

Jadedness: A Philosophical Analysis

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Abstract: The essay contributes to the philosophical literature on emotions by advancing a detailed analysis of jadedness and by investigating whether jadedness can be subject to the various standards that are often thought to apply to our emotional states. The essay argues that jadedness is the affective experience of weariness, lack of care, and mild disdain with some object, and that it crucially involves the realisation that such an object was previously, but is no longer, significant to us. On the basis of such a characterisation, jadedness is shown to be an affective call to restructure our commitments and values in a manner that we no longer assign any kind of significance to its object. Precisely because of its potential to affect our lives in such a fashion, jadedness is shown to carry philosophical, psychological, and even social importance.

keywords: jadedness; boredom; weariness; affect; emotion; formal object; normativity

Witnessing a rainbow was too much for her. “The thing is so distressing,” David Inglis notes about his patient, “that the mere recollection of it sets her into agitation” (Inglis 1898, 464). Her aversion to rainbows wasn’t due to iridophobia. No, what troubled her was that rainbows would stir in her an extreme, almost unbearable, *positive* reaction. Without fail, they enthralled her; their beauty and awesomeness overtook her.

The patient experienced too much awe. Or so Inglis concludes in his note about her in the *New York Medical Journal*. His conclusion is not merely descriptive though. Extreme awe is declared to

be the symptom of a deficiency. The patient, Inglis writes, represents “a reversion to an early type...an aboriginal” (464). Notwithstanding his racist language, Inglis’ diagnosis is premised on the idea that awe is subject to correctness conditions. Too much awe (or misplaced awe, i.e., awe in objects that are not in fact awesome) is inappropriate. Worse, a propensity to experience extreme awe often could even be an indication of an immature intellect: one that has not yet “reasoned out the causes and relations of natural phenomena” (464).

Inglis’ claims about the inappropriateness of awe might very well be the product of his racist worldview. Nevertheless, the idea that one could experience too much awe is worth investigating in its own right. In fact, this idea stands broadly in agreement with current research on awe. Contemporary accounts of awe suggest that it is an epistemic emotion (or affective state) that is tied to the subject’s understanding of the world (Stellar et al. 2018; Valdesolo, Shtulman, and Baron 2017). According to Keltner and Haidt (2003)’s influential account, awe involves both the perception of vastness and a need for cognitive accommodation. It is triggered when the subject is faced with a cognitively or perceptually rich situation that challenges existing schemata, frames of reference, or conceptual theories, and motivates a need to adjust these schemata, frames of reference, or theories in order to make better sense of the experience.¹ Such a characterization of the phenomenon of awe suggests that there can be both appropriate and inappropriate occurrences of awe. If the proper elicitors of awe are “perceptually or conceptually complex, information-rich stimuli,” then inappropriate awe would be awe in the face of situations that are mundane or lacking in cognitive or perceptual complexity (Shiota, Keltner, and Mossman 2007, 947).

If the experience of awe can be inappropriate, then what does such a conclusion suggest, if anything, about *jadedness*, a state that stands diametrically opposed to awe? Are there circumstances in

¹ See Kristjánsson 2017 and Fredricks 2018 for philosophical presentations of the phenomenon of awe.

which it is appropriate, maybe even desirable or beneficial, to be jaded? In the case of Inglis' patient, would it have been better had she been jaded by rainbows? After all, they are familiar and well-understood objects.

In this essay, I set out to accomplish two objectives, a main and an ancillary one. The primary aim is to provide an analysis of the experience of jadedness. Despite its obvious moral and psychological significance, jadedness has been neglected both by philosophers and psychologists, and the present essay offers the first stand-alone philosophical analysis of jadedness. Second, the essay investigates whether jadedness can be appropriate or inappropriate and thus subject to the various standards that are often thought to apply to our emotional states.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1, I introduce jadedness by comparing it to a number of related affective states. This section highlights the ways in which jadedness differs from those states and makes a case as to why jadedness is a philosophically interesting phenomenon that deserves its own analysis. In section 2, I undertake a detailed analysis of jadedness. After a discussion of the typical antecedents of jadedness, the section offers a characterization of jadedness' cognitive and epistemic attitudes, its experiential profile, and its intentional object. In section 3, I take up the question of the ontology of jadedness. I present and evaluate two distinct understandings of jadedness—jadedness as an emotion and as a sentiment. Lastly, in section 4, I turn my attention to the normative character of jadedness. I argue that jadedness can be fitting, epistemically justifiable, and prudentially beneficial. I conclude the paper by showing how both the appropriateness and potential value of jadedness can help us to make better sense of jadedness' role in our lives.

1. Affects of Weariness

Jadedness belongs to a class of psychological states that I shall call “affects of weariness.” By calling them “affects” I don't mean to suggest that all members of this category are feelings (or sensations)

as opposed to emotions. Instead, the label “affects” is meant to convey the fact that they have an associated affective phenomenology—there is something that it is like to undergo them, and their phenomenal character is similar (or it isn’t radically dissimilar) to the phenomenal character of everyday affective or emotional states. In addition to jadedness, the class includes fatigue, exhaustion, boredom (or tedium), and weariness. All of them involve aversive feelings, patterns of physiological deactivation, and indicate either an inability, a disinclination, or even a loathness to engage further with one’s situation or with their intentional objects (in case those states take such objects).

Fatigue, exhaustion, and (perhaps) weariness aren’t, or at least don’t appear to be, emotions. They are instead sensations, felt bodily states, or, as I am inclined to think of them, affects in Barrett (2017)’s technical sense of the term (i.e., a basic sense of feeling characterized by both valence and arousal). This feature doesn’t rob them of their philosophical importance. Still, categorizing them as affects and not as emotions entails that they aren’t subject to the various standards that are typically thought to govern our emotional states. To use an expression that now rings old-fashioned, emotions, but not affects, are denizens of both the space of reason and that of causes. They aren’t merely felt or causally efficacious, but they also answer to various normative demands. Even if jadedness doesn’t turn out to be an emotion, it is, I shall argue, emotion-like, and thus embedded within a network of normative constraints. Indeed, its normative complexity is partly responsible for why jadedness doesn’t appear to be amenable to a straightforwardly biological explanation. In contrast, fatigue, exhaustion, and weariness are intimately related to our biology: adaptation and satiation are well-understood phenomena and can be used to account for these affective states.

The presumed normative complexity of jadedness sets it apart from fatigue, exhaustion, and weariness. In this respect, jadedness deserves a normative analysis than might not be appropriate for the other three states. However, its susceptibility to normative standards isn’t the sole reason for wishing to focus on jadedness. There is something else about this phenomenon that calls for a

dedicated analysis of jadedness. To point out exactly what that is, we need to consider first how it compares to boredom.

Boredom is arguably an emotion and thus subject to the same normative standards that I shall argue govern jadedness. Yet boredom differs from jadedness in important respects. Our ordinary understanding of boredom conceives of it as an apathetic state (Van Tilburg and Igou 2017). This is partly right insofar as there are circumstances in which boredom is a deactivating state: Boredom gives rise to patterns of physiological *de*activation and, due to its associated action-tendencies, it prepares one for withdrawal from its object. In that respect, boredom resembles weariness. In boredom, one feels tired or fatigued (Harris 2000; Martin et al. 2006) and one becomes weary of one's task or situation (O'Brien 2014; Vogel-Walcutt et al. 2012). Having said that, studies of boredom's phenomenology and physiological correlates reveal that boredom is a complex state. Depending on different factors, boredom can be a low arousal state, a high arousal state, or a state of mixed autonomic arousal (for a review, see Elpidorou 2021). As a state of low arousal, it can help us to disengage from our boring (and hence unsatisfactory, unengaging, or meaningless) situations. But as a state of high arousal, it prepares us for change or action, and makes escape from boring situations possible. Furthermore, investigations into the volitional component of boredom reveal that the state of boredom involves a strong desire not just to disengage with one's situation but to do something else (something meaningful or interesting) (Fahlman et al. 2013). Thus, empirical work on boredom makes clear that it has an active side, and theoretical articulations of boredom's nature have made much of it. On the one hand, it has been used to distinguish boredom from apathy since only the latter is a state of motivational loss (Bench & Lench 2013; Goldberg et al. 2011). On the other hand, the active side has been implicated in articulations of the function and value of boredom. Boredom, it has been argued, is potentially valuable insofar as it motivates us to pursue projects that are of

interest, engaging, or meaningful to us when our current projects cease to be perceived as interesting, engaging, or meaningful (Bench & Lench 2013; Danckert et al. 2018; Elpidorou 2014, 2018, 2020).

Compared to boredom, jadedness appears to lack a corresponding active side. If jadedness involves, as I will argue, a mild disdain for its objects, it is hard to see what kind of positive contribution it can make to one's life. As an affective state of withdrawal that involves a lasting negative attitude regarding its object, it appears to foreclose possibilities of action and engagement for the experiencing agent. Hence, the issue of jadedness' function or role in our mental economy becomes a pressing one and serves, partly, as the impetus for this investigation.

2. An Analysis of Jadedness

The absence of any serious empirical investigation into the character of jadedness is noteworthy. A search using the PsycINFO and PubMed databases reveals that there are no published articles with “jadedness” in the title. Nor are there any that include this term in the abstract.² This lack of interest in jadedness by the psychological and medical sciences can't be attributed to the fact that jadedness is a phenomenon that is unimportant for the public life. Jadedness with life, love, global economy, politics, or climate change are topics of tremendous interest and importance—frequently discussed in newspaper articles and op-eds and represented in popular culture. Given widespread and sustained interest in this phenomenon and its obvious importance for our social existence, the psychology and science of jadedness should have been front and centre. A better understanding of this phenomenon could elucidate aspects of human psychology that currently aren't well understood and instigate perhaps important behavioural and social change. I suspect that what partly explains the absence of any empirical work on jadedness is the fact that we lack an accepted analysis of the character of this

² The search was conducted on March 11, 2022.

phenomenon. Without an explication of jadedness' character, it is hard to know how to go about operationalising and assessing its presence, and how to empirically explore its role in our personal and social lives. What complicates matters further is that pre-theoretically we possess only a tenuous understanding of what type of phenomenon jadedness could be. Is it an emotion, a sentiment, a personality trait, or something else? The aim of this paper is to make progress both in describing the character of jadedness and in exploring its ontology.

Research on previously published work on the philosophy of jadedness yields only one essay dealing with the nature of jadedness—a piece by Nathan P. Carson in a volume dedicated to the philosophical contributions of Walker Percy (Carson 2018). Carson relates his discussion of jadedness to themes within Percy's work, yet his analysis of jadedness is insightful and valuable independently of its connection to Percy. Carson articulates jadedness by contrasting it to prejudice, cynicism, and bitterness and concludes that jadedness is essentially characterized by “*volitional and epistemic inertia* associated with prejudice, *a faulty assumption of epistemic completion or superiority* and *foreclosure of possibilities* associated with prejudice and cynicism, and the *disappointment* over lost goods associated with bitterness” (218). Although there is much to be learned by and admired in Carson's exploration, in what follows I take a different approach in analysing the same phenomenon. Instead of trying to understand jadedness by comparing it to prejudice, cynicism, and bitterness, I proceed mainly by using an approach of analysing emotional and affective states that is common within recent philosophical and empirical literature. Specifically, I accept that affective states consist of a set of interrelated components (or aspects) and that the task of characterizing a state like jadedness amounts to that of explicating its different components (e.g., Scherer 1984). I follow, in other words, a component processes account of emotions or affective states, and set out to describe and individuate jadedness by presenting, in addition to its antecedents or common elicitors, its cognitive, physiological, affective,

and volitional components. Such an approach has found success in the empirical and philosophical literature. More importantly, it allows us to zero in on the phenomenon at hand.

Antecedents

When does jadedness arise? In other words, what are the conditions that cause or elicit the experience of jadedness? A moment's reflection reveals that there is no list of environmental or situational conditions that invariably lead to the experience of jadedness. Some people might be jaded with their lovers, fame, money, technology, personal development, politics, or life itself.³ Yet there are others who are completely enthralled by all of them. Moreover, jadedness does not appear to be a simple ("surface") feature of one's situation. Repetition or monotony often give rise to boredom, but jadedness seems to involve a "deeper" dissatisfaction with one's situation (or object), one that is often very hard to dispel, and which doesn't easily reduce to some identifiable feature of one's situation (or object).

To get closer to its eliciting conditions we should examine the psychology of the experiencing agent. Specifically, we ought to consider the agent's experiential history. I admit that there can be

³ Literature and TV contain numerous examples of fictional characters who have become jaded by the things that most of us aspire to achieve. The unnamed narrator of Ottessa Moshfegh's marvelous *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* has ostensibly everything and yet she is jaded with and even repulsed by her life and relations. The characters of Bret Easton Ellis' *Less Than Zero* seem to feel the same way. And in HBO's *Euphoria*, Rue's drug addiction appears to be driven by her jadedness with life. In these and other works, it is often hard to distinguish clearly jadedness from alienation, ennui, and depression. All the same, jadedness is undeniably a significant part of the affective background of the lives of these characters.

extraordinary cases of jadedness that don't require previous exposure to the object of jadedness.⁴ However, most cases of jadedness are premised on, and arise because of, a set of previous negative experiences with the object of jadedness.⁵ Although no single one of these experiences appears capable of giving rise to jadedness, all of them combined, or enough of them, bring about jadedness. What these experiences do to the agent is that they affect the agent's attitudes and expectations regarding what will ultimately become the object of jadedness. One can imagine having a series of disappointing experiences with one's romantic partners. Without fail, one's partners turn out to be unreliable, untrustworthy, cruel, etc. Such experiences slowly corrode one's trust in love. One becomes more and more disappointed with love or even with the idea of being in a romantic relationship. At some point, one transitions from a state of disappointment (and perhaps also of anger or frustration) to a state of jadedness. Although it is hard to predict when the transition would happen, it is clear (at least from the perspective of the experiencing agent) when it does. Jadedness gives rise to the view that one wants to no longer deal with the object of jadedness. One is, so to speak, done with that object and the object has nothing more to give to one.

Of course, not every occurrence of jadedness needs to have the well-defined experiential history of the above example. It is not always necessary that there will be clear experiential markers of

⁴ For example, it is possible for jadedness to arise due to some change in one's neurophysiology or because of brain stimulation. Damasio tells the story of a Parkinson's patient who came to experience intense sadness during a treatment session that involved deep brain stimulation (i.e., the use of implanted electrodes and electrical stimulation either to treat neurological conditions or to alleviate their symptoms) (2003, 65-70). The patient was surprised by the emergence of sadness and could not explain it. See also Bortolotti & Allifè (2021).

⁵ The link between past experiences and jadedness is also found in dictionary definitions of "jaded." For instance, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "jaded" as the state of being "dull or sated by continual use or indulgence." The provided definition entails that the object of jadedness is something to which we have been previously exposed.

jadedness that would allow us to explain its emergence, and jadedness could arise, at least in some cases, abruptly. All the same, the subject would still be aware of a change in their attitudes, should jadedness arise, and, in most cases, they would be able to offer us some kind of story—perhaps accurate, perhaps not—as to how they became jaded. At the very least, they would admit that their jadedness is the product of something that has happened to them and has affected their values, attitudes, commitments, and more.

Jadedness thus arises because of a change in one’s psychology. In typical cases of jadedness—those which will be the focus of this investigation—such change is *causally* related to a set of previous negative experiences with the object of jadedness. In other words, it is because of some disappointing experiences with an object that our values, attitudes, commitments, etc. have changed and that we, consequently, became jaded with the object. But are there instances of jadedness that do not require a disappointing past with jadedness’ object?⁶ Consider, for instance, the case of a hedge fund manager who now declares that they are jaded by capitalism. Suppose further that they never had any disappointing experiences with capitalism itself—because of their socioeconomic standing, they were capable of enjoying all the privileges that capitalism afforded them. As the growing anti-work movement makes clear, jadedness with capitalism is a genuine phenomenon. Yet, in this particular case, the absence of any past negative experiences with capitalism should give us pause. Is the jadedness of the subject in question sincere? And if it is, is it appropriate? They might insist that their change of heart was the product of some change in their attitudes, views, or beliefs. “Somehow, somewhere,” they might say, “I’ve changed myself and I’ve come to see capitalism under a new—far

⁶ My discussion of this type of jadedness owes much to an anonymous referee’s comments concerning the possibility of jadedness arising out of a personal change that is not necessarily connected to past negative experiences with jadedness’ object.

more damning—light.” True enough—jadedness does require a change of heart. But it isn’t clear that this is the right change of heart. Not every reappraisal of an object or situation is jadedness. Without any clear evidence that they have been harmed by capitalism’s workings it is hard to readily accept their claims. Whereas they speak of “jadedness,” we might point out that “disillusionment” is perhaps a better name for their current experiential state.

Here’s another way of raising the same point. People who because of systemic racism have been personally harmed by our social institutions (the police, the disenfranchisement laws of the legislative system, etc.) might become jaded by them. When we find out about their jadedness, we have little trouble accepting it as both sincere and appropriate. We can understand their feelings and attitudes towards our social institutions because of how they have been previously treated by them, despite the expressed egalitarian aims of those institutions. Imagine now someone who announced to us that they are also jaded by our social institutions, but, upon further inquiry, it becomes clear to us that they’ve never had any negative experiences with them—indeed, their social identity protects them from such negative experiences. I won’t speculate as to what the reader’s exact reactions might be to such a declaration of jadedness. Still, I believe that most of us would be perplexed by the subject’s pronouncement. The subject’s claim to jadedness—compared to the same claim made by someone who has been harmed by systemic racism—appears, if not insincere, at least in need of further justification. This and other examples (e.g., jadedness with the judicial system because of how one has been affected by corruption and incompetence, or jadedness with familial relationships because of being raised in an abusive family) support the contention that many cases of jadedness require past disappointing experiences with their objects.

To be clear, I don’t wish to rule out the possibility that there can be cases of jadedness that don’t causally depend on some negative experiences with jadedness’ object. Perhaps the personal change that is necessary for jadedness could come in some other way. All the same, I won’t make such

cases of jadedness (assuming that they are genuine cases) my focus. Instead, I proceed by accepting the view that jadedness is deeply rooted in the subject's past. To determine whether one is jaded, we need to know something about one's experiential history, and specifically how they have been previously affected by the object of their jadedness. Here, we can locate an important difference between jadedness and many other of our emotional states. We can be afraid, frustrated, or disgusted by an object or situation that we never encountered before. Or consider boredom. Boredom might be related to the past insofar as things that we have found boring in the past might continue to bore us in the present. Still, our experience of boredom is not *predicated* on a series of negative encounters with its objects. As Calhoun (2011) argues, our ability to continue to derive value in (appreciate, or be interested in) our objects of engagement might deteriorate after prolonged interaction with, or "use" of, those object and because of that, boredom could arise. As a result, objects that we have previously found enjoyable, engaging, meaningful, or stimulating (e.g., a movie, a book, a song) might, without first somehow disappointing us, become boring for us.⁷ On the contrary, jadedness requires a past (often an intimate and hurtful one) with its object: that which jades us now is, in most cases, something that has previously disappointed us.

In sum, jadedness requires that our relationship with its object has been somehow transformed. Something happened to us that made us reappraise its object. Importantly, jadedness does not leave us indifferent to its object. What jadedness reveals is not simply a neutral lack of fit between myself (as a participant in a network of values, relationships, and projects) and its object. It

⁷ Discussions of whether a greatly prolonged or even immortal existence would necessarily be boring can also provide insight into how and when certain objects of engagement might become the objects of boredom after prolonged interaction with them. Read, e.g., Fischer (1994), Fisher and Mitchell-Yellin (2014), Rosati (2013), Williams (1973), and Wisniewski (2005).

shows rather a *mismatch* or an incongruity. In other words, jadedness involves the realization that its object either fails to be conducive to some of my aims or, worse, disrupts important life goals.

Cognitive and Epistemic Attitudes

Our discussion of its antecedents suggests that jadedness involves certain complex cognitive attitudes regarding its object. I take the following three to be essential to typical cases of jadedness. First, the experience of jadedness involves the belief (explicit or not) that that with which we are jaded has either nothing of importance to offer to us or whatever it can offer to us is no longer worth the price. We have lost faith, so to speak, in the object of our jadedness. Due to our past experiences, we have come to realize that it is no longer valuable *to us*. In this respect, jadedness involves an attitude of relative devaluation: relative to us, to our goals and well-being, the object of jadedness is appraised as being relatively unimportant. It is crucial, however, to make clear that this devaluation constitutes a reversal of a previously held view regarding jadedness' object. In order for jadedness to be the affective act of *losing* faith in an object, it must be the case that there was faith to be lost in the first place. Thus, the object of jadedness is presented to us as something that once had value for us. Indeed, it must have previously played an important role in our mental and behavioural economy. That is because only if we had somehow been invested in it, we can now be jaded with it.

Second, jadedness involves a measured disdain for its object. Because of our previous experiences we have become negatively disposed toward the object of jadedness. Through our dealings with the object of jadedness, we have been harmed by it; or, at the very least, we have been let down by the object and concluded (rightly or wrongly) that the promise for our well-being, happiness, or prudential interests that it once carried was a hollow one. We have learnt, through experience with its object, that the object of our jadedness is, despite previous appearances to the contrary, not actually important or significant to us. The presence of such a negative appraisal regarding the (present) value

of the object of jadedness is crucial for accounting for the experience of jadedness. On the one hand, it seems to be the consequence of our disappointing and even painful history with its object, when such history exists. On the other hand, the presence of a negative appraisal grounds the withdrawal behaviour exhibited during a state of jadedness. While jaded, we are repelled (granted, only subtly or weakly) by its object. If jadedness were a purely apathetic state or a state characterized entirely by indifference or lack of care, then we would have no explanation for why we are moved *away* from the object of jadedness. But we are not simply indifferent to that which jades us. We have a past with it and, importantly, we want no future with it.

Indeed, jadedness is not merely a state that relates to our past. It is also, and crucially so, a forward-looking state. Not only does the experiencing agent deny that the object of jadedness has anything of value to offer to them *right now*, but they also maintain that it will continue to be like that. Thus, jadedness involves, thirdly, a tendency to essentialize its object. The object of jadedness is thought to possess some stable characteristics that will continue to accompany the object regardless of how and when we encounter it. In this way, jadedness gives one license to avoid its object in the future. Once again it is instructive to compare jadedness to boredom. We might be bored with a song but if we take a break from it, we might renew our interest in it. Or it's common for students to find a lecture boring when they have no grasp of its significance. However, once they learn more about its value, boredom tends to dissipate and gives way to interest or even fascination (Nett, Goetz, and Daniels 2010). Jadedness isn't like that. Once we become jaded with an object or a situation, it is hard to become unjaded. Because of the cognitive attitudes that it involves, jadedness is resilient to change and to cognitive reappraisal. Jadedness carries inertia. Not only do we think that the object of our jadedness will continue to jade us, but we also behave in that way—we behaviourally avoid it and devalue it both in thought and conversation.

The cognitive characteristics of jadedness that were just described go hand in hand with an epistemic attitude that characterizes jadedness. The experiencing agent becomes, *qua epistemic agent*, resolute about the object of jadedness. To be jaded by an object is to accept that you possess a certain epistemic authority regarding its nature—you are somehow in the know. As discussed before, this epistemic attitude affects not just one’s current beliefs about the object of jadedness but also future ones. The object of jadedness is unimportant now and will continue to be so in the future. Although this epistemic state could be described as one of arrogance (Carson 2018), I don’t wish to call it that. It is true that jadedness involves the ascription of a *thick* property (Väyrynen 2021) to its object insofar as it involves a judgment not just about our current engagement with its object but also about future engagements with it. Yet, it isn’t clear that such an attitude is arrogant or somehow epistemically defective. Bring to mind the case of a subject that has been the victim of serial abuse. Such an individual might become jaded with interpersonal or romantic relationships. Their jadedness doesn’t involve arrogance but a pragmatic, well-grounded, and beneficial attitude concerning interpersonal relationships. Of course, that doesn’t mean that one cannot become jaded too quickly or unreasonably. Jadedness involves at heart an embodied inductive inference regarding its object: on the basis of one’s past, one now comes to experience one’s object of engagement as something that is no longer worthy of one’s time. Just like all other inductive inferences, some will be stronger than others. Consequently, jadedness can be characterized as reasonable or unreasonable, depending on the type of experiences that the subject has had with the object of jadedness and on the subject’s beliefs concerning the object.⁸

I return to the issue of justification in section 4.

⁸ As an anonymous reviewer rightly points out, in our determination of the reasonableness or unreasonableness of one’s jadedness, we also need to take into consideration differences in personality traits. Perhaps some individuals are more likely to be jaded than others, and that might not be because they have somehow committed a fallacious or rash inference but because of how they are disposed to engage with and think about their potential objects of jadedness.

Arousal and Action-Tendencies

Arousal is a dimensional construct that varies from “low” to “high,” and is thought to be a measure of physiological activation by representing the extent to which our body is prepared (or not) for action. Jadedness is a state of low arousal. It is, in other words, a psychological state that involves physiological changes and processes similar to those that occur during calm or deactivated states (e.g., relaxation or depression).

Both dictionary definitions and our own first-personal experience strongly support this contention. “Jadedness” is routinely defined as a state of fatigue (*Oxford English Dictionary*) and, indeed, when we experience jadedness, we feel weary, fatigued, or satiated. Furthermore, the action-tendencies of jadedness are characterized by a measured withdrawal. When one is jaded one avoids or wishes to avoid the object of jadedness. Of course, one isn’t scared, frustrated, disgusted, or in any way strongly affected by jadedness. Jadedness forecloses the possibility of a strong reaction. It signals not just a lack of care for the object in question but also an indifference that is manifested in one’s reluctance to invest any time or effort in that object. Thus, one withdraws from the object of jadedness without doing *too much* to withdraw from it. Whereas the object of fear, for example, matters to us because it threatens our well-being and thus, we are strongly motivated to avoid it, jadedness lacks the urgency that is associated with many negative emotions.

Valence and Phenomenology

Affective states are partially characterized by their valence. Valence designates whether an affective state is “positive,” “negative,” or somewhere between those two assessments. Different articulations of the notion of *valence* exist in the literature and judgments regarding the valence of a particular

affective state are not always straightforward (Colombetti 2005). Consider, for instance, the following characterizations of valence:

PHENOMENOLOGICAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state feels pleasurable or not to the experiencing subject.

BEHAVIOURAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state promotes either an approach or avoidance behaviour.

VOLITIONAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state involves a desire to continue to be in that state or not.

GOAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state is taken to contribute to the subject's goals or not.

CAUSAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state's typical triggers are assigned a positive or negative value.

APPRAISAL VALENCE:

The extent to which the experienced state involves positive or negative appraisals of one's situation.

Jadedness is a state of negative valence according to most characterizations of valence. The phenomenal character of jadedness is complex, but it points ultimately to an experience of negative phenomenological valence. Jadedness involves feelings of weariness and a felt disdain for its object. Categorizing jadedness as a phenomenally aversive experience does not mean, however, that jadedness is painful or especially aversive. True, we are negatively disposed toward the object of our jadedness. Yet, jadedness is typically not an experience that overtakes us phenomenally. The experience of jadedness posits a certain distance between ourselves and its object. And that distance entails that we don't actively hate or reject it. Jadedness, thus, is not a "heated" experience; its phenomenal character is a subtle one.

It is of course possible to harbour a much stronger second-order affective reaction in response to our jadedness. For instance, we might be frustrated or proud with our jadedness. These reactions to jadedness are likely to carry their own phenomenal character. Nonetheless, we shouldn't be misled to think that they reveal anything about the phenomenal character of jadedness. One might take pride, for example, in the fact that one is jaded with political institutions. Still, such a positive feeling isn't part of the experience of jadedness.

Jadedness prompts withdrawal behaviour: to be jaded with an object is to be disposed to avoid or ignore it. As a result, jadedness can be characterized as a state of negative behavioural valence. However, jadedness doesn't possess a specific volitional valence. There can be variability regarding the attitudes that one may assume toward one's experience of jadedness. Although some might be wishing for their jadedness to end, not everyone might react to jadedness in the same way. Indeed, jadedness with certain objects might become constitutive of one's identity. Consider an individual who has become thoroughly jaded with global capitalism. Their jadedness will likely affect not just their attitudes towards capitalism but also their participation in various projects that were previously self-defining (e.g., their job). Yet jadedness need not only negatively affect one's identity; it can also make

possible new sources of meaning and identities that are premised on the agent's rejection of the system of values that capitalism carries. They could now become an individual whose life is defined (at least, partly) by their anti-capitalist agenda. Insofar as an individual would like to maintain their identity, they might happily accept their jadedness—even if it carries a negative affective quality—and might even actively contribute to it by intentionally cultivating and sustaining their negative attitudes towards the object of jadedness.

Regardless of whether the volitional valence is negative, positive, or neutral, its *goal valence* is clearly negative. To be jaded with an object is to experience one's encounter with that object as not being conducive to one's goals—the object of jadedness has already been appraised as unimportant to us. To be clear, such a negative attitude towards the *object* of jadedness doesn't preclude the possibility that one may assign a goal-conducive role to *jadedness* itself. That is to say, even if the object of jadedness doesn't promote our goals, jadedness might. Still, such a possible attitude regarding jadedness doesn't show that its goal valence isn't negative; all that it shows is that our relationship to jadedness can be complex. Lastly, in terms of both its causal valence and appraisal valence, jadedness should be characterized as a state of negative valence. The triggers (or elicitors) of jadedness are negatively valued and the very experience of jadedness involves a negative appraisal of its object.

Duration, Intentional Object, and Scope

Whereas most emotions are transient experiential states that are sensitive to environmental changes, jadedness behaves differently. First, there is no reason to suppose that jadedness must be a short-lived experience. Indeed, as it has become evident from our discussion of its cognitive elements, jadedness appears to be a stable and potentially long-standing state. In fact, insofar as it involves an attitude to avoid and devalue its object, jadedness is a self-sustaining state: when jaded, we are moved to act in ways that will sustain our jadedness. Once again it is useful to compare jadedness to the negative

emotions of boredom, disgust, or anger. The latter affective states put in motion behaviours that aim to change our psychology so that we cease to experience them. Boredom aims to move us out of our boring situation; disgust moves us away from the object of disgust; and anger aims to resolve the offense that gave rise to it in the first place. Jadedness is different. To be jaded with an object is already to think that the object has nothing to offer to us, both right now and in the future. Such an attitude will help to sustain our negative opinion of the object—we will not be motivated to engage with the object and thus change our attitudes regarding it—and will likely prolong the experience of jadedness.

On the issue of the intentional object (or target), reflection on examples of jadedness (jaded, e.g., with love, political institutions, professional development, the economy) and its psychological antecedents makes evident that the target of jadedness is typically either a concrete entity or a state of affairs. Moreover, jadedness's object is something that is relatively stable across time—e.g., a recurring situation or a persistent object, person, process, or state of affairs. That is because the intentional object of jadedness isn't merely present to us while jaded, but also something that has either previously and consistently disappointed us or offered us something that was previously but is no longer considered to be valuable. Moreover, typical experiences of jadedness also involve the expectation that the object of our current jadedness will continue to exist and hence we should continue to avoid it.

Lastly, it is useful to draw a distinction between narrow and wide jadedness. When the object of our jadedness is a specific situation, structure, object, or person, we can talk about a narrow type of jadedness: the affective experience of weariness, lack of care, and mild disdain with some specific object that is accompanied by the realization that such object was erstwhile falsely significant to us. In contrast, wide jadedness is an experience (or state) with a much broader intentional scope. One is in a state of wide jadedness when one is jaded with life or existence itself. Such a state appears to be akin to a fundamental attunement: a global perspective on life that permeates and “colours” one's wishes,

desires, attitudes, and actions.⁹ One could attempt to explicate wide jadedness further by drawing upon the resources of existential phenomenology.¹⁰ Alternatively, one could hold that wide jadedness is a type of global personality trait—an enduring and stable “internal” characteristic that its presence can be inferred by the subject’s behaviours, attitudes, and feelings and which can be used to predict behaviour, attitudes, and feelings. Either way, it seems reasonable to expect that wide jadedness will share certain characteristics with trait boredom (Farmer and Sundberg 1986) and existential boredom (Bargdill 2000; Elpidorou 2021; O’Brien 2021)—these forms of boredom involve a global perception of meaninglessness and an inability to conceive of oneself as an efficacious agent, and are closely

⁹ Herman Melville’s *Bartleby* appears to embody, almost perfectly, this type of wide jadedness. Nothing in his world is significant to him; nothing is worth his attention and time; and everything is, in some sense, beneath him. All the same, and at least until the very end, Bartelby hasn’t given up on life. As it is revealed by his mantra (“I would prefer not to”), he still has desires, even though nothing in the world seems to be capable of fulfilling them. Importantly, his past experience as clerk in the Dead Letter Office could even explain how his jadedness came to be. The burning of the undelivered letters, one might imagine, has revealed to Bartelby that the social, economic, and political institutions that surround him violate some of his deeply held expectations and desires.

¹⁰ Indeed, readers familiar with the phenomenological tradition might be wondering whether wide jadedness is akin to a Heideggerian *Stimmung* (Heidegger 1962). That is to say, is wide jadedness an affective mode of existence that both constitutes and discloses the manner in which we find ourselves in the world of our practical, personal, and social concerns? Although the exact character of wide jadedness would need to be further explored, there appear to be important similarities between the two phenomena (or constructs). First, just like phenomenological moods, wide jadedness is an enduring and all-encompassing affective condition that alters in fundamental respects our relationship to the world. Second, both are assumed to have a crucial revelatory function. Phenomenological moods are said to be the background horizon against which features of our ourselves and of the world are made potentially present to us, often in salient ways (Elpidorou & Freeman 2015; Freeman 2014; Guignon 1984; Ratcliffe 2013). Wide jadedness also possesses this feature: in wide jadedness it is the world itself (and not a specific object) that is revealed to us as a potential threat to our eudaimonic well-being. The world was, but no longer is, a match for our projects and concerns.

connected to depression. If one is jaded with one's existence—that is, if one is jaded with all actual and potential activities and objects—then it is hard to see how one can be optimistic about one's future, motivated to act, and perceive one's world as a source of meaning.¹¹

My focus in what remains will be on narrow jadedness. It is for this type of jadedness that I shall raise and attempt to answer the issue of appropriateness. A fuller exploration of wide jadedness will have to wait for another occasion.

3. But What Is It Really?

So far, I haven't confronted the question as to whether jadedness (in its narrow variety) is an emotion or not. The answer to this question is important but not of *crucial* importance for present purposes. That is especially so given scepticism concerning the unity of the category of emotion and the different and often diverging approaches to defining emotions. Moreover, we can offer a description of

¹¹ Having said that, it is not unreasonable to still expect important differences between, on the one hand, trait boredom or existential boredom and, on the other hand, wide jadedness. Such forms of boredom could potentially render a subject completely indifferent to their world. If indeed they are bored by everything, then nothing whatsoever matters or concerns them. This type of complete withdrawal of significance and mattering has even led some to claim that boredom has the potential to strip away one's identity-giving characteristics (Heidegger 1995): without any projects or values, we simply cannot define ourselves. In contrast, in wide jadedness, the experiencing subject still remains an individual: one's projects and values matter to oneself, and it is this continued mattering that makes wide jadedness possible. To wit, we are jaded with the world because the opportunities that the world affords us are no longer conducive to our *current* goals, aims, desires, and values. In wide jadedness, one has not given up on the view that the world is the source of meaning and value. The world continues to carry meaning and value, just not the *right* sort of meaning and value. Because of that, I think wide jadedness should be understood as an affective refusal to go along with the world (and the systems of values and meanings that it currently offers). To put it differently, wide jadedness is a form of passive resistance, and not a form of apathy or surrender.

jadedness' experiential, volitional, conative, and cognitive profiles without necessarily having to settle its ontology. Indeed, we have done precisely that. All the same, I do want to take up, even if briefly, the question of the ontology of jadedness and offer two different perspectives on what jadedness might be.

The Emotion View

One could hold that jadedness is an emotion. Just like paradigmatic emotions, jadedness is an intentional state that is characterized, *inter alia*, by its phenomenology and bodily feelings, action-tendencies, and the cognitive attitudes that it involves. Furthermore, jadedness is an evaluative response to an object or situation: that which jades us is evaluated as tiresome, insignificant, and not conducive to one's aims or goals.

It is widely accepted that most emotions possess a double intentionality: in addition to their particular intentional object (or target), they also have a formal object (de Sousa 1987; Kenny 1963). When Tabata fears the approaching bear, the particular object of Tabata's fear is the bear (or *that* the approaching bear might harm them), whereas its formal object is danger. Formal objects are considered to be indelible components of the intentional structure of emotions because they do important work (see Teroni 2007). For one, they help to individuate emotion types. What makes a particular token of fear *fear* isn't its particular object. We can be fearful of a mélange of things: approaching cars, spiders, heights, open water, intimacy, being alone, poverty, depression, being in confined spaces, death, or the devil itself. Fear isn't unified because of a commonality amongst its targets. Rather, it is unified because of its formal object. A token of fear is a token of the type fear because it represents (or is about) danger—in fact, all experiences of fear apprehend (or present to us) their objects *as* dangerous. The same holds for other emotion types. Tokens of awe represent the admirable, tokens of grief represent loss, tokens of anger represent offensiveness, and so on. In

addition, the positing of formal objects allows us to make sense of the correctness conditions of emotions. If we want to explain why some tokens of emotions can sometimes be correct and sometimes incorrect, we need to appeal to their formal objects. Specifically, an emotion is correct (or fitting) if its particular object is such that it exemplifies its formal object. In the case of fear, to evaluate whether an instance of fear is correct or not we need to assess whether the feared object (i.e., the particular object of fear) is indeed dangerous.

Does jadedness possess a formal object, in addition to its particular intentional object? Whereas the particular object of jadedness is that with which we are jaded, its formal object, if there is one, would be the property that we implicitly or explicitly ascribe to the particular object of our jadedness in virtue of being jaded with that object. What might its formal object be? Given our previous analysis, one could propose that jadedness' formal object is the complex axiological property of *being incongruent to one's goals while appearing otherwise*. The object of jadedness poses a special kind of danger. It is a potential existential (or eudaimonic) trap: the object carries the false appearance of significance whereas in reality it has nothing to offer us as a way of promoting our goals and advancing our projects. Jadedness is thus an affective reminder of a broken promise. It presents its object not merely as insignificant for us, or unworthy of our engagement, but as something that has in some way deceived us. Such a view regarding what jadedness represents (or *how* jadedness presents its object to us) coheres nicely not simply with the presence of a negative appraisal regarding the current value of the object, but also with the mild disdain that we harbour towards it. An attitude of disdain is appropriate because the object of jadedness has violated an implicit promise: either it promised us something that it could have never delivered or whatever goods it may have previously delivered to us (think here, for example, of the minimal benefits of capitalism for the subject jaded with capitalism or of the fleeting and, ultimately, false rewards of an abusive relationship for the subject jaded with romantic relationships) are no longer worth it.

I realize that the proposed formal property of jadedness is uncharacteristically complex. Yet one must not lose sight of the fact that jadedness itself is representationally complex. Thus, the demand that jadedness carries a formal object can perhaps only be fulfilled by identifying the formal object with a complex or conjunctive axiological property. In this respect, the complexity of the proposed formal object is a reflection of the complexity of jadedness' cognitive attitudes. Having said that, I shall not engage in an examination of whether the proposal accurately captures the formal object of jadedness. The proposal is offered simply as an exploratory attempt to articulate jadedness' formal object and not as the final opinion on the issue. Regardless of how we ultimately describe the formal object of jadedness, it is incumbent upon proponents of the *Emotion View* to offer some explication of it or to clarify how jadedness can lack such an object and still be an emotion. Moreover, if jadedness' formal object turns out to be a complex one, then its complexity should be taken seriously by those who accept the *Emotion View*. It suggests that, if jadedness is indeed an emotion, it is likely to be a *compound* or *blended* emotion (Broad 1954).

Despite the noted similarities between emotions and jadedness, there are differences between the two that complicate a straightforward assimilation of jadedness into the category of emotion. Here, I mention two. First, jadedness appears to have a longer duration than most emotions. As was previously discussed, there is no reason to expect that jadedness is a transient experience and, given the essentialist attitude that it involves and the withdrawal behaviour that it exhibits, there are reasons to think that it may even be a self-sustaining state. Second, jadedness is predicated on the subject's experiential history with the object. In fact, typical cases of jadedness require that the subject has had a series of negative experiences with its object. Other emotions—think of anger, disgust, fear, or frustration—don't.

In response to the first difference, one could distinguish between dispositional and occurrent jadedness and argue that what is long lasting is dispositional jadedness. Occurrent jadedness only lasts

for as long as the object of jadedness is present to us (either physically or mentally). This distinction is readily utilized when accounting for other emotional attitudes, and it can be employed, one may argue, for jadedness as well. Consider disgust and fear. It is intelligible to declare that I am scared of snakes or that I am disgusted by rotten flesh even if I am not currently experiencing those emotions. What such declarations signify is that I have a dispositional fear for snakes and a dispositional disgust for rotten flesh such that, when in the presence of those objects, I experience the corresponding emotions. The same can be said about jadedness. My jadedness with love or capitalism need not be constantly felt. It may arise only when I somehow engage or think about those objects. Still, I can be dispositionally jaded with both. Were I to encounter or think of them, I would experience weariness, entertain negative thoughts about them, and lack any motivation to engage with them.

In response to the second difference, one could accept that jadedness is unlike most of our emotions insofar as it does require a series of antecedent experiences with its objects in order to arise. Still, a proponent of the view that jadedness is an emotion could deny that such a difference is sufficient to exclude jadedness from the class of emotions. Jadedness might not behave like fear, disgust, or boredom, but it might behave like grief. The latter is predicated on the subject's having had a significant relationship with its object. We experience grief only when we lose something that is important to us, and items typically become important to us because of our antecedent engagement with and exposure to them. Thus, just like jadedness, grief can only arise if the experiencing agent has already had certain experiences. Assuming that there are reasons to subsume grief under the category of emotion, we can do the same for jadedness.¹²

¹² Another but more contentious example of an emotion that appears to behave like jadedness is jealousy (Farrell 1980). In typical cases of jealousy, we experience jealousy only if we have a past with the object of our concern (or love).

The Sentiment View

An alternative approach holds that jadedness is a sentiment. A sentiment is a multi-track disposition to respond emotionally to an object (Frijda 2007).¹³ According to Frijda, such dispositions “are affective schemas with features similar to those of emotions” (192). He explains:

The schemas include appraisals of the objects, including affective valence—they are liked or disliked—and often further valenced properties (“dishonest,” “always interesting!,” “a dangerous animal”). Sentiments thus contain beliefs, and like or dislike is felt when the object is merely mentioned or thought of. The schemas also contain latent action readiness to seek or avoid the object, or to affect it in some other way (ibid.).

The example of romantic love can help to clarify the character of sentiments. Suppose that we have good reasons to think that romantic love is a sentiment. If so, romantic love isn’t the experience of a certain feeling or emotion. It is rather the disposition to have positive affective experiences towards the object of one’s love (care, affection, physical attraction, erotic intoxication, etc.); grief, frustration, and anger when things go wrong; and jealousy when one suspects that one’s lover might not be faithful. Moreover, romantic love contains beliefs regarding its object, and it brings about or motivates

¹³ The requirement that sentiments are *multi-track* as opposed to single-track dispositions is necessary in order to distinguish sentiments from dispositional emotions. (The distinction between single-track and multi-track disposition is presented in Deonna & Teroni 2012, 8-9). Specifically, single-track dispositions are dispositions that involve only a single emotion. For example, the disposition to be disgusted by rotting flesh is a single-track disposition because every time it becomes actualised it gives rise to the same emotion—disgust. Multi-track dispositions are dispositions that give rise to a variety of emotions, feelings, desires, and beliefs when actualised. Furthermore, there is no requirement that such dispositions must give rise to the same emotion or feeling every time they become actualised. If romantic love is a multi-track disposition, then romantic love would sometimes be expressed (or actualised) in the form of physical attraction and care and other times in the form of frustration or jealousy.

certain patterns of behaviour, e.g., ruminating about the object of love, seeking it out, protecting it when threatened, and having it close to oneself.

If the *Sentiment View* is accepted, then jadedness becomes a disposition to respond in a cognitive, affective, and volitional manner to the object of our jadedness. Thus, the analysis of jadedness that was offered in section 2 is an analysis of the affective schema of jadedness. It is, in other words, not an analysis of an occurrent state but a description of how the psychology of a jaded subject changes *when* their disposition becomes actualized. Indeed, assuming that jadedness is a sentiment, there is no distinction between dispositional jadedness and occurrent jadedness—jadedness is *always* and *only* a disposition to feel, think, and act in a certain way. Consequently, when we declare that we are jaded, our jadedness isn't identical to a particular feeling, thought, or action, but to the disposition to have an array of feelings, thoughts, action-tendencies when we are in the presence of its object.

The *Sentiment View* carries important theoretical benefits. First, it accounts naturally for the duration of jadedness. There is no requirement that dispositions ought to be short lived. In fact, their very nature suggests that they are long lasting because they are hard to be relinquished once they are acquired. Second, the *Sentiment View* offers an explanation as to the complexity of the formal object of jadedness. Although some might be resistant to the idea that emotions carry formal objects with a complex (conjunctive) structure, there is no analogous difficulty in the case of sentiments. As a sentiment, jadedness may involve numerous attitudes, emotions, and affective states. As a result, jadedness can simultaneously represent a number of properties because of the individual attitudes, emotions, and affective states that it involves. Third, there is no difficulty in accepting that certain dispositions take time to develop—in fact, this seems to be the case for most of our acquired dispositions. Thus, the fact that jadedness's presence is predicated on a series of antecedent experiences that gave rise to a change in attitudes, values, commitments, etc. is perfectly consistent

with, perhaps even explained by, the *Sentiment View*: learnt dispositions arise because of a series of antecedent experiences.

On account of these benefits, I submit the *Sentiment View* as a more preferable position than the *Emotion View*. I don't, however, insist on this conclusion. It is prudent to leave the difficult issue of the ontology of jadedness unsettled, at least for the time being. More work is needed before we can resolve it. Still, the hypothesis that jadedness is either an emotion or sentiment is serviceable: it allows us to better understand its nature. As it will be shown in section 4, it also permits us to consider the various ways in which it may be appropriate.

4. The Appropriateness of Jadedness

Emotions are typically thought to be subject to various standards. First, they are subject to *correctness conditions*: the experience of a particular emotion might be *fitting* or not depending on the nature of its intentional object. Stated more precisely, the tokening of an emotion type is fitting just in case its particular intentional object exemplifies its formal object (or the axiological property represented or correlated by the emotion type). Being fearful of a venomous snake, angry at a person for making a racist remark, and sad when dumped unexpectedly by one's partner are fitting emotional experiences: the particular objects of such experiences (venomous snake, racist remark, the end of a romantic relation) exemplify their respective formal objects (danger, offensiveness, loss). On the contrary, fear of bread, angry at an infant, or sad because of baryonic asymmetry are not fitting experiences. They are possible but incorrect emotional stances.

Second, emotions are appropriate or not insofar as they are or fail to be epistemically justified. An emotion token is epistemically justified just in case the experiencing subject becomes aware of some feature of the particular object of their emotion that exemplifies the axiological property that figures in the correctness condition of the emotion (see Deonna and Teroni 2012 for a development

of this proposal; for a related but not identical view, see Magalotti and Kriegel 2021). Thus, grief is justified when one is aware that one has suffered a significant loss; fear of the venomous snake is justified if it is based on one's awareness of the snake's fast movement, unpredictable behaviour, and venom; and anger is justified if one has formed the correct belief that they have suffered an injustice. An emotion's epistemic justification is intimately connected to the type of information (or content) that one is in possession regarding the target of one's emotion. Should such information (or content) reveal to oneself that the object is fitting, then one is epistemically justified in holding that emotion.¹⁴

Third, an emotion can also be appropriate or not in the sense that it can be *prudentially* beneficial or harmful. Fear is typically prudentially beneficial insofar as it gives rise to an array of behaviours that serve our aims—they protect us from danger. Of course, certain fears although fitting and justified might be prudentially harmful because they might foreclose possibilities that are valuable or potentially beneficial to us. On the contrary, emotions that might appear to be inappropriate or unjustified can lead to positive outcomes (Bortolotti & Allifi 2021). Boredom with one's job might lead to a career change. And feeling proud when one really has no reason to be proud of one's accomplishment can be prudentially beneficial insofar as it may motivate the agent to act in advantageous for the agent ways—ask for a raise, apply for a grant, start a new project, etc.

Is jadedness subject to these three standards? Before we answer this question, it is important to note that even though we haven't settled the ontology of jadedness we can still evaluate whether

¹⁴ There is a non-epistemic sense of justification in the offing. Whereas an emotional state is epistemically justified if it is based on relevant evidence, it can be non-epistemically justified (or causally justified) if it is the outcome of antecedent events that can causally explain the current presence of the state. For example, one's fear of dogs might be causally justifiable insofar as the person has had a previous traumatic experience with them. Both notions of justification can help us make sense the presence of our emotions. For present purposes, I focus only on the epistemic variety of justification.

jadedness is appropriate or not. In other words, emotions are not the only states that are subject to the three senses of appropriateness that were delineated above. Beliefs are also appropriate or inappropriate: they can be fitting (when true), epistemically justified (when the subject possess evidence for their belief or when the belief is the product of a reliable source), and, depending on their outcomes, prudentially beneficial or harmful. The same holds for sentiments. Given that sentiments are dispositions to react emotionally to certain objects or situations, then sentiments can be evaluated for their appropriateness on the basis of the appropriateness of the emotions, beliefs, and other evaluable states that they may involve. Hence, under the assumption that jadedness is either an emotion or a sentiment, we can ask whether it is appropriate in the three senses of appropriateness that were discussed.

Fittingness

Jadedness would be fitting just in case the specific object of one's jadedness exemplifies the axiological properties that jadedness (as a type) is thought to represent. Thus, jadedness is fitting just in case the object of jadedness possesses characteristics that exemplify the property *being incongruent to one's goals while appearing otherwise*. In order for this explication of fittingness to have import, it must be possible for jadedness to misrepresent. And that means that the following two scenarios ought to be possible. First, an agent could fail to experience jadedness with an object even though it exemplifies the relevant axiological property. Second, an agent could be jaded with an object despite the fact that the object fails to exemplify the axiological property associated with jadedness. Are such cases of misrepresentation possible?

They are. Consider the first possibility: failing to experience jadedness even if our object of engagement exemplifies the axiological property associated with jadedness. There can be examples of agents who, for whatever reason, don't learn from their past experiences. Despite a series of

disappointing experiences with an object, and despite the fact that engagement with such an object has routinely failed to meet their expectations, they still engage with it. For instance, think of someone who is convinced that their abusing partner will change or that their tyrannical government will listen to the will of the people. Most of us might readily recognize that such objects are existentially harmful to the subject in precisely the way that the object of jadedness is: they appear to the subject to be somehow conducive to their goals even though they are not. Still, the subject might be incapable or unwilling to discern that. As a result, they fail to become jaded with an object that should jade them. Jadedness, in this case, misrepresents insofar as it fails to detect the presence of an object that should jade us.

Consider the second possibility: jaded with an object that does not exemplify the relevant axiological property. Here, we are asked to imagine a situation in which jadedness misrepresents in a different way: it represents to us its object as falsely having the axiological property associated with jadedness. Such a situation occurs when a subject becomes jaded with an object that never carried (or even promised to carry) any significance *for the subject*. For instance, imagine someone who is jaded with the meatpacking industry or with attempts to colonize Mars. If the meatpacking industry or missions to Mars aren't the type of objects that can even appear to hold value and significance for one's life, or if the subject's history is not such that reveals an investment in those objects, then becoming jaded with them is inappropriate. Recall that typical cases of jadedness arise on the basis of an antecedent relationship with its object. That is, jadedness is predicated on a prior investment in the object of jadedness and requires that its object carried previously, but doesn't anymore, the promise of value for oneself. Objects that lack any of those characteristics are not appropriate objects of jadedness. Should we become jaded with such objects, then our jadedness isn't fitting. Such inappropriate cases of jadedness resemble experiences of grief for the loss of something with which we didn't share a past or that it didn't have a significant role in our mental and behavioural economy.

Epistemic Justification

Given our characterization of the notion of epistemic justification, an experience of jadedness counts as being justified just in case the subject of such an experience is aware of features of their situation that exemplify the axiological property of jadedness. It is easy to think of examples in which jadedness is either epistemically justified or unjustified. First, consider cases in which one's experience of jadedness is epistemically unjustified—these are instances of baseless or inadequately supported jadedness. For instance, on account of a single negative experience with local government, a subject may become jaded with the very institution of local governance. Or a subject may become jaded with efforts to ameliorate the effects of climate change because of their false belief that such efforts are not efficacious. These examples reveal the possibility of epistemically unjustified jadedness. Indeed, we might very well criticize the subjects for having such emotional experiences.¹⁵ We might tell the first subject that they shouldn't be jaded with local governance merely on the basis of one disappointing experience. And we might inform the second subject that they are wrong about their views regarding the efficacy of certain environmental efforts and therefore, that they have adopted an incorrect or inappropriate emotional stance. The intelligibility of such criticisms makes evident that jadedness is epistemically assessable (Salmela 2006) and subject to criteria of epistemic justification.

¹⁵ As it was stated in note 8, it is important to keep in mind the role that various personality traits might play in the emergence of jadedness, especially if we have reasons to think that such personality traits are not reliable sources of accurate attitudes concerning the objects of jadedness. A subject, for example, who is disposed to be overly optimistic about what the various social, economic, and political institutions can offer might be more resistant to jadedness than some other subject who lacks this disposition—despite negative experiences with those institutions, the optimist subject expects that such institutions will *at some point* deliver the goods that they promised.

On the flip side, a subject would be epistemically justified in their experience of jadedness were they to realize correctly that their object exemplifies the property associated with jadedness. To employ an example that has been used before, a subject who has had a series of disappointing and abusive relationships in the past is justified to be jaded with love or romantic relationships. The subject has previously invested in love and accepted that love (or romantic involvement) is something that carries value for them. Yet, such an investment has only harmed them. On account of their past experiences, they now hold the attitude that such relationships are harmful and not conducive to their aims or well-being. Their jadedness is an expression (embodied or felt) of their realization that love's appeal wasn't merely hollow but also harmful. Thus, an adequate appreciation of one's situation, past experiences, relevant personality traits, and how objects and projects in the world relate to the subject's goals is necessary in order to properly evaluate whether one's experience of jadedness is epistemically justified or not.

Prudential Benefit or Harm

On the face of it, jadedness appears to be an experience that carries predominantly harmful consequences. The essentialist attitude that it contains and the withdrawal behaviour that characterise it call for a type of disengagement from projects of possible concern. And thus, it is easy to imagine scenarios in which jadedness proves costly for an agent. Because of their jadedness, they miss out on opportunities, they take up behaviours that might be maladaptive and harmful, and they even allow (or cause) their narrow jadedness to become wide.

Although common, such a view of jadedness is at best incomplete and potentially misleading. Our discussion of epistemic justification has already hinted at the ways in which jadedness can be prudentially beneficial. Once again, bring to mind the person who has become jaded with love because they have been the victim of abuse. Or think of an individual who has been the subject of systemic

racism and on account of those experiences they are now jaded with our social and political institutions: such institutions are prime objects of jadedness precisely because they appear to hold great promise (e.g., bettering the quality of one's life or improving social conditions) but they very often fail to deliver the promised goods. We can argue that in those two examples, the individuals have learnt something: they are now in possession of a better understanding of how human relationships and social institutions, respectively, work. Because of this knowledge, they can act appropriately and care for themselves. Jadedness thus appears to be a protective mechanism: it brings about a change of attitudes such that we are motivated not only to avoid the object of jadedness but to also relegate (perhaps even to dismiss) its significance for our projects. Such type of restructuring of one's values and commitments can often be beneficial. If jadedness is fitting, then the object of jadedness does indeed pose to us an existential or eudaimonic harm and we should (prudentially speaking) avoid it. The value of jadedness lies in its capacity to change our orientation towards an object. But this capacity also carries a danger. It is possible (perhaps even tempting sometimes) to become jaded all too quickly or unreasonably. Jadedness of this sort will not have the protective function of a jadedness that is both fitting and justified. It doesn't protect us from a potential existential (or eudaimonic) harm. Instead, it disconnects us from things or activities that might be potentially beneficial to us, restricts our possibilities for engagement, and grants us a false sense of epistemic authority.

5. Conclusion

For better or worse, jadedness contains a lesson. It is the affective realization of the fact that what we once thought was important or valuable to us is no longer. In fact, because of our past negative experiences with its object and changes in our attitudes, values, and commitments, we now consider the object of jadedness to be existentially (or eudaimonically) harmful to us: from our current jaded

perspective, it makes promises that it cannot keep. Engagement with such an object is thus ultimately revealed as pointless, a waste of resources, and even potentially dangerous. Jadedness is thus not pure indifference or apathy. Far from it. Jadedness is an affective call to restructure our commitments and values in a manner that we no longer assign any kind of significance to its object. Precisely because of its potential to affect our lives in such a fashion, jadedness is philosophically, psychologically, and socially important.¹⁶

¹⁶ I would like to express my gratitude to the two anonymous referees who have read and extensively commented on previous versions of this paper. I would also like to thank my colleague John Gibson for the many lengthy conversations that we had on the topic of jadedness; for his support and encouragement when I was working on this project; and for sharing with me his many insights on emotions and art.

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