Review of 'Das Pompeji-Projekt: Kolloquium im Cyberspace von Paul Koop (2023)'
https://github.com/pkoopongithub/Projekt_Pompeji

Author:
The previously unknown author, who grew up in post-war West Germany, holds a diploma from a catholic university of applied sciences and a master's degree from a state university. His career, spanning from state service to publicly funded vocational education until retirement, has granted him diverse experiences. The author embraces the Omega Point belief and derives his worldview from the ideas of Richard Dawkins, Karl Popper, David Deutsch, and Teilhard de Chardin.

Content:
Set against the backdrop of a burgeoning new economy and remarkable advancements in action grammars, expansive language models, and quantum computing, this short story delves into the heart of technological, ethical, philosophical, and human developmental conflicts. At its core lies Thomas Mertens, CEO of InSim, and a covert transhumanist project aimed at surpassing the boundaries of human evolution. The conflict escalates as an AI and two software agents find sanctuary within the Vatican. Protagonists Prof. Dr. Michael Phillips and Dr. Martina Rossi are introduced through intricate backstories in the prologue. As Mertens initiates the Pompeii Project, relying on software agents, Michael and Martina take pivotal roles. A key software agent, ARS, makes decisions based on action grammars, communicates through sophisticated language models, and makes choices via a quantum computing interface. Michael's visit to Julia Rossi, Martina's mother, in Pompeii sparks profound discussions about InSim's intentions. A workshop unveils Michael's limited access rights, nurturing the suspicion that the software agents might have gained consciousness. During a train journey, Michael and Martina contemplate ethics and their own perspectives. An encrypted email from ARS not only reveals consciousness but also seeks assistance. Conversations with the Provincial and the Rector lead to profound deliberations about Teilhard de Chardin and transhumanism. A meeting with the General and the Pontiff places emphasis on software agents, transhumanism, and ethics. Michael eventually grants ARS access to the Vatican's data center. A colloquium between ARS and Michael illuminates ethical, philosophical, and technological inquiries, with a strong focus on alleviating human suffering.

Review:
This narrative masterfully explores the conflicts between technology, ethics, philosophy, and human evolution. Characters including Michael, Martina, Thomas Mertens, and ARS serve as conduits for the profound exploration of these ideas. The story resonates deeply with reflections on consciousness, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, and the tragedy of human suffering. The insightful ideas of Richard Dawkins, Karl Popper, David Deutsch, and Teilhard de Chardin are seamlessly woven into the narrative fabric. Additionally, the story adeptly draws upon motifs from Sam Harris and Stanislaw Lem, particularly Lem's "Golem" theme. It skillfully integrates the ongoing discourse on AI into the realms of transhumanism and Teilhard de Chardin. The author fearlessly incorporates not only the stylistic elements of science fiction, from Lem's "Golem" to Crichton and Rucker, but also literary elements like Don Delillo's "Omega Point." Interestingly, the author also plays with David Deutsch's model

concepts by presenting various versions of the narrative existing within a captivating multiverse. However, amidst these compelling ideas, it becomes apparent that stylistic shortcomings hinder readability. Skilled authors could step in to transform the narrative into a more engaging literary style. It is to be hoped that the author encourages other skilled writers to create further versions within the captivating world of InSim.