

Complex dynamics, value distributions, and potential theory

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Abstract. Value distributions and complex dynamics are intertwined in that they involve the study of preimages and forward-images under iteration, respectively. In this article, we first show the equivalence of the dynamical exceptional set of a rational map $f: \widehat{\mathbf{C}} \rightarrow \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ and both the dynamical Nevanlinna and Valiron exceptional sets. As a consequence, we establish several convergence theorems of the potentials of the averaged value distributions, which are stronger than what can be obtained from the general axiomatic potential theory.

1. Introduction

A rational map f is a holomorphic endomorphism of the Riemann sphere $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

Notation 1.1. Rat denotes the set of all rational endomorphisms of $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$. $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ is identified with the set of all constant maps of $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

In the case that f is non-invertible, the Fatou and Julia strategy for studying the complex dynamics $(\widehat{\mathbf{C}}, f)$, which treats *forward-images* under iterations, is the separation of $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ into two completely invariant complementary subsets, one of which is the *Fatou set* $F(f)$, the region of normality of $\{f^k := f^{\circ k}\}$, and the other the *Julia set* $J(f)$. In other words, the restricted dynamical systems $(F(f), f)$ and $(J(f), f)$ are tame and chaotic, respectively. Consequently, the dynamical system *around* $J(f)$ has an *almost covering* feature, that is,

$$E(f) := \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \bigcap_{U: \text{an open neighborhood of a point of } J(f)} \left(\bigcup_{k \in \mathbf{N}} f^k(U) \right)$$

consists of at most two points.

Definition 1.1 (dynamical exceptional set). $E(f)$ is called the *dynamical exceptional set* of f .

From this almost covering feature, a Nevanlinna theoretical study, which treats *preimages* under iterations, arises naturally.

For the Nevanlinna theory, see, for example, [3] and [5].

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Notation 1.2. The Dirac measure at $w \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ is written as δ_w .

Definition 1.2 (averaged value distribution). For distinct $f, g \in \text{Rat}$, put $\mu(f, g) := \sum_{f(w)=g(w)} \delta_w$, where the summation takes into account the multiplicity of each root of the equation $f = g$. The *averaged value distribution* of f for g is the probability measure $\mu(f, g)/(\deg f + \deg g)$.

The spherical area measure and the chordal distance on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ are given by

$$\sigma(w) = \frac{dx dy}{\pi(1 + |w|^2)^2} \quad (w = x + iy) \quad \text{and} \quad [z, w] = \frac{|z - w|}{\sqrt{1 + |z|^2} \sqrt{1 + |w|^2}},$$

respectively. We note that they are normalized as $\sigma(\widehat{\mathbf{C}}) = 1$ and $[0, \infty] = 1$.

Definition 1.3 (dynamical Nevanlinna theory [12]). For $f, g \in \text{Rat}$, the *pointwise proximity function* is defined by

$$(w(g, f))(z) := \log \frac{1}{[g(z), f(z)]} : \widehat{\mathbf{C}} \rightarrow [0, \infty],$$

which is δ -subharmonic, and the *mean proximity* by

$$m(g, f) := \int_{\widehat{\mathbf{C}}} w(g, f) d\sigma \in [0, \infty).$$

Let \mathcal{F} be a *rational sequence* $\{f_k\}_{k=0}^\infty \subset \text{Rat}$ with increasing degrees $\{d_k := \deg f_k\}$. For $g \in \text{Rat}$, the dynamical *Nevanlinna* and *Valiron exceptionalities* are defined by

$$\begin{aligned} \text{NE}(g; \mathcal{F}) &:= \liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{m(g, f_k)}{d_k} \in [0, \infty], \\ \text{VE}(g; \mathcal{F}) &:= \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{m(g, f_k)}{d_k} \in [0, \infty], \end{aligned}$$

respectively.

From now on, we consider the *iteration* sequence $\{f^k\}_{k=1}^\infty$ of $f \in \text{Rat}$ of degree $d \geq 2$.

Definition 1.4 (dynamical Nevanlinna and Valiron exceptional sets). The dynamical *Nevanlinna* and *Valiron* exceptional sets of f in $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ are defined by

$$\begin{aligned} E_N(f) &:= \{p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \text{NE}(p; \{f^k\}) > 0\}, \\ E_V(f) &:= \{p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \text{VE}(p; \{f^k\}) > 0\}, \end{aligned}$$

respectively.

We shall use several notions from the geometric measure theory and the potential theory. For the details, see, for example, [1], [10], and [4].

Convention. We consider only weak convergences for measures.

Theorem 1 (All exceptional sets are same). For $f \in \text{Rat}$ of degree ≥ 2 ,

$$E_N(f) = E_V(f) = E(f).$$

Remark 1.1. In [11], Theorem 1 has been already implicitly applied to the Siegel–Cremer linearizability problem of rational maps.

The proof relies on a fundamental theorem in complex dynamics proved by Lyubich [6] and independently by Freire–Lopes–Mañé [2]:

Theorem 1.1 ([6] and [2]). Let $f \in \text{Rat}$ be of degree $d \geq 2$. For every $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$,

$$(1) \quad \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\mu(f^k, p)}{d^k} = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{(f^k)^* \sigma}{d^k} =: \mu_f.$$

An important conclusion from Theorem 1 is a convergence theorem of the potentials of the averaged value distributions.

Definition 1.5 (spherical potential). For a regular measure μ on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$, the potential is defined by

$$V_\mu := \int_{\widehat{\mathbf{C}}} \log \frac{1}{[\cdot, w]} d\mu(w) : \widehat{\mathbf{C}} \rightarrow [-\infty, \infty],$$

which is a δ -subharmonic function on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

Remark 1.2. In the potential theory, the potential is sometimes defined as $-V_\mu$, but the definition will be more convenient in our study.

The (axiomatic) potential theory implies that when positive regular measures $\{\mu_k\}$ converges to μ , then

$$(2) \quad \liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu_k} = V_\mu$$

quasi everywhere on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

Theorem 2 (convergence theorem of potentials). Let $f \in \text{Rat}$ be of degree $d \geq 2$ and $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$. If p is not a fixed point of f , then

$$(3) \quad \liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu(f^k, p)/d^k} = V_{\mu_f}$$

on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$. If p is a fixed point of f , (3) holds on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \bigcup_{k \geq 0} f^{-k}(p)$.

We also characterize such points that the potentials actually converge there.

Theorem 3 (convergence of potentials and pointwise behavior). *Let $f \in \text{Rat}$ be of degree $d \geq 2$. For $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$ and $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,*

$$(4) \quad \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu(f^k, p)/d^k}(q) = V_{\mu_f}(q)$$

if and only if

$$(5) \quad \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{d^k} \log \frac{1}{[p, f^k(q)]} = 0.$$

Hence it follows from the classification of the Fatou components that for $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$ and $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$, if (4) (or (5)) does not hold, then either

- (i) p is periodic and $q \in \bigcup_{k \geq 0} f^{-k}(p)$,
- (ii) $p, q \in J(f)$, or
- (iii) p is not periodic but contained in a rotation domain and

$$(6) \quad q \in \text{Fol}_f(p),$$

which is called the *foliated equivalence class* of p (cf. [8]) defined by

$$\text{Fol}_f(p) := \{q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \overline{\text{GO}_f(p)} = \overline{\text{GO}_f(q)}\},$$

where $\text{GO}_f(p)$ is the *grand orbit* of p defined by

$$\text{GO}_f(p) := \{q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \text{for some } k, l \in \mathbf{N}, f^k(p) = f^l(q)\}.$$

Conversely, in the case (i), (5) never holds. Concerning (ii), it is possible to find such an f that for some $p, q \in J(f)$ not satisfying (i), (5) does not hold: for example, let $f(z) = z^d$, choose such a sequence $\{a_l\}_{l=1}^\infty \subset \mathbf{N}$ that $\limsup_{l \rightarrow \infty} (a_{l+1} - a_l)/d^{a_l} \geq 1$, and set $p = 1$ and $q = \exp(2i\pi \sum_{l=1}^\infty 1/d^{a_l})$. Then $p, q \in J(f) = \{|z| = 1\}$, $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \bigcup_{k \geq 0} f^{-k}(p)$ and, by a direct calculation, $\limsup_{m \rightarrow \infty} (1/d^{a_m}) \log(1/[p, f^{a_m}(q)]) \geq \log d > 0$.

In the third case (iii), we have the following.

Theorem 4 (convergence of potentials and rotation domains). *Let $f \in \text{Rat}$ be of degree $d \geq 2$. For $p, q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ such that p is not periodic but contained in a rotation domain and $q \in \text{GO}_f(p)$, (5) (and (4)) holds.*

Hence in (iii), we have a stronger assertion that

$$(7) \quad q \in \text{Fol}_f(p) - \text{GO}_f(p)$$

than (6). The following is open.

Problem (a new problem on rotation domains). For some $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ not periodic but contained in a rotation domain and $q \in \text{Fol}_f(p) - \text{GO}_f(p)$, is it possible that (5) does not hold?

If the answer to this problem is No, we can conclude that $\{V_{\mu(f^k,p)/d^k}\}$ always converges to V_{μ_f} on $F(f)$ except for the trivial case (i).

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2. The continuity of the potential of μ_f

In the rest of this paper, we fix $f \in \text{Rat}$ of degree $d \geq 2$.

- Notation 2.1.** (i) $\|\cdot\|$ denotes the Euclidean norm on \mathbf{C}^2 .
 (ii) $d = \partial + \bar{\partial}$ and $d^c = (i/(2\pi))(\bar{\partial} - \partial)$, hence $dd^c = (i/\pi)\partial\bar{\partial}$.
 (iii) $\pi: \mathbf{C}^2 - O \rightarrow \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ is the canonical projection which maps (z_0, z_1) to z_1/z_0 when $z_0 \neq 0$. Here O is the origin in \mathbf{C}^2 .
 (iv) An integration $\int_{\widehat{\mathbf{C}}} \phi d\mu$ is also written as $\langle \phi, \mu \rangle$.

Lemma 2.1 (continuity of the potential [7]). V_{μ_f} is continuous on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

This lemma was proved by Mañé [7], whose proof was based on a quite technical lemma. We shall give a short proof of Lemma 2.1 by the pluripotential theory rather than his technical lemma.

Proof. There exists a homogeneous polynomial map $F: \mathbf{C}^2 \rightarrow \mathbf{C}^2$ of degree d such that $\pi \circ F = f \circ \pi$ on $\mathbf{C}^2 - O$. The *escaping rate function* $G^F: \mathbf{C}^2 \rightarrow [-\infty, +\infty)$ is the limit of $\{\log \|F^k\|/d^k\}$, which is uniform on $\mathbf{C}^2 - O$ (cf. [13, Theorem 1.5]). Hence G^F is continuous on $\mathbf{C}^2 - O$ and plurisubharmonic on \mathbf{C}^2 .

Since $\pi^*\sigma = dd^c \log \|\cdot\|$, it follows from Theorem 1.1 that $\pi^*\mu_f = dd^c G^F$.

Lemma 2.2 (a Stokes formula). For $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$(8) \quad dd^c \log \frac{1}{[\cdot, p]} = \sigma - \delta_p,$$

and hence for every regular probability measure μ on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$(9) \quad dd^c V_\mu = \sigma - \mu.$$

Hence $\text{dd}^c(\pi^*V_{\mu_f} - \log \|\cdot\| + G^F) = 0$, which concludes that $\pi^*V_{\mu_f}$ is continuous on $\mathbf{C}^2 - O$ and hence V_{μ_f} is continuous on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$. \square

3. Proof of Theorem 1

Definition 3.1 (accumulation and convergence loci). The *accumulation* and *convergence* loci of the *averaged* value distributions of f in $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ are defined by

$$A(f) := \left\{ p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \text{there exists } \{k_j\}_{j=0}^\infty \subset \mathbf{N} \text{ such that } \lim_{j \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\mu(f^{k_j}, p)}{d^{k_j}} = \mu_f \right\},$$

$$\text{Conv}(f) := \left\{ p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\mu(f^k, p)}{d^k} = \mu_f \right\},$$

respectively.

Theorem 1.1 means $\widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f) = \text{Conv}(f)$. We show the following, which contains Theorem 1:

Theorem 5 (characterizations of exceptional sets). *We have*

$$E_N(f) = E_V(f) = E(f) = \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \text{Conv}(f) = \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - A(f).$$

Proof. For $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ and $k \in \mathbf{N}$, it follows from (8) that

$$\text{dd}^c \frac{w(f^k, p)}{d^k} = \frac{(f^k)^* \sigma - \mu(f^k, p)}{d^k}.$$

Hence for every C^∞ function ϕ on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$\left| \left\langle \phi, \frac{(f^k)^* \sigma - \mu(f^k, p)}{d^k} \right\rangle \right| = \left| \left\langle \frac{w(f^k, p)}{d^k}, \text{dd}^c \phi \right\rangle \right| \leq \left(\max_{\widehat{\mathbf{C}}} \left| \frac{\text{dd}^c \phi}{\sigma} \right| \right) \frac{m(p, f^k)}{d^k}.$$

The liminf and limsup of the right-hand side are 0 if $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_N(f)$ and $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_V(f)$, respectively, which in fact implies that $A(f) \supset \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_N(f)$ and $\text{Conv}(f) \supset \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_V(f)$ since $\{w(f^k, p)/d^k\}$ is a sequence of δ -subharmonic functions on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

For the proof of the following, see [12] or [11].

Lemma 3.1 (Riesz decomposition). *For $p, q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,*

$$w(f, p)(q) = V_{\mu(f, p) - f^* \sigma}(q) + m(f, p).$$

By Lemma 3.1, for $p, q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ and $k \in \mathbf{N}$,

$$(10) \quad \frac{w(f^k, p)(q)}{d^k} = V_{(\mu(f^k, p) - (f^k)^* \sigma)/d^k}(q) + \frac{m(f^k, p)}{d^k}.$$

We integrate both sides of (10) by $d\mu_f(q)$. Then by the Fubini theorem and $f_*\mu_f = \mu_f$ from (1), we have

$$(11) \quad \frac{1}{d^k} V_{\mu_f}(p) = \left\langle V_{\mu_f}, \frac{\mu(f^k, p) - (f^k)^*\sigma}{d^k} \right\rangle + \frac{m(f^k, p)}{d^k}.$$

Since V_{μ_f} is continuous on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ by Lemma 2.1, (11) implies that $A(f) \subset \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_N(f)$ and $\text{Conv}(f) \subset \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E_V(f)$.

Finally we show that $E(f) \subset E_N(f)$. We recall the following (cf. [9]).

Lemma 3.2 (algebraic characterization of the exceptional set).

$$E(f) = \{p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} : \text{periodic of period } \leq 2 \text{ and critical of order } d - 1\}.$$

Let $p \in E(f)$. When p is of period one, by the Böttcher theorem, there exists a neighborhood U'' of p such that f is conformally conjugate to $z \mapsto z^d$ there. When p is of period two, there exist neighborhoods U of p and U' of $f(p)$ such that f^2 is conformally conjugate to $z \mapsto z^{d^2}$ on U and $f(U') \subset U$, and we put $U'' := U \cup U'$. For such U'' , there exists $C > 0$ such that $\int_{U''} w(f^k, p) d\sigma > Cd^k$ for every $k \in \mathbf{N}$. Hence $\text{NE}(p; \{f^k\}) \geq C$, which implies $p \in E_N(f)$. Now the proof is completed. \square

4. Proof of Theorems 2 and 3

Lemma 4.1 (convergence of potentials).

$$(12) \quad \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{(f^k)^*\sigma/d^k} = V_{\mu_f}$$

on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$.

Proof. Let s and t be local holomorphic sections of π on \mathbf{C} and $\widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \{0\}$, respectively. Since there exists a holomorphic function c on $\mathbf{C} - \{0\}$ such that $t = cs$ on $\mathbf{C} - \{0\}$, we have $t^*F = c^d s^*F$ and $t^*G^F = s^*G^F + \log|c|$ there. Hence

$$H_k(z) := \begin{cases} s^* \left(\frac{1}{d^k} \log \|F^k\| - G^F \right) & \text{on } \mathbf{C}, \\ t^* \left(\frac{1}{d^k} \log \|F^k\| - G^F \right) & \text{on } \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \{0\} \end{cases}$$

is a well-defined function on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$, and tends to 0 uniformly on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$ as $k \rightarrow \infty$. By $\pi^*\sigma = \text{dd}^c \log \|\cdot\|$ and $\pi^*\mu_f = \text{dd}^c G^F$, it follows that

$$\frac{(f^k)^*\sigma}{d^k} - \mu_f = \text{dd}^c H_k$$

on $\widehat{\mathbf{C}}$. Now for every $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$V_{(f^k)^*\sigma/d^k}(q) - V_{\mu_f}(q) = \left\langle \log \frac{1}{[\cdot, q]}, \text{dd}^c H_k \right\rangle = \left\langle H_k, \text{dd}^c \log \frac{1}{[\cdot, q]} \right\rangle = \langle H_k, \sigma - \delta_q \rangle$$

converges to 0. \square

We shall finish the proof of Theorems 2 and 3.

From Theorem 1, (10) and Lemma 4.1, it follows that for $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$ and $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$(13) \quad \liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{w(f^k, p)(q)}{d^k} = \liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu(f^k, p)/d^k}(q) - V_{\mu_f}(q).$$

When $\liminf_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu(f^k, p)/d^k}(q) \neq V_{\mu_f}(q)$ at $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$, it follows that there exist $N \in \mathbf{N}$ and $\delta > 0$ such that for every $k \geq N$,

$$(14) \quad [f^k(q), p] \leq e^{-\delta d^k}.$$

Hence p is a fixed point of f . When $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - \bigcup_{k>0} f^{-k}(p)$, it follows from (14) that p is a superattractive fixed point of f of order $d - 1$. Hence $p \in E(f)$ from Lemma 3.2, which is a contradiction. Now we have proved Theorem 2.

Again, from Theorem 1, (10) and Lemma 4.1, it follows that for $p \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}} - E(f)$ and $q \in \widehat{\mathbf{C}}$,

$$(15) \quad \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{w(f^k, p)(q)}{d^k} = \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} V_{\mu(f^k, p)/d^k}(q) - V_{\mu_f}(q);$$

(13) and (15) conclude the proof of Theorem 3. \square

5. Proof of Theorem 4

It is enough to give a proof in the case of $q = p$.

Let D denote the rotation domain containing p , and S the unique analytic f -invariant circle in D containing p . Without loss of generality, we assume that $D \subset \mathbf{C}$ and the period of D equals one, and choose an analytic *linearizing* map h of $f|_D$ that conformally maps D onto a disc or a concentric annulus centered at the origin containing the unit circle, and as S onto it. Then on D ,

$$h \circ f = \lambda \cdot h,$$

where $\lambda = e^{2i\pi\alpha}$ for some $\alpha \in \mathbf{R} - \mathbf{Q}$ is called the *rotation number* of D .

Notation 5.1. $A \asymp B$ means $A/C < B < CA$ for some constant C .

Then the following uniform estimate holds: on $S \Subset D$,

$$[f^k(z), z] \asymp |f^k(z) - z| \asymp |h \circ f^k(z) - h(z)| = |\lambda^k - 1| \cdot |h(z)| = |\lambda^k - 1|,$$

where the implicit constants are independent of $k \in \mathbf{N}$ and $z \in S$. Hence

$$(16) \quad \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{d^k} \log \frac{1}{[p, f^k(p)]} = \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{d^k} \log \frac{1}{|\lambda^k - 1|}.$$

On the right-hand side of (16), we have already shown the following.

Theorem 5.1 (a priori bound [11]). *The rotation number λ of every rotation domain satisfies*

$$(17) \quad \limsup_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{1}{d^k} \log \frac{1}{|\lambda^k - 1|} = 0.$$

Combining (16) and (17) we finish the proof. \square

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