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ef·fete  (ĭ-fēt)

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adj.

1.

a. Characterized by extreme refinement or self-indulgence, often to the point of unworldliness or decadence: *"the effete taste of people surfeited with expensive comforts"* (R.P.T. Davenport-Hines).

b. Having or reflecting an attitude of social superiority; pretentious or snobbish: *"Throughout its amateur era tennis was a country club sport, denigrated as elitist and effete"* ([Stuart Miller](#)).

2. Depleted of vitality, force, or effectiveness; exhausted: *the effete monarchies of Europe*.

3. Effeminate: *"As a manly adventurer ... [Saint Paul] seemed the perfect rebuttal to our great, if unspoken, fear that the celibate vocation was effete"* (James Carroll).

4. Archaic No longer productive; infertile.

[Latin *effētus*, worn out, exhausted : *ex-*, *ex-* + *fētus*, bearing young, pregnant; see **dhē(i)-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

ef·fete *ly* *adv.*

ef·fete *ness* *n.*

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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