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*Jonathan Culler*

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**Jonathan Culler : On Puns: The Foundation of Letters by Jonathan Culler (1988-06-01)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Puns: The Foundation of Letters by Jonathan Culler (1988-06-01):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Foundation of LettersBy NoelVery useful book. Looks at puns from mutiple perspectives. Subtitle: The Foundation of Letters. I think that comes from Samuel Beckett. It points to the fundamental ambiguity at the core of language. It reminds us that language is alive and while we think of language as something created by humans reminds me that we are in part created by language. That may not make much sense, but nevertheless it reminds me of the endless richness of human experience.1 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Where's the Beef?By A Customer"Is it the meat or is it the motion?" Jonathan Culler asks irreverently in this ambitious book on puns and the origins of "written" literature. In other words, which is the more persuasive of the two dominant competing theories of literature's origins--the essentialist or the pragmatic. Try as he might to be evenhanded in his presentation of both theories, he doesn't leave you in doubt as to his preference for the latter. Though he commits himself in the introduction to writing his book more for the general reader than for the specialist, he compromises his intent by frequently resorting to turgid, opaque prose; for example: "By their coaxial ambivalence, the anal and the nasal "markers" crystallize the discomfiture that must have been felt by the first hominid rising out of the miasmal mists of consciousness." If this weren't enough of a distraction for the reader, his theory that the transition from oral to written literature first manifested itself in, of all places, prehistoric Finland should make one's head spin.

All in all, this a book that only a graduate student will take unqualified pleasure in reading. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. This is a collection of essays By Jonathan Culler The first reviewer fails to note the basic fact that this is a collection of essays by different writers, some of them witty and graceful, others less so. The sentence he or she quotes is from the most rebarbative essay, and readers who are put off by this sample of the prose should read the essays by Derek Attridge, Debra Fried and Fred Ahl, for example.