Samuel — a dialogue about incompleteness

Johan Gamper[1]

1 Subrosa KB

Abstract

Samuel seeks out Kurt at a pub and initiates a discussion. Soon Kurt becomes engaged. What is it that is incomplete?

Samuel: I don't know. Can we talk?

Kurt: About what?

Samuel: That.

Kurt: Go away.

Samuel: A minute?

Kurt: What?

Samuel: I wonder.

Kurt: About what?

Samuel: It's so definitive. Or so not definitive?

Kurt: Yes?

Samuel: The incompleteness. It's so definitely incomplete. Therefore, not definitive.

Kurt: I have just shown some incompleteness in mathematics.

Samuel: I wonder.

Kurt: I'm a mathematician.

Samuel: They say you could complete it. By adding a Gödel sentence. I wonder.

Kurt: Yes. It's still incomplete.

Samuel: What's incomplete?

Kurt: There are things that are true that cannot be proven.

Samuel: How could you now? That they are true?

Kurt: There are ways.

Samuel: Do you ever think about absurdities?

Kurt: No.

Samuel: Thought so.

Kurt: Should I?

Samuel: No. You should never give up.

Kurt: Is that your mantra?

Samuel: I often give up. It's in my nature.

Kurt: Things can be true even if they cannot be proven locally. You don't know how much money I have in my pocket. I have some.

Samuel: I believe you. But is it that interesting with "truth"? Why should I bother? I don't know how much money you've got. So what?

Kurt: You got a good point there.

Samuel: Thanks.

Kurt: But I think I have proven something more substantial.

Samuel: You cannot prove everything?

Kurt: How can you know if you cannot prove it? No system is foolproof. I don't know. No system is foolproof.

Samuel: Seems reasonable.

Kurt: What is a system? It isn't foolproof. But what is it? What is foolproof? What is a system?

Samuel: Waiting for something?

Kurt: Formal system. Formal.

Samuel: Seems boring.

Kurt: It's fundamental. Boring is beside the point.

Samuel: Fundamental as in… what?

Kurt: The fundamental is incomplete?

Samuel: No.

Kurt: Yes.

Samuel: Do you know what you are talking about?

Kurt: Formal systems are incomplete.

Samuel: But are they fundamental?

Kurt: Epistemologically, yes.

Samuel: Do you know that?

Kurt: Formal systems are epistemologically fundamental.

Samuel: Okay.

Kurt: But are they fundamental?

Samuel: I wonder.

Kurt: "What is knowledge" is less fundamental than "what is". That must be true?

Samuel: Prove it.

Kurt: Listen. "What is", is incomplete?

Samuel: The formal systems are?

Kurt: Yes. But "what is"?

Samuel: "What is", is incomplete as such or as "what is"?

Kurt: "What is", just is?

Samuel: How could it be otherwise?

Kurt: "What is", as such, is complete.

Samuel: Thank you Lord!

Kurt: "What is", as "what is", is incomplete.

Samuel: A formal system is?

Kurt: A formal system is, therefore it is incomplete.

Samuel: Formal systems are instantiations of "what is"?

Kurt: Proofs are typical for all instantiations?

Samuel: You'll need something more fundamental.

Kurt: Only a less strong system can be foolproof!?

Samuel: You have found it!

Kurt: A formal system is, therefore it is incomplete.