf{Z}) & \xrightarrow{j_*} & H_{n+1-q}(M \times S^1; \mathbf{Z}) \end{array}$$

where the vertical maps are the Poincaré dualities. It says that

$$j_!(1) \cap [M \times S^1] = j_*[X].$$

This together with (1.2) means that

$$j_!(1) \in \pi^* H^2(M; \mathbf{Z}).$$

Hence it follows from (1.4) and (1.5) that

$$\mathcal{L}(v) \in j^* \pi^* H^*(M; \mathbf{Q})$$

and hence

$$\mathcal{L}(X) \in j^* \pi^* H^*(M; \mathbf{Q})$$

by (1.3). This together with (1.2) implies that

$$\mathcal{L}(X)[X] = 0. \quad \text{Q.E.D.}$$

Theorem 1.1 gives a necessary condition for  $(S^{n+2}, K)$  to belong to  $I_0(M, L)$ . When we consider the converse problem, i.e. the problem to find  $(S^{n+2}, K)$  in  $I_0(M, L)$ , we apply the relative  $s$ -cobordism theorem. We shall state it as a lemma for later convenience's sake.

LEMMA 1.6. *Suppose there exists a cobordism  $(U, Z)$  between  $(M, L)$  and  $(S^{n+2}, K)$  such that*

- (1)  $Z$  is diffeomorphic to  $L \times I$ ,
- (2) the exterior  $E(Z)$  of  $Z$  is an  $s$ -cobordism relative boundary.

Then  $(S^{n+2}, K) \in I_0(M, L)$ .

*Proof.* The relative  $s$ -cobordism theorem says that  $E(Z)$  is diffeomorphic to  $E(L) \times I$  where the diffeomorphism can be taken as the identity on  $E(L) \times \{0\}$  and  $(\partial E(L)) \times I$ . Therefore it extends to a diffeomorphism:  $(U, Z) \rightarrow (M, L) \times I$  which is the identity on the 0-level. This means that  $(S^{n+2}, K) \in I_0(M, L)$ . Q.E.D.