

**Friday PhD Talks 2024-2025**

**#20**

**Claudia Aguas**

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## **Begin Again (or How Life Led Me to Research): Second-Year PhD Reflections**

*Abstract:*

At the start of 2023, I was living in Mallorca, working for both the CSR and the Communication Departments of one of the largest hotel chains in the world. By the end of 2023, I had made a significant career (and life) shift: I was granted a research fellowship (FPI) at the University of Zaragoza, began my PhD, and moved back to my hometown. Although pursuing a PhD had always been a long-term goal, these sweeping changes came with its own set of challenges. These included adjusting to the demands of research, dealing with impostor syndrome, learning how to manage my time effectively, and adapting to teaching responsibilities. Now, as I begin my second year in the PhD programme, I want to share some personal reflections on what it's really like to make a big career change and start anew in academia. My aim is to provide insight into the diverse paths that English Studies graduates can take after completing their degrees, as well as the realities of transitioning into a PhD programme after some time away from academia. Through this discussion, I hope to spark a conversation about the challenges and rewards of embarking on an academic journey while also maintaining balance in life beyond it.

**Bionote:**

PhD candidate in Film Studies at the University of Zaragoza. I hold a BA in English Studies from the University of Zaragoza. I also received an MA in Screenwriting for Film and Television Series from the Rey Juan Carlos University (Madrid). My PhD thesis analyses the spaces of the transnational in Penelope Cruz's cinema. My research interests include transnational stardom, the representation of motherhood in contemporary cinema, and the construction of personal identity in films.

Besides this, and often relatedly, I am a screenwriter and I have worked mostly on animated feature films.