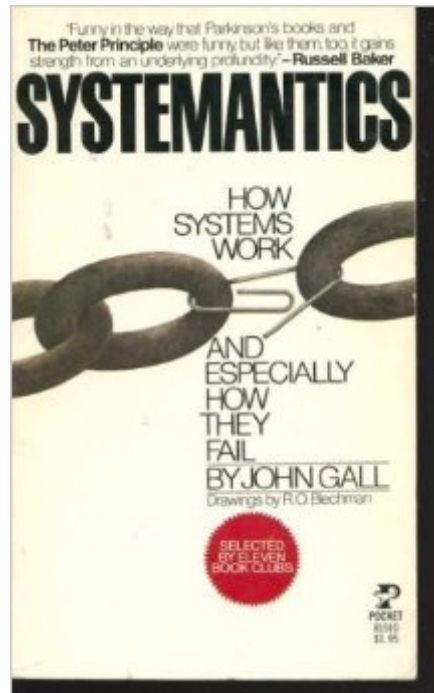


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# Systemantics: How Systems Work And Especially How They Fail



## Synopsis

Systemantics: How Systems Work and Especially How They Fail

## Book Information

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Publisher: Pocket; 1st edition (May 1, 1978)

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## Customer Reviews

Things are not working, that much we agree about. For me, these 'things' are mostly software systems which drive me closer to the edge of insanity the more I work with them, and for the author of this book it's mostly human organizations. The arguments of the book are supposed to apply to all systems, so we can ignore this minor difference. Who or what is to blame for this state of affairs? Or even better, how can we navigate it? The culprit, according to the author, is the systems that we see everywhere, enjoined and entangled, permeating our lives, and pulling us in all directions. The solution proposed by the author is to be suspicious of systems, and know their tricky ways ("We must learn to live with systems, to control them lest they control us", p. xiii). An extensive definition of a system is not attempted by the author, rather wisely, because this gives the reader the drive to look for systems in their own life. There is one roundabout way of defining systems towards the end of the book which I found rather enlightening, however: "The system represents someone's solution to a problem. It does not solve the problem" (p. 74). More than systems per se, the author targets what he calls systemism, the vacuous belief in the fundamental usefulness of systems, and the book aims to cast it out of the reader by succinct statements of the flaws of systems. The book is written in a tongue-in-cheek style. The author makes claims of systematicity, and orders his argument in axioms that should somehow lead up to a consistent theory, but that's not really the case. This doesn't mean that the book is inconsistent, however.

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Systemantics: How Systems Work and Especially How They Fail A Tear And A Smile: "If you love somebody, let them go, for if they return, they were always yours. If they don't, they never were."  
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