The Metis Element

Metis Element Email

Metis Defined

Ipsissimus Michael A. Aquino defined Initiation in his *Dark Side* stories as “a process of awakening certain latent sensitivities within rare individuals” and “the deliberate sensitizing of the individual to the abilities that lie within his – or her – consciousness” (p. 47). Setian Initiation uses the form or neter Set as a model: the isolator of psychocentric consciousness and ender of delusion.

These abilities and latent sensitivities are possible ways of Self-apprehension. Researchers have identified an increasing number of human cognitive abilities, multiple intelligences, and biopsychosocial systems that might be described as abilities and latent sensitivities. For instance, the influential Cattell-Horn-Carroll theory of cognitive abilities has over 17 different categories of “cognitive human diversity” (Kaufman 2013).

The Metis Element focuses primarily on metic intelligence: a ‘cunning’ or ‘wiley’ intelligence, or ‘survival sense’ (#22T), that underpins craft, skill, and wisdom. Metis has three primary facets:

1. The development of craft-based skills as one possible path to cultivate ‘embodied’ expertise or ‘tacit’ knowledge (Michael Polanyi).
2. It is a form of ‘cunning intelligence’ or ‘survival sense’ that the Left Hand Path sovereign possesses, and that informs creative solutions to life challenges and situations.
3. It provides a framework or perspective for the possible cultural transmission of initiatory knowledge, such as in a School, lineage, or wisdom tradition.

Metis in the Ancient and Contemporary Eras

Metis has its roots in at least two ancient cultures. The Greek pantheon of Zeus, Athena, Hephaestus, Hermes, and Metis; the polymetis or metic hero Odysseus; and the Orphic initiatory system each manifested metic intelligence (Detienne & Vernant, 1991). In China, the classical Confucian, Mohist, and Taoist schools taught ‘cunning’ wisdom, ‘skillful means’, and stratagem warfare, such as in the 36 Stratagems school (Raphals, 1992).

Metis has Remanifested in the contemporary era in several ways. The science fiction novelist Neal Stephenson (1999) chose the Greek goddess Metis as the symbol of cryptographers, computer hackers, and anarchical data havens. Metis illuminates the form and mode of cultural transmission in the contemporary martial arts (#19D; #19AD; and Rosenbaum 2004). The options trader and philosopher Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2012) has articulated a very Metis-like worldview of ‘antifragility’, ‘long gamma’, and ‘optionality’: Becoming stronger from disorder, rather than more fragile. Taleb’s formulation suggests that Metis may be a quality of the neter Set and the Bata myth of overcoming self-limits (#2AH; #17K).

In the Age of Satan (1966-75) the Church of Satan focused in part on aristocratic, elite, and materialist-oriented forms of power. This Machiavellian-like perspective (#22E and #22G) now informs Lesser Black Magic training in organisational and personal power (Pfeffer 2010). The contemporary Setian faces a more complex environment in the Aeon of Set. Automation has devalued artisan and craft-based skills (Sennett 2008). Initiates and non-initiates alike face a weakening of the traditional social contract and institutional structures (Packer 2013).

Perhaps the most promising avenue for pursuing metis lies in K. Anders Ericsson’s work on deliberate practice which Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Coyle, Geoffrey Colvin, and other authors have popularized. Ericsson’s focus on how to build skills and cultivate expertise has been applied to a
broad range of practice domains, and with a growing scholarly and scientific evidence base (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich & Hoffman, 2006).

**Aims of the Metis Element**

The Metis Element has the following aims:

1. To orient interested Setians to publicly available information and research resources on Metis and metic intelligence.
2. To promote craft-based skills, deliberate practice, and focused effort as initiatory pathways for cultivating and embodying LHP sovereignty in the world.
3. To serve as a forum that explores the possible relevance of Metis to Setian Initiation, the Temple of Set’s initiatory and research systems, and the Aeon of Set.

The Metis Element is envisioned primarily to provide resources and perspectives that can inform and support Setian Initiation in other Temple fora and suborganizations, and in relevant initiatory work outside the Temple, such as activist work, artisan and craft-based creative projects, and the martial arts.

The Temple already has a long tradition of Metis-oriented initiatory work, such as the Arkte Warriors in the Order of the Vampyre, and the artisan and craft-based creative projects in the Esoteric Order of Beelzebub. The Metis Element may simply provide resources and perspectives that support these existing Temple suborganizations, and does not claim expertise in them.

**Joining the Element**

The Element is open for II°+ Initiates of the Temple of Set. Setian I’s are advised to pursue initiatory work in the Soa-Gild and with a III°+ Priesthood of Set member as a solid foundation for Setian Initiation. The Element’s annotated research list of book, film, and online resources is available to any Setian on request for personal research.

**Relevant Sources**


*Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society* by Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant. Translated by Janet Lloyd. (University of Chicago Press, 1991 [1978]). (TS-4).

*Kata and the Transmission of Knowledge in Traditional Martial Arts* by Michael Rosenbaum (Boston, MA: YMAA Publication Center, 2004). (TS-3)

