Life Interrupted: Trafficking into Forced Labor in the United States. By Denise Brennan. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014, 304 pp., $84.95 (cloth), $23.95 (paper)

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Meet Flo, a housekeeper with extensive work experience, an activist against political corruption in her native country, a daughter who was able to build a house for her parents, and a survivor of human trafficking. Denise Brennan's ethnographic study of forced migrant labor in the United States is a welcome addition to scholarship on human trafficking. Based solidly on interviews and participant observation with exploited laborers such as Flo, her anthropological approach yields fresh and remarkable findings. For example, we learn of the gradualist character of the exploitation and ultimately outright abuse of labor in the cases of numerous survivors of trafficking, or the way ethnography can get at the nuances of control, often through simple and subtle tools of fear and perceived isolation, rather than brute force or explicit threats of violence. Such perceptions, she argues, revealed in the stories of Tatiana, Elsa, and others, are the stock upon which traffickers trade and in which there are diverse targets and opportunities. In Flo's case, we learn that even experienced global laborers, who have the bravery and the determination to leave home countries and travel across borders in search of work, can still be duped in new cultural contexts. Variation of experience is the key word here, and Brennan shows us through her many cases how unique accounts fit into larger patterns of the exploitation of labor, or rather still do not "fit" into the public's notion of trafficking or the master narratives of governmental responses or media coverage. In this regard, her introductory overview of the theoretical, methodological and interpretive issues entangled in the crafting of responses to and raising public awareness about human trafficking is an excellent complement to the ethnographic material she presents. But even better still, Brennan's study also includes accounts of the difficult and downright liminal path of transitioning out of forced labor, the barriers and confusion such paths can present, and the

personal strategies, choices, and emotions of women seeking new place and purpose. In this new phase of experience, survivors must deal with institutional and government policy and practice in addition to their own—often painful—pasts.

The book itself is concise and clear: five chapters and an introduction, which is further nicely divided into two parts. The first summarizes and addresses the complex and critical theoretical scholarship on human trafficking and its relevance to the field of migrant labor and sex work. Here, informants' voices are keenly helpful in demonstrating what Brennan calls the "subjectivity of coercion" and what often amounts to unintended migration. The second half describes the important—and understudied—experience of getting out of coercive relationships, the institutional landscape of assistance, and the persistent problems of power, control, and independence that survivors still face as they navigate getting help, relocating, and rebuilding their own lives. In closing the study, Brennan also provides some signposts for action in the form of an appendix listing organizations and groups who can assist individuals who find themselves in situations of forced labor. Often overlooked in reviews, the index of this study is outstanding and should add to the value of the book's worth as a work scholarship.

From the perspective of gender studies, however, this book may leave some readers asking more questions. For example, more might be said of the gendered aspect of Brennan's data set, which, curiously, appears to be the result of both her choice and the decisions of 'gatekeeping' service providers lurking in the background. Missing is the exploitation of male labor and male vulnerabilities. Moreover, the gatekeeping roles of those who provide help and who inhabit and maintain elite structures could be more intensely problematized, as such work has been done in critical legal studies and sociolinguistics albeit not on human trafficking. Finally, the author (or her editor) has chosen to sideline information in some 40 pages of footnotes that seems quite relevant to the ethnographic cases. For example, the debate in social science about psychology-centric trauma models and blanket interventions applied to highly diverse, and dispersed, at-risk populations would help contextualize and underscore the value of her ethnographic cases. But these problems are rather minor and in no way detract from the book's significant ethnographic contribution to understanding human trafficking.

This is an important work that should be tremendously useful to students, educators, policy makers, activists, and scholars. While Brennan notes how advocacy can be a form of participant observation, where

scholars may occupy dual roles of researcher and activist, her book also demonstrates how participant observation, the foundational method of cultural and social anthropology, can be a form of advocacy.

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