

The Lightness of Doubt

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Paolo Sorrentino's film *La Grazia*¹ is about, De Santis, the President of the republic, a lawyer and widower, who strongly believes in law, balance, and religious faith. Shortly before the end of his term, he is confronted with political and moral dilemmas and with the unbearable question of who had been his late wife's lover 40 years earlier. He sought to attain the absolute truth throughout his life. His nickname "reinforced concrete" suggests the rigid way in which he approaches life, law, and truth.

Jacques-Alain Miller² explains that for Lacan, the singular form of truth initially held the greatest value, as it is supposed to be inscribed in the continuity of history. De Santis seeks out his wife's lover, thereby raising a question about female pleasure. This can be interpreted as an attempt to give meaning to something unresolved in his story, which would then allow him to mourn. After much persistence, his wife's secret is revealed. Upon his final departure from the presidential palace, he expresses his doubt about the truth of this revelation.

His trusted bodyguard at the time, acting as another analyst, points out to him that he places excessive value on the truth and reminds him that he has just retired from the pursuit of it. "The interpretation of the analyst [...] must be thought of in relation to revelation. It is an aid to revelation. [...] The interpretation [...] must be ventured as playing a part in relation to the contingent revelation it could produce in the analysand, that is to say, the fall or the tearing of the veil that it may bring about."³ The truth of law constitutes a veil that conceals his ignorance. He is hiding behind the supposed absolute truth, so as not to face the unconscious, pleasure, or variations of truth.

"It's too late for passion. But I have the grace of the beauty of doubt," De Santis states. He could mean the passion of ignorance, which concerns the subject's active stance in confronting the unbearable nature of the real. The truth that interested him so much was an agonizing effort on his part to fill the void, a way he had found to exist.

¹ Sorrentino, P. (Director). (2025). *La Grazia*. [Film]. Freemantle;The Apartment Pictures; Numero 10.

² Miller, J.-A., "A New Alliance with Jouissance", *The Lacanian Review* 2, 2016, pp. 107-108.

³ Miller, J.-A., "Truth is Coupled with Meaning". *The Lacanian Review* 2, 2016, p. 14.

The beauty of doubt may point to the end of analysis, which does not mean that one arrives at the absolute truth, but rather that one accepts the truth that cannot be said completely. This implies an assumption that there is structurally a share of ignorance, impervious to knowledge. At the end of the film, De Santis, now light, having left behind his former concrete rigidity, floats like an astronaut. Following a parallel with the course of an analysis, this scene argues that “‘the mirage of truth’ has a ‘terminal point,’ that of the real unconscious which can be seen and appreciated from ‘the satisfaction that marks the end of the analysis.’”⁴

⁴ Miller, J.-A., “Pass Bis” *Psychoanalytical Notebooks 17*, 2008, p. 100.