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Professor Kozek
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Math 5

DISCUSSION: *Logicomix*

First of all, What is your reaction to the book?

- Did you find value in the book as a graphic novel?
 - If so, did the material become more relatable and less intimidating?
 - Were you able to follow along ok in the back and forth dialogue between Bertie's story and the writers meetings?
 - Is this a biography of Bertie Russell?
 - Who is Bertie Russell?
 - (1872-1970) British philosopher, logician, mathematician, historian and social critic. Mentor to Ludwig Wittgenstein

Is this 'process' or 'journey' discussed in *Logicomix* more valuable than the eventual solutions to these theorems? Or are they rather just means to an end?

- While this journey dominates the plot of the story, it seems as though the author is attempting to relate Bertie's life to the logical aspects of mathematics. The trials and tribulations he experiences in his own personal life seem to align with the difficulties he encounters with his work.

How is the theme of insanity portrayed throughout the novel?

- Did you find it to dominate much of the story's characters?
- We are introduced into the personal life of Bertie quickly through his upbringing in an extremely strict household. Does this perhaps set the foundation for his future instability?
- This theme is especially evident in Chapter 3: *Wanderjahre*
 - Bertie travels the world with Alys in search of Frege and Cantor

- Finds that Frege is completely consumed by his work and shuts out any outside influences or distractions
- Professor Cantor seems to embody this theme of insanity as he is placed in what looks like an insane asylum

What is your reaction to the role of women in the story?

- Do you think there is too much attention paid to his relationship with Alys?
- Bertie finished the story with 3 different women
- There are no women mathematicians in the novel and none that have any profound impact upon Bertie's work in logic
- Yet, he seemed to have been affected by the illness of Evelyn enough to change his mindset.

- "My new concern with the welfare of my fellow human beings had tempered my passion for the Foundations of Mathematics. In this new spirit, I also started giving lectures—like the one I'm giving to you right now—trying to apply the Higher Logic to human affairs"
(*Logicomix* pg. 235).

Did you enjoy the way mathematical concepts in general were presented in the story?

- Were you provided enough information about the various methods of logic?
- Did you need more background information on math and logic icons that were discussed?
- Were there too many topics depicted?
- Did you have a hard time understanding the creation of the *Principia Mathematica*?