

**ACS Technology Grant
REPORT**

**PROJECT: Post-revolutionary Cuba: A *Videolit*© on Leonardo Padura Fuentes
An Intersection of Literature, Film and Pedagogy**

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COMPLETED PROJECT:

- *Cuban Mysteries: An Interview With Leonardo Padura* (A Claudia Ferman *Videolit*©)

Documentary; Length: 30'; Language: Bilingual edition (Spanish and English)

- *Misterios cubanos: Una entrevista con Leonardo Padura* (Un *Videolit*© de Claudia Ferman)

Documentary; Length: 30'; Language: Spanish

Origin: Cuba, USA, Argentina

Year: 2006

Available Format: DVD, Digital, Mini-DV

1. Background: Rationale for Overall Project

As educators in our present time, we compete with media products that affect the approach, understanding, and processing of information and as a result the traditional classroom often fails to attract students and excite learning. The purpose of my work on *videolits*© is to respond to the contemporary learning and viewing habits of a television-literateⁱ student population. By exploring the potential of time-basedⁱⁱ media for carrying traditionally print-based literary information, this project seeks to employ emerging technologies to enhance both the learning experience and the message itself, especially as it reveals itself through the written word.

A *Videolit*© explores the possibilities that the illuminated screen (projecting film screen, TV, computer) may bring to the reception and dissemination of literature. *Videolits*© unite writing, orality, and computer wizardry to enhance the interaction and dissemination of literary products. In *Videolits*©, the visual possibilities of the printed word are emphasized as a means to grasp the texts' literary depth and significance.

2. Description:

Title: *Cuban Mysteries: An Interview With Leonardo Padura* (30') A Claudia Ferman *Videolit*© (Cuba, USA, Argentina, 2006)

My project for a *videolit*© on Leonardo Padura Fuentes was inspired and informed by a series of initiatives under the auspices of the ACS Consortium, which began in the Spring of 2001, and with the objective of creating a Latin American Virtual Program, LAS.

This *Videolit*© presents contemporary debates on culture, politics, and literature in Cuba, through an approach to Leonardo Padura's writing. Leonardo Padura is one of the most recognized writers in contemporary Cuban literature. He is internationally known as one of creators of the new detective novel. He has been the recipient of many prestigious awards. His best-known work is a tetralogy, *Las cuatro estaciones* (The Four Seasons),ⁱⁱⁱ

four novels depicting post-revolutionary Cuban society through the eyes of Mario Conde, a character that personifies the best qualities of the New Detective Novel. The film weaves together excerpts and dramatized sequences from Padura's writing with an interview with the author at his home in Havana.

3. Curriculum and Assessment: Integration into the Curriculum; Dissemination

Videolits© intend to respond to the increasing caesura, or schism, between literary production, electronic communication, and academic criticism and debate. Videolits© are intended primarily for use in classes of Latin American Literature and/or Culture, by any Spanish, Latin American, or Literature studies program. However their format makes them also suitable for mass media release, and therefore for wide-ranging access and consumption.

At this time, the final project has been presented and discussed at various fora attended by literary scholars, teachers and general audience (see below). I will also submit it to national and international film festivals.

- "Movimientos Sociales y Literatura" Conference. Universidad de Puerto Rico, Cayey. March 20, 2006. (In Spanish)
- VCU Spring 2006 Social Justice Film Series, April 3, 2006. (Bilingual edition)
- Centro de Relaciones Exteriores, Universidad Blas Pascal, Córdoba, Argentina. May 30, 2006. (In Spanish)

Scholars and teachers in various disciplines, and general audience constituted the audience. The film was very well received, and prompted conversations on literature, Cuban politics and culture, and teaching methodology.

Programmed presentation:

- Lunchtime Forum series. University of Richmond, November 8, 2006. (Bilingual edition)

ⁱ Visual literacy: the ability to interpret content through images.

ⁱⁱ Messages that exist and unravel in time; the meaning of the message is exposed over time.

ⁱⁱⁱ The titles are: *Máscaras*, *Paisaje de otoño*, *Pasado perfecto*, and *Vientos de Cuaresma*.