Book Notes
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at the same time hope is founded on something absolute, in particular, on religion: "The conviction," he writes, "that service to one's fatherland is at the same time service to absolute values lends this service an unexpected strength. Whoever does not serve, sins." G. L.

Shafto, Michael, ed. *How We Know: Nobel Conference XX.*
San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985. Pp. xix+171. $14.95 (cloth).

This is a collection of papers from a conference (Nobel XX, at Gustavus Adolphus College) on the theme of the title. Given the distinction of the contributors, it could be expected that the papers are all at least reasonably good, and they are. But the bits of discussion following each are not very useful. There is an introduction and afterword by the editor, surrounding the following papers: Gerald Edelman, "Neural Darwinism: Population Thinking and Higher Brain Function"; Brenda Milner, "Memory and the Human Brain"; Roger C. Schank and Colleen M. Seifert, "Modeling Memory and Learning"; Herbert A. Simon, "Some Computer Models of Human Learning"; Daniel C. Dennett, "Can Machines Think?"; Arthur R. Peacocke, "A Cristian 'Materialism.' " The most interesting, to me, was Edelman's (a Nobel laureate in physiology) account of how the brain becomes tuned to the patterns of experience. H. M.

Hallen, B., and Sodipo, J. O. *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy.*
London: Ethnographica, 1986. Pp. vi+138. $24.95 (cloth).

Analytic philosophers have invested enormous amounts of energy attempting to analyze various terms that play a central role in our everyday thinking about the epistemic and ethical dimensions of our lives. It is often supposed that the conceptions underlying these terms are universals of human culture. The fascinating thesis of this intriguing little book is that this supposition is false. The authors, both philosophers, ply the skills of the analytic philosopher on some common terms used by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria. In their longest chapter, they focus on *mo* and *gbagbo,* which the standard dictionaries render as "knowledge" and "belief." But, they argue, the Yoruba terms do not correspond to "knowledge" and "belief" since *mo* applies only to information about which one has personal experience. What one learns via indirect evidence, or from the reports of others, no matter how reliable or trustworthy, can never be more than *gbagbo.* Another chapter argues that the concept underlying the Yoruba term *aje,* generally translated as "witch," does not correspond to the Western concept of a witch. Though the authors do not develop the point, there is something profoundly subversive in all this. If our own epistemic notions are local cultural products, why should they be of any more than anthropological interest? S. P. S.