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## MINIMAL GROWTH OF ENTIRE FUNCTIONS WITH PRESCRIBED ZEROS OUTSIDE EXCEPTIONAL SETS

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Let *h* be a positive continuous increasing to  $+\infty$  function on  $\mathbb{R}$ . It is proved that for an arbitrary complex sequence  $(\zeta_n)$  such that  $0 < |\zeta_1| \le |\zeta_2| \le \ldots$  and  $\zeta_n \to \infty$  as  $n \to \infty$ , there exists an entire function *f* whose zeros are the  $\zeta_n$ , with multiplicities taken into account, for which

$$\ln m_2(r, f) = o(N(r)), \quad r \notin E, \ r \to +\infty$$

with a set E satisfying  $\int_{E\cap(1,+\infty)} h(r)dr < +\infty$ , if and only if  $\ln h(r) = O(\ln r)$  as  $r \to +\infty$ . Here N(r) is the integrated counting function of the sequence  $(\zeta_n)$  and

$$m_2(r,f) = \left(\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} |\ln|f(re^{i\theta})||^2 d\theta\right)^{1/2}.$$

**1. Introduction and results.** Let  $\mathcal{Z}$  be the class of all complex sequences  $\zeta = (\zeta_n)$  such that  $0 < |\zeta_1| \le |\zeta_2| \le \ldots$  and  $\zeta_n \to \infty$  as  $n \to \infty$ . For every sequence  $\zeta = (\zeta_n)$  from the class  $\mathcal{Z}$ , we denote by  $\mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  the class of all entire functions whose zeros are precisely the  $\zeta_n$ . Here a complex number that occurs m times in the sequence  $\zeta$  corresponds to a zero of multiplicity m, and for each  $r \ge 0$  we put

$$n(r,\zeta) = \sum_{|\zeta_n| \le r} 1, \qquad N(r,\zeta) = \int_0^r \frac{n(t,\zeta)}{t} dt.$$

Let us set  $\mathbb{D}_R = \{z \in \mathbb{C} : |z| < R\}$  for every R > 0. If R > 0, then for an arbitrary meromorphic function f in  $\mathbb{D}_R$  and all  $r \in [0, R)$  we denote by T(r, f) the Nevanlinna characteristic function, and

$$m_q(r,f) = \left(\frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} |\ln|f(re^{i\theta})||^q d\theta\right)^{1/q}, \quad q \ge 1$$

For an arbitrary entire function f and each  $r \ge 0$ , we put  $M(r, f) = \max\{|f(z)| : |z| = r\}$ . By L denote the class of all positive continuous increasing to  $+\infty$  functions on  $\mathbb{R}$ .

A. A. Goldberg [1] proved the following two theorems.

**Theorem A** ([1]). Let  $\zeta \in \mathcal{Z}$  be an arbitrary sequence. Then there exists an entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  such that

$$\ln \ln M(r, f) = o(N(r, \zeta)), \quad r \notin E, \ r \to +\infty,$$
(1)

where E is an exceptional set of finite logarithmic measure, i.e.,  $\int_{E \cap (1,+\infty)} d \ln r < +\infty$ .

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**Theorem B** ([1]). Let  $\psi \in L$ . If  $\psi(x) = o(x)$  as  $x \to +\infty$ , then there exist a sequence  $\zeta \in \mathbb{Z}$  and a set F of upper linear density 1, i.e.,

$$\overline{\lim_{r \to +\infty} \frac{1}{r}} \int_{F \cap (0,r)} dr = 1,$$

such that for any entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  we have

$$\psi(N(r,\zeta)) = o(\ln \ln M(r,f)), \quad r \in F, \ r \to +\infty.$$
(2)

The following two theorems show that we can make more precise conclusions about the sizes of the sets E and F in Theorems A and B.

**Theorem C** ([2]). Let  $\zeta \in \mathbb{Z}$  be an arbitrary sequence. Then there exist an entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  and a function  $\alpha \in L$  such that (1) holds with an exceptional set E satisfying

$$\int_{E\cap(1,+\infty)} r^{\alpha(r)} dr < +\infty.$$
(3)

**Theorem D** ([2]). Let  $\psi \in L$ . If  $\lim_{x \to +\infty} \frac{\psi(x)}{x} = 0$ , then there exist a sequence  $\zeta \in \mathcal{Z}$  and a set  $F = \bigcup_{n=0}^{\infty} (x_n; y_n)$  satisfying

 $1 < x_0 < y_0 < x_1 < y_1 < \dots, \qquad \lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{\ln y_n}{\ln x_n} = +\infty,$ 

such that for any entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  we have (2).

Note that Theorem C is also true for the relation

$$\ln T(r,f) = o(N(r,\zeta)), \quad r \notin E, \ r \to +\infty,$$

instead of (1), because for an arbitrary entire function f and every  $r \ge 0$  we obtain

$$T(r,f) := \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} \ln^+ |f(re^{i\theta})| d\theta \le \ln^+ M(r,f).$$

The proof of Theorem D, given in [2], shows that this theorem is true for the relation

$$\psi(N(r,\zeta))=o(\ln T(r,f)),\quad r\in F,\ r\to+\infty,$$

instead of (2). Therefore, Theorem D is also true for the relation

$$\psi(N(r,\zeta)) = o(\ln m_2(r,f)), \quad r \in F, \ r \to +\infty,$$

instead of (2), because for any function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  and each  $r \ge 0$  we have

$$m_2(r, f) \ge m_1(r, f) = 2T(r, f) - N(r, \zeta) - \ln |f(0)|.$$

In this paper, we will prove the following two theorems.

**Theorem 1.** Let  $\zeta \in \mathcal{Z}$  be an arbitrary sequence. Then there exist an entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  and a function  $\alpha \in L$  such that

$$\ln m_2(r, f) = o(N(r, \zeta)), \quad r \notin E, \ r \to +\infty,$$
(4)

where E is an exceptional set satisfying (3).

**Theorem 2.** Let  $h \in L$ . If

$$\overline{\lim_{r \to +\infty} \frac{\ln h(r)}{\ln r}} = +\infty,$$
(5)

then there exists a sequence  $\zeta \in \mathcal{Z}$  such that for any function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  we get

$$N(r,\zeta) = o(\ln m_2(r,f)), \quad r \in F(f), \ r \to +\infty,$$
(6)

where F(f) is a set satisfying

$$\int_{F(f)\cap(1,+\infty)} h(r)dr = +\infty.$$
(7)

Theorem 2 shows that the function  $\alpha \in L$  in Theorem 1 depends on  $\zeta$  in general. Therefore, estimate (3) for the size of the exceptional set E in Theorem 1 is exact in a certain sense.

In connection with the above results, the following question arises: is (3) an exact estimate for the size of the exceptional set E in Theorem C? In other words, is it possible to replace  $\ln m_2(r, f)$  by  $\ln \ln M(r, f)$  in Theorem 2? This question remains open.

At the end of the introductory part, we note that some other problems concerning comparisons of the growth of an entire function f to the distribution of its zeros were considered, in particular, in [3]–[10]. We also note that questions regarding the sizes of exceptional sets in various asymptotic relations between characteristics of entire functions were investigated, for example, in [12]–[19].

2. Auxiliary results. We will deduce Theorem 1 from Theorem C by using the following two lemmas.

**Lemma 1** ([20]). Let  $0 < r < R < \rho$ , and let f be a meromorphic function in  $\mathbb{D}_{\rho}$ , with f(0) = 1. Then

$$m_2(r, f) \le (1 + 8/\sqrt{\log_2(R/r)})T(R, f).$$

**Lemma 2** ([21]). Let  $-\infty < x_0 < a \le +\infty$ , and functions H(x), u(x) and  $\varphi(u)$  satisfy the following conditions:

1) H is continuous increasing to  $+\infty$  on  $[x_0, a)$ ;

2) u is non-decreasing unbounded on  $[x_0, a)$ ;

3)  $\varphi$  is positive non-decreasing unbounded on  $[u_0, +\infty)$  and  $\int_{u_0}^{+\infty} \frac{du}{\varphi(u)} < +\infty$ , where  $u_0 = u(x_0)$ .

Then for the set

$$E = \left\{ x \in [x_0, a) : u\left(H^{-1}\left(H(x) + \frac{1}{\varphi(u(x))}\right)\right) \ge u(x) + 1 \right\}$$

we have  $\int_E dH(x) < +\infty$ .

Note that Lemma 2 is a version of the classical Borel-Nevanlinna theorem (see, for example, [11], p. 120) and is easily deduced from this theorem.

**3. Proof of Theorems.** Proof of Theorem 1. Let  $\zeta \in \mathcal{Z}$  be an arbitrary sequence. By Theorem C, there exist an entire function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  and a function  $\beta \in L$  such that

$$\ln T(r, f) = o(N(r, \zeta)), \quad r \notin E_1, \ r \to +\infty, \tag{8}$$

where  $E_1$  is an exceptional set satisfying  $\int_{E_1 \cap (1,+\infty)} r^{\beta(r)} dr < +\infty$ . Clearly, we can assume that f(0) = 1. Let us prove that there exists a function  $\alpha \in L$  such that for the function f we have (4) with an exceptional set E satisfying (3).

Since  $\ln r = o(N(r, \zeta))$  as  $r \to +\infty$ , there exists a function  $\eta \in L$  for which

$$\eta(r)\ln r = o(N(r,\zeta)), \quad r \to +\infty.$$
(9)

We choose some  $r_0 > 1$  such that  $T(r_0, f) > 1$ , and consider the set

$$E_2 = \{r > r_0 : \ln m_2(r, f) > \eta(r) \ln r + 2 \ln T(r, f)\}.$$

Fix an arbitrary integer  $k \ge 1$  and prove that  $\int_{E_2} r^k dr < +\infty$ . For each  $r \ge r_0$ , we put

$$R(r) = \left(r^{k+1} + \frac{1}{T^2(r,f)}\right)^{1/(k+1)}$$

Note that

$$\ln \frac{R(r)}{r} = \frac{1}{k+1} \ln \left( 1 + \frac{1}{r^{k+1}T^2(r,f)} \right) \sim \frac{1}{(k+1)r^{k+1}T^2(r,f)}, \quad r \to +\infty.$$
(10)

Let  $H(r) = r^{k+1}$  and u(r) = T(r, f) for all  $r \ge r_0$ , and let  $\varphi(u) = u^2$  for all  $u \ge 1$ . Using Lemma 2, we see that, for the set  $F = \{r \ge r_0 : T(R(r), f) > T(r, f) + 1\}$ , the estimate  $\int_F r^k dr < +\infty$  holds.

Further, for all sufficiently large  $r \notin F$ , say for  $r \geq r_1$ , by Lemma 1 and (10) we have

$$\ln m_2(r, f) \le \ln \left( 1 + \frac{8\sqrt{\ln 2}}{\sqrt{\ln(R(r)/r)}} \right) + \ln T(R(r), f) \le \eta(r) \ln r + 2 \ln T(r, f),$$

that is,  $r \notin E_2$ . Therefore,  $E_2 \subset F \cup [r_0, r_1]$ , and hence  $c_k := \int_{E_2} r^k dr < +\infty$ .

We choose a sequence  $(s_k)$  increasing to  $+\infty$  such that  $s_1 \ge r_0$  and  $s_k \ge 2^k c_{k+1}$  for every integer  $k \ge 1$ . It is easy to see that there exists a function  $\gamma \in L$  such that  $\gamma(r) \le k$  for all  $r \in [s_k, s_{k+1})$  and every integer  $k \ge 1$ . Then

$$\int_{E_2} r^{\gamma(r)} dr = \int_{E_2 \cap [r_0, s_1]} r^{\gamma(r)} dr + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \int_{E_2 \cap [s_k, s_{k+1}]} r^{\gamma(r)} dr \le$$
$$\le \int_{r_0}^{s_1} r^{\gamma(r)} dr + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \int_{E_2 \cap [s_k, s_{k+1}]} r^k dr \le \int_{r_0}^{s_1} r^{\gamma(r)} dr + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{s_k} \int_{E_2 \cap [s_k, s_{k+1}]} r^{k+1} dr \le$$
$$\le \int_{r_0}^{s_1} r^{\gamma(r)} dr + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{c_{k+1}}{s_k} \le \int_{r_0}^{s_1} r^{\gamma(r)} dr + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2^k} < +\infty.$$

We set  $\alpha(r) = \min\{\beta(r), \gamma(r)\}$  for all  $r \in \mathbb{R}$ , and let  $E = E_1 \cup E_2$ . Then  $\alpha \in L$  and

$$\int_{E} r^{\alpha(r)} dr \leq \int_{E_1} r^{\beta(r)} dr + \int_{E_2} r^{\gamma(r)} dr < +\infty,$$

that is, the set E satisfies (3). In addition, from the definition of the set  $E_2$ , (9), and (8) we see that relation (4) holds.

*Proof of Theorem 2.* Le  $h \in L$  be a function that satisfies (5). We set l(x) = h(x/e) for all  $x \in \mathbb{R}$ . Then  $l \in L$  and

$$\overline{\lim_{r \to +\infty} \frac{\ln l(r)}{\ln r}} = +\infty.$$
(11)

It follows from (11) that there exists a sequence  $(r_k)$  increasing to  $+\infty$  such that  $r_1 > 1$ ,  $l(r_1) > 1$ , and for every integer  $k \ge 2$  we have

$$r_k > e^2 r_{k-1}, \qquad \ln([l(r_k)] - [l(r_{k-1})]) > k l(r_{k-1}) \ln r_k.$$
 (12)

Here and further, for a number  $x \in \mathbb{R}$ , [x] denotes the largest integer not greater than x.

For all integers  $k \ge 1$ , we put  $n_k = [l(r_k)]$ . It is clear that  $(n_k)$  is an increasing sequence of positive integers. Let  $m_1 = n_1$ , and let  $m_k = n_k - n_{k-1}$  for each integer  $k \ge 2$ . Note that  $\sum_{j=1}^{k} m_j = n_k$  for an arbitrary integer  $k \ge 1$ .

Let us form the sequence  $\zeta = (\zeta_n)$  as follows  $\underbrace{r_1, \ldots, r_1}_{m_1 \text{ times}}, \underbrace{r_2, \ldots, r_2}_{m_2 \text{ times}}, \ldots, \underbrace{r_k, \ldots, r_k}_{m_k \text{ times}}, \ldots$ , that is, we set  $\zeta_n = r_k$  for all integers  $n \in (n_k - m_k, n_k]$  and  $k \ge 1$ . Then  $n(r, \zeta) = 0$  if  $r \in [0, r_1)$ ,

and  $n_{\zeta}(r) = n_k$  if  $r \in [r_k, r_{k+1})$  for some integer  $k \ge 1$ .

Consider a function  $f \in \mathcal{E}(\zeta)$  and prove that this function satisfies (6) with a set F(f)satisfying (7).

The function f has no zeros in the disk  $\mathbb{D}_{r_1}$ , and therefore there exists an analytic function

$$g(z) = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \alpha_n z^n$$

in  $\mathbb{D}_{r_1}$  such that  $f(z) = e^{g(z)}$  for all  $z \in \mathbb{D}_{r_1}$ . Let r > 0, and let  $c_p(r)$  be the p-th Fourier coefficient of the function  $\ln |f(re^{i\theta})|$ , i.e.

$$c_p(r) = \frac{1}{2\pi} \int_0^{2\pi} e^{-ip\theta} \ln |f(re^{i\theta})| d\theta, \quad p \in \mathbb{Z}.$$

Then, since all  $\zeta_n$  are positive, for each integer  $p \geq 1$ , according to the Poisson-Jensen formula (see, for example, [11, p. 16–17]), we have

$$c_p(r) = \frac{1}{2}\alpha_p r^p + \frac{1}{2p} \sum_{|\zeta_n| < r} \left( \left(\frac{r}{\zeta_n}\right)^p - \left(\frac{\zeta_n}{r}\right)^p \right).$$
(13)

Using (13), for R > r > 0 we obtain the following equality

$$c_p(R) - \left(\frac{R}{r}\right)^p c_p(r) = \frac{1}{2p} \sum_{r \le |\zeta_n| < R} \left( \left(\frac{R}{\zeta_n}\right)^p - \left(\frac{\zeta_n}{R}\right)^p \right) + \frac{1}{2p} \sum_{|\zeta_n| < r} \left( \left(\frac{\zeta_n R}{r^2}\right)^p - \left(\frac{\zeta_n}{R}\right)^p \right).$$

Both terms on the right-hand side of this equality are non-negative, and so we have

$$|c_p(R)| + \left(\frac{R}{r}\right)^p |c_p(r)| \ge \frac{1}{2p} \sum_{r \le |\zeta_n| < R} \left( \left(\frac{R}{\zeta_n}\right)^p - \left(\frac{\zeta_n}{R}\right)^p \right).$$

Since  $x^2 + y^2 \ge (x + y)^2/2$  for arbitrary real x and y, we get

$$|c_p(R)|^2 + \left(\frac{R}{r}\right)^{2p} |c_p(r)|^2 \ge \frac{1}{8p^2} \left(\sum_{r \le |\zeta_n| < R} \left(\left(\frac{R}{\zeta_n}\right)^p - \left(\frac{\zeta_n}{R}\right)^p\right)\right)^2.$$
(14)

We now denote by K the set of all integers  $k \ge 1$  such that  $m_2(r, f) \ge \sqrt[4]{m_k}$  for all  $r \in [r_k \exp(-1/m_k), r_k]$ .

Let us first consider the case when the set K is infinite. In this case, we put

$$F(f) = \bigcup_{k \in K} [r_k \exp(-1/m_k), r_k].$$

Since  $h(r_k \exp(-1/m_k)) \ge l(r_k) \ge n_k > m_k$  for each integer  $k \ge 1$ , we have

$$\int_{r_k \exp(-1/m_k)}^{r_k} h(r)dr \ge m_k r_k (1 - e^{-1/m_k}) = (1 + o(1))r_k, \quad k \to +\infty.$$

Therefore, for the set F(f) estimate (7) holds. In addition, if  $k \in K$  and  $k \ge 2$ , then, using the second of inequalities (12), for an arbitrary  $r \in [r_k \exp(-1/m_k), r_k]$  we obtain

$$N(r,\zeta) = \int_{r_1}^r \frac{n(t,\zeta)}{t} dt \le n_{k-1} \ln \frac{r}{r_1} < \frac{1}{k} \ln m_k \le \frac{4}{k} \ln m_2(r,f),$$

and this implies (6).

Let us now consider the case when the set K is finite. Then for each integer  $k \ge k_1$  there exists a point  $s_k \in [r_k \exp(-1/m_k), r_k]$  such that  $m_2(s_k, f) < \sqrt[4]{m_k}$ . Put

$$F(f) = \bigcup_{k \ge 1} [r_k \exp(1/m_k), r_k \exp(2/m_k)].$$

Since  $e^x - 1 > x$  for all x > 0, for each integer  $k \ge 1$  we have

$$\int_{r_k \exp(1/m_k)}^{r_k \exp(2/m_k)} h(r) dr \ge m_k r_k (e^{2/m_k} - e^{1/m_k}) > r_k,$$

and therefore, for the set F(f) estimate (7) holds. By (12) we obtain  $r_k \exp(2/m_k) < r_{k+1}$  for each integer  $k \ge 1$ , and in addition  $n_k \sim m_k$  as  $k \to \infty$ . So, for an arbitrary integer  $k \ge k_2$ , we get

$$N(r_k e^{2/m_k}, \zeta) = \int_{r_1}^{r_k} \frac{n(t, \zeta)}{t} dt + \int_{r_k}^{r_k \exp(2/m_k)} \frac{n(t, \zeta)}{t} dt \le n_{k-1} \ln \frac{r_k}{r_1} + \frac{2n_k}{m_k} \le \frac{1}{k} \ln m_k + 3.$$
(15)

Using (14) with  $r = s_k$  and taking into account that  $e^x - e^{-x} > 2x$  for all x > 0, for arbitrary integers  $k \ge 1$  and  $p \in [1, m_k]$ , and for each  $R \in [r_k \exp(1/m_k), r_k \exp(2/m_k)]$  we have

$$|c_{p}(R)|^{2} + e^{6}|c_{p}(s_{k})|^{2} \ge |c_{p}(R)|^{2} + \left(\frac{R}{s_{k}}\right)^{2p}|c_{p}(s_{k})|^{2} \ge$$
$$\ge \frac{1}{8p^{2}} \left(\sum_{s_{k} \le |\zeta_{n}| < R} \left(\left(\frac{R}{\zeta_{n}}\right)^{p} - \left(\frac{\zeta_{n}}{R}\right)^{p}\right)\right)^{2} = \frac{m_{k}^{2}}{8p^{2}} \left(\left(\frac{R}{r_{k}}\right)^{p} - \left(\frac{r_{k}}{R}\right)^{p}\right)^{2} \ge$$
$$\ge \frac{m_{k}^{2}}{8p^{2}} \left(2p \ln \frac{R}{r_{k}}\right)^{2} = \frac{m_{k}^{2}}{2} \ln^{2} \frac{R}{r_{k}} \ge \frac{1}{2}.$$

Therefore, for each  $R \in [r_k \exp(1/m_k), r_k \exp(2/m_k)]$  and all integers  $k \ge k_3$  we obtain

$$m_2^2(R,f) = |c_0(R)|^2 + 2\sum_{p=1}^{\infty} |c_p(R)|^2 \ge 2\sum_{p=1}^{m_k} |c_p(R)|^2 \ge 2\sum_{p=1}^{m_k} \left(\frac{1}{2} - e^6 |c_p(s_k)|^2\right) \ge m_k - e^6 m_2^2(s_k, f) > m_k - e^6 \sqrt{m_k} > m_k/2.$$

This and (15) imply (6).

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