

Research Article

On Value Distribution of Difference Polynomials of Meromorphic Functions

Zong-Xuan Chen

School of Mathematical Sciences, South China Normal University, Guangzhou 510631, China

Correspondence should be addressed to Zong-Xuan Chen, chzx@vip.sina.com

Received 24 January 2011; Revised 17 March 2011; Accepted 20 May 2011

Academic Editor: H. B. Thompson

Copyright © 2011 Zong-Xuan Chen. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

We study the value distribution of the difference counterpart $\Delta f(z) - af(z)^n$ of $f'(z) - af(z)^n$ and obtain an almost direct difference analogue of results of Hayman.

1. Introduction and Results

Hayman proved the following Theorem A.

Theorem A (see [1]). *If $f(z)$ is a transcendental entire function, $n \geq 3$ is an integer, and $a (\neq 0)$ is a constant, then $f'(z) - af(z)^n$ assumes all finite values infinitely often.*

Recently, many papers (see [2–7]) have focused on complex differences, giving many difference analogues in value distribution theory of meromorphic functions.

It is well known that $\Delta f(z) = f(z+c) - f(z)$ (where $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ is a constant satisfying $f(z+c) - f(z) \not\equiv 0$) is regarded as the difference counterpart of $f'(z)$, so that $\Delta f(z) - af(z)^n$ is regarded as the difference counterpart of $f'(z) - af(z)^n$, where $a \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ is a constant.

Liu and Laine [7] obtain the following

Theorem B. *Let f be a transcendental entire function of finite order ρ , not of period c , where c is a nonzero complex constant, and let $s(z)$ be a nonzero function, small compared to f . Then the difference polynomial $f(z)^n + f(z+c) - f(z) - s(z)$ has infinitely many zeros in the complex plane, provided that $n \geq 3$.*

We use the basic notions of Nevanlinna's theory (see [8, 9]) and in addition use $\sigma(f)$ to denote the order of growth of the meromorphic $f(z)$ and $\lambda(f)$ to denote the exponent of convergence of the zeros of $f(z)$.

In this paper, we consider the difference counterpart of Theorem A. When $n \geq 3$ is an integer, we prove the following Theorem 1.1. Compared with Theorem B, Theorem 1.1 is an

almost direct difference analogue of of Theorem A and gives an estimate of numbers of b -points, namely, $\lambda(\Psi_n(z) - b) = \sigma(f)$ for every $b \in \mathbb{C}$. Our method of the proof is also different from the method of the proof in Theorem B.

Theorem 1.1. *Let $f(z)$ be a transcendental entire function of finite order, and let $a, c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ be constants, with c such that $f(z + c) \neq f(z)$. Set $\Psi_n(z) = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^n$, where $\Delta f(z) = f(z + c) - f(z)$ and $n \geq 3$ is an integer. Then $\Psi_n(z)$ assumes all finite values infinitely often, and for every $b \in \mathbb{C}$ one has $\lambda(\Psi_n(z) - b) = \sigma(f)$.*

Example 1.2. For $f(z) = \exp\{\exp\{z\}\}$, $c = \log 3$ and $a = 1$, we have

$$\Psi_3(z) = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^3 = -\exp\{\exp\{z\}\}. \quad (1.1)$$

Here $\Psi_3(z) \neq 0$, which shows that Theorem 1.1 may fail for entire functions of infinite order.

Example 1.3. For $f(z) = \exp\{z\} + 1$, $c = \log 3$, $a = 1$, we have $\Psi_2(z) = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^2 = -\exp\{2z\} - 1$. Here $\Psi_2(z) \neq -1$, which shows that Theorem 1.1 may fail for $n = 2$ and that the condition $n \geq 3$ in Theorem 1.1 is sharp.

Example 1.4. For $f(z) = \exp\{z\}$, $c = \log 3$, $a = 1$, we have $\Psi_2(z) = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^2 = \exp\{z\}(2 - \exp\{z\})$, which assumes all finite values infinitely often.

What can we say about $\Psi_2(z)$ when $n = 2$? We consider this question and obtain the following Theorems 1.5 and 1.6.

Theorem 1.5. *Let $f(z)$ be a transcendental entire function of finite order with a Borel exceptional value 0, and let $a, c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ be constants, with c such that $f(z + c) \neq f(z)$. Then $\Psi_2(z)$ assumes all finite values infinitely often, and for every $b \in \mathbb{C}$ one has $\lambda(\Psi_2(z) - b) = \sigma(f)$.*

Theorem 1.6. *Let $f(z)$ be a transcendental entire function of finite order with a finite nonzero Borel exceptional value d , and let $a, c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$ be constants, with c such that $f(z + c) \neq f(z)$. Then for every $b \in \mathbb{C}$ with $b \neq -ad^2$, $\Psi_2(z)$ assumes the value b infinitely often, and $\lambda(\Psi_2(z) - b) = \sigma(f)$.*

Remark 1.7. From Theorems 1.5 and 1.6, we see that if $f(z)$ has the Borel exceptional value 0, then $\Psi_2(z)$ has not any finite Borel exceptional value, but if $f(z)$ has a nonzero Borel exceptional value, then $\Psi_2(z)$ may have a finite Borel exceptional value. From Theorem 1.6, this possible Borel exceptional value is $-ad^2$. Example 1.3 shows that this Borel exceptional value $-ad^2 (= -1)$ may arise, and thus the conclusion of Theorem 1.6 is sharp.

2. Proof of Theorem 1.1

We need the following lemmas.

Lemma 2.1 (see [3, 4]). *Let $f(z)$ be a meromorphic function of finite order, and let $c \in \mathbb{C} \setminus \{0\}$. Then*

$$m\left(r, \frac{f(z+c)}{f(z)}\right) = S(r, f), \quad (2.1)$$

where $S(r, f) = o\{T(r, f)\}$.

Lemma 2.2 (see [3]). Let $f(z)$ be a meromorphic function with order $\sigma(f) = \sigma < \infty$, and let c be a nonzero constant. Then, for each $\varepsilon > 0$, one has

$$T(r, f(z+c)) = T(r, f) + O\left(r^{\sigma-1+\varepsilon}\right) + O(\log r). \quad (2.2)$$

Lemma 2.3. Suppose that $n, a, c, f(z), \Psi_n(z)$ satisfy the conditions of Theorem 1.1. If $b \in \mathbb{C}$, then $\Psi_n(z) - b$ is transcendental.

Proof. Suppose that $\Psi_n(z) - b = p(z)$, where $p(z)$ is a polynomial. Then

$$-af(z)^n = b - \Delta f(z) + p(z). \quad (2.3)$$

By Lemma 2.2, for each $\varepsilon > 0$, we have

$$T(r, \Delta f(z)) \leq 2T(r, f) + S(r, f) + O\left(r^{\sigma-1+\varepsilon}\right), \quad (2.4)$$

where $\sigma = \sigma(f)$. By an identity due to Valiron-Mohon'ko (see [10, 11]), we have

$$\begin{aligned} T(r, af(z)^n) &= nT(r, f) + S(r, f) \\ &= T(r, b - \Delta f(z) + p(z)) \\ &\leq 2T(r, f) + S(r, f) + O\left(r^{\sigma-1+\varepsilon}\right). \end{aligned} \quad (2.5)$$

This contradicts the fact that $n \geq 3$. Hence $\Psi_n(z) - b$ is transcendental. \square

Lemma 2.4. Suppose that $n, a, c, f(z), \Psi_n(z)$ satisfy the conditions of Theorem 1.1. Suppose also that $b \in \mathbb{C}$, $q(z) \not\equiv 0$ is a polynomial, and $p(z) \not\equiv 0$ is an entire function with $\sigma(p) < \sigma(f)$. If

$$\Psi_n(z) - b = p(z) \exp\{q(z)\}, \quad (2.6)$$

then

$$P(z, f) = np(z)f'(z) - (p'(z) + q'(z)p(z))f(z) \not\equiv 0. \quad (2.7)$$

Proof. Suppose that

$$np(z)f'(z) - (p'(z) + q'(z)p(z))f(z) \equiv 0. \quad (2.8)$$

Integrating (2.8) results in

$$f(z)^n = dp(z) \exp\{q(z)\}, \quad (2.9)$$

where $d(\neq 0)$ is a constant. Therefore, by (2.6), (2.9), and the definition of $\Psi_n(z)$, we obtain

$$\Psi_n(z) - b = f(z+c) - f(z) - af(z)^n - b = \frac{1}{d}f(z)^n, \quad (2.10)$$

and so

$$d(f(z+c) - f(z)) = (ad+1)f(z)^n + bd. \quad (2.11)$$

We must have $ad+1 \neq 0$. In fact, if $ad+1 = 0$, then by (2.11) and $d \neq 0$, we have that

$$f(z+c) - f(z) = b, \quad (2.12)$$

so $f'(z)$ is periodic. Then, write (2.8) as

$$f'(z) = R(z)f(z), \quad (2.13)$$

where

$$R(z) = \frac{p'(z) + q'(z)p(z)}{np(z)}. \quad (2.14)$$

Clearly, $R(z) \neq 0$ and $\sigma(R) \leq \sigma(p) < \sigma(f)$. We obtain from (2.12) and (2.13)

$$(R(z+c) - R(z))f(z) = -bR(z+c). \quad (2.15)$$

If $R(z+c) - R(z) \equiv 0$, then $b = 0$ by (2.15) and $R(z) \neq 0$. Thus, by (2.12), we have $f(z+c) \equiv f(z)$, which contradicts our condition. If $R(z+c) - R(z) \neq 0$, then by (2.15), we have

$$\sigma(f) = \sigma\left(\frac{-bR(z+c)}{R(z+c) - R(z)}\right) \leq \sigma(R) < \sigma(f). \quad (2.16)$$

This is also a contradiction. Hence $ad+1 \neq 0$.

Differentiating (2.11), and then dividing by $f'(z)$ result in

$$d\left(\frac{f'(z+c)}{f'(z)} - 1\right) = n(ad+1)f(z)^{n-1}. \quad (2.17)$$

Therefore, by Lemma 2.1, we get that

$$(n-1)T(r, f) = (n-1)m(r, f) = S(r, f') = S(r, f), \quad (2.18)$$

a contradiction for $n \geq 2$. Hence $P(z, f) \neq 0$. \square

Halburd and Korhonen obtained the following difference analogue of the Clunie lemma [4, Corollary 3.3].

Lemma 2.5. *Let $f(z)$ be a nonconstant, finite order meromorphic solution of*

$$f^n P_1(z, f) = Q_1(z, f), \tag{2.19}$$

where $P_1(z, f), Q_1(z, f)$ are difference polynomials in $f(z)$ with small meromorphic coefficients, and let $\delta < 1$. If the degree of $Q_1(r, f)$ as a polynomial in $f(z)$ and its shifts is at most n , then

$$m(r, P_1(z, f)) = o\left(\frac{T(r + |c|, f)}{r^\delta}\right) + o(T(r, f)) \tag{2.20}$$

for all r outside an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measure.

Remark 2.6. If coefficients of P_1, Q_1 are $a_j(z)$ ($j = 1, \dots, s$) satisfying $\sigma(a_j) < \sigma(f)$, then using the same method as in the proof of Lemma 2.5 (see [4]), we have

$$m(r, P_1(z, f)) = o\left(\frac{T(r + |c|, f)}{r^\delta}\right) + o(T(r, f)) + O\left(\sum_{j=1}^s m(r, a_j)\right) \tag{2.21}$$

for all r outside an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measure.

We are now able to prove Theorem 1.1. We only prove the case $\sigma(f) > 0$. For the case $\sigma(f) = 0$, we can use the same method in the proof. Suppose that $b \in \mathbb{C}$ and $\lambda(\Psi_n(z) - b) < \sigma(f)$. Then, by Lemma 2.3, we see that $\Psi_n(z) - b$ is transcendental. Thus, $\Psi_n(z) - b$ can be written as

$$\Psi_n(z) - b = p(z) \exp\{q(z)\}, \tag{2.22}$$

where $q(z) \not\equiv 0$ is a polynomial, $p(z) \not\equiv 0$ is an entire function with $\sigma(p) < \sigma(f)$.

Differentiating (2.22) and eliminating $\exp\{q(z)\}$, we obtain

$$f(z)^{n-1} P(z, f) = Q(z, f), \tag{2.23}$$

where

$$P(z, f) = a n p(z) f'(z) - a(p'(z) + q'(z)p(z)) f(z)$$

$$Q(z, f) = p(z) f'(z) - p(z) f'(z + c) + \Delta f(z) (p'(z) + q'(z)p(z)) - b(p'(z) + q'(z)p(z)). \tag{2.24}$$

By Lemma 2.4, we see that $P(z, f) \neq 0$. Since $n \geq 3$ and the total degree of $Q(z, f)$ as a polynomial in $f(z)$ and its shifts, $\deg_f Q(z, f) = 1$, by (2.23), Lemma 2.5, and Remark 2.6, we obtain that for $\delta < 1$

$$\begin{aligned} T(r, P(z, f)) &= m(r, P(z, f)) = o\left(\frac{T(r + |c|, f)}{r^\delta}\right) + o(T(r, f)) + O(m(r, p)), \\ T(r, fP(z, f)) &= m(r, fP(z, f)) = o\left(\frac{T(r + |c|, f)}{r^\delta}\right) + o(T(r, f)) + O(m(r, p)) \end{aligned} \quad (2.25)$$

for all r outside of an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measure.

Thus, (2.25) give that

$$T(r, f) = o\left(\frac{T(r + |c|, f)}{r^\delta}\right) + o(T(r, f)) + O(m(r, p)) \quad (2.26)$$

for all r outside of an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measure. This is a contradiction. Hence $\Psi_n(z) - b$ has infinitely many zeros and $\lambda(\Psi_n(z) - b) = \sigma(f)$, which proves Theorem 1.1.

3. Proof of Theorem 1.5

We need the following lemma.

Lemma 3.1 (see [12, page 69–70], [13, page 79–80], or [14]). *Suppose that $n \geq 2$, and let $f_j(z)$, $j = 1, \dots, n$, be meromorphic functions and $g_j(z)$, $j = 1, \dots, n$, entire functions such that*

- (i) $\sum_{j=1}^n f_j(z) \exp\{g_j(z)\} \equiv 0$;
- (ii) when $1 \leq j < k \leq n$, $g_j(z) - g_k(z)$ is not constant;
- (iii) when $1 \leq j \leq n$, $1 \leq h < k \leq n$,

$$T(r, f_j) = o\{T(r, \exp\{g_h - g_k\})\} \quad (r \rightarrow \infty, r \notin E), \quad (3.1)$$

where $E \subset (1, \infty)$ is of finite linear measure or finite logarithmic measure. Then $f_j(z) \equiv 0$, $j = 1, \dots, n$.

To prove Theorem 1.5, note first that $f(z)$ has a Borel exceptional value 0, we can write $f(z)$ as

$$f(z) = g(z) \exp\{\alpha z^k\}, \quad f(z+c) = g(z+c)g_1(z) \exp\{\alpha z^k\}, \quad (3.2)$$

where $\alpha (\neq 0)$ is a constant, $k (\geq 1)$ is an integer satisfying $\sigma(f) = k$, and $g(z)$, $g_1(z)$ are entire functions such that $g(z)g_1(z) \neq 0$, $\sigma(g) < k$, $\sigma(g_1) = k - 1$.

First, we prove $\Psi_2(z) - b = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^2 - b$ is transcendental. If $\Psi_2(z) - b = p(z)$, where $p(z)$ is a polynomial, then

$$af(z)^2 = \Delta f(z) - b + p(z). \quad (3.3)$$

Thus by Lemma 2.1 and an identity due to Valiron-Mohon'ko (see [10, 11]), we have

$$\begin{aligned} T(r, af^2) &= 2T(r, f) + S(r, f) \\ T(r, \Delta f(z) - b + p(z)) &= m(r, \Delta f(z) - b + p(z)) \\ &\leq m(r, f) + m\left(r, \frac{f(z+c)}{f(z)} - 1\right) + O(\log r) \\ &\leq T(r, f) + S(r, f). \end{aligned} \quad (3.4)$$

By (3.4), we see that (3.3) is a contradiction.

Secondly, we prove $\sigma(\Psi_2 - b) = \sigma(f) = k \geq 1$. By the expression of $\Psi_2(z)$, we have $\sigma(\Psi_2 - b) \leq k$. Set $G(z) = \Psi_2(z) - b$. If $\sigma(G) = k_1 < k$, then by (3.2), we have

$$(g(z+c)g_1(z) - g(z)) \exp\{\alpha z^k\} - ag(z)^2 \exp\{2\alpha z^k\} - (b + G(z)) = 0. \quad (3.5)$$

Since $\sigma(G) = k_1 < k$ and $\sigma(g) < k$, we see that the left hand side of (3.5) is of order $= k$ by applying the general form of the Valiron-Mohon'ko lemma in [10], a contradiction. So, $\sigma(G) = k$.

Thirdly, we prove $\lambda(G) = k(\geq 1)$. If $\lambda(G) < k$, then $G(z)$ can be written as

$$G(z) = g^*(z) \exp\{\beta z^k\}, \quad (3.6)$$

where $\beta (\neq 0)$ is a constant, $g^*(z) (\neq 0)$ is an entire function satisfying $\sigma(g^*) < k$. Thus by (3.2), (3.6), and $G(z) = \Psi_2(z) - b$, we have

$$(g(z+c)g_1(z) - g(z)) \exp\{\alpha z^k\} - ag(z)^2 \exp\{2\alpha z^k\} - b - g^* \exp\{\beta z^k\} = 0. \quad (3.7)$$

In (3.7), there are three cases for β :

- (i) $\beta \neq \alpha$ and $\beta \neq 2\alpha$;
- (ii) $\beta = \alpha$;
- (iii) $\beta = 2\alpha$.

Applying Lemma 3.1 to (3.7), we have in case (i)

$$g(z+c)g_1(z) - g(z) \equiv ag(z)^2 \equiv g^*(z) \equiv 0; \quad (3.8)$$

in case (ii), we have

$$ag(z)^2 \equiv 0; \quad (3.9)$$

in case (iii), we have

$$g(z+c)g_1(z) - g(z) \equiv 0. \quad (3.10)$$

Since $f(z+c) - f(z) \not\equiv 0$ and $f(z)$ is transcendental, we see that any one of (3.8)–(3.10) is a contradiction. Hence $\lambda(\Psi_2 - b) = \sigma(f)$.

4. Proof of Theorem 1.6

Since $f(z)$ has a nonzero Borel exceptional value d , we can write $f(z)$ as

$$f(z) = d + \varphi(z) \exp\{\alpha z^k\}, \quad f(z+c) = d + \varphi(z+c)\varphi_1(z) \exp\{\alpha z^k\}, \quad (4.1)$$

where $\alpha (\neq 0)$ is a constant, $k (\geq 1)$ is an integer satisfying $\sigma(f) = k$, and $\varphi(z)$, $\varphi_1(z)$ are entire functions such that $\varphi(z)\varphi_1(z) \not\equiv 0$, $\sigma(\varphi) < k$, $\sigma(\varphi_1) = k - 1$.

Using the same method as in the proof of Theorem 1.5, we can show that

$$\Psi_2(z) - b = \Delta f(z) - af(z)^2 - b \quad (4.2)$$

is transcendental and $\sigma(\Psi_2 - b) = \sigma(f) = k \geq 1$.

Now we show that $\lambda(\Psi_2(z) - b) = k (\geq 1)$. Set $G(z) = \Psi_2(z) - b$. If $\lambda(G) < k$, then G can be written as

$$G(z) = \varphi^*(z) \exp\{sz^k\}, \quad (4.3)$$

where $s (\neq 0)$ is a constant and $\varphi^*(z) (\neq 0)$ is an entire function satisfying $\sigma(\varphi^*) < k$. Thus by (4.1) and (4.3), we have

$$\begin{aligned} & (\varphi(z+c)\varphi_1(z) - \varphi(z) - 2ad\varphi(z)) \exp\{\alpha z^k\} - a\varphi(z)^2 \exp\{2\alpha z^k\} - \varphi^*(z) \exp\{sz^k\} \\ & - (ad^2 + b) = 0. \end{aligned} \quad (4.4)$$

In (4.4), there are three cases for s :

- (i) $s \neq \alpha$ and $s \neq 2\alpha$;
- (ii) $s = \alpha$;
- (iii) $s = 2\alpha$.

Applying the same method as in the proof of Theorem 1.5 to these three cases, we obtain

$$ad^2 + b = 0, \quad (4.5)$$

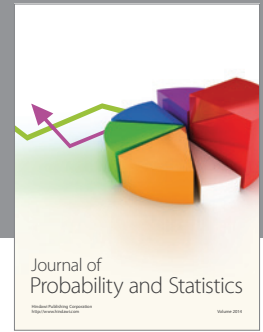
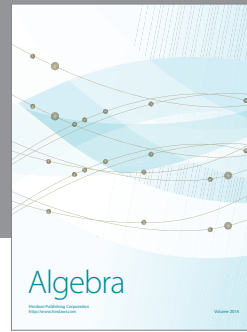
which contradicts our supposition that $b \neq -ad^2$. Hence $\lambda(\Psi_2 - b) = \sigma(f)$.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (no. 10871076). The author is grateful to the referee for a number of helpful suggestions to improve the paper.

References

- [1] W. K. Hayman, "Picard values of meromorphic functions and their derivatives," *Annals of Mathematics*, vol. 70, pp. 9–42, 1959.
- [2] Z.-X. Chen and K. H. Shon, "On zeros and fixed points of differences of meromorphic functions," *Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications*, vol. 344, no. 1, pp. 373–383, 2008.
- [3] Y.-M. Chiang and S.-J. Feng, "On the Nevanlinna characteristic of $f(z + \eta)$ and difference equations in the complex plane," *Ramanujan Journal*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 105–129, 2008.
- [4] R. G. Halburd and R. J. Korhonen, "Difference analogue of the lemma on the logarithmic derivative with applications to difference equations," *Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications*, vol. 314, no. 2, pp. 477–487, 2006.
- [5] R. G. Halburd and R. J. Korhonen, "Nevanlinna theory for the difference operator," *Annales Academiæ Scientiarum Fennicæ. Mathematica*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 463–478, 2006.
- [6] J. Heittokangas, R. Korhonen, I. Laine, J. Rieppo, and J. Zhang, "Value sharing results for shifts of meromorphic functions, and sufficient conditions for periodicity," *Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications*, vol. 355, no. 1, pp. 352–363, 2009.
- [7] K. Liu and I. Laine, "A note on value distribution of difference polynomials," *Bulletin of the Australian Mathematical Society*, vol. 81, no. 3, pp. 353–360, 2010.
- [8] W. K. Hayman, *Meromorphic Functions*, Oxford Mathematical Monographs, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, 1964.
- [9] L. Yang, *Value Distribution Theory*, Springer, Berlin, Germany, 1993.
- [10] A. Z. Mohon'ko, "The Nevanlinna characteristics of certain meromorphic functions," *Teorija Funkcij, Funkcional'nyĭ Analiz i ih Priloženija*, no. 14, pp. 83–87, 1971.
- [11] G. Valiron, "Sur la dérivée des fonctions algébroides," *Bulletin de la Société Mathématique de France*, vol. 59, pp. 17–39, 1931.
- [12] F. Gross, *Factorization of Meromorphic Functions*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washinton, DC, USA, 1972.
- [13] C.-C. Yang and H.-X. Yi, *Uniqueness Theory of Meromorphic Functions*, vol. 557 of *Mathematics and Its Applications*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 2003.
- [14] J. Wang and I. Laine, "Growth of solutions of nonhomogeneous linear differential equations," *Abstract and Applied Analysis*, vol. 2009, Article ID 363927, 11 pages, 2009.



Hindawi

Submit your manuscripts at
<http://www.hindawi.com>

