A simplified version of the Arabic tale complex Kalila wa Dimna is available as a reader for intermediate students of Arabic. The text includes a brief introduction by author Munther A. Younes and a glossary after each story. (Tales From Kalila wa Dimna: An Arabic Reader. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. Pp. x + 158, introduction, notes. $16.00 cloth). Though the 46 tales included in the text are abridged and "denested" from the eighth-century literary version, this simplification has its own tradition—Kalila wa Dimna tales have continued to circulate in many versions, both literary and oral. Companion audio cassettes are available to those who want to polish listening comprehension.

It seems that the folks at August House really do listen to scholarly grumbles about their folklore series. Italian-American Folklore (Frances M. Malpezzi and William M. Clements. Little Rock, 1992. Pp. 272. $24.95 cloth, $14.95 paper), which arrived in their last shipment to us, is still written for a very general audience and still homogenizes "the folk" somewhat. But it also includes quite a bit of specific information about fieldwork situations and variations both between and within Italian American communities. This book is a definite improvement over several others we've seen in the series, and that deserves a mention. We also test-drove several of August House's "American Storytelling" audio cassettes. Of these, only Donald Davis's stories were complex enough or wry enough to sustain most adult interest, but kids seemed genuinely inspired by the others. (For example, Listening for the Crack of Dawn. Little Rock, 1992. 120 minutes. $16.95. The "Storytelling Press Audio" series was not included in those we compared, nor were Roberta Simpson's tapes). Now you know.

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Cultivating Differences, an anthology edited by Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier, presents analyses of many of the same issues that have fascinated postmodernist literary theorists since the so-called death of structuralism. One big difference between the sixteen contributors to
Cultivating Differences and the crowned heads of post-modernism is that while de Man, Deleuze, and Kristeva often send even the most hard-bitten theorists to "guides" and "commentaries," these sociologists write in a clear and concise fashion, giving concrete examples and presenting actual case studies that crystallize the "symbolic boundaries and the making of inequality" much more lucidly than any number of abstractions, tangential points, or Greimasian rectangles.

Lamont and Fournier are not content to select essays that merely acknowledge the arbitrariness of cultural distinctions separating primary classes from secondary (or "outsider") classes. Instead, the contributors explore how such boundaries are set up as well as the implications of such boundaries. Paul DiMaggio's chapter on theater, opera, and dance demonstrates that each of these hallmarks of "high culture" were, in fact, within easy reach of the entire populace, from the bluebloods to the groundlings, as late as the turn of the last century. Through the presentation of actual source materials, DiMaggio demonstrates how the traveling theater troupe, the little touring musical companies, and the small dance club, in furious bids for survival via a hitherto unnecessary respectability, all play into a bourgeois power structure. Once deemed respectable, the forms that originated with the common people are now reserved for the elite only. Everything gets incorporated into the structure of economic and social power.

The editors divide their examination into four sections. The first examines "the institutionalization of cultural repertoires and the symbolic boundaries that define them," suggesting the work of Michel Foucault. The focus is on the manner in which the arbitrary distinctions between sacred and profane genres are produced and how these distinctions manage to keep the powerful in place. There is a new concern for "purity" and "genuineness," and a new kind of definition of the impure, something that must be kept out of the homogenous circle. Most fascinating here is Nicola Beisel's history lesson on Anthony Comstock, a bowdlerizer most famous for losing Walt Whitman his publishing contract with Osgood and Company in 1882. According to Beisel, Comstock continuously had to redefine the border between obscenity and art by bullying those who had no power to defend themselves: youth, the lower classes, and foreigners.

The second section offers a more thorough examination of how high and popular culture can be used to define boundaries and create status groups. "High culture" creates the privileged, not the other way around. Like the famous new clothes of the status conscious emperor, "high culture" (such as theater, opera, and dance) does not exist until it is in the best interests of the powerful to cause it to exist. Culture serves as a tool for domination. Most fascinating here is Vera Zolberg's essay on art museums. Despite
half-hearted attempts to make the lower classes feel at home, the economic bottom line remains: artistic institutions wish to cultivate high-rollers. It is not that the lower classes naturally feel uncomfortable around art and do not embrace it; rather, institutionalized art refuses to embrace the lower classes. The third section is concerned with the process of building boundaries and how those boundaries are used to accomplish social and political distinctions, "how boundaries are built and used by groups whose identities are based on ascribed characteristics." The contributors in this section take their cue from the suggestion that culture repertoires (both high and low) define individuals rather than the other way around. The stress on difference and inequality is focused primarily in race and gender. Difference really is a self-propagating illusion, and writers like Cynthia Fuchs Epstein argue that it is time to move beyond the binary oppositions that define women and minorities as Others and outsiders. Epstein focuses on the impediments to inclusiveness and presents a strong case for a more thorough examination of these social demarcations.

The final section specifies how phenomena of exclusion appear in the political world and demonstrates how individuals remain members of larger constructs that filter into the creation of privilege. Most interesting here is Alan Wolfe's case for inclusiveness, in which he argues for required demarcations and examines the kinds of boundaries that must be maintained. Boundaries are here to stay, Wolfe says, and we must learn to live with them instead of trying to jettison them all. The essayists in the final section offer a fine-tuning of many of the ideas of those in the third, often arguing that difference is good, though the concepts of "high" and "low" may be more suspect.

*Cultivating Differences* is an impressive collection in both its scope and presentation. Even readers who disagree with the general thesis on the creation of inequality will find the case presented in a clear and straightforward manner with no deliberate opaqueness or clever sophistries to obscure the writers' arguments.


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In this essay the Marxist philosopher Leszek Kolakowski has given us a perceptive treatment of the dialectic between fact and value: he explores the social dimensions of the conflict between the "mythologico-symbolic" beliefs and values through which people give their lives meaning and