<u>Differing Use of Sonic Empathy in 1982 and 2017 *Blade Runner* Movies</u>

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Abstract: The Blade Runner movies created sonic worlds that beautifully demonstrate of the depth to which sound design can create atmosphere in cinema. Vangelis' original soundtrack built a sonic landscape that has become the signature of the movies. In building upon this landscape in the second Blade Runner film, Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch focus on introspective narrative music from the perspective of the character Joe. This choice to take a subjective rather than an omniscient viewpoint charges the soundtrack emotionally. However, it stifles their ability to mirror one of the unappreciated strengths of Vangelis' composition, sonic empathy. While Vangelis' soundtrack works to broaden the perspectives considered by the listener, Zimmer and Wallfisch's focus on Joe's internal soundscape limits their perspective. Because of this, the soundtrack of Blade Runner 2049 struggles to support the central theme of the universe: appreciation for all forms of humanity.

How does music support a story? How does it support its characters? Their humanity? Their world? In the *Blade Runner* movies (*Blade Runner* by Ridley Scott, 1982, and *Blade Runner 2049* by Denis Villeneuve, 2017) composers Vangelis, Han Zimmer, and Benjamin Wallfisch create sonic worlds that beautifully demonstrate the extent to which sound design can create atmosphere in cinema. In a near-future dystopia where humans and their nearly indistinguishable manufactured counterparts, called replicants, live side by side, the *Blade Runner* universe is both utterly alien and deeply rooted in the history of Earth. The movies open to the sight of gleaming of neon signs whose light filters through a dark layer of clouds and smog onto the bustling multicultural city below. In the 1982 *Blade Runner*, soundtrack composer Evángelos Papathanassíou, better known as Vangelis, captures the chaos of a sprawling metropolis with the constant low groans of engines, the sound of spinner vehicles whirling overhead, the grind of metal and the chatter of a multitude of languages. Silence, rarely heard in the world of *Blade Runner,* is always deliberate. Through a constant layer of metropolitan noise, Vangelis' sound design captures the never ending soundscape of a modern city.

The plotlines of the *Blade Runner* world revolve around the lives of characters known as Blade Runners. Members of a futuristic Los Angeles Police Department, Blade Runners are hired to destroy

rebellious replicants, manufactured humans with implanted memories created to serve as slave labor. The humanity of the repliants is a constant theme throughout *Blade Runner* and the larger theme of who is human is central to *Blade Runner 2049*. Despite a new director, Denis Villeneuve, and new composers, Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch, the long awaited sequel does its best to remain true to the distinctive aesthetic of the original movie.

In this essay I will compare the work of Vangelis' in creating the score of the 1982 *Blade Runner* to the work of Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch in *Blade Runner 2049*. By analyzing holistic readings of the score by others as well as through my own analysis, I will demonstrate the difference I see between the two movies: Vangelis' third person omniscient viewpoint that uses sonic empathy—empathetic music associated with specific characters, to humanize the outsiders in the film—and Zimmer and Wallfisch's first person subjective viewpoint that focuses on Joe's character development. I will then describe how these differing viewpoints cause Zimmer and Wallfisch's score to fail its female characters by not allowing them to fully express their humanity.

To summarize the plots of the *Blade Runner* films: in the first movie Deckard, a Blade Runner whose replicant status remains a matter of debate for fans, hunts down the replicants Roy, Leon, Pris, and Zhora, but also finds himself in love with the replicant Rachael causing him to question the ethics of his job. In the sequel, the Blade Runner K, a replicant, discovers that Rachael has given birth to a child and is ordered to hunt down and kill the child in order to prevent replicants from rebelling. His enemy is the replicant Luv who works for Wallace, a replicant designer who hopes the child will allow him to create replicants capable of reproduction.

In order to understand the sonic world of the *Blade Runner* movies it is important to understand Vangelis' unique approach to technology and sound design. For Vangelis the Yamaha CS-80 synthesizer was crucial to the design of the soundtrack. Han Zimmer describes the power of the instrument and why it was the perfect choice for a movie about synthetic humanity.

"The magic of it is, and what Vangelis embraced so brilliantly, is that it's a real musical instrument. It responds to your touch, it translates your soul and your musicality the way a musical instrument is supposed to... It's got a little dirt under the fingernails."[1]

A synthetic instrument that feels real: it is as though Vangelis created the score using his own replicant. Foley and music are inseparable in Vangelis' score, as is evidenced by his 12-year reluctance to release a soundtrack album despite the documented desire of fans.[2] Instead, bootleg copies and recordings stripped from the movie circulated the internet as fans tried to obtain the iconic score. "It was a talismanic object acquired only by the lucky, the devoted or the enlightened,"[3] Nick Soulsby of The Vinyl Factory explains. When Vangelis finally did release an album it was a carefully selected 12 tracks. A showcase of brilliant electronic music, but clearly not anywhere near the total composition of the movie.[4] Yet, the album and movie remained distinct. From the dialogue that remains in the album, such as throughout "Tears in the Rain" or "Blush Response," to the lingering siren and city soundscape as the last chords of "Memories of Green" fade away, the world of *Blade Runner* is a part of the music and the music of the world.

"'You can never repeat certain things,' Vangelis told NPR last year of his decision to recuse himself from the second film. 'It's only once in lifetime. It's like doing another Chariots of Fire, it's impossible.' To his credit, it's an understandable notion — after all, who in their right mind would want to follow up one of the most iconic scores of all time?"[5] This was the first challenge faced by Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch. The second was more philosophical. "Finding the heart of the movie,"

[1] Lobenfeld, Claire. "Blade Runner 2049: How Hans Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch Followed up the Most Influential Sci-Fi Score of All Time." FACT Magazine: Music News, New Music., FACT, 20 Oct. 2017, www.factmag.com/2017/10/20/hans-zimmer-wallfisch-blade-runner-2049-interview/.

[2] Soulsby, Nick. "The Myth and Majesty of Vangelis' Timeless Blade Runner Soundtrack." The Vinyl Factory, 4 Oct. 2017, thevinylfactory.com/features/blade-runner-soundtrack/.

[3] Nick Soulsby.

[4] Nick Soulsby.

[5] Roffman, Michael. "Album Review: Hans Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch – Blade Runner 2049 Original Motion Picture Soundtrack." Consequence of Sound, 6 Oct. 2017, consequenceofsound.net/2017/10/album-review-hans-zimmer-and-benjamin-wallfisch-blade-runner-2049-original-motion-picture-soundtrack/.

Wallfisch called it, "What is it to be human? What is consciousness? Finding musical analogues to those questions."[6]

However despite this understanding, what the beauty and introspection of Zimmer and Wallfisch's score fails to capture is Vangelis' sonic empathy. The beauty of Vangelis' score is that it did not focus on Deckard, but the world around him; it brought to life the nobodys, the replicants, the love interest. Look more closely at the beautiful death that Zimmer and Wallfisch paid homage to with their use of "Tears in the Rain." The character K is mirroring in this parallel is not Deckard, the other "Blade Runner," but Roy, a replicant, and to briefly summarize plot, the villain. His death is not silent, it is a plea for empathy. "In the moment of his demise, the suggestion is, having already demonstrated his humanity, his mercy, his capacity to love, it is he who has earned the privilege of seeing beauty, that he is something better than the humans present within the film." He tries to teach this to Deckard, poetically recounting "'I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears…in…rain... Time to die.' The accompanying music is gentle, without being cloying, it offers up a remnant of hope, that even the artificial can become something deeper, something that resonates with emotion."

Roy is not the only character to receive this gift of sonic empathy. Similarly to Roy, the humanity of the replicant Rachael is defined by music. By incorporating into the score his piano composition "Memories of Green" and placing ownership of it in Rachael's hands Vangelis' associates her with one of the few non-synthetic instruments in the score, a beautiful Steinway Grand piano, just slightly out of tune.

The mix of arpeggio and melody without a strong rhythmic background allows the pianist to play in a mix of tempos, which lends human character to the music. This reactive playing also allows the

[6] Burlingame, Jon. "'Blade Runner 2049': Composer Benjamin Wallfisch on How to Follow Up a Classic Sci-Fi Score." Variety, 6 Oct. 2017, variety.com/2017/film/news/blade-runner-2049-composer-benjamin-wallfisch-score-interview-1202582983/.

music to empathize with Rachael's lines and respond to their context. For example, as Rachael realizes that Deckard's knowledge must mean she is a replicant, there is a stretch on the arpeggio, which mirrors her hesitance to accept this reality. It is followed by a return to tempo, as Deckard breaks the silence, and comments, "bad joke." Similarly, Rachael's silence and tears are accompanied by retards. This often unnoticed change is distinctly highlighted by the presence of strongly melodic music, which lends itself to a human execution. While a human pianist would easily make these changes in tempo, they are notable and uncommon in a highly synthesized score, as is present in Blade Runner. By contrasting the empathetic piano and melody with the drone chords and artificial bells that fill much of the soundtrack, the score emphasizes Rachael's humanity.

Finally perhaps the third most interesting composition and certainly notable scene highlights yet another replicants humanity and the cruelty of her death. "Glass shatters. Full-length panes burst in a glittering sea-surf spray as a bloodied figure — the hunted replicant (simulated machine humanoid) Zhora — hurls herself forward through shop windows," yet in the background, "The Blade Runner Blues" a saxophone playing a old blue jazz melody, slightly distorted by the layers and layers of reverb. As if echoing from the past to highlight the gruesome death occurring in the glimmering chaos of neon lights, clear plastic, and glass shop windows. Windows full of mannequins which are no more technically human than the living breathing girl inspiring the freeform saxophone melody.

These melodies, this personal, instrumental, and human music prompts the audience to think more deeply about the central theme of the Blade Runner world: who deserves to be considered human? Deckard has no single piece strongly associated to him, certainly no title on Vangelis' carefully crafted album such as "Tears in the Rain," "Memories of Green," or "Blade Runner Blues." But he does not need one. Deckard is the protagonist, and instead of questioning whether he should be fully human, the only fan theories that gain excessive thought are whether he might in fact be a replicant.

Blade Runner 2049 brings even more complexity to these questions than Vangelis' challenge of scoring the original Blade Runner. By introducing a digital character who takes the form of a hologram, Joi, a main character who is himself a replicant, K, a replicant sex worker who considers herself a "real girl," Marionette, and the possibility of replicants giving birth, Blade Runner 2049 takes the definition of human far beyond the traditional boundaries that its predecessor once tested.

> Describing the central approach they took to the design of the score, Han Zimmer describes, "the soul theme" [a melody which] consists of four notes, 'a very simple melody, the first thing you hear over the opening shots of the movie," recurring throughout as K (Ryan Gosling) searches for answers. Much of the score is subtle, with "synth textures and colors that evolve very slowly to match the pace of the film."'[7]

The soul theme demonstrates how Zimmer and Wallfisch approach the challenge of Blade Runner 2049: by centering their score around K. They build his sonic world, utilizing the tools that Vangelis' so carefully crafted. The score sounds like "a total evolution of what Vangelis set in motion way, way back in 1982. It's louder, it's gloomier, it's heavier, and it's much more expansive, all qualities one might tag with Villeneuve's breathtaking sequel."[8] The key elements of the score are "[w]hat [Wallfisch] calls "the soul theme" consist[ing] of four notes, 'a very simple melody, the first thing you hear over the opening shots of the movie,' recurring throughout as K (Ryan Gosling) searches for answers. Much of the score is subtle, with 'synth textures and colors that evolve very slowly to match the pace of the film.'"[9] However, while Zimmer and Wallfisch escalate the scale, weight and grandeur of the score, they also utilize silence far more than Vangelis. For example, the first scene featuring emotional music is the scene where K discovers Rachael's grave, leading up to the discovery of her death in childbirth and revealing that replicants too can bear children. The preceding conversation has no soundtrack backing it. While there is a slight hum from the old spinner he sits in, and the sound of distortion on his conversation through video chat with his commander, the score plays no role in the scene.[10] It is only when he kneels to pick up the

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[7] Jon Burlingame.
[8] Michael Roffman.
[9] Jon Burlingame.
[10] Villeneuve, Denis. Blade Runner 2049. Alcon Entertainment, 2017. 11:27.

frail wilted yellow flower, bright against the grey stone, that the thin wisps of the synthesizer begin to play. The sounds breathy timbre and slightly wavering mid range tones seem hesitant, reflecting K's own uncertainty regarding the mysterious grave. Drifting out of the silence across the empty farmscape, the music seems to come from within K, lending it a deeply personal feeling.[11]

The internal nature of Zimmer and Wallfish's compositions is present in all of the scenes which turn away from the almost symphonic grandeur or chaotic city soundscape of the world, and are central to their interpretation of the movie.[12] In "Rain" a scene highlighting K's love for Joi, his holographic girlfriend and perhaps literally the joy in his life, the same technique of internal music is utilized. This time, the internal sound emerges from the sound of the rainy city. On a rooftop, with blue lighting and the pattering of rain paying homage to the signature composition "Tears in Rain" from Vangelis' score, we hear only the sounds of water hitting the ground and splashing against Joi's holographic skin as she takes her first steps outside thanks to "her present," an emulator device that allows her to travel into the outside world. When the music begins, it starts with a chime-like synthetic melody, a gently descending scale that stretches the tempo with each note and leaves the listener unsure of the downbeat. The notes hold into a cluster and are augmented by a "uncomfortably high"[13] but lightweight synthetic tone mirroring a violin. This chord blooms slowly into a full synthetic background, but retains its soft gentle feel. [14]The reluctance of tempo and lightness with which the music enters the soundtrack once again feels internal, as though K's own conscious is producing the score to accompany his growing emotions, It mirrors his growth as a character, finding love, and, despite knowing he is a replicant, becoming human.

As the movie comes to a close, and K, or Joe as he is now known, accepts his self sacrifice in order to reunite Deckard, the central character of the original *Blade Runner*, with his daughter, K's

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[11] *Blade Runner 2049*. 11:54-12:00.
[12] Examples of these pieces chronologically would be "Sapper's Tree," "Rain," "Memories," "Someone Lived This," "Joi," "That's Why We Believe," "All The Best Memories Are Hers," and "Tears In Rain."
[13] As described by Wallfisch according to Claire Lobenfeld's article.
[14] *Blade Runner 2049*. 22:01-22:21.

internal music pay tribute to Vangelis' composition "Tears in Rain." The only track to be repeated in both *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner 2049*'s albums, Wallfisch and Zimmer use this composition to highlight the parallel between K's sacrifice and the death of the replicant Roy in *Blade Runner*, both occurring in order to protect Deckard[15]. Now, standing in the lightly flurrying snow, the white flakes sticking into his still damp hair, K's internal music swells to a finale. As he lies back against the cold granite steps, the first chime of the melody sounds, as if to call to him with Roy's final words "time... to die."[16] As the song finishes and we pan into the building to see Deckard meet his daughter, the final dialogue feels right, "beautiful isn't is?" She asks, and it is. The rain has turned to snow, K has sacrificed himself, "the most human thing any of us can do," and he dies in a field of pure white among a beautiful composition paying homage to Vangelis himself.[17]

The music of *Blade Runner 2049* is centered around K. While it is true that K is in fact a replicant himself, it seems strange that the humanity of the central character should need so much reinforcement. In this new time we have established that replicants can bear children. They seem nearly as common as humans, perhaps more, occupying most of the screen whenever extra characters are present. There is a rebel movement fighting for the freedom of replicants. The replicant Marionette introduces herself to K and when he rejects her claims that he must not like "real girls." While the strengths of internalized music to create empathy for K and place us inside his world create a beautiful emotional experience, by focusing solely on K's perspective Zimmer and Wallfisch fail to expand the definition of human to include less obviously defined characters in the film, particularly the films women.

Blade Runner 2049 explores the themes of love and sex beyond the scale of its predecessor. Rather than a singular female lead, Rachael, it features three women, Joi, Luv, and Marionette who all

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[15] Fletcher, Rosie, and Sam Ashurst. "Blade Runner 2049 Has a Problem with Women." Digital Spy, 9 Oct. 2017, www.digitalspy.com/movies/feature/a839916/blade-runner-2049-gender-issues/.
[16] *Blade Runner 2049*. 2:31:16.
[17] *Blade Runner 2049*.2:33:03.

offer their own perspectives on love and sexuality. However, the lack of musical support for these

characters leaves their questions of feminine humanity unanswered.

> "Joe himself, a product of technology, is most human because he buys into to the lie—just as Deckard might've done 30 years ago when he fell in love with Rachael. However, this unforgiving pessimism, while faithful to the world Scott imagined, seems unfair to the replicants who populate it. After all, Roy Batty had a poet's heart in the original film, no matter what moviegoers' initial prejudices might have suggested. So the newfound biases permeating between replicants about younger forms of artificial intelligence in 2049 are likely just as misguided."... "As identity and the definition of what is "real" becomes only more fluid in Blade Runner 2049 and its vision for our darkening century, the conceit that replicants could also practice bigotry against peers who are one-step further removed from their normalized origins only proves just how human these joyless creatures are. The absence of that joy is what makes their miserable lives as real as tears in the rain."[18]

Joi represents the introduction of a new layer of replication. She is a digital hologram, designed to

be "Everything You Want" as the billboard for her software proclaims. Yet throughout the course of the

movie Joi evolves and in the end she sacrifices herself to protect K. If the leader of the replicant resistance

claims that "dying for the right cause is the most human thing [one] can do," does this lend Joi humanity?

In his article of the role of Joi in *Blade Runner 2049*, David Crow argues it does. He claims, "It was an act

of actual love to place herself in this danger to protect Joe and deny his wishes. And it was thus a real

final emotion where she cried "I love you" before Luv permanently disconnected the hardware."[19] It is a

theme that could have been explored musically, just as Roy's evolution from and inhuman killing

machine to a character of sympathy was brought about through Vangelis' use of "Tears in Rain" but it is

never explored. Instead, Joi's death is accompanied only by low tension building pulses of the

synthesizer, the crunch of boots on broken glass and electronics, and near silence as she realizes her pleas

for life are ignored and desperately reaches out to K, whispering "I love you." Immediately, she is gone,

and the score continues its heavy actions themed music, expressing K's stress, fear, and defeat rather than

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[18] Crow, David. "Blade Runner 2049 and the Role of Joi in a Joyless World." Den of Geek, 19 Jan. 2018, www.denofgeek.com/us/movies/blade-runner/268248/blade-runner-2049-and-the-role-of-joi-in-a-joyless-world.
[19] David Crow.

taking any time to mourn for Joi. After all, as Luv just mentioned, she is only a "product," a material loss.[20]

However, she is not made of solid material and so *Blade Runner 2049* introduces Marionette. A replicant sex worker, Marionette considers herself perfectly human. She displays this independent sense of self through her sarcastic attitude and appreciation for reality. When she first approaches K and he implies that she should be afraid of him asking "don't you know what I am?" She simply replies, "Yeah, guy eating rice."[21] Her nonchalance regarding the distinction between replicants and humans reflects her refusal to accept dehumanization of any sort—perhaps a symbolically significant viewpoint coming from *Blade Runner 2049*'s portrayal of sex workers. When asked about her character, Mackenzie David replied "In the perspective of my character, what it means to human is the ability to appreciate the brevity of life."[22] Perhaps then, viewers may not be surprised to discover that Marionette is a member of the replicant resistance. Spying on K as well as sleeping with him.

Despite these indicators of humanity, Marionette lacks any sort of thematic music. The scene in which she appears longest is one where she serves only a body for Joi. The music reflects this, playing music associated with Joi's emotional scene in which she tells K, "I'm so happy when I'm with you," and focusing primarily on Joi and K's interaction.[23] However, when Marionette goes to leave she looks down on Joi, warning "Quiet now. I've been inside you. Not so much there as you think."[24] Between Marionette's assessment of Joi's humanity, or lack of, and the only female theme in the score basing itself around Joi, it becomes difficult to justify the score providing humanity to any character besides K.

The final female character whose humanity is brought into question by the movie is Luv. K's primary enemy, Luv serves as Wallace's first officer. She is a strong, powerful, and quick witted woman

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[20] *Blade Runner 2049*. 2:00:58-2:01:38.
[21] *Blade Runner 2049*. 45:52.
[22] http://www.scmp.com/culture/film-tv/article/2114243/blade-runner-2049-how-ana-de-armas-mackenzie-davis-and-sylvia-hoeks
[23] *Blade Runner 2049*. 1:28:00-1:30:39.
[24] *Blade Runner 2049*. 1:32:21.

to rival K's own abilities as a detective and cop. Similarly to K she seeks out the Rachael's child, but

unlike K she wants to use the child to give replicants the ability to reproduce. Yet Luv has an identity

separate from her creator, Wallace. In the scene where she murders Lieutenant Joshi, she tells her "I think

I'll tell Wallace you tried to shoot me first," indicating that she can lie. In fact, it is possible she may want

to find the child for a similar reason as the replicant resistance, not to wipe it out, but to give replicants the

ability to reproduce and therefore overthrow their human overlords.[25] Similarly to Roy, while she spends

most of the movie as a ruthless killer, stopping at nothing to achieve her goals, her motives remain

unclear, and perhaps not as evil as her actions suggest. But unlike Roy's iconic death scene, Luv's death

is silent. Following a fight scene filled with action music, her strangulation and drowning by K takes

place accompanied only by the underwater bubbles and gasps of her dying breaths. She does not receive a

dying speech or song, and the moment she is dead she is left, attention returning once again to K. As

Rosie Fletcher and Sam Ashurst write:

> "[T]hat's the film's real problem: women are present in the narrative, while simultaneously absent. Blade Runner 2049 has the illusion of women, with nothing solid for them to do. It makes its female characters feel as hollow as holograms.
> The original film made us question what it means to be human. Blade Runner 2049 explores what it means to be a man."[26]

Certainly sexism is nothing new to hollywood or science fiction. But it is important to note the

likely unintentional impact that score can have on the depth of characters. While it is true that Roy's

monologue was not a musical element of the 1982 *Blade Runner* film, certainly Zhora's death is

humanized almost entirely through "Blade Runner Blues," a track that drastically changes the mood of the

scene. Additionally, "Memories of Green" is crucial to the theme of Rachael's humanity. Something that

even the creators of Blade Runner 2049 must have acknowledged as they chose to leave pianos in both

the house by Rachael's grave, and next to the photo of her Deckard keeps. However, because of the focus

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[25] *In Search of the Distinctively Human | The Philosophy of Blade Runner 2049*, Like Stories of Old, 29 Jan. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4etinsAy34.
[26] Rosie Fletcher, and Sam Ashurst.

on K's perspective, Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch's score lacks these moments of sonic empathy, and therefore, the humanization of female characters has little in the way of support besides fan theories. There is nothing concrete in the movie to lend these theories creedence the way that "Tears in Rain" has been used to argue for Roy's humanity, or "Memories in Green" for Rachael's.

Ultimately though, it is not that all female characters in a movie must be brought to the center of attention by the score. The importance lies upon drawing attention to the characters who provide new viewpoints, and ones that the audience might otherwise miss. As David Sims argues, "The hero of *Blade Runner*, Ridley Scott's 1982 dystopian masterpiece, isn't Rick Deckard, the cop who finds and kills "replicants" for the LAPD in a grim, rain-drenched futurescape. It's his primary target, Roy Batty, an escaped combat unit seeking a cure to the four-year lifespan built into his system. Roy is super-strong and terrifying, to be sure, and unafraid to commit murder, but Scott shoots the tow-headed Hauer like an angel, especially in his unforgettable death scene, as he saves Deckard's life and crouches over him, imparting his strange, alien memories to his would-be assassin before expiring."[27] What Vangelis' soundtrack excels at is layering a second film interpretation over the original. He makes arguments like David Sims' more than just plausible by providing the emotional support that they need.

What is ironic is that K is not really the hero of *Blade Runner 2049* either, although it might take a bit longer to see it—or rather hear it. "In an inversion of Hollywood's typical male-driven fantasies — perpetuated by blockbusters like The Matrix, Star Wars and Harry Potter — by the film's end, it appears our hero has resigned himself to his own irrelevancy, realizing that he's actually the footnote in someone else's story."[28] When K realizes that he is not the child of Rachael, that she in fact gave birth to a daughter, it becomes clear that Ana Stelline, Rachel's daughter and the creator of K's memories was in fact the human protagonist all along. But instead of the soundtrack building to this revelation, humanizing

[27]Sims, David. "The Real and Unreal in Blade Runner 2049." The Atlantic, Atlantic Media Company, 12 Oct. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/10/the-real-and-unreal-in-blade-runner-2049/542574/.

[28] Joho, Jess. "The Hidden Feminist Message Buried inside 'Blade Runner 2049'." *Mashable*, Mashable, 14 Oct. 2017, mashable.com/2017/10/14/blade-runner-2049-feminist-environment-patriarchy/#mzDj97ziukq0.

its female characters and lacing Ana Stelline's scenes with some special signature, Wallfisch and Zimmer chose to focus on K. As the protagonist, his humanity is the most assumed throughout the movie and yet his death is highlighted with what I believe is the closest to a Vangelis style moment of sonic empathy that *Blade Runner 2049* contains.

> "Blade Runner 2049's ultimate symbol comes at the end, when K dies, sinking back into the cold snow. In Blade Runner's final moments, Roy Batty died in a different weather pattern, after giving one of the most beautiful speeches in cinema history – it's the moment that gave Blade Runner its soul, that elevated it.
>
> Here, K sinks back into (yet another) truly beautiful shot... and says nothing."[29]

Han Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch succeeded in recreating the beauty and world of Vangelis' 1982 *Blade Runner*. However, perhaps in the end their score was nothing but a replicant, it lacked what truly makes us human: empathy.

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[29] Rosie Fletcher, and Sam Ashurst.

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