ELL788/HSL622: Reading response 2

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Instructions: You should primarily refer to the assigned readings, but may also consult any other materials you find useful. However, your answers should be written entirely in your own words. If you refer to sources outside of the assigned readings, please mention them in a list of references at the end.

Please try to answer to the point, without getting into general discussion that is not directly responding to what has been asked. There are no rigid length constraints, but none of the answers should really need more than a couple of hundred words. The submissions will need to be uploaded on Moodle, and you should aim to do so by the end of Friday 9th April.

1 Part A: Alan Turing's *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*

1. Turing lists a number of possible objections to his view that computers will be able to pass the Turing test in 50 years. It has now been over 70 years since the paper came out, and we still do not have a clear indication of any machine having passed the Turing test. Which of the objections do you feel might be the most convincing/prominent reason for this? Explain your choice. **[2.5]**

2. Using a similar setup to the Turing test, can you develop a test for *consciousness*? If you cannot make out from the answers (depending on whatever test you develop) whether they are coming from a machine or a human, then by analogy to the Turing test the machine would have shown itself to be 'conscious'!
   Please both describe your test (*i.e.*, which questions you would be asking, and how you think the responses would be indicative of consciousness), and also explain your reasoning for why only a conscious being would be able to answer the questions correctly or appropriately. **[2.5]**

2 Part B: John Searle's *Minds, Brains, and Programs*

You should also refer to the discussion on this paper in the shared extract from Steven Pinker's book *How the Mind Works*.

1. John Searle says that "Instantiating a computer program is never by itself a sufficient condition of intentionality." What does he mean here by 'intentionality'? What does he believe would have to be added on to computer programs in order to endow them with intentionality? **[1.5]**

2. What does Searle think about the Turing test? Do you think his views on the meaning or utility of the Turing test would differ from Turing's own views? Why or why not? **[1.5]**

3. Pinker says that "My own view is that Searle is merely exploring facts about the English word *understand*." Searle himself uses the words *understand* and *understanding* many times in his paper. Why is the notion of understanding so central to this debate, and how do Pinker and Searle differ in the ways they interpret this notion? **[2]**