



Treatment:

Nicolas story.

Motto: "In Paris, love is the child of stories" Stendhal

Frame: Each episode is introduced by black film. In it, the numbers (1-12) and the title of each episode are visible.

The film is shot in black/white, with the exception of one color scene in episode 7

Time: A few days in summer

1. Trip to Paris. An encounter. Nicola makes a decision.

A young woman, Nicola, is driving a small, fast rental car from Frankfurt to Paris on Friday night. She is about 25 years old, wearing black jeans, a washed-out, formerly black T-shirt and a warm jacket, also black. Her luggage consists of a Nagra tape recorder, a microphone, an aluminum photo case - stuffed full of plastic toys and two or three T-shirts - a toy organ and a Walkman.

Nicola works freelance (and occasionally, so 1-2 times a year) for a radio station. She borrowed the tape recorder to record sounds in Paris, which she later wants to use for a show. The toys are supposed to establish a connection with the sounds - she doesn't yet know how that will happen: perhaps she'll give some of them away to the bored children in the Bois de Boulogne; or she'll lose a toy and record the reactions of attentive passersby. In any case, she expects to return to Frankfurt with some unusual sounds. For her, the trip is a "project" of which she does not yet know whether a product will emerge that she can exploit.

Their idea is a good opportunity for them to go to Paris again. At least it was a good reason to borrow the car.

In a rest stop called "Maison du Dieu" Nicola encounters four striking figures. They wear black and white clothing (60s style, clear cuts, clearly set off); their faces glow mask-like in the neon light of the rest stop, the movement of the persons seems correspondingly pantomimic, the androgynous body language seems intentional. Nicola is confused the longer she watches and, above all, listens: the strangers speak a

Text examples for tonality / musical structure

(intro "Durchführung"/development of musical themes)

Fragments from Abbey Road

Gibberish from several languages, between which they jump back and forth very quickly - often in mid-sentence.

She understands only fragments, especially since large parts of the conversation seem to consist of gestures, hand movements and something like deaf-mute language. Despite the strangeness, the people seem strangely familiar to her - although Nicola cannot even tell who is male and who is female.

When Nicola sees that one of the 4 people is using the toilet, she goes after her. She has become curious - and loaded with Nagra and aluminum suitcase she follows her to find out more about these strange figures.

At the toilet door, she pauses: pictograms for men and women are stuck side by side at eye level on each of the two doors, as if each toilet is suitable for both women and men. She shakes her head and decides on the left-hand door. She pushes the door open and sees the person standing at the sink plucking her eyebrows. Suddenly, something falls into the sink: a small, grayish-silver shimmering lump, which must have come loose from the brows or face. The person in front of the mirror doesn't seem to have noticed this, at least doesn't care and cuts her eyelashes with a small pair of scissors.

Nicola is still standing in the doorway, watching the action from about 3 meters away. She doesn't go to the toilet, but stands so that she can watch what the person is doing in the mirror. After an almost endless minute, the carefully performed, cumbersome procedure ends.

The eyes of the two meet in the mirror, the person does not look unfriendly, but a touch too calm to appear truly friendly. Wordlessly she passes Nicola and leaves the toilet. Nicola goes, no: almost rushes to the sink and hastily collects the lump.

She wraps it in a piece of toilet paper and stores it in her aluminum photo case. On the way to the car, she buys 20 batteries for her Nagra - to be able to work even more mobile.

While driving, her right hand mindlessly plays with the toy from the aluminum case. With the Nagra switched on, she records her sentences, her inner monologue. She thinks about how these people spoke to each other: That they had seemed "peaceful in a way that must have had something to do with their language." She would like to learn that, too, she thinks. And actually, she is convinced, she possesses with that strange lump that had fallen out of this person's face, a "decoy". She should be looking less for sounds and more for figures like these, she thinks.

Nicola is convinced that people who speak and interact like this could be found anywhere. She fantasizes a little and laughs at the idea that the four figures appear to her in her memory like dolphins in disguise. She thinks of sounds of the sea and that sometimes words can be heard in them.

She decides to approach the figures with symbolic, ritualistic actions - similar to how Indians stalk their livelihood, the buffalo, and work amazingly quietly and unnoticed and thus successfully in a seemingly irrational behavior. Shortly before Paris, Nicola stops once again at a rest area. She goes to a trash can, and in the imagined ritualistic way, "fishes" for "answers" with the tape just discussed.

In this pantomime, the tape flows into the trash can- it seems to be pulled in. She loses the monologue she has just recorded.

ELO: Can't get that thing out of my head

2 Paris. On the banks of the Seine

Morning. Nicola is walking, her gait is dance-like and as if in love; in her left hand she holds the keyboard, you can see: she is "tuned in", listening to the film music - her smile is for the music. She casts curious glances at some PoC standing on the shore. Her right hand forms an "L" with her index finger and thumb. She addresses a PoC:

He begins to rap about the theme (L, Elle, Al). Because she wants to join in, she works on her plastic organ: she breaks the keyboard out of its case, touches the contacts with her tongue and pushes the keyboard back into its holder. Due to the short circuit, the keyboard can no longer be played in a controlled manner.

Al Jarreau: Roof garden

Si vous aimez "Al".fait ca: detruire dit-L or Al Matt-L, Cherau-Cherie, ce faux, ce Lautre-a-mon, chi-chi, and suddenly, there's a light (like in that goddam Rocky Horror Picture Show) and L-Ectric, Catweazles X-Antric, no ants in pants, but still a certain type of "SansscuLotte", can't you: see the lights, or is that nu purely commercial, remember the tone of lips and also "L"-ectro War Sense as a Greek function of the lips, phi-Lips of that? La revolte des Anges, who sat there in the dungeon, what should we believe - looking for L-Dorado??? Let's be here, ce ca schmier: Anatole France, n'est-ce pas? And exegetes keep on kneading: Alice is called Alice because it's L. that is in Wonderland. But then: he could have called her Lou-Lou...

3 In search. In the parking garage.

Nicola is looking for:

Multilingual signs at the confusing corners in the parking garage: Soigné ta droite, Keep your rights, Protect your rights. Old steel grid elevators that can just carry 1-2 people, a parking garage attendant giving her a friendly nod. Discoveries: Bentleys, Jaguars, Rolls and MGs with inches of dust on the 5th or 6th underground floor. Darkness, getting lost and the feeling of finding an entrance to something "strange". The keyboard chimes irregularly. Nicola digs out the lump she now calls "angel dust" and crumbles some onto the circuit board under the keyboard. The instrument works for Nicola like a "Geiger counter": she lets herself be guided by the notes. When the tones fall silent, she stops searching.

"A car that combines Paris and my understanding of the city."

Collage from Stravinsky: Firebird and
Nico: Frozen Warnings

4 The hotel. Orpheus. The reflection

A small, exclusive hotel in Passy. A night porter, a pensioner, would like to learn English. He tells (in a mixture of English and French) how nice and easy shopping is - and points to the showcase with the gifts.

Nicola goes to her room, a small shabby room that doesn't match the rest of the hotel and the ostentatious entrance. She lies down on the bed, exhausted and unsettled. Film sequences from an Orpheus film (Peter Stein) could be dream fragments.

She stands up, takes a black T-shirt, puts some "angel dust" on it and ties it around her head. She feels her way down the maid's staircase around the elevator. A cleaning lady comes to meet her on the stairs, looking surprised and frightened. Nevertheless, she brings Nicola back to her room with simple, energetic gestures and without a word.

There Nicola takes the T-shirt from her eyes and looks around, slowly and as if lurking for something unusual to happen. Her gaze lingers on the bed and sure enough, the headboard of the simple, almost shabby bed suddenly appears much whiter than before, as if freshly made and incongruously clean for the rest of the filthy room. As Nicola gazes at the headboard for a few seconds, it rises slowly, as if driven by an electric motor. Mixed in with Nicola's increasing anxiety is a strong desire to be touched. She goes into the bathroom and looks in the mirror. As she does so, she holds the half-disassembled keyboard in her hand, touches with her tongue the plantine lying under the keyboard, random music from the short-circuited organ. A face appears in the mirror that looks very much like her, but is male, familiar to her like a brother she wants to meet.

Nico: "Ill be your mirror"

5 In an Indian restaurant. Nicola eats and philosophizes without knowing it

On the wall, behind the restaurant's largest table, hangs an Indian dance scene of countless priestesses dancing around Shiva. The waitresses look remarkably like the priestesses. Nicola is hungry

She gets the food without having ordered anything - and without paying anything for it.

Michael Nyman: The masques (Prosperos Books)

(Close up:) "Alors, tu sere reine, le quatre cents coup e ca n'y est pas le quarante neuf step. Tu sera, 49 steps ca fait plutot pour la Renaissance, and we call it "rebirth", so encore une fois, this is the Way ins Paradise: once over Faraday, the L-ectro connection, like a first-class movie, well, you know, instrumentalized through, the one way left to us. Just silly that no one counted the steps, but you did with your Krshna way. Ce ca pour toi: 49 - with us they always think, "I must go through it, whatever it costs". Your path, what is it actually? You divide it into 49 parts, which are not even equally long, equally high, or equally difficult to climb. Everything is stuck in the Krshna. I call this: the difference of "Pathé Krishna and Pathé Marconi". Or the invention of the radio waves as compensation of a lack of transcendence.

6 The College of Fine Arts. Sunday. Nicola is happy

Sunday morning. Nicola wants to talk to a music professor.

She tells the doorman about her discovery and shows the small plastic keyboard:

Later, she sits happily on the steps making music with the keyboard, having eye contacts with men and women - she doesn't get to see a professor.

Her surroundings appear peaceful and relaxed to her. She looks forward to continuing her search on Monday. As Nicola walks through Paris, she sees many small stores open despite it being Sunday. Curious, she wanders through the displays, pretending to be bored and stealing small things with somnambulistic certainty, sometimes taking them straight from the shop window: souvenirs and all those cheap things that are so good to give away to strangers on the street - including plastic electronic toys.

Velvet Underground: Sunday Morning

(close up:) "To him I will show the birth of music from the spirit of love".

(from off:) "Keyboard lifted and moistened with tongue, do that it plays automatically and uncontrolled=free, but if I enrich it with "spirit", it becomes the musical mouthpiece of that spirit."

To the music of Bowie/Starman:
There's Godard man, waiting in disguise, he chooses not to meet us, cause he thinks, he blows our mind.

7 On the Trocadero. A promotional event. Water games. The control room.

Evening. A large, pink-lit tent with elegantly dressed guests. A few minutes ago the compulsory part of the event ended, now it's "get together" with a cold buffet. Nicola enters, sits down on the already emptied podium as a matter of course, observes the audience. Security guards ask her, unobtrusively and quietly at first, to move away from the podium. When this is unsuccessful, two guards pull her outside, one holding her firmly by the upper arm and the other swearing softly at her.

Outside the tent, Nicola looks around. She walks down the water cascades toward the Seine. She stops on the steps of the fountains, draws half circles, and walks across the irregularly starting fountains out of the pleasure of the moment. It's warm enough not to worry about wet clothes either. Some PoC launch fluttering birds made of plastic and rubber bands - it seems to her that the birds follow her, flying a few meters across the fountains and over the cascades.

Looking around, she sees that other people are also walking through the fountains, probably following her. On this warm evening, Nicola begins to feel at ease. She walks through the fountains as if she were walking on water: for she does not get wet at all. With a glance back, she realizes that everyone who followed her got plenty of water - she likes that and says:

She leaves the waterworks, continues toward the Seine, and sees an open canal cover - where the outer sides of the cascades meet in an imaginary extension. With a determination that shows she knows what she expected, she climbs down the canal stairs. She sees a control room - full of colorful buttons, some illuminated

(Inside the room the film is in color)

About 80-100 blue, red, yellow, green buttons blink; the blinking seems choppy at first because there are so many buttons. Only after a longer observation a rhythm can be recognized. Nicola looks very concentrated as she presses the buttons in what seems to be a predetermined order for her. She speaks to herself:

At the same time, she looks as if she could stand at these buttons all her life. She looks around the room - something is lying on the floor: a piece of toilet paper in which a gray-silvery shimmering lump is wrapped - The lump looks exactly like the "bait" from the rest stop. She

Beatles - You never give me your money (Abbey Road)

(off:) "Pied Piper of Hamelin".

Bauhaus: All, we ever wanted...

"The ruler of the world as a child at play".

collects it, takes another green button with her, which reminds her of a coin, and leaves this place with the words:

Back at ground level, she sees that the glass blocks and the cascades, almost the entire Trocadero, glow so strongly that the flashing bathes the square in a warm light dimmed by the water and the fountains. Overwhelmed by this, she walks up to a man and presses the green button into his hand.

"It works and: If something works, do something else"

"Keep up the good work, do your part for the City of Lights".

8 Rue Victor Hugo. The unknown

At night. A courtyard between two old, large town houses seems like a refuge. Nicola wants to rest.

At the end of the courtyard is a fountain, almost a little embedded in the wall of the house - she sits down, it is quiet - she does not know what she is looking for here, but she finds peace. A woman approaches, slim, black big hat, pale in the face (movie quote: Sara Driver in "Stranger than paradise"). She asks:

Nicola does not know, is exhausted, wants to sleep - she leans against the fountain and only briefly looks at the strangely misshapen medallion, the heart of the fountain - "L'inconnue de la Seine" is written there.

"Everything's alright?"

9 The suburb of "La Defense". Original and fake. The shoe purchase

Nicola drives her car through Paris until she finds the Etoile. She clearly enjoys this - she drives around the Arc de Triomphe two or three times and then approaches the skyscrapers of "La Défense" via the avenue to Neuilly.

First, she goes to the shopping malls. In one store, she sees a jacket in the window that looks exactly like her own, but from a different company. She forces an argument about original and counterfeit and is somewhat upset that her jacket is being sold here - with a different label and at a much higher price. She argues in a gibberish of languages with the salesman, who becomes more uncertain, and finally beckons him to follow her.

She doesn't know where she's going, but she does very purposefully and finally finds, in a corner, somewhere between the shopping arcades, high-rise walls and garage walls, one of those places where homeless people have built themselves a camp out of cardboard in the concrete. On the way there, and as they stand in front of the cardboard boxes carefully constructed into a place to sleep, she talks about "cinema vérité" and how this is really a test run for a movie. She orders the salesman, who is getting more and more frightened, to lie down and begins to undress. This is too much for the man: he escapes with some unkind words. She looks after him and feels, in jacket, jeans and T-shirt, "like in combat-gear":

She goes into the next best shoe store, appears very determined, with the demanding, somewhat schoolgirlish gesture of "...I don't care what it costs." Instead of paying, she leaves her ID card at the shoe store with the words:

When the saleswoman looks at her questioningly, she says:

(A "theoretical digression" intended to provide explanations in sociologist-speak - spoken by a "commentator" off-camera as she drives:)

"Increasingly important to Nicola are the names of things and places. She suspects that the name often experiences not only naming, which is often so direct that the name itself can be the plot. If so, "La Défense" would have something to do with her search. The illuminated letters "Hoechst Roussel", already visible from a distance, only increase their curiosity. Are the revolutionary contents of the Enlightenment from the Jacobins to Bertrand Russel symbolized here and are they just waiting to take on a life of their own? That's what she wants to take a closer look at."

"So much for truth and fake - the stuff works and works and the jacket looks martial. Now I'm going to buy men's boots."

"The truth always comes out later."

"La vérité, ce la Variété, and please: verify very fine tea."

10 Nicola hands out gifts and needs money. A bank manager

She has the aluminum suitcase with her and wants to distribute the things she has stolen or already brought from Frankfurt for this purpose. In front of the "Ark", the Arc de Triomphe in La Défense, architecture students sit and sketch the structure from different perspectives. Nicola hands out her plastic toys. The students are delighted with the small calculators and computer games, although they obviously have no idea what to do with them.

She goes into one of the big skyscrapers

And wants to take care of her money problem.

At the bank, she is immediately ushered into a back room. She meets a serious and attentive bank manager, Monsieur de Paris, who speaks passable English and to whom she describes her situation. De Paris promises to help her.

(from off:) "Société Generale, strange name: a general society."

11 Drive through Paris. The call. Once again de Paris. Back at the hotel

Nicola is driving through Paris. She glides through the traffic quickly, almost aggressively. The limit to confident driving is sometimes crossed too clearly. Nevertheless, she feels safe. She wears two sets of headphones on top of each other, receiving a radio station that seems to be constantly repeating a short interview with George Harrison, the other playing an abstruse mixture of snatches of old pop music and loud, nervous 80s music. Nevertheless, Nicola is aware of her surroundings: glancing at the fuel gauge, she realizes how desperately she needs money.

She stops in front of a café and calls Germany - a company she used to work for as a freelancer:

Nicola does not find out whether the assistant sends the fax. She understands little of what is said at the other end of the line. She is confused, her thoughts revolve around fewer and fewer words. Knowing how important money is to her, she seeks out de Paris one last time:

Music collage

"Actually, I should be filling up my tank right now, too."

"Hello and good day! How are things in Frankfurt? - Well, either you fix the elevator or you all do more sports! Yes, yes, tell me about difficult. I'm in a complicated situation myself: identity card, cards, documents, everything - gone. Now I'm in Paris and I need a card to even pay for the hotel. - Yes, exactly, the easiest way is: You send a fax to Monsieur de Paris, Societé Generale, La Défense. That I'm doing orders with them for, well, let's say, around 80,000 euros a year? No, I don't think they need to bother Kurzmann with that -- Thank you very much - So long!"

You know me, I don't tell no lies: having lost all that shite, you know, like passports, cars of affiliated Unions, cheques, credit cards, even my driving license - you know: the one I showed you last time.

Nicola is relieved because she thinks Monsieur de Paris has understood her.

On the way to the hotel she gets more and more scared. Even driving, which she had previously enjoyed, now scares her. She feels that she can no longer trust what she sees and parks the car on the side of the road. She hails a cab and drives back to the hotel.

The hotel porter has to pay the cab because Nicola has no money. Since he does this only under loud protest, Nicola gets even more scared: after all, after the friendly first conversation, she had seen him as a "confidant" and almost "accomplice" on the way to easy understanding.

Then: having been at several consulates, don't tell me no lies about these bidders: told them that I hold on to three citizenships, being German, British and Israeli cause of my fiancé, they just pushed me on and on. But "don't push me, cause I'm close to the edge, I try not to lose my head, ha ha ha".

M. de Paris promises: "I take care of you" - He does not give the impression of having grasped all that.

12 The elevator. The colors. Nicola and the music

Instead of going to her room, Nicola has crawled into a corner of the hotel elevator and does not react when hotel guests and the doorman approach her and try to get her out of the elevator. She has put on her legs 8and wrapped two T-shirts around her head - one has "BLUE" written in big letters on the other "RED".

Nicola hears the doorman calling the police. Before they arrive, she is able to get up. She still feels her way through the walls of the hotel to the exit with the two T-shirts wrapped around her head. Even outside the hotel, she does not take the two T-shirts from her eyes. It is early evening, the sidewalk is empty. Only to the right of the entrance, in a small square, some young people can be seen riding mountain bikes, skateboards and roller skates. Nicola hears the music from their boombox and wants to go there. After about 30 meters, walking purposefully and straight in that direction, she falls off the edge of the sidewalk into the gutter of a cross street. She remains lying there.