LaRouche: 'I am definitely not a John Von Neumann'

In his autobiography, The Power of Reason: 1988, *Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. describes the difference between his method and that of John Von Neumann:*

I am definitely not a John Von Neumann. According to my sources, he was famed already during his early years, for amazing arithmetic calculations. As in every kindred case of which I know, this development of one's brain as a calculating machine, has certain advantages, but is usually also a grave mental defect. His posthumously published Yale lectures, on the subject of the computer and the brain, display the price he paid for his remarkable talent. My brain has never functioned arithmetically; at no time in my life have I shown better than average arithmetic capacities. My mind functions geometrically, as I believe all minds should, under normal conditions and normal development. By conditioning children's minds in such a way as to emphasize a potential for arithmetical thinking, we cause them to lose much of a capacity which is more fundamental, more valuable.

From what I know of the human brain, including study of the way in which the eye maps into the cortex, human memory is not digital, but holographic. I believe that we "store" experience holographically. I believe that we do not recall experience in the way a digital computer searches out a stored datum. I believe that we reconstruct an image of experience holographically. . . .

During 1958 and 1959, I returned to the original point of departure for my economic researches, the issue of "information theory."

Over the preceding years, in addition to my attention to what was called "automation," I had studied the efforts to sell the idea that digital computers could be developed to simulate "artificial intelligence." Various theorists, including Wiener and Turing, had helped to build up a credulous audience for such propositions. The influence of John Von Neumann must also take much of the blame for this.

The idea of "artificial intelligence" is readily proven to be an absurd one, but sometimes the work of refuting an absurd idea leads to a useful result. The idea occurred to me: Instead of merely refuting the absurd claim of MIT's Professor Marvin Minsky, et al., why not use the disproof of Minsky's claims as a way of defining the outer limits of capabilities of digital computers? . . .

Every bit of information reflecting an act of communication by, or to, human intelligence, is representable in the adequately extended elaboration of a Gauss-Riemann physics. This signifies that the correct analysis of "information" is uniquely of this form. That fact disproves absolutely the dogmas of Norbert Wiener and John Von Neumann.

The overlay of this line of inquiry with my work in economic science, has been the central feature of my intellectual life since the end of the 1950s, and is the focus of my activities today.

postwar boom in so-called operations research—the method originally developed by the Anglo-Americans to evaluate and perfect the use of bombing of towns and cities for psychological warfare. It was also closely related to the development of information theory and linguistics. We can thank these pioneering efforts for a good deal of the evil which has been perpetrated in the postwar period.

Von Neumann is known as the father of the modern electronic computer (although the mathematical principles involved were well known to Leibniz 250 years earlier). Von Neumann seems to have been obsessed with mathematical formalism and mechanistic forms of lawfulness. He firmly believed that the human brain is essentially nothing but a large digital computer. He devoted great efforts to the design of a self-reproducing machine. His dream was, that by developing ever larger computers, eventually it should be possible to replicate the behavior of any system, living or inanimate. It would only be necessary to introduce a sufficient number of variables. So, it is a short step to the World Bank's RUNS model with its 77,000 parameters.

The basic approach of Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern is this. They look at the economy and say, what are the basic elements? These, they say, are the individuals acting in the economy, as workers, businessmen, bankers, and so forth. These are, so to speak, the Newtonian elementary particles of the economy. These interact with each other by making various sorts of trading transactions and deals with each other. Von Neumann and Morgenstern assume that each of these economic "players" has a *system of values* determining what various outcomes are worth to them. Each one tries to maximize its gains and minimize its losses according to some strategy. This criterion defines the action of the so-called market forces.

Note, that there is no principle of *reality* in this so-called model of economics, no morality, no purpose whatever. It is just a game. If anyone would object that something had been left out of the model, the authors could simply answer: No problem! We will just add more parameters!

We find the game theory concept spread everywhere in western society today. Generals conduct exercises in strategy