



Child's Pose

Director: Calin Peter Netzer

Country: Romania

Date: 2013

A review by Tim Robey for The Daily Telegraph:

Child's Pose is an awkward title for an excellent film. Back in February, this tightly-plotted Romanian drama about motherly overprotectiveness pipped the Chilean favourite Gloria, also released this week, to the Golden Bear at Berlin Film Festival. Any other year – a year in which the incomparable Paulina Garcia wasn't ruling the roost – and this film's leading lady, Luminița Gheorghiu, might have walked off with Best Actress, too.



Gheorghiu is best-known to international viewers as the beleaguered ambulance nurse in *The Death of Mr Lazarescu* (2005), that vanguard film of the Romanian New Wave. Here, with dyed-blond hair, wrapped in furs and often pensively smoking, she's Cornelia, a smothering, calculating Bucharest socialite faced with a crisis. Her son, a sullen head-case played by Bogdan Dumitrache, has just run over a 14-year-old boy in an accident fuelled by road rage. Her immediate reaction isn't sympathy for the boy's family, but damage limitation – you can practically see the gears clicking behind that basilisk gaze.

Incriminating statements can be modified, grieving relatives surely bribed. But there's only one way to disprove that her son was speeding. In the movie's centrepiece scene, Cornelia meets a witness to the accident over coffee in a downtown shopping mall. Implacably played by Vlad Ivanov – he was the lecherous abortionist in *4 Months, 3 Weeks, and 2 Days* – this cold-blooded opportunist tells her there might be room for negotiation, at the right price.



The screenwriter here is Razvan Radulescu, whose scripts routinely wind up turning into Romania's best films. This is the most memorable since 2010's *Tuesday, After Christmas* (which was selected for *Un Certain Regard* section at Cannes that year). A long scene between Cornelia and her bitter daughter-in-law (Natașa Raab) makes it all the clearer to us that they're fighting over the non-existent affections of Dumitrache's character – an angry coward ducking from responsibility and brutally punishing his closest kin. The energy Cornelia devotes to helping her son goes so

unrewarded by love or basic respect that she comes across as both an unfeeling meddler and a strangely selfless martyr – a contradiction which the transfixing Gheorghiu manages to make credible from first to last.

From: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmreviews/10417710/Childs-Pose-review.html>