

CHAPTER 31

Reinaldo Arenas: The Sexual Politics of a Queer Activist

Rafael Ocasio

*Abstract: Reinaldo Arenas became one of the most vocal figures among the political activists opposed to the Castro regime shortly after his arrival in the United States by means of the Mariel boatlift. His clashes (ideological and personal), many of them recorded in the public media, earned him the reputation of a strong-willed, rather callous and aggressive individual. The biggest controversies about Arenas arise from his posthumously-published autobiography, *Antes que anochezca* (1992); [*Before Night Falls* (1993)]. In it Arenas explored his own life as an outlaw engaged in sexual activities that were anathema to the Revolution, and as a queer activist who transformed his life into a case study. In his literary production he had portrayed a strong image as a sexual outlaw, a role that he linked with his political agenda. The autobiography is clearly a text produced with the intention to shock his reader with graphic disclosures of unorthodox or taboo sexual practices. "AIDS and the Sexual Politics of a Queer Activist" focuses on the role of AIDS as an agent that may have precipitated Arenas's decision to memorialize his life as that of a sexual outlaw. Seeking a controversial angle, he wrote both as a gay man afflicted with AIDS and as a queer willing to speak out about his rather intimate sexual preferences. This is his most important contribution to an AIDS-inspired political discourse; however, as I argue, Arenas shied away from disclosing much about his own AIDS condition. He preferred to be remembered as an outlandish pícaro, a queer activist who transformed his life into a case study, and not as a sick man who ended his own life.*

Upon his arrival in the United States on May 5, 1980, by means of the Mariel boatlift, Reinaldo Arenas started an active anti-Castro campaign. The open, out-of-the-closet angle of his political activism was, during the eighties, unique among gay writers from a Latin American country, including Cuba. It created for him a rather negative reputation. Arenas was often labeled an aggressive activist, an untiring political contender with a flair for tantrums that often led to his insensitive and crude insults against his opponents. Specifically, he took it upon himself to publicize the cases of writers who had been marginalized by Cuban cultural or judicial authorities, unable to publish or placed under arrest. His own legal

case against the Cuban system of justice remained barely discussed, however.

In spite of possible damage to his literary career, Arenas became involved in numerous public debates that were often documented in the print media in the United States and abroad. His self-promoted image was that of a “desterrado;” a man without a land, a term that he repeatedly used in *Before Night Falls*, his posthumously published autobiography. Also in his autobiography, he described extensively his dilemma while in the United States, during an exile of ten years, prior to his decision to commit suicide in 1990. His characterization of his exile is defined in rather depressing terms. Suffering is at the core of his exile (and by extension) in the heart of all Cubans in exile: “Suffering has marked us forever, and only with people who have gone through a similar experience can we find some level of understanding” (trans. 308).¹

This paper focuses on Arenas’s political and gay activism in the last three years of his life. He was writing as a gay man and as an AIDS patient who took a public stand on the question of homophobia within the Cuban revolution and, by extension, in Cuban society at large. AIDS may have precipitated Arenas’s decision to memorialize his life as a sexual outlaw. Seeking a controversial angle for his autobiography, he wrote both as a gay man afflicted with AIDS and as a queer willing to speak out in an intimate tone about his sexual preferences, particularly his fondness for engaging in sexual acts in public, preferably at beaches in the outskirts of Havana. He considered those activities part of his political activism against homophobic revolutionary judicial practices in Cuba.

After diagnosis of his AIDS condition in 1987, Arenas continued to be involved in counterrevolutionary political campaigns. Up to the moment of his death in 1990 that strong political activism clearly influenced his later literary work.² He also rushed to conclude his pentagonía project with the novel, *El color del verano* (1991), *The Color of the Summer* (2000) which would be his most vociferous attack (in fiction) against the Castro regime. He concluded his autobiography, *Antes que anochezca*

1. Quotations from *Before Night Falls* are from the published English translation. The Spanish original is available in the footnotes. “...el sufrimiento nos marcó para siempre y sólo con las personas que han padecido lo mismo, tal vez podamos encontrar cierta comunicación” (330).

(1992); *Before Night Falls* (1993), in which Arenas symbolically and concretely held Fidel Castro responsible for his decision to commit suicide. *El color*, the fictionalized accounts of a sexual outlaw, which Arenas described in a 1990 letter as “my best novel,”³ makes use of shocking sexual incidents similar to those used in his sexually graphic autobiography. He also wrote in a 1990 letter that *El color* “was going to cause a great stir.”⁴ Both works are Arenas’s last testimonial declarations against the Castro regime and his final act of vengeance against his enemies.

The focus of *Before Night Falls* is Arenas’s desire to shock his reader with open references to a gay underground world in Cuba, in a “tell-it-all” testimonial. In it he recorded his many daring sexual escapades and those of his friends and of his enemies, as they attempted to bypass the police’s vigilant efforts to stop homosexual activities in public areas. In a 1989 letter he wrote that the autobiography would be “a scandal,” a text in which “I tell all the horrors that I have committed in my life,” and that it was to be published posthumously.⁵

Arenas shied away from disclosing much about his own AIDS condition, however. He preferred to be remembered as an outlandish pícaro, a queer activist who transformed his life into a case study, and not as a sick man who ended his own life. This absence is particularly evident in *Before Night Falls*, an irreverent text presented as a narration by an unrepented elderly pícaro who, unlike the traditional pícaro, at the moment of his death refused to conform to societal expectations of “proper” sexual

2. A recent tribute to Arenas’s political activism is the publication of his never before published article, “Elogio a Fidel Castro;” Praise of Fidel Castro, by the well-known Spanish newspaper “El País.” The byline of the article stresses Arenas’s committed political activism until the moment of his death: “Artículo inédito de un escritor perseguido. El escritor Reinaldo Arenas escribió su ‘Elogio a Fidel Castro’ en 1990, poco antes de morir en Nueva York;” “Unpublished article by a persecuted writer. The writer Reinaldo Arenas wrote his ‘Praise of Fidel Castro’ in 1990, shortly before his death in New York.” “El País” (August 7, 2006): 10

3. All undocumented quotations from letters to and from Reinaldo Arenas are from the Reinaldo Arenas Collection (CO 232) in the Princeton University Library. Passages I have translated from the unedited letters are identified by endnotes, including box and folder numbers.

4. Box 27, folder 8.

5. Box 23; folder 7.

behavior. In its place, Arenas revealed his most outrageous opinions on the impact of sex (from the vantage point of a patient of AIDS) on his life and, controversially, extended his prickly opinions to gays in general.

Although Arenas made few references to AIDS in *Before Night Falls*, the presence of that terrible disease permeates the text. Like other AIDS-affected individuals Arenas had a long battle against various illnesses related to his HIV condition. In the autobiography's introduction he remarked in passing that his condition interrupted the normal pace of his proposed projects. In fact, at the time of his diagnosis in 1987, Arenas had prepared to die. He had just finished writing *Viaje a La Habana* (1990), a collection of three long short stories. His pentagonía was incomplete, with two pieces, *El color del verano* and *El asalto* (1990); *The Assault* (1994), still to be revised from original texts that he had smuggled out of Cuba.⁶ He set aside these two manuscripts in order to take a trip to Miami. Although he had decided to die close to the sea, his close friend Lázaro Gómez Carriles brought him back to New York. He was hospitalized without health insurance, thanks to the efforts of a doctor who was a friend of Margarita Camacho, one of Arenas's closest friends and wife of exiled Cuban painter Jorge Camacho.⁷

According to the autobiography, at the hospital Arenas decided to dictate rather than to write his memoirs and he managed to start working on *El color*. After his release he began reviewing the manuscript of *El asalto*, which he described as "a manuscript [...] written in Cuba in great haste so it could be smuggled out of the country" (trans. xiii).⁸ *El asalto* and *El color* were to become the last pieces of his life-long pentagonia project, a series of five novels with strong autobiographical content, corresponding to the life of a Cuban gay peasant from his childhood through his adulthood. In letters from 1989 and throughout 1990 Arenas started to refer to his life as "an agony," and he often wished that "it might end at any moment."⁹

6. A first draft of *El color del verano* is dated by the Arenas Collection at the Princeton Library, as Cuba, 1977, and of *El asalto*, as La Habana, 1974.

7. The Camachos had been key figures in persuading friends who traveled as tourists to Havana to smuggle Arenas's manuscripts in various degrees of completion.

8. "En realidad se trataba de un manuscrito escrito en Cuba atropelladamente para poder sacarlo del país" (13).

Arenas's depression increased with his decline in homosexual activity. Of particular biographical interest today is Arenas's correspondence with the Camachos in which he revealed intimate details about his sexual life during the last three years of his life. He had decided to refrain from engaging in any kind of sexual activity. In an August 29, 1989 letter, Arenas said that he had given up anonymous sex, in spite of having been propositioned while riding a bicycle in Central Park: "I had an 'unchaste' proposition from a huge black man, which unfortunately I cannot accept. I have already become accustomed to my monkish life, and that has helped me to work a lot."¹⁰

Arenas's "monkish life" goes against his frequent statements in his autobiography about his need for sex while he was engaged in writing: "I could never work in pure abstinence; the body needs to feel satisfied to give free rein to the spirit" (trans. 101).¹¹ It was not, however, the first time that he had imposed chastity upon himself. Between 1974 through 1976, in a Cuban jail, during his incarceration under accusations of corruption of male minors, he had decided against engaging in sexual adventures. His explanation for this decision goes to the core of his view of sex: "I had no sexual relations while in prison, not only as a precaution but because it made no sense; love has to be free, and prison is a monstrosity where love turns into bestiality" (trans. 187).¹² Another example of his connection of unorthodox sexual acts and the actual process of writing is his involvement with male minors, an activity that in his autobiography he characterized as indispensable: "In the afternoons I would lock myself in my little room in Miramar, and sometimes write until late into the night. But during the day I roamed all the beaches, barefoot, and enjoyed unusual adventures with wonderful guys in the bushes, with ten, eleven, twelve of them sometimes, at times with only one, who would be so extraordinary he would satisfy me as much as twelve" (trans. 101-102).¹³

9. Box 23, folder 7.

10. Box 23, folder 7.

11. "Nunca he podido trabajar en plena abstinencia, porque el cuerpo necesita sentirse satisfecho para dar rienda suelta a su espíritu"(127).

12. "Yo no tuve relaciones sexuales en la prisión; no solamente por provocación, sino porque no tenía sentido; el amor es algo libre y la prisión es algo monstruoso, donde el amor se convierte en algo bestial" (212).

The above quotations are just a handful of examples of Arenas's most intimate revelations concerning his sexual practices. His open treatment of gay sexuality, particularly evident in his autobiography and in the novel *El color...*, violates self-imposed moral restrictions among Latin American writers in dealing with such taboo subjects. Arenas went a step further, however, by offering personal comments on issues of interest to all gays, such as his doubting the possibility of a gay monogamous commitment: "The ideal in any sexual relationship is finding one's opposite, and, therefore, the homosexual world is now something sinister and desolate; we almost never get what we most desire" (trans. 108).¹⁴ This latter statement is certainly a point of considerable contention; in fact, it appears as his indirect explanation of his controversial statement about his overactive sexual activity. As he was about to die alone and by his own hand, the absence of a lover at his side is particularly pathetic. This was drastic for a man who had known, in shocking testimony according to his "complicated mathematical calculations," numerous sexual partners, some 5,000 by the time he was 25 years old (119; trans. 93). It is within the context of a physical and spiritual solitude that he proclaimed categorically, "The gay world is not monogamous. Almost by instinct, the tendency is to spread out to multiple relationships, quite often to promiscuity" (trans. 64-65).¹⁵ He had been deeply involved in understanding gay relationships prior to this statement in his autobiography, as he indicated in a 1987 interview with Nedda G. de Anhalt. In that conversation he had labeled promiscuity an "endless search." He stated, "One of the characteristics of the homosexual world is that one seeks his own likeness. That nonexistent friend is the companion that one would want, and one pursues oneself in that endless search" (152).¹⁶

13. "En mi pequeño cuarto de Miramar me encerraba por las tardes y a veces escribía hasta las altas horas de la noche. Pero por el día yo había recorrido descalzo todas aquellas playas y había tenido aventuras con bellísimos adolescentes entre los matorrales; diez, once, doce a veces y, en ocasiones, uno solo, pero extraordinario, para que me rindiese por una docena" (127-128).

14. "Lo ideal en toda relación sexual es la búsqueda de lo opuesto y por eso el mundo homosexual actual es algo siniestro y desolado; porque casi nunca se encuentra lo deseado" (133).

15. "El mundo homosexual no es monogámico; casi por naturaleza, por instinto, se tiende a la dispersión, a los amores múltiples, a la promiscuidad muchas veces" (90).

With detailed references in his autobiography to his sexual drive, which he described as “a huge sexual appetite” (trans. 18),¹⁷ Arenas was also writing as an “outlaw” since some of the episodes in which he had become involved fell within violation of sexual laws in Cuba. His literary mentor could have been the French novelist and playwright Jean G net, an author in whom Arenas expressed interest after Arenas’s arrival in the United States in 1980 (Olivares, Montenegro 53).¹⁸ This emphasis on the marginalized social outlaw was strong in Arenas’s mind since his first drafts of the autobiography, made while he was a fugitive from justice in 1974, prior to his incarceration in El Morro Prison.

In *Before Night Falls* Arenas also purposely sought controversy, a fact concretely evident in his divulging rather graphic details about his sexual involvement with underage males. The encounters were consensual, and they were related to a strong underground community in Havana where minors often sought engagement with adult males without expecting remuneration. The many encounters with those minors, whom he described with flattering labels, such as “bell simos adolescentes;” “most beautiful adolescents,” explain the only time that Arenas fell into a police entrapment. As was his custom, already well documented both in his autobiography and in fiction, Arenas had gone to a public beach, where he obtained consensually the sexual favors of two “j venes;” youths. After engaging in sexual relations, the j venes robbed Arenas and a friend and denounced them to the police as sexual aggressors. The blow to Arenas’s p caro pride is two-fold. One, he had not realized that this was a police entrapment and two, at the trial his accusers, although the size of a grown man, “over six feet tall” (234; trans. 209), had pretended to be minors.¹⁹

After his diagnosis with AIDS Arenas continued to view his life as a political case. Arenas’s vigorous political activism in *Before Night Falls* made him a vocal opponent of the homophobic record of the Cuban revo-

16. “Una de las caracter sticas del mundo homosexual es que uno se busca a uno mismo.

Ese amigo inexistente es el compa ero que uno quisiera, y lo persigue en uno mismo a trav s de esa b squeda incesante.”

17. “...una gran voracidad sexual” (39).

18. The impact of G net on Arenas is a subject for further research. Arenas, who had advanced knowledge of French, could have read G net in French, or he could have read G net in Cuba in translations by the Cuban playwright Ant n Arrufat.

lution, as he challenged the macho image of the perfect revolutionary as expressed in Ernesto Che Guevara's "hombre nuevo;" new man. Arenas did not observe the self-censorship of many gay artists who, as critics have pointed out, often "translate their need for a sense of pride into a desire for respectability, and so expect lesbian and gay history to provide them with a 'cleaned up' version of the past" (Duggan 152). Before the publication of his autobiography Arenas often commented on the role of gay erotic activism as an agent of social and political change. For example, in 1983, in his interview with Charles Greenfield, Arenas explained oppressive actions against homosexuality by the Cuban government: "Sex is an authentic manifestation of communication, therefore, it must be repressed" (42). Some journals seemed to have censored his frequent comments on homosexual issues, a fact revealed in his 1981 conversation with the critic Ana Roca, who in 1980 had one of the first interviews after Arenas's arrival in the United States. Thanks to Dra. Roca I have had access to the original interview, in which Arenas spoke at length about the underground homosexual life in Cuba as a reaction to the extreme, officially sanctioned homophobia by revolutionary institutions.

In hindsight, it is understandable that in 1980 an American publisher might have been reluctant to deal openly with Arenas's charges of Cuban

19. Arenas later made of this arrest a case of political persecution due to his publications abroad without proper permission from Cuban cultural institutions of his novels *El mundo alucinante* (France, 1968 and Mexico, 1969) and to the French translations of his novels *Celestino antes del alba*, published in France in 1973 and *El palacio de las blanquísimas mofetas*, also published in France in 1975. He set forth his case in a "Comunicado a la Cruz Roja, a la ONU y a la UNESCO;" a Comunicué to the Red Cross, to the United Nations and to UNESCO, which he wrote while a fugitive from justice on November 15, 1974 (Arenas in *Necesidad...*, 150-152). According to his autobiography, the Comunicué appeared in France in the newspaper "Le Figaro," and also in Mexico. In *Necesidad de libertad*, published in 1986, Arenas reproduced the text of the Comunicué as he had drafted it and smuggled it into France to his friends Jorge and Margarita Camacho. In a footnote Arenas wrote, however, that the Camachos had decided not to make this document public: "Aunque llevaba órdenes expresas de que el mismo se publicara inmediatamente, conjuntamente con mis manuscritos inéditos, los depositarios determinaron no hacerlo, temiendo las consecuencias que pudiera acarrearle, ya que a los pocos días de su expedición fui nuevamente arrestado" (152); "Although it carried expressed instructions for its immediate publication, together with my unedited manuscripts, the recipients decided not to do so, fearing the consequences that it might have had for me, since a few days after sending it I was again arrested."

revolutionary homophobia, with his charges of violations of their human rights and many times of their deaths. Even more so, when Arenas left some of his most serious accusations unsubstantiated, or, in instances when he had named victims of these violations, a publisher would probably have hesitated to support the charges or even to reveal the identity of people still living in Cuba. Publishers might have been cautious about revealing names of victims living in the United States, at that time recovering from right wing, anti-homosexual religious campaigns, such as that of Anita Bryant in Florida in 1977.

The severe censorship of Arenas's interviews regarding gay life in revolutionary Cuba may have inspired his desire to explore this subject freely in his last works. This is a goal of his unpublished essay, "Prólogo al misterio del miedo;" "Prologue to the Mystery of Fear."²⁰ Written in New York City and dated 1987, this article appears to be a preamble to Arenas's daring works to come:

One of the most ancient and persistent feelings suffered by man is fear. Before smiling, man screamed. Leaving the mother's womb (that warm, safe place) fills us with panic. We come into the world screaming. The subsequent path through life is an adventure through fear's intricate passages, and all this culminates in death, the greatest fear, since death represents absolute destruction or absolute mystery. Fear is, then, that obscure, impending threat that we cannot control. In contemporary times one not only dies or suffers death throes through fear, but one lives headed toward (or under) fear. Now terror is a scientific method used, in one way or another, by the mechanisms of power to control humanity.²¹

20.Box 19, folder 25.

21. "Una de las sensaciones más antiguas y constantes padecidas por el hombre es el miedo. Antes de sonreír el hombre gritó. La salida del vientre materno (aquel lugar tibio y seguro) nos llena de pánico. Entramos al mundo gritando. Luego, el tránsito por la vida es una aventura por los intrincados pasadizos del miedo, y todo esto culmina con la muerte, el miedo mayor, pues representa la destrucción absoluta o el absoluto misterio. El miedo es pues esa amenaza oscura e inminente que no podemos controlar. En los tiempos contemporáneos no solamente se muere o se agoniza a través del miedo, sino que se vive para (o bajo) el miedo. El terror es ya un método científico que de una forma u otra manera los mecanismos del poder utilizan para controlar a la humanidad." (Box 19, folder 25.)

He was, however, willing to fight that oppressive feeling: “We live not in the splendor of a culture, much less of a knowledge, but in the splendor of terror. Man, who seemed to be the quintessential rebel, has turned into (or was he always so?) a slave to fear. And the most terrible thing is that in many cases we don't even recognize the moment when that horror has permeated us, the moment when we are no longer authentic beings and therefore free and self-confident, but instruments or victims of panic.”²² Further proof that Arenas intended to begin a campaign of shocking statements appears in another unpublished and undated article, “Tiempos modernos;” “Modern Times.” Unlike in the “Prologue to the Mystery of Fear,” in “Modern Times”²³ Arenas indicated what his goal for the future might have been in order to fight these modern times that he labeled “a time of the ‘holy family’ and of solitary masturbations:” “But remember, above all, clandestinely and underground, life doesn't have to stop. And it will not stop because always there will be somebody ready to die for it. Anyway, while new hells draw near and drag me into whirlwinds, I would like to leave here my brief testament: *I shall not surrender.*”²⁴

Whether “Modern Times” was written prior to his diagnosis of AIDS is not evident, but in that article Arenas reflected his current depressed state of mind, which in the autobiography is closely linked to his AIDS-related diseases. In his last recorded statement to his friend the Latino novelist Jaime Manrique, Arenas linked AIDS to his dissatisfaction with his life in New York: ““All these years, I've felt Manhattan was just another island-jail. A bigger jail with more distractions but a jail nonetheless. It just goes to show that there are more than two hells. I left one kind

22. “Vivimos no en el esplendor de una cultura, mucho menos de una sabiduría, sino el esplendor del terror. El hombre que parecía ser la criatura rebelde por excelencia se ha vuelto (¿O lo ha sido siempre?) un esclavo del miedo. Y lo más terrible es que en muchos casos ni siquiera advertimos hasta que punto ese horror nos ha permeado, hasta que punto ya no somos seres auténticos y por lo tanto desenfadados y libres sino instrumentos o víctimas del pánico.” (Box 19, folder 25.)

23. Box 19, folder 34.

24. “Pero recuérdelo, por encima de todo, clandestina y subterráneamente, la vida no se habrá de detener. Y no se detendrá porque siempre habrá quien esté dispuesto a morir por ella. De todos modos, mientras nuevos infiernos se aproximan y en su torbellino me arrastran, quisiera dejar aquí mi breve testamento: *No capitularé*” (emphasis in the original).

of hell behind and fell into another kind. I never thought I would live to see us plunge again into the dark ages. This plague-AIDS-is but a symptom of the sickness of our age” (68). Arenas’s reference to the “sickness of our age” seems to stem from religious or governmental restrictions to homosexuality. The following is his statement in an unpublished document, “Carta de los Estados Unidos;” “Letter from the United States,” in which Arenas wrote about the reasons for homophobic restrictions in his usual crude language: “The male moralist has such a high regard for masculinity that his greatest pleasure would be for another man to screw him. From that exhibitionism repressive laws arise and Christian or bourgeois Communist morality.”²⁵ He often referred to his current time as “o reactionary and prudish,” as he wrote in 1990 to Jorge Camacho, that his darling *El color del verano* might not find a suitable publisher.

Arenas’s personal experiences with moral censorship in Cuba, his physical suffering in disciplinarian institutions (rehabilitation and detention centers), and his condition as a gay Marielito involved in political controversies in the United States provided the bases for his progressively strong gay aesthetics. *Before Night Falls*, in particular, is an outstanding text in Cuban and in Latin American literature that promotes new subjects into autobiographical writing, especially Arenas’s open exploration of his erotic practices. It can be argued that his imminent death from AIDS forced Arenas into a graphic sexual “self-outing,” which included his ultimate revelation of his attraction to engage in consensual sexual relations with male minors, in clear violation of the moral codes of the so-called revolutionary new man. Clearly, he meant his memoirs to shock his readers with bold descriptions of gay sex. This is an intricate part of his gay activism: a ground-breaking analysis of gay sex in descriptive, erotic language that becomes for Arenas the ultimate sign of gay identity.

25. “El hombre moralista tiene un concepto tan elevado de la masculinidad que su mayor placer sería que otro hombre le diese por el culo. De esa exhibición surgen las leyes represivas y la moral cristiana o burguesa comunistas.” (Box 19, folder 34.)

Bibliography

- Anhalt, Nedda G. de. "Reinaldo Arenas: Aquel mar, una vez más." In *Rojo y naranja sobre negro*. México: Vuelta, 1991. 133-67.
- Arenas, Reinaldo. *Antes que anochezca*. Barcelona: Tusquets, 1992.
- . *El asalto*. Miami: Universal, 1990.
- . *The Assault*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Viking, 1984.
- . *Before Night Falls*. Translated by Dolores Koch. New York: Viking, 1993.
- . *El color del verano*. Miami: Universal, 1991.
- . *The Color of the Summer*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Viking, 2000.
- . *Necesidad de libertad*. México: Cosmos, 1986.
- . *The Palace of the White Skunks*. Translated by Andrew Hurley. New York: Viking, 1990.
- . *El palacio de las blanquísimas mofetas*. Caracas: Monte Avila, 1980.
- . *Viaje a La Habana*. Miami: Universal, 1990.
- Duggan, Lisa. "History's Gay Ghetto: The Contradictions of Growth in Lesbian and Gay History." *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissident and Political Culture*. Lisa Duggan & Nan D. Hunter, editors. New York: Routledge, 1995. 144-154.
- Greenfield, Charles. "Life Imitating Art: A Profile of Reynaldo Arenas." *Nuestro* 7 (June-July 1983): 40-42.
- Manrique, Jaime. *Eminent Maricones. Arenas, Lorca, Puig and Me*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.
- Olivares, Jorge, and Nivia Montenegro. "Conversación con Reinaldo Arenas." *Taller Literario* 1:2 (Fall 1980): 53-67.
- Roca, Ana. "A Word With Arenas, Author in Exile." *Américas* 33 (September 1981): 36-38.