Selmer's Searlean Argument

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It should be uncontroversial that

(2) If Strong AI will succeed, there are R-programs $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ and inputs $I_1, \ldots, I_r$ to these programs, such that when these programs run on a Register machine M with these inputs, M understands Chinese.

It follows from this proposition and

(4) It's not the case that there are R-programs programs $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ and inputs $I_1, \ldots, I_r$ to these programs, such that when these programs run on Jonah's R-machine M_J with these inputs, M_J understands Chinese.

by *modus tollens* that Strong AI won't succeed. Now some may find (4) in and of itself plausible, but most will demand justification for this proposition. I believe I have a formidable justification; it runs as follows. It seems to me that

($\star$) $\neg(4) \rightarrow$ Jonah understands Chinese,

i.e., spelled out:

($\star$) If there are R-programs programs $P_1, \ldots, P_n$ and inputs $I_1, \ldots, I_r$ to these programs, such

that when these programs run on Jonah's R-machine M_J with these inputs, M_J understands Chinese, then Jonah understands Chinese.

And furthermore it seems to me that

($\star'$) Jonah doesn't understand Chinese.

Proposition ($\star'$) is the result of a little sub-argument, viz.,

($\mathbf{L}^*$) If an agent s understands two natural languages L_0 and L_1, then s can (perhaps with considerable effort) translate between L_0 and L_1.

Since Jonah by hypothesis understands English, and since Jonah can't translate between English and Chinese, it follows that Jonah does not understand Chinese, that is that ($\star'$) is the case.
And of course, ($\star'$) and ($\star$), by *modus tollens* and double negation, entail (4), and (4) is what is needed to make the argument against "Strong" AI go through.