

Title: Parca's Picks: Stuck and Unstuck by Numbers in the Tourist State of Belize

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Abstract:

Parca is a Creole woman living in a small Belize beach town that has “gone crazy” for the panic expansion of generic Caribbean tourism. She plays Boledo, the national gambling game. The rules of the game are simple. Pick several numbers and play as much money on them as your seductions dare you to. Parca's Boledo picks resonate when they feel right and that is when she is seduced by her numbers to play them successfully. This paper tracks a confusing and violent moment at the US Consulate in Belize where Parca hoped to secure a US visitor's Visa. The interview experience was paralyzing. Traumatized as a result, she became “stuck” in place and in life, glued to bad attachments, unable to negotiate the chancy edges of the sensible where rogue bodily agitations might enliven forces of desire through her successful number picking system. The Consular experience shocked her, after which she felt powerless to make any life “moves” at all. Generally when “stuck” Parca's picks fail her. She can't win. When “unstuck” Parca feels nimble enough to improvise life “moves” using her strategy for picking numbers, enough to multiply moments of desire for something else of life, something excitable expressed against an emergent local world of global tourism futurities that can incite contingent material-semiotic linkages that rub up against a Belize that has hooked itself to the spasmodic world of an “unsustainable sustainable tourism”. This paper explores how Parca's emotional entanglements with the profound shift in everyday practices in Belize means riding the wild oscillating forces of becoming stuck and unstuck and that instantiate a politics of desire through her system of picking numbers. I suggest that Parca's picks are her local strategy for negotiating the nervous antics of global tourism mobilities, for better and for worse.
