

**Questions for “The Andromeda Strain” (1971)**

1. The movie concerns a “*biological crisis*” set in **February, 1971**. **Compare & contrast the political context of this period with the current biological crisis of 2020-22** (fifty years difference) (e.g.: Who is the US President?). Numerous political references are made in the film: try to identify them. How do they compare with those made today?
2. Compare and contrast the **technological methods and scientific approaches** applied in early 1970s to those you would expect to be applied in the early 2020s to a “*space germ*.” Especially, consider the use of “*computers*”, fifty years apart.
3. The film is groundbreaking in its presentation of an accurate scientific approach to a biological problem. **Outline the experiments, results, and observations** that lead to an understanding of the nature of the *Andromeda Strain*, its effects, and treatment. What are the clues and the chain of reasoning? As you watch, are you able to anticipate the solution: what are the major clues?
4. “*Andromeda Strain*” was Michael Crichton’s first book and movie (he has a cameo, as the gowned and masked physician behind the doctor who orders Hall to break scrub). At the time, it was considered “*state of the art*” science. Past Biol4270 students have commented on the movie as “*sooo ‘70s*”: do you agree, for example with respect to his “*Jurassic Park*” films?
5. The results of the **elemental analyses** are particularly enlightening, given the ultimate nature of the Andromeda Strain. Watch for the reaction to them at 1:32 (see next page). Are they consistent with the nature of the “*Andromeda Strain*” as inferred by the scientific team? Why or why not?
6. **FOR FURTHER THOUGHT:** A recurring meme in **exobiology** (the search for life on other planets) is that experiments are designed to look for life “*as we know it*.” This leaves open the question of how to look for life “*not as we know it*.” Consult the NASA/JPL sites for the biological experiments to be carried out by the 2021 Mars lander “*Perseverance*” in its search for life on Mars. What are their advantages and limits?

## ELEMENTAL ANALYSIS

### BLACK OBJECT

H	HE	LI	BE
21.87	0	0	0
B	C	N	O
0	54.90	0	16.00
SI	P	S	CL
00.20	-	01.01	02.00

### GREEN OBJECT

H	HE	LI	BE
27.00	0	0	0
B	C	N	O
0	45.00	05.00	23.00
SI	P	S	CL
-	-	-	-