



2016 Closing Ceremony Speech by Priyanka Patil Bhaskar

Nine months ago I was packing. The two big bags that I carried were heavy and filled with memories from home and *guilt!* The guilt of leaving my 50 year old mother alone at home for the sake of 'my' education and 'my' future.

September, October and November had passed by and the only time when I felt like I belonged here was on my train to my host family during the winter break. The 'only' time in all these months when I realized that I actually feel at home here. I was home sick then, I missed two things: the spicy, oily Indian food and you all.

We all know we are caught up here. Some times in rehearsals, sometimes studying or rather most of the time studying, sometimes in relationships and sometimes just the complexity of the nature of life (# if you take Doctor Paul's philosophy classes too seriously!) who doesn't feel that they could have taken more out of this experience?

I do too! Every conversation we had, I feel I should have had more. Every movie we saw, I feel I should have seen more. Every cup of tea we had, I wish we had more. Now some of you second years might say "you have another year", I say: I 'will' have another year but I won't have you all.

I realized yesterday that 'every' single one of you filled the empty space here because Duino is more than just the 8 BFFs we tend to have.

I have learned a lot....., I have learnt how to fight for rights even if it means having an hour long fight with Brunella and Fernando to get my seashells back. I have learned how the world is bigger and different. The world for me back home was really small, life felt content and satisfied with every meal we had, the only thing that caused sadness in our lives was the suffering of the poor actresses in the Bollywood soap operas.

I know that while trying to discover myself I have lost 'a lot' of my old one. It has been frightening to see myself change, to do things that I had never imagined I'd do - like dancing Caribbean. To see myself looking at things differently like developing this belief that smoking or drinking does not make one a bad person. To say things that I never said before like BOH! It's difficult to embrace the fact that 9 months have changed me so much that now I am 'scared' of going back! Whether or not I am able to come here again or see some of you again I have a lot of things from you, things that will always stay in the form of memories, pictures, sweaters, jokes and not to forget the Year Book.

I am going back and I am packing my bag again, not with guilt but with the joy of having spent the year with some extraordinary intellectuals, rebels, actors, artists, radicals, travelers, 'humans' who are all just like me.

The guilt has now turned into accomplishment. The burden of leaving my mother and home does not feel that heavy anymore because I know that I am carrying back a lot of things. I still have to pack but what I have with me is satisfaction. Thank you for making my year without my mother worth it!