



Jodie Foster stars as 'Nell' in the story of a woman raised in a remote cabin in the woods who speaks a strange, impenetrable language. She's the source of great wisdom and inspiration to a doctor (Liam Neeson) and psychologist (Natasha Richardson) as they decide whether to bring the mysterious woman into contemporary society.



Wesley Snipes stars as U.S. Marshall Pete Nessip, who is tracking down organized crime leaders and his brother's killer in 'Drop Zone.'

'Nell' a modern fable; Parachute flick a bore

NEW YORK — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.

'Nell'

(20th Century Fox) A woman (Jodie Foster) living completely on her own in a remote wilderness area of North Carolina and speaking what seems only gibberish is terrified when discovered by a caring physician (Liam Neeson) who, with the help of a research-minded psychologist (Natasha Richardson), tries to communicate with her and prepare her for the likelihood of court-ordered institutionalization. Directed by Michael Apted, the beautifully photographed, sensitively acted story deals with the simple wisdom of innocence, though sluggish pacing and logical inconsistencies diminish the narrative's fable-like qualities. Shadowy skinny-dipping, a flash of nudity, brief sexual references, minimal profanity and an instance of rough

language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

'Drop Zone'

(Paramount) Revenge-themed action flick in which a suspended U.S. marshal (Wesley Snipes) goes undercover to get evidence against his brother's killers, who turn out to be a group of highly skilled skydivers (led by Gary Busey) planning to break into DEA headquarters to steal information on undercover drug agents. Director John Badham focuses so intently on skydiving action and escalating violence that the characters become a blur and the narrative a bore. Excessive violence and recurring rough language. The USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Disclosure'

(Warner Bros.) With his computer firm on the verge of a crucial merger, a troubled family man (Michael Douglas) jeopardizes the deal and his job by bringing charges of sexual harassment against his new boss (Demi Moore), a manipulative former lover out to destroy his career while enhancing her own. Director Barry Levinson makes slick entertainment out of corporate backstabbing while reducing the painful subject of sexual harassment to the level of glossy escapist fare. Restrained depiction of a near-seduction scene, verbally graphic descriptions of it and intermittent rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Nobody's Fool'

(Paramount) Quirky story set in wintry upstate New York, where an incorrigible aging loser (Paul Newman) looks after his ailing former grammar school teacher (the late Jessica Tandy) while starting to build a long overdue relationship with his estranged son and grandson, though romantically pursued by the neglected wife (Melanie Griffith) of his construction company boss (Bruce Willis). Writer-director Robert Benton juggles nearly a dozen small-town relationships with realism and humor in a movie small in scope but large in heart as it explores friendship, hope and the ever-present possibility of personal growth. Some partial nudity, sexual references and minimal rough language. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Author examines Generation X myth

"Generation at the Crossroads: Apathy and Action on the American Campus," by Paul Rogat Loeb; Rutgers University Press (New Brunswick, N.J., 1994); 458 pp.; \$24.95.

Reviewed by William Droel
Catholic News Service

Generation X has been characterized as one of slackers and cynics. In recent months movies and the popular media have solidified — although occasionally challenged — that image. Paul Loeb, a journalist and public speaker, spent seven years touring hundreds of campuses trying to get beyond "monolithic generational stereotypes."

In "Generation at the Crossroad" Loeb found it is true that the majority of college students "have room for only one serious concern: preparing to make it in the material world." He calls these students "apolitical adapters." It is false, however, that students are leading "America's retreat from responsibility." They are part of a wider cultural trend and should not carry the blame for society's callousness.

In addition, Loeb balances what would otherwise be a discouraging report with several portraits of unheralded students who are involved in improving health care delivery, tutoring



delinquent youths, making commitments to the environment and trying to improve our world in other ways.

No student-basher, Loeb instead explores the students' thoughts and feelings. This does not mean that he approves of everything he sees and hears on campus. He challenges students "to take responsibility for the moral implications of their choices." But he refrains from easy moralizing.

Among several astute observations about college life, Loeb describes what he calls the "affliction of the perfect standard." He found many students so plagued by an overactive superego that they lack any moral energy for effective social involvements. "These students respond to major social problems with resignation," believing that nothing "will make a real difference." They are especially sensitive to the

hypocrisy of student activists. That a fellow student drives an eight-cylinder car to an environment rally is reason enough not to get involved. Loeb weaves this theme and others through his campus reports and his review of relevant literature.

Loeb concludes with a concern that the idealist students will not sustain their involvements without "an explicit framework for hope." Religious faith is one source for that framework, he acknowledges. But he finds too few students who hear anything from their churches about putting careers in a vocation context or about working for the common good.

This book, for all its research, is one man's opinion and it comes with a distinctly liberal bias — evident when Loeb mentions abortion. Still, I find nothing wildly out of sync in Loeb's presentation and I — as a parent, teacher, campus minister and citizen — find much to be concerned about.

Droel is an instructor and the campus minister at Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills, Ill.

Available at your bookstore or order prepaid from Rutgers University Press, 109 Church St., New Brunswick, N.J. 08901. Add \$2 for shipping and handling.