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Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to express my deep gratitude for an opportunity to participate in the Phoenix Summer School in Gaming in July 2003. It has offered me an unique chance to broad my knowledge on literature, philosophy, history and religion to meet wonderful students and professors. I have also learnt a lot about myself.

Let me start with the academic thoughts. I very much admire the Greek and Christian roots of our European culture. The history of Poland proves that under oppression of foreign powers civil society wakes up, acts courageously and accordingly to the Greek and Christian principles, often even with a risk of one's life. Surprisingly during times of independence and freedom when righteous Polish governance is necessary, courage is a virtue that I personally have difficulties to find among our political elite. I think Phoenix is a good formation school and gives philosophical, historic and religious foundation so essential when entering socio-political world.

During the Paul Gabriner's course we have learnt that discussions on difficult and controversial issues give opportunity for strengthening one's opinions but also for rectifying one's mistakes. Wrong idea might be exchanged with the right facts and arguments. The societies in the Central and Eastern Europe were suppressed to express any ideas which were not in a course with the party. That is why firstly courage to speak up is a valuable virtue. Secondly it is vital to be open to criticism and have courage to be criticized. Variety of modes makes it more difficult to defend one's opinion but also gives more stable foundation for the future discussion. I think it is very important to base teaching methods on the Mill's praiseworthy quest for truth and encouragement to develop one's opinion.

Reading *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* we have discovered that the character blames others for his own misfortune or unhappiness. It is easier to find an easy explanation and not to take a

responsibility in one's hands. But the latter brings what the first deprives. Despite the human self-defense mechanism I am convinced that it is very important to stay honest with oneself in all aspects of one's life.

I have met students from different places around the globe who are not afraid of difficult questions and want to face them. We have discussed how to separate what is truly good and what appears to be good. We have asked simple questions: why do we study? Because we are looking for wisdom which will enable us to make a good choices and prioritize the ways according to our values. Our friends from Mexico have showed us the poverty in their country. There is no doubt: when one is hungry it is more difficult to keep his/her human dignity. The examples of our Mexican friends has proved that they want to make a difference, they help the poor communities, they want them to escape from vicious cycle which at the one end - is a dream of food and at the other end - a desire to forget their life

Nothing could be more convincing than real life examples. I was impressed and inspired by many lecturing professors. Their academic excellence, commitment and an interest in students' development have showed us their passion and their character. Ultimately we - students say: *I want to follow this example!*

The summer school of the Phoenix Institute Europe Foundation has been a wonderful experience for me. Plato says in "The Republic": *the unexamined life is not worth living*. In Kartause Gaming we not only wanted to make sure that our life is examined but also to build our characters in order to make a difference in our communities and countries.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours faithfully,  
Damian Kozlowski