

Immunity Properties and the n -C.E. Hierarchy^{*}

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Abstract. We extend Post's programme to finite levels of the Ershov hierarchy of Δ_2 sets, and characterise, in the spirit of Post [9], the degrees of the immune and hyperimmune d.c.e. sets. We also show that no properly d.c.e. set can be hh-immune, and indicate how to generalise these results to n -c.e. sets, $n > 2$.

1 Introduction

In 1944, Post [9] set out to relate computational structure to its underlying information content. Since then, many computability-theoretic classes have been captured, in the spirit of Post, via their relationships to the lattice of computably enumerable (c.e.) sets. In particular, we have Post's [9] characterisation of the non-computable c.e. Turing degrees as those of the simple, or hypersimple even, sets; Martin's Theorem [6] showing the high c.e. Turing degrees to be those containing maximal sets; and Shoenfield's [10] characterisation of the non-low₂ c.e. degrees as those of the atomless c.e. sets (that is, of co-infinite c.e. sets without maximal supersets).

In this article, and in Afshari, Barmpalias and Cooper [1], we initiate the extension of Post's programme to computability-theoretic classes of the n -c.e. sets.

For basic terminology and notation, see Cooper [4], Soare [11], or Odifreddi [7].

2 On the degrees of immune and hyperimmune d.c.e. sets

Theorems 1 and 2 below fully characterise the degrees of the immune and hyperimmune d.c.e. sets. The techniques needed are somewhat more complicated — and different — to those applicable in the c.e. cases.

Theorem 1. *Every non-computable d.c.e. bT (that is, wtt) degree contains an immune d.c.e. set.*

^{*} The first author was partially supported by an ORS (UK) award. The second two authors were supported by EPSRC grant No. GR /S28730/01, and by the NSFC Grand International Joint Project, No. 60310213, *New Directions in the Theory and Applications of Models of Computation*. We wish to thank the referees for useful comments which improved the presentation of this paper.

Proof. Suppose we are given a non-computable d.c.e. set W . We wish to construct a d.c.e. set $A \equiv_{bT} W$ which is immune i.e. for every infinite c.e. set V , $V \not\subseteq A$. We consider each number enumerated in V as a guess about members of A . We want to construct A such that it is impossible for such a guessing procedure to guess always correctly. We consider an effective enumeration V_0, V_1, \dots of all c.e. sets *filtered* in the following way: we enumerate n into V_j at stage s if it currently belongs to both the j -th c.e. set *and* A , the set we are constructing. These c.e. sets may not exhaust the class of c.e. sets, but if a c.e. set is subset of A it will be in that list. So (V_j) is an enumeration of all potential opponents and it suffices to construct $A \equiv_{bT} W$ such that

$$\mathcal{I}_j : \exists i(i \in V_j \wedge i \notin A) \text{ or } V_j \text{ is finite}$$

for all j . An \mathcal{I} requirement asks to extract a number which has appeared in A . Without loss of generality we can assume that W is not immune and that (p_{kt}) is a double sequence of members of W which is increasing on both arguments (indeed, every d.c.e. set is bT -equivalent with a non-immune d.c.e. set). Let $P \subset W$ be the set of these terms and

$$P_j = \{p_{jk} \mid k \in \mathbb{N}\}.$$

In the d.c.e. approximation of W that we use we assume that numbers in P are never extracted. For any $n, j \in \mathbb{N}$ define the j -sequence of n to be $(p_{j,k-j}, \dots, p_{jk})$ where k is the largest such that $p_{jk} < n$. That is, the sequence of the largest $j+1$ numbers in P_j which are smaller than n . Note that for each j almost all n have a j -sequence. If some \mathcal{I}_j acts by extracting some $n \notin P$ then the j -sequence of n becomes the \mathcal{I}_j -sequence for the rest of the construction. The idea of the construction is to control the membership of n w.r.t. A according to its membership w.r.t. W and simultaneously let the \mathcal{I} requirements extract numbers. The problem is that some n may be extracted from W while n has been previously extracted from A by some \mathcal{I}_j . In that case we notify A by enumerating the largest number of the j -sequence of n into A . This notification may later be extracted from A by some \mathcal{I}_i , $i < j$ but then the previous term of that j -sequence will enter A . Eventually (since there are only j requirements of higher priority than \mathcal{I}_j) some notification will remain in the j -sequence of n . The priority ordering of the requirements is the obvious one (\mathcal{I}_i has higher priority than \mathcal{I}_j iff $i < j$). There will be no injury: once a requirement is satisfied it will remain so. Let U be a c.e. non-computable set such that $U \leq_{bT} W$. Assume an effective 1-1 enumeration (u_s) of U .

Construction At stage s do the following.

Step 1 (*Coding*)

- If some $n \notin P$ enters W then $n \searrow A$.
- If some n is extracted from W and $n \in A$, extract n from A .

- If some n is extracted from W but $n \notin A$ then find which \mathcal{I}_j has extracted n from A and enumerate into A the largest term of the \mathcal{I}_j sequence.
- Step 2 (*Satisfaction of \mathcal{I}*) We say that \mathcal{I}_j *requires attention* if it has not acted so far, $V_j \subseteq A$ and one of the following cases holds.
- There is $n \in V_j$ such that $n \notin P$, $u_s < n$ and there is a j -sequence of n .
 - There is $n \in V_j$ such that $n \in P_i$ for some $i > j$ and $u_s < n$.
- Consider the least j such that \mathcal{I}_j requires attention and *act* as follows (saying that \mathcal{I}_j *acts on n*):
- If $n \notin P$ extract n from A and define the \mathcal{I}_j *sequence* to be the j -sequence of n .
 - If $n \in P_i$ extract n from A and enumerate its predecessor in the \mathcal{I}_i sequence.
- Go to the next stage.

Verification

Lemma 1. *A is d.c.e.*

Proof. We show that in the approximation to A given by the construction no number n can be extracted from A and later re-enter A . Indeed, if $n \notin P$ then it follows from the fact that the approximation of W is d.c.e. If $n \in P$ and is part of the sequence of \mathcal{I}_j , once extracted \mathcal{I}_j will not act again and only smaller terms of the sequence can change in the approximation (via the actions of \mathcal{I}_i , $i < j$).

Lemma 2. *If the sequence of some \mathcal{I}_j is defined during the construction (i.e. \mathcal{I}_j acts on some $m \notin P$) then the only elements of P_j that may ever be enumerated into A are the terms of that sequence (the j -sequence of m). In particular, for each j only finitely many numbers in P_j will ever be enumerated into A .*

Proof. The sequence of \mathcal{I}_j is defined when \mathcal{I}_j acts on (i.e. extracts) a number $m \in \mathbb{N} - P$. This happens at most once and no number P_j can enter A before that. Once the sequence is defined its terms will be used one by one from the larger to the smaller ones. If the largest enters A (because of the extraction of m from W), it may later be extracted and in this case its predecessor will enter A , and so on. This progression happens by the action of some \mathcal{I}_i , $i < j$ (which extracts an element of P_j). So it can happen at most $j + 1$ times (including the initial enumeration due to W), the length of the sequence.

Lemma 3. *Every \mathcal{I}_j acts at most once and is satisfied.*

Proof. Suppose that this holds for \mathcal{I}_i , $i < j$. When \mathcal{I}_j acts it extracts a number from A which has already been enumerated in that set. According to the proof of lemma 1 this will not re-enter A and so \mathcal{I}_j will remain satisfied. If it does not act it means that it never requires attention after a certain stage; then V_j must be finite (by the usual permitting argument, since U is non-computable and higher priority requirements act only finitely many times) and so \mathcal{I}_j is satisfied.

Lemma 4. $A \leq_{bT} W$.

Proof. It suffices to show $A \leq_{bT} W \oplus U$. To decide ‘ $n \in A$?’ do the following

- If $n \notin P$, find a stage s where $U \upharpoonright n$ has settled; then $n \in A$ iff $n \in W$ unless it has been extracted by stage s (in which case $n \notin A$). This is because extraction via the \mathcal{I} strategies needs a change in $U \upharpoonright n$.
- If $n \in P_j$ computably find a number t which bounds the (finitely many) numbers in $\mathbb{N} - P$ which have n as a member of their j -sequence. Find a stage s at which $U \upharpoonright t$ has settled and the approximation to $W \upharpoonright t$ is correct. Then the approximation of the membership of n to A is also correct: if $n \in A$ it cannot be extracted as there is no $U \upharpoonright n$ permission (only \mathcal{I} strategies extract numbers in P); if $n \notin A$ it cannot be enumerated by some \mathcal{I} (as this requires $U \upharpoonright t$ -permission). If it was later enumerated due to the extraction of some m from W , m would be one of the numbers in $\mathbb{N} - P$ whose j -sequence contains n . That $m < t$ must be in W at s , since \mathcal{I}_j cannot act on (i.e. extract) m after s (there will be no U -permission). But that is a contradiction by the choice of s .

Lemma 5. $W \leq_{bT} A$.

Proof. Suppose we want to answer ‘ $n \in W$?’ for $n \notin P$ (otherwise $n \in W$ since $P \subset W$). Wait until a stage s where the approximation to $A \upharpoonright (n+1)$ is correct. Then the approximation to $W(n)$ is also correct:

- if $n \in W$ and $n \in A$ at s then n cannot be extracted from A , and so n cannot be extracted from W ;
- if $n \in W$ and $n \notin A$ at s then the extraction of n from W would imply an enumeration $t \searrow A \upharpoonright n$ (a member of the sequence of \mathcal{I}_j which extracted n). Of course t may later be extracted but another $t_1 < t$ (of the same sequence) would enter A and so on, eventually guaranteeing that $A \upharpoonright n$ at s is different than the final limit;
- if $n \notin W$ at s and it is enumerated later, $A \upharpoonright (n+1)$ at s will be different than the final limit: n would enter A and even if it is extracted by some \mathcal{I}_j , some member of the j -sequence of n (whose members are not in A at s) will stay in A .

This concludes the proof of the theorem.

For more information on the behaviour of hyperimmunity in the weak truth table degrees (particularly in the c.e. case) see [2, 3].

Theorem 2. *Every non-computable d.c.e. degree contains a hyperimmune d.c.e. set.*

Proof. Suppose we are given a d.c.e. set W . Then there is a non-computable c.e. set $U \leq_T W$. We wish to construct a d.c.e. set $A \equiv_T W$ which is hyperimmune

i.e. for every computable sequence $D = (D_i)$ of disjoint segments of \mathbb{N} there is an i such that $D_i \cap A = \emptyset$. We consider each member of D as a guess about members of A . We want to construct A such that it is impossible for such a guessing procedure to guess always correctly. We consider an effective enumeration D^0, D^1, \dots of all partial computable sequences of disjoint segments of \mathbb{N} ($D^j = (D_i^j)$) i.e. an enumeration of all potential opponents. It suffices to construct $A \equiv_T W$ such that

$$\mathcal{H}_j : \exists i (D_i^j \cap A = \emptyset) \text{ or } D^j \text{ is not total}$$

for all j . There are two main differences with the proof of theorem 1 where we just have to consider immunity. One is that now it is harder to keep the codes small, as our opponent can guess with entire segments of \mathbb{N} of unbounded length. The other one, perhaps less apparent, is that the requirements \mathcal{H} do not just ask to extract elements but also not to let numbers enter A in certain segments (even if they have not appeared yet).

Without loss of generality assume that W is not immune and that (p_{kt}) is a double sequence of members of W which is increasing on both arguments. Let $P \subset W$ be the set of these terms. At all stages of the construction of A , every $n \notin P$ will have a code $c(n)$ which corresponds to A . The default is $c(n) = n$. By ensuring

$$n \in W \iff c(n) \in A$$

at all times we code W to A . We sometimes think of these codes as *c-markers* on \mathbb{N} . During the construction the code $c(n)$ of n may change to a larger number for the sake of the \mathcal{H} requirements; but it will eventually reach a limit. These limits will be computable in A . This suggests some additional coding in A , which will be made via the positions in P (which initially are free of *c*-codes). Positions in

$$P_j = \{p_{jk} \mid k \in \mathbb{N}\}$$

will be exclusively *used* by \mathcal{H}_j (at the beginning of the construction no number has been *used*). Since we also want $A \leq_T W$ we need some kind of permitting and for this reason we use a non-computable c.e. set $U \leq_T W$. Note that this introduces some non-uniformity in the proof as such a U cannot be found uniformly given an index of W . Now we will require any change of a *c*-code to be permitted by U .

The \mathcal{H} strategies can have one of the following two states during the construction: *satisfied* and *unsatisfied* with the latter being the default. Strategy \mathcal{H}_j will find a suitable member of D^j and evacuate all numbers belonging to that segment in the characteristic sequence of A , thus becoming *satisfied*. That member of D^j is now an *attack segment* of \mathcal{H}_j . Higher priority strategies (which do not take into account \mathcal{H}_j) may later put a number into A which belongs to that segment. Then \mathcal{H}_j is set back to *unsatisfied* (a kind of *injury*) and it has to perform a new attack in a new segment. Eventually each strategy will settle satisfied and having used finitely many attack intervals. The priority ordering of the requirements is the obvious one (\mathcal{H}_i has higher priority than \mathcal{H}_j iff $i < j$). Assume an effective 1–1 enumeration (u_s) of U .

Construction At stage s do the following.

Step 1 (*Coding*) For all $n \notin P$ ensure

$$n \in W \iff c(n) \in A$$

by enumerating in or extracting $c(n)$ from A (if needed).

Step 2 (*Satisfaction of \mathcal{H}*). We say that \mathcal{H}_j *requires attention* if it is *unsatisfied* and there is some k such that

- $D_k^j \downarrow$ and $u_s < \min D_k^j$
- there exists t such that $u_s < p_{jt} < \min D_k^j$ and p_{jt} is larger than all numbers in attack intervals used so far by \mathcal{H}_i , $i \leq j$ and larger than any number p_{ik} that has been used by \mathcal{H}_i , $i \leq j$.

Consider the highest priority strategy \mathcal{H}_j which requires attention and *act* as follows:

- Call p_{jt} the *base code* of this attack and put $p_{jt} \searrow A$; set all \mathcal{H}_i , $i > j$ to *unsatisfied*.
- Take all numbers of D_k^j out of A and if any number in this interval is a code $c(n)$ for some n , redefine $c(n)$ to be a *fresh* number in P_j (i.e. greater than s and any number or interval used in the construction so far).
- Set \mathcal{H}_j to *satisfied* and say that p_{jt} and the numbers in P_j which received c -markers under the previous step were *used* by \mathcal{H}_j .

Go to the next stage.

Verification The verification consists of the following lemmas.

Lemma 6. *A is d.c.e.*

Proof. We show that in the approximation to A given by the construction no number can enter A , then be extracted from A and later be enumerated into A again. Indeed, if $n \in P$, say $n = p_{jk}$, it can only enter A as the base code of some attack or as a c -code (if it carries a c -marker, $c(m) = n$ for some m). If it is later extracted from A it must be either because of some attack interval which contains n or (in the latter case) because m is extracted from W . After this happens, according to the construction, n will not be the base code of \mathcal{H}_j again and it will not carry any c -marker again. So it will stay permanently out of A .

If $n \notin P$ it can only enter A as a c -code. But the only c -code it will ever carry is the default $c(n) = n$. After the enumeration of $n \searrow W$ it can be extracted from A either because n is extracted from W (and n is still the c -code of n) or because an attack interval contains n . In the former case n will not enter W again and since n will not carry other c -codes (or be a base code) it will stay out of A . In the latter case n will again stay outside A as it will not be assigned a new c -code (or a base code).

Lemma 7. *All \mathcal{H}_j are satisfied and cease requiring attention at some stage.*

Proof. Suppose that the lemma holds for \mathcal{H}_i , $i < j$ and that these strategies have been settled at stage s . Any attack intervals or base codes used by these strategies will be finitely many and so, bounded by some number. Since U is non-computable, by the usual permitting argument \mathcal{H}_j will require attention at some stage after s (or (D^j) is partial). It will choose an attack interval D and empty A on this interval thus being satisfied. Moreover, it will stay satisfied as no strategy can enumerate numbers of D into A from now on (as \mathcal{H}_i , $i < j$ have settled and lower priority strategies cannot do this).

Lemma 8. *Every c -marker reaches a limit (i.e. for all $n \notin P$, $\lim_s c(n)[s] < \infty$). Moreover, if $c(n)[s]$ changes to a different number $c(n)[s+1]$ then $(A \upharpoonright c(n))[s]$ is never part of the A -approximation of the construction after s (in particular it is not an initial segment of A).*

Proof. Indeed at first $c(n) = n$ (for $n \notin P$). If it is later moved by some \mathcal{H}_j it will sit on some number in P_j . Then it can only be moved by some \mathcal{H}_i , $i < j$ and so on. So it can move at most $j+1$ times.

For the second claim, if $c(n)[s]$ changes to a different number $c(n)[s+1]$ it must be because of an action of some \mathcal{H}_j . By construction, some number $t \in P_j$ (the base code of the attack) which has never appeared in A before will enter A . If this is never extracted the claim holds. Otherwise another attack will have taken place which used a base code $t_1 < t$ (where t_1 has not been enumerated before) and so on. Eventually one of these base codes must remain in A which proves the claim.

Lemma 9. $W \leq_T A$

Proof. If $n \notin P$ (otherwise $n \in W$) to answer ‘ $n \in W?$ ’ wait until a stage s where $A \upharpoonright c(n)$ is a correct approximation of (the first $c(n)$ bits of) A . This will be found since, according to lemma 8 $c(n)$ has a limit. It is enough to show that $c(n)$ will not change in latter stages since, in that case,

$$n \in W \iff c(n) \in A.$$

Now if $c(n)$ changed, according to lemma 8 $(A \upharpoonright c(n))[s]$ will not be part of any approximation of A at stages larger than s . In particular, it will not be a correct approximation of A , a contradiction.

Lemma 10. $A \leq_T W$

Proof. It is enough to show $A \leq_T W \oplus U$. To answer ‘ $n \in A?$ ’ find a stage $s > n$ such that $U \upharpoonright n$ has settled. Then no more attack intervals D with $n \in D$ and no base codes $\leq n$ will be used after s . If n is not a c -code at s then it will not become later on (as c -markers are defined at fresh numbers) and it will also not be chosen as a base code for an attack (since no U -permission will be given). So, according to the construction $n \in A$ iff it is there at stage s .

If on the other hand n has a c -marker on it, i.e. $n = c(m)$ for some m at stage s , then this marker will not be moved after s (since U will not give permission for an attack which can do this). So

$$n \in A \iff c(m) \in A \iff m \in W.$$

This concludes the proof of the theorem.

The proof of theorem 2 generalizes to all finite levels of the difference hierarchy giving the following result.

Theorem 3. *If n is even, every nonzero n -c.e. degree contains an n -c.e. hyperimmune set. If n is odd, every nonzero n -c.e. degree contains an n -c.e. co-hyperimmune (in the sense that no strong array intersects its complement) set.*

We sketch the proof of this generalised statement: an important fact that we used in the proof of theorem 2 is that no \mathcal{H} - requirement asks the for extraction of a number which has reached the maximum number of membership changes (which is 2 for the d.c.e. case). This enables us to prove that the set we are constructing is in the particular level of the difference hierarchy; also this is the reason why the cases n even and n odd split. Note that e.g. in the 3-c.e. case if the \mathcal{H} requirements require co-hyperimmunity, i.e. ask for certain segments of the characteristic sequence of A to be filled with 1s (instead of 0s, as in the hyperimmunity case), then this condition still holds. In the 4-c.e. case we have \mathcal{H} requiring hyperimmunity and again no requirement asks the for extraction of a number which has reached the maximum number of membership changes, and so on.

After this modification on the content of the requirements \mathcal{H} the proof (the construction and the verification) is entirely similar to that of theorem 2. The only difference is that step 1 of the construction may force up to n A -membership changes to the code of a number (which is within our limits in making A n -c.e.).

3 HH-Immunity and D.C.E. Sets

The purpose of this section is to show that hh-immunity in the finite levels of the difference hierarchy reduces to hh-immunity in the co-c.e. sets. We start with the following iterated version of Owings' spitting theorem.

Theorem 4. *Suppose that A, D are c.e. sets such that $\overline{A} \cup D$ is not c.e. Then there are uniform sequences of c.e. sets $(E_e), (F_e)$ such that*

1. $\overline{E_e} \cup D, \overline{F_e} \cup D$ are not c.e.
2. for all n , $A = (\cup_{i < n} E_i) \cup F_n$
3. E_i are pairwise disjoint and for all $n, i < n$, $F_n \cap E_i = \emptyset$.

Proof. The Owings splitting theorem [8] says that given effective enumerations of A, D we can *uniformly* define effective enumerations of C_0, C_1 such that $A = C_0 \cup C_1$, $C_0 \cap C_1 = \emptyset$ and $\overline{C_i} \cup D$ are not c.e. Our claim follows by iterating this procedure: since $\overline{C_1} \cup D$ is not c.e. we can apply the Owings procedure to get two disjoint c.e. sets C_{10}, C_{11} such that $C_1 = C_{10} \cup C_{11}$ and $\overline{C_{10}} \cup D, \overline{C_{11}} \cup D$ are not c.e.; we continue with C_{11} and so on (see figure 1).

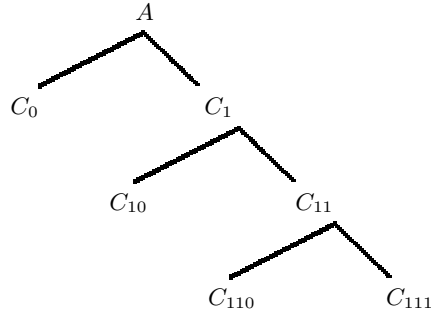


Fig. 1: Iterating the Owings Splitting theorem.

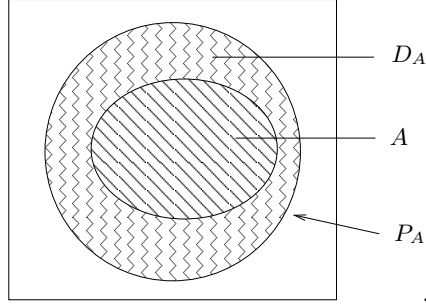
Define $F_0 = A$ and for all $k \in \mathbb{N}$,

$$\begin{aligned} E_k &= C_{1^k 0} \\ F_k &= C_{1^k} \end{aligned}$$

It is clear that these c.e. sets have been obtained uniformly and so the sequences $(E_k), (F_k)$ are uniform sequences of c.e. sets. Moreover they have the properties (1)–(3) above since they have been obtained via Owings splittings as described above.

Theorem 5. *If A is d.c.e. and hh-immune then A is co-c.e.*

Proof. Fix a d.c.e. approximation of A and consider the set P_A of the numbers that have appeared in A at some stage of its approximation. Also, let D_A be the set of numbers in P_A which do not belong to A (i.e. those which have entered and later been removed from A , see figure 2). Note that both P_A and D_A are c.e. (the latter because once a number is extracted from A it cannot enter again).

Fig. 2: Approximation of a d.c.e. set A

It is enough to show that if A is not co-c.e. then there is a uniform sequence of finite pairwise disjoint c.e. sets such that each of its members intersects A . If A is not co-c.e., $\overline{P_A} \cup D_A$ cannot be c.e. Now apply theorem 4 and get a uniform sequence of pairwise disjoint sets (E_i) , subsets of P_A , such that $\overline{E_i} \cup D_A$ is not c.e. for any i . In particular, $E_i \not\subseteq D_A$ and so $E_i \cap A \neq \emptyset$ for all i . But E_i are infinite, so define:

$$\hat{E}_i[s] = \begin{cases} \hat{E}_i[s-1], & \text{if } \hat{E}_i[s-1] \cap A[s] \neq \emptyset; \\ E_i[s], & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where $[s]$ denotes the state of an object at the end of stage s (the enumeration is based on that of A and (E_i)). Since $E_i \cap A \neq \emptyset$, each \hat{E}_i will be finite and $\hat{E}_i \cap A \neq \emptyset$ for all i .

Theorem 6. *If A is n -c.e. and hh-immune then A is co-c.e.*

Proof. Suppose $n > 2$ and A is n -c.e. and not i -c.e. for any $i < n$. By induction (and the previous theorem) we may assume that the claim holds for all $i < n$. It is enough to show that A is not hh-immune. Suppose that it is for the sake of a contradiction. Consider an n -c.e. approximation of A and the set T_A of numbers that enter A $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$ times ($\lceil x \rceil$ is the least integer $\geq x$). Note that any number during the approximation can enter A at most $\lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$ times.

Now for n odd we immediately get a contradiction since (as a properly n -c.e. set) A contains an infinite c.e. set and so it cannot be hh-immune. If n is even, $A \cap T_A$ is infinite (as A is properly n -c.e.), d.c.e. and hh-immune (as an infinite subset of a hh-immune set). By induction hypothesis $A \cap T_A$ is co-c.e. and so A is $(n-2)$ -c.e. Indeed, for an approximation with at most $n-2$ mind changes run an enumeration of $\overline{A \cap T_A}$ and the n -c.e. approximation of A with the following modification: when a number has already $n-3$ mind changes (and so it is currently a 1) we only change it to 0 if

- our n -c.e. approximation requires it *and*
- the number has appeared in $\overline{A \cap T_A}$

(and after that this number does not change anymore). This is an $(n - 2)$ -c.e. approximation and it is not hard to see that the set we get is A . This is a contradiction since we assumed that A is not $(n - 2)$ -c.e.

Corollary 1. *If A is n -c.e. and cohesive then A is co-c.e.*

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