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Q. 1985 **Agonia** *Variety*
(Agony)
(VENEZUELAN-COLOR)

Montreal, Aug. 31.

A Joel Films Production. Produced by Elia Schneider. Directed by Jose Novoa. Written by Novoa and Aminta de Lara; dialog by Novoa; camera (color), Novoa, Hernan Toro; editor, Novoa; set design, Silvia I. Vallejo; sound, Robert Katz; music, Gilberto Harquez; costumes, Silvia I. Vallejo. Reviewed at Montreal World Film Festival (Parisien), Aug. 31, 1985. Running time: **85 MINS.**

Jorge Juan Manuel Montesinos
Aida Aminta de Lara
Galindo Roberto Fontana
Arturo Jorge Diaz
Crescencio Rodney Rochester
Isabel Maria Eugenia Carrasco
Maneto Mario Pena
Tatiana Carlota Sosa
Jorge's father Nelson Serge
Jorge as boy Danniell Garmendia
Grandmother Marianella Rojas

"Agonia," the debut feature of New York-based helmer Jose Novoa, moves too slowly and carefully, a major mistake of an otherwise well-crafted, moody psychological study. Cut to an hour, it would make a quality tv pic.

Jorge, the central character, is about to turn his family's plantation into real estate in order to leave the country and the jungle for the sake of his lonely wife, Aida. Story stretches across two days and a night of the visit and negotiations with two visiting men. They have brought along a sex-bomb named Isabel whom Aida instantly dislikes. Flirtations and signals of interest lead to various forms of seduction.

The hacienda's sale will include the two servants, a lovely young Indian girl and a dwarf Crescencio, who is the manager. The Buyer's son Arturo arrives to collect his allowance, and when his father proves unwilling to fork over the money, Arturo enters a liaison with the servant girl who is eager to have a baby.

The women are portrayed as universally frustrated, and even the proper Aida winds up in the arms of the dwarf and is discovered by her husband. Generation gaps and class conflicts are drawn with decadent overtones. The wife sinks ever deeper into the lush nature of the jungle of the plantation as well as the corrupt relationships around her. When it becomes clear that Jorge will continue drinking and cling to his roots, she puts a bullet through her temple.

A score put together of soulful opera arias makes for lovely listening, but the story is stretched too thin and the characters left undeveloped, while the camera explores the exotic Venezuelan landscapes.

—Kaja.