

# ‘HOME SWEET HOME’

*And the Myth of Returning*

*Among Spanish Migrants in Australia*

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<http://www.homesweethomeproject.net/>



*Image 1. Immigration Museum, Museums Victoria (2019).*

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An exegesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Creative Arts

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## **Declaration of Ethics**

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The research presented and reported in this exegesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in research Involving Humans (1999), the Joint NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human research (2007), and the UTS policy and guidelines relating to the ethical conduct of research.

The proposed research received clearance from the University of Technology Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee UTS HREC NO: 2013000210.

The following points should also be noted in relation to the issue of permission. I formally sought and was given permission to prepare and submit this exegesis by all the family members involved in these interviews.

## **Certificate of authorship and originality**

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I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree; nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

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Date: 06/08/2019

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## Abstract

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The aim of this Doctor of Creative Arts (DCA) is to reconsider the meaning of migratory 'return' in an era of increasing transnational experiences while arguing for the impossibility of a final 'return home' for Spanish migrants with emotional links to Spain and Australia. My thesis expands from the growing literature on circular transnational migration and proposes a new concept, 'emotional returnees', which describes those migrants who are involved in multiple returns to both countries. I argue that the impossibility of an emotional and final return unsettles families for generations, turning the act of a final return 'home' into a myth. By drawing on different disciplinary strands of migration theory that deal with identity construction, the meaning of home, the challenge of distance and the myth of return, this DCA expands from ideas proposing that transnational movements do radically transform migrants' ideas of home whenever returning is experienced, deconstructed or planned by the different members of a migrant family, to further develop and deepen our understandings of 'home' and 'return' through different case studies using a transnational migration frame.

The creative contribution of this DCA is a series of nine short documentaries delivered as a website that comprises interviews with returnees in Australia and Spain (<http://www.homesweethomeproject.net/>). Their reflections demonstrate that for many Spanish transnational migrants, 'return' would be better described as an ongoing journey rather than a final destination back 'home'. This website emerges from a methodology of practice-based research that enabled me to produce the short documentaries alongside a virtual archive of migratory memorabilia and material documents.

In this DCA I also deploy an auto-ethnographic approach by including my personal experiences as a Spanish-born migrant, a mother and a multiple returnee. This means that in this exegesis and the accompanying creative website I am not an outsider; rather, I am a participant in the analysis, a position that allows me to document the intricacy of the subject of Spanish migratory returns as both an insider and active participant.

The findings of this DCA contribute to the critical literature in transnational lives and migration by approaching the idea of return from an intergenerational

perspective. Most importantly, the DCA contributes to extant Australian migration studies by augmenting and building from the limited studies of Spanish migration to and from Australia. The creative component of this thesis—which hosts the oral histories, digital ethnographies and archived memorabilia I collected—now survives the DCA process as a significant site of Spanish migrant memorialisation in Australia, and as an invaluable resource for future scholarship.