the *Kulturkrieg*. Next, Besslich turns to Johann Plenge, the youngest of all of her subjects and the only one who seemed never to have had any misgivings about the disenchantment of the world and indeed, under the program "Organization," to have positively embraced it. As the author points out, however, Plenge's motto was a "floating signifier," pointing to a wide variety of positions and cloaking what remained an elusive conception of socialism, one that was easily coopted by the German right wing after the war. Perhaps it is this vagueness that renders the analysis of Plenge the most tepid part of the book.

The author concludes with a short discussion of both Jewish *Kulturkrieger* and of Gustav Radbruch's critique of the *Kulturkrieg*, adumbrations of what appears to be her next project. Wisely she leaves it largely to the reader to draw his or her conclusions about her four principal subjects. One striking feature common both to Mann and to Bahr is how they came to celebrate irrationalism and the outbreak of war because in part of their boredom with the prewar world. While passages in her book suffer from repetitiousness, Besslich provides for the patient reader a frequently illuminating intellectual history of the prewar roots of the *Kulturkrieg*. The exhaustive, up-to-date scholarly apparatus alone makes the book worth consulting.

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The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies, 1890–1960. By Adelheid von Saldern. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 2002. Pp. xxii + 383. $64.50. ISBN 0–472–10986–3.

The evolution of British and American labor history seems to reverse Charles Peguy's famous dictum that things start out as mysticism and end up as politics. Anglophone scholarship on the labor movement began with studies of political parties, and then emphasized work and community before becoming absorbed with culture and language. At the moment, labor history seems to be ready for the list of endangered historiographical species. As one can see in this collection of essays by Adelheid von Saldern, German historians have been powerfully influenced by their British and American counterparts, but have not uncritically followed their example. Political issues and problems, if not political parties and organizations, remain significant for Saldern, as they do for most of her colleagues. Conceptual and methodological debates, especially debates over *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of everyday life, have a peculiarly German character and tone. And, to judge Saldern's exemplary work, labor history retains a vitality in Germany that it has lost in the English-speaking world.

This volume, the thirty-sixth published in Geoff Eley's series on Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany, brings together eleven of Saldern's articles, all of them previously published between 1991 and 1999. The collection opens with a useful synthetic essay that compares the situation of Wilhelmian Social Democracy in the movement's "centers" and in its hinterlands. This is followed by a wide-ranging discussion of class identity and political action, which is heavily influenced by E.P. Thompson's historically-grounded conception of class. The next five items, which all reflect Saldern's interest in the history of everyday life, examine various dimensions of what she calls "social rationalization" as it applied to living spaces, housework, and welfare policy. Politics and particularly the political catastrophe of Nazism are never far from these domestic scenes: her essay on instructions on how to clean linoleum, for instance, ends with some reflections on other, more deadly forms of social hygiene. The final four essays treat different aspects of popular culture as expressed in the opening ceremonies of the Hanover Stadium in 1922, in debates about cultural problems during the Weimar and Nazi periods, and in the role of gender on GDR radio during the 1950s.

In her helpful introduction to these studies, Saldern tells us that they have one common denominator: "modernity" (p. 27). What does she mean by this most elusive of terms? Quite rightly, she rejects a normative definition: "historical writing becomes cramped and limited if it works with a loaded concept of 'modernity,' that is, one that is closely associated with the ideals of the Enlightenment and therefore entirely positive." Following Adorno, Horkheimer, Zygmunt Bauman, and especially Detlev Peukert, Saldern emphasizes that "modernity itself is thought now to harbor many possibilities, one of which is certainly barbarism" (p. 3). But if modernity is detached from its normative mooring, what remains? Is "modernity" no more than a chronological category, just another way of referring to "the present"? If so, it loses much of its explanatory power and risks becoming a tautology, as in this rather unfortunate formulation: "we use 'modernity' to designate the historical epoch when all areas of life began to be modernized" (p. 302). Clearly Saldern wants the concept to do some analytical work, but that requires a more careful and precise definition than is provided here — or, for that matter, in most recent works that invoke "modernity" in order to explain rather than simply to locate contemporary developments.

Like most historians, Saldern's strengths are empirical rather than conceptual. She approaches her subjects with great sympathy and sensitivity; her archival research is always impressive; she is skillful in linking specific individuals and events to broader trends. In her capable hands, a wide range of subjects — instructions on how to clean linoleum, debates about the proper size of a kitchen, the travails of a desperate single mother, the ceremony to open a new sports stadium, concern over salacious films, and the way the news was

presented on the radio — are used to illuminate the richness and complexity of ordinary people's lives.

The Challenge of Modernity is a valuable introduction to some significant themes in twentieth-century German social history and to the work of an important scholar. The translation (after a very shaky start) is serviceable if not distinguished. All in all, we should be grateful to the University of Michigan Press for making Saldern's work accessible to a broader audience, even if it is at a price that only libraries will be able to afford.

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Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany. By Andrew Zimmerman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2001. Pp. 364. $60.00. ISBN 0–226–98341–2.

Andrew Zimmerman has written a remarkable book that recasts our understanding of early German anthropology by showing how it emerged as a fundamentally antihumanist enterprise. Humanism is here understood as the study of peoples and cultures that share in a common humanity. Zimmerman powerfully argues that nineteenth-century German anthropology attempted to study *Naturvölker* as something less than, and different than, humans in the full sense. Central to this antihumanistic enterprise was the attempt to make anthropology a natural science emancipated from the subjectivities of nineteenth-century historicism and hermeneutics. By casting *Naturvölker* as other, anthropologists could claim to pursue an objective science.

The brilliance of this book lies partly in its arresting thesis, partly in the surprising evidence Zimmerman marshals in support of the thesis. The book is also beautifully written. In its clear, arresting presentation of the evidence, it will have a profound impact.

Naturvölker stood outside of history and culture; it was therefore unnecessary and indeed unscientific to study them within their own environments, which only clouded the data and precluded controlled experimentation. Instead, German anthropologists brought *Naturvölker* to Germany and observed them in *Völkerschauen* (ethnographic performances), which were commercially very successful. Zimmerman examines these *Völkerschauen* with considerable acuity. Although it seems evident that these shows represent the acme of a European objectification of native peoples, along with the concomitant silencing of the latter, Zimmerman argues that there was a great deal of native resistance to the scientific stage-managing undertaken in order to render the people more authentic. Partly in reaction to this resistance, anthropology became ever more