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REBECCA SHUMWAY, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Rochester NY: University of Rochester Press (hb \$85 – 978 1 58046 391 1). 2011, ix + 232 pp.

The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is an important contribution to Ghanaian history as well as to the larger field of slave trade studies. As Shumway correctly notes, much has been written on the Fante but only a few scholars have explored the linkages between the historical development of Fante institutions and cultures and the transatlantic slave trade. Shumway has done a remarkable job in pulling together the existing literature, supplementing this with archival research and situating her analysis within the context of the literature on changes that were occurring in other coastal societies in West Africa during the era of the Atlantic slave trade.

To briefly summarize her main points, Shumway argues that ‘the rapid growth ... of the transatlantic trade in slaves ... created ... conditions within which the people of southern Ghana completely transformed their political structures and created the groundwork for a new cultural identity’. The political changes she documents involved the creation of a coalition government (as opposed to a full-blown state system or new forms of economic and social networks, as happened elsewhere). The cultural changes included the rise of a powerful war shrine that expanded in influence as the coalition government developed, the expansion of the Fante language as the principal lingua franca on the central coast of what is now Ghana, and the emergence of community-organized militias.

Influencing these political and cultural changes were a number of different developments that Shumway discusses in clear and understandable prose. Among these developments were the fourteenth-century migration of the so-called Borbor Fante from the interior to the town of Mankessim, just north of the coast; the establishment of trade relations between the descendants of the original Borbor Fante and the Portuguese in the late fifteenth century; the emergence of a people known as the Akanny, who came to be the dominant economic brokers in the region; the rapid decline in the export of gold from the region by the second half of the seventeenth century and a concomitant increase in the slave trade; the development of the coastal town of Anomabo (a Borbor Fante community) as the largest slave-exporting port on the central Gold Coast; the emergence of a Borbor Fante military elite that led to the Fante language becoming the dominant language on the coast; and, finally, the success of the Borbor Fante at Anomabo in bringing together a number of different polities into a coastal coalition while using the Fante Borbor shrine Nananom Mpow as an additional unifying force.

This is a well-argued reconstruction and discussion of the history of the Fante during the Atlantic slave trade era. Still, there are issues that could have been developed further. At one point in the book, Shumway says that her study is ‘primarily a story about state formation’ (p. 2), but at other times (p. 9, 10, 11) ‘state’ is placed in scare quotes. At yet another point, she says that ‘the Fante engaged in a type of state formation, but remained distinctly decentralized’.

And, of course, she talks throughout about a political coalition. This discussion would have been stronger had she chosen a particular term (or set of terms) to define the Fante political organizational system as it shifted over time. In making the case for the expansion of the Fante language and therefore a Fante identity, Shumway notes that the coastal communities prior to the seventeenth century were composed of a number of different groups (Abrem, Etsi, Eguafo, Efutu and Asebu as well as Akan and Borbor Fante). Sometimes Shumway defines these groups as ethnicities (p. 19), sometimes as having distinct cultural traditions (p. 15), and at other times as different linguistic communities (p. 30), yet these are not synonymous terms. A discussion of exactly what is meant by ethnicity in eighteenth-century Fante would have been more instructive.

Her discussion of the Nananom Mpow shrine, however, provides tantalizing clues about its economic operation (it offered its services – for a fee – in disputes that involved different European trading companies on the coast) and its role in supporting the military efforts of the coalition.

In her analysis of the origins of the Fante *asafo* (militia[s]), Shumway notes that an *asafo* served a variety of functions: it linked different lineages together that were present in particular residential areas within a town; it operated as a sort of neighbourhood watch association; and it performed community service, making sure that roads and paths were kept clear for travel. Less clear is whether or not the focus of the *asafo* companies on fostering kinship and military linkages *within* towns facilitated the work of the coastal coalition (which sought to foster greater linkages *between* towns).

Still, in pulling together the literature on the Fante, Shumway's book is extremely helpful. This is the first study that gives scholars a sense of the historical development of the Fante in the eighteenth century. Because she places this history within the context of the history of other coastal communities, her book adds to our understanding of the various paths African communities took in adapting to the changing character of trade on the coast in the eighteenth century.

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SUJATA PATEL and TINA UYS, editors, *Contemporary India and South Africa: legacies, identities, dilemmas*. New Delhi and Abingdon: Routledge (hb £65 – 978 0 415 52299 1). 2012, xi + 330 pp.

Since the 1990s there has been greater cooperation and dialogue between scholars in the humanities in India and South Africa. The 2010 commemorations marking 150 years since the first arrival of indentured labourers in South Africa from India brought together scholars from various disciplines in both countries at a conference at the University of Johannesburg. This book arises out of that conference. It is divided into three parts, with chapters that focus on indenture and the commemorations, contemporary issues such as the extent and successes (or lack of success) of democracy, education and environmental policies, and, finally, the ties at state level between the two countries and projects of mutual cooperation.

There are strong chapters on the commemorations that highlight issues of identity and some of the questions that emerged during the commemorations – what should be commemorated, who should lead the process, and how this should be done. Drawing on one of the crucial questions that emerged among