

SLAS Conference Grant Report

by

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In March 2007, I presented a proposal for a paper at the prestigious *III Congreso Internacional de Literatura Española, Latinoamericana y Argentina* (International Conference of Spanish, Latin American and Argentinian Literature), organised by the CELEHIS, and being held at the City of Mar del Plata, Argentina, in April 2008.

Given the level of trajectory of the speakers (including Noé Jitirk, Guillermo Saccomanno, Ma. Teresa Gramuglio), and based on the fact that I am ‘only’

a PhD student, I expected my abstract not to be accepted. But I was wrong. Once they sent me the official confirmation, my first thought was that I would have to find a colleague in Argentina to read out the paper for me, for I knew it would be financially impossible for me to travel to Argentina. Participating in absentia is not desirable, yet I felt I would have no choice, until browsing through the SLAS website, I learnt about their Conference Grants for postgraduate



students. I applied a few days before the deadline in complete resignation that it was all just a pipe dream. But again, I was wrong. The Society for Latin American Studies Conference Grant not only allowed me to attend one

of the most important conferences on Latin American literature, which is the field of my PhD, in addition, I was able to carry out essential interviews and research for my thesis. Being Argentinian myself, yet having done all of my career in the UK, presenting a paper on Julio Cortázar in front of the most respected figures of the academic world of Argentinian letters, was a nerve-wrecking challenge. The experience proved to be not only fruitful, in both a professional and a personal level, but it was also vital in that



it allowed me to share my research with, and obtain feedback from, the experts in the field on the other side of the world, as well as giving me the chance to keep up to date with the academic trends in the study of Argentinian and Latin American literature within the Southern Cone. I cannot emphasize enough how grateful I am to the SLAS for having given me this unique opportunity. I am eternally indebted.

Carolina Orloff – May 2008

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