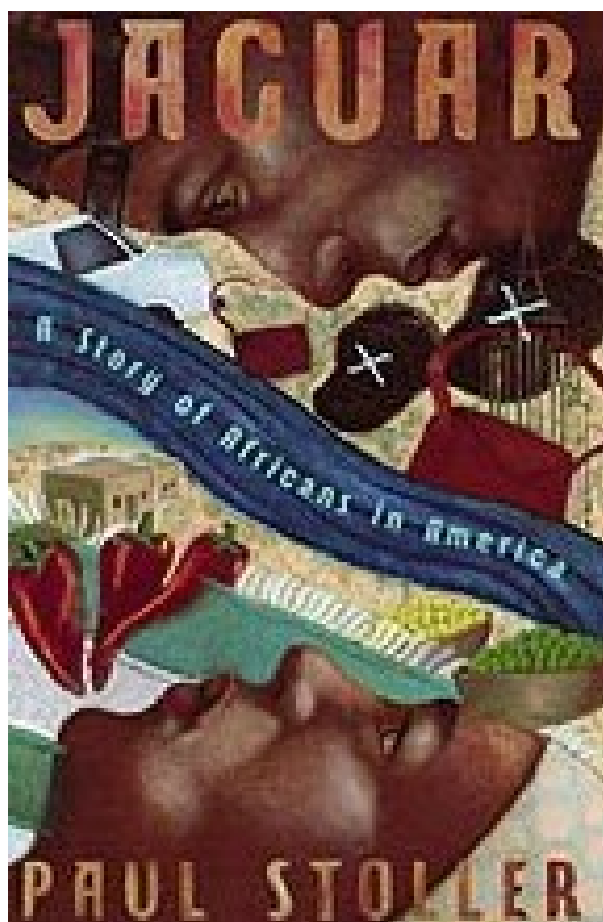
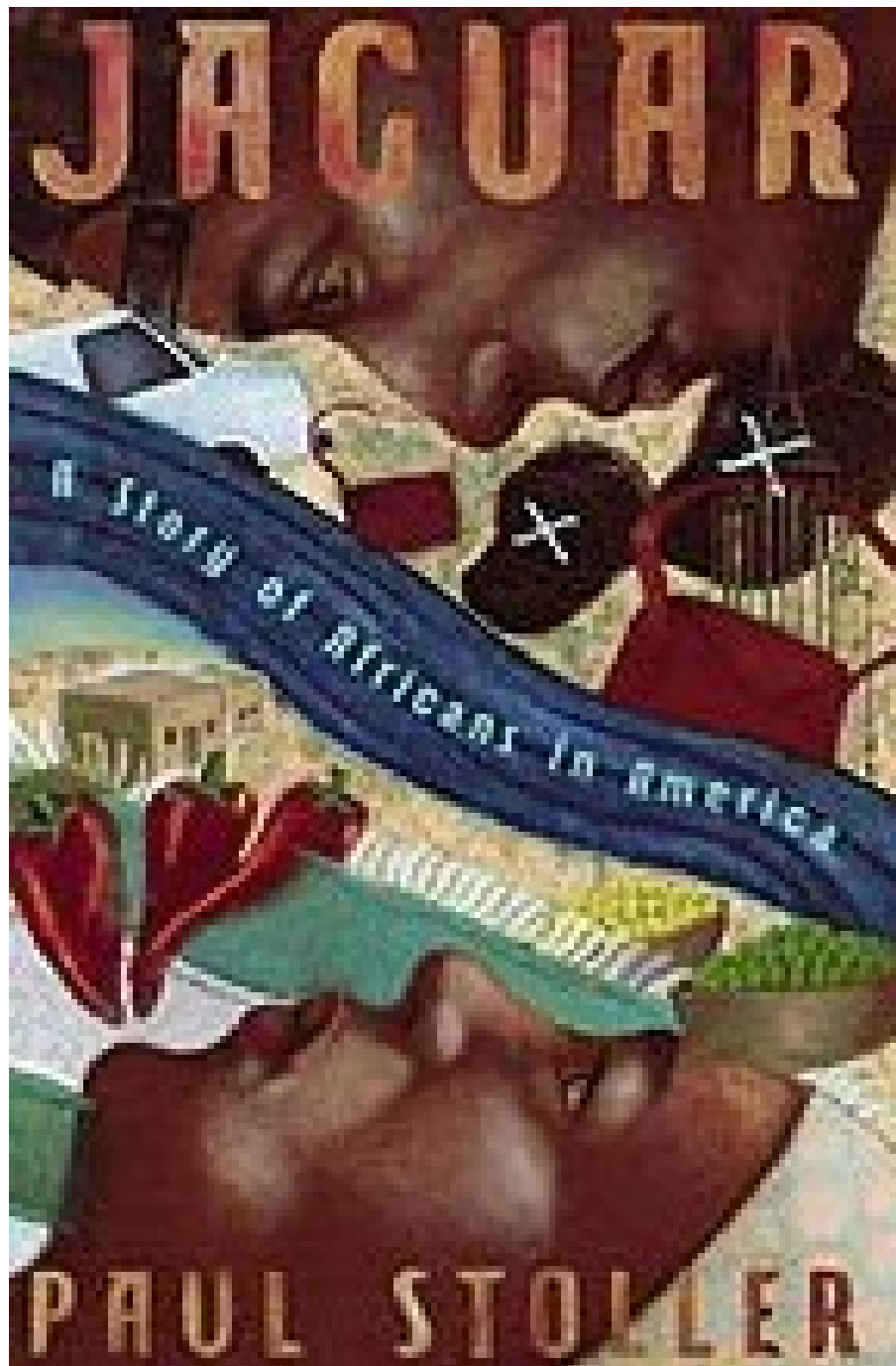


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Issa Boureima is a young, hip African street vendor who sells knock-off designer bags and hats in an open-air market on 125th street in Harlem. His goal is to become a "Jaguar"—a West African term for a keen entrepreneur able to spot trends and turn a profit in any marketplace. This dynamic world, largely invisible to mainstream culture, is the backdrop of this timely novel.

Faced with economic hardship in Africa, Issa has left his home in Niger and his new wife, Khadija, to seek his fortune in America. Devout Muslims, the couple has entered into a "modern" marriage: Khadija is permitted to run her own business, and Issa has agreed not to take additional wives. Issa quickly adapts to his new surroundings, however, and soon attracts several girlfriends. Aided by a network of immigrants, he easily slips through gaps in the "system" and extends his stay in America indefinitely. Following a circuit of African-American cultural festivals across America, he marvels at African-Americans' attitudes toward Africa, and wonders if he'll ever return to Niger. Meanwhile, Khadija also struggles to make it—to become a "Jaguar"—as she combats loneliness, hostile in-laws, and a traditional, male-dominated society. The eventual success of her dry goods shop and her growing affection for a helpful Arab merchant make her wonder if she'll ever join Issa in America.

Drawing on his own decades of experience among Africans both in Niger and in New York, Paul Stoller offers enormous insight into the complexities of contemporary Africa. Alive with detail, Jaguar is a story of triumph and disappointment, of dislocation and longing, and of life lived in a world that no longer recognizes boundaries.

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Very Interesting Book

By Dee

I loved this book! I read it almost non-stop until I finished it. I've read many books on Africa and African lifestyles, but this one was still informative. I admired Khadija for her strength of character, high principles and decisiveness in her business decisions. I was quite curious as to whether or not she and Issa would reunite, in the end. I must say that the book ended with a feeling of closure even though there were a couple of surprises. I will be looking forward to reading the next book that Mr. Stoller has very recently completed, on a similar topic. I recommend this book for anyone interested in Africans, how some of them think,

rationalize and go about the task of trying to "make it" in America.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A Jaguar's Tale of Triumph

By Brooke L. Majeske

Paul Stoller, an anthropologist, has specialized in ethnographic study of the traditions of the Songhay people of the Republic of Niger in 1976 to 1990, previous research among West African street vendors and art traders in New York City, and is the author of the entertaining ethnographic fictional book, *Jaguar: A Story of Africans in America*. Stoller's literary work fulfills the quest of providing an enlightening anthropological study of the African family and culture in Niger Africa, while bridging the transition of the life of a noble man in Africa, Issa Boureima, to the life of an entrepreneur vendor on the streets of Harlem. The vivid and accurate story of Issa's transition as a West African immigrant to the busy streets of Harlem is a clear proof of the success of Stoller's life's work of ethnographic research in West Africa and New York City for the past thirty years. Stoller's primary interests in his ethnographic studies include film, anthropology of religion, and the various cultures within cities of Africa, as well as The United States. His primary interests are evidently explored in the themes of *Jaguar*: the dichotomy of African and American culture, including the exploration of the vast differences in the socioeconomic foundations, the differential struggles of individualism and collectivism, and the anthropological insights of the gender traditions of a religious heart of Muslim residing in Africa, as well as America. The backbone of Stoller's *Jaguar* is the support of many research fellowships and grants, in which Stoller has used to provide his readers with a story thriving with detail of success and setback, of a sense of aching Diaspora, and the life adjustments of a kept man, restricted by his role in family, to the changing life in a free world that no longer acknowledges boundaries.

The questionable fate of a kept, noble, West African man in a borderless world of possibility engages every reader to explore the Issa's economic and marital responsibilities of his family, deemed to the eldest son, while finding his identity as an African immigrant in America. Issa, the eldest son born of a noble, merchant family of Niger, holds the responsibility to uphold the longevity of the prosperity of his family. Stoller illustrates the intensity of the family's frail entitlement in a seemingly third world country, climaxing the problematic concern of Issa's marital defiance by claiming a wife outside of the noble kin.

Confronted with economic destitution in Africa, Issa's struggles to fulfill the responsibilities of providing for his family, and a hopeful Issa leaves his new wife, Khadija, and family to seek his fortune in America. Stoller's exemplifies a borderless American experience with Issa's "sinful" decisions of retaining many girlfriends, defying immigration laws, and living freely in a country of opportunities. Triumph and disappointed in endured in Issa's combat for success as a young African vendor on the streets of Harlem, selling knock-off designer bags and hats, striving for the title "Jaguar", a West African term for a keen entrepreneur able to spot trends and turn profit in most any marketplace. Meanwhile in Africa, Khadija strives to be a "Jaguar" as an independent, modern businesswoman, while battling her marital obligations of unwelcoming in-laws in a traditional, male-dominated society. Bound by marriage, the couple finds themselves independently successful a world away from each other struggling with a questionable fate of the longevity of their triumphant prosperity when joined geographically together.

A promised lively, engaging experience to every reader of Stoller's *Jaguar: A Story of Africans in America*. Stoller successfully drowns the expectations of boredom of an anthropological text by delivering a fictional, lively story. The lively story provides interesting information to be learned of the anthropology of West Africa and the streets of Harlem, yet with colorful characters enduring life experiences, the hardships of an immigrant's stories, marital struggles, and trying devotions to family. Stoller presented his research beautifully throughout the well-structured book, connecting the memorable hardships of each character through every chapter. The reader is promised to feel the emotions of the characters through Stoller's compelling authorship. This timely novel is a vacation for the minds' of his readers of a dynamic world, which strays from mainstream culture, into the world of a West-African immigrant, a family of West Africa, an independent woman of West Africa, all connected with religious foundational beliefs as Muslims striving

for prosperity in the twentieth century. This literary work is complete without any need for adjustments or improvements. Stoller's book can be enjoyable to all audiences in search of an entertaining novel that will have you wishing for more.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Jaguar: a story of Africans in America

By A. Taher

Paul Stoller, a professor of anthropology at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, has spent much of his career conducting research on the Songhay people of the republic of Niger. In 1999, Stoller published a book, *Jaguar: a Story of Africans in America*, which is about West African Muslims who migrate to the U.S. and work as street vendors and traders. These men, who move across the globe for years at a time in order to make money, are known as Jaguars. In addition, this ethnographic fiction is about the world these African men leave behind in their native lands, and the responsibilities they have to their families living there. In *Jaguar: a Story of Africans in America*, Stoller illustrates the dichotomy between African culture and American culture by showing the differences in gender roles, class structures, and family. Furthermore, Stoller depicts the different views each culture has on topics like polygamy and adultery. Stoller's book also describes the tensions between contemporary and traditional gender roles. Finally, Stoller's book demonstrates a struggle between individualism and collectivism.

Jaguar: a Story of Africans in America centers on a man from Niger named Issa. Issa has gone to America and left his wife, Khadija, in Niger in search of fortune and adventure. Issa becomes a street vendor in Harlem, New York, and his life begins to change as he lives with American culture. He encounters many new things and meets many people throughout his journey. Meanwhile, Khadija is left behind in Niger with no husband, and a mother-in-law who can't stand her because of her social class. With the departure of Issa, Khadija's life changes as she struggles to define herself as an individual. Issa and Khadija faced many other difficulties, including the struggle to remain loyal to each other and resist sexual temptations. Stoller's book contains 31 short chapters and 210 pages. The book is split between two settings, Niger and Harlem, that alternate back and forth throughout the story. This is the basic structure of the book, and the settings continue to alternate with about five chapters in each section.

Paul Stoller's *Jaguar: a Story of Africans in America* is entertaining, and very easy to read. The book is well written, and the vocabulary is not difficult to comprehend. Stoller's book is very interesting because it teaches people about the struggles Africans face when migrating to America. It shows the difficult life styles that Africans have to live, in addition to leaving their families behind. Also, Stoller's book is very sad because African families are torn apart. Families are separated as the men leave for work and opportunity in America, in order to support their families who are left behind. Stoller's book focuses on West African Muslims living in America. He does a good job emphasizing the difficulties that many Africans face while living in America. However, Stoller does not do a good job emphasizing the Islamic aspect of the Africans' lives. For instance, the idea of committing adultery is not taken seriously in the book. Several characters commit the act, without any fear, and they show no regret. This is not Islamic because adultery is a major sin that Muslims should refrain from ever committing.

Jaguar: a Story of Africans in America is a good book in which the author does a fantastic job depicting the lives and struggles of Africans living in the United States. It is a great introduction for anyone who is interested in learning about West African culture, and the way some of them live in America. However, this is not a good book for someone who is interested in learning about Islam in the United States, because the book doesn't do a good job addressing the Islamic aspects of the Africans who live in America.

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