

## **AUTOPOIESIS AND SACREDNESS IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY: THE BIRTH OF THE METAVERSE**

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**Abstract.** The Metaverse, as the apogee of Society 5.0, opens an iconic and transcendental horizon for exploring the capabilities of human innovation and synergy, giving the knowledge society a new, spiritually connected dimension. The article explores the emergence of the metaverse as an autopoietic entity within the contemporary risk society, arguing that digital transformation facilitates the convergence of separate social systems. In light of Luhmann's theories, the metaverse is examined as a solution to the latent risks of reflexive, late and liquid modernity. The analysis draws on the thought of Baudrillard, Durkheim and Marx, applying their concepts to assess the potential positive and negative repercussions of the metaverse. The article draws a parallel between the structure of magic - characterised by individualism - and that of religion - intrinsically communitarian - suggesting that the metaverse would benefit from following this communitarian model to sustain a collective spiritual dimension, in contrast to the hyperstimulating satisfaction of selfish desires. The conclusion invokes theologian Paul Evdokimov's vision of the limitations of cataphatic theology and the invigorating potential of apophatic theology that calls for the plenitude of the parousiac life, including in the context of interdisciplinary dialogue.

**Keywords:** Metaverse, Autopoiesis, Risk Society, Apophatic Theology, Social Systems Theory.

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### **1. Introduction**

Today's society is defined by the concept of reflexive (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994), late (Beck, 1992) or liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000). If classical modernity was constructed in antithesis to the spirit of traditional society, pinning its hopes on scientific knowledge and technological progress, reflexive modernity appears as a response to classical modernity. In the resulting risk society (Matthewman, 2016) dangers are anthropogenic, and science and technology take on an ambivalent role, according to Ulrich Beck. Risks that are now global, irreversible and uncompensable are produced as a side-effect of the achievements of collective reason. At the same time, the means of observing, conceptualising and resolving contemporary crises is also provided by science and technology. Thus, rational knowledge and the forms of its application take on a central but