

**QUESTIONS ON PAUL FARMER: *AIDS AND ACCUSATION:*
*HAITI AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF BLAME***

1. Describe the village of Do Kay with respect to religious beliefs and practices
2. How does Farmer criticize popular concepts of voodoo? (p. 196-201) What critiques does he make of scholarly research on this subject?
3. “We were bitter at the sound of hungry children crying, bitter over everything. If someone succeeded in leaving all that behind, we were bitter with him too” (p. 31).

What were the responses of Do Kay’s inhabitants to such a situation—after the water rose? What generalizations does Farmer make about this?

4. “Possession and performance are everywhere a part of Haitian religion.” What does this mean? What point is Farmer making when he says that “such understandings of *maji* are shared by most rural Haitians, and are thus a part of *rural Haitian culture*”?
5. What are, according to Farmer, the functions of sorcery accusations in Do Kay? How does “the low percentage of murders” (p. 245) tie in? What does he mean by citing Taussig’s comment that “Sorcery seems designed not to interrupt, but to modulate the process” (p. 246)?
6. If you had carried out research in Do Kay similar to Farmer’s, how would you have written *your* book about it?
7. “The most striking revelation [at a conference in 1983], considering reports about Haitians with AIDS in the United States, was that fully 50% of the men interviewed had a history of sexual relations with men. None of them, however, was exclusively homosexual” (p. 135).

If you had been an epidemiologist, what questions should you have been asking then? What questions were not being asked at that time?

8. This was a difficult book to write with respect to diplomatic considerations. List all the groups of people Farmer potentially offended. How did he handle this issue? What would you have done differently?
9. Farmer’s ambitious goal is to present a local ethnography and tie it to global processes. Where are the weak links in his chain of causality?
10. Farmer is especially eloquent about the demonization of Haiti by the West, both historically and currently. Give five examples. How has this construction of Haiti influenced the AIDS epidemic there and among Haitian-Americans? How has it affected non-diseased Haitians, on the island and in the USA?

11. What is “offshore production” (183-188)? What kinds of items are produced? Both the US and Haiti spoke of this as a good thing for Haiti. What is the downside?
12. Farmer speaks of several studies that show “the effects of international aid have often been highly deleterious to the local economy.” (p. 189). In what ways?
13. Farmer refers to “proximal” effects and “distal” effects (p. 193). What do these words mean? Give some examples of each.
14. What is your opinion of the Center for Disease Control’s “4 H” categorization of people most at risk for AIDS? What’s the original meaning of “4H”?
15. Farmer discusses the question of “paranoia or sociological imagination?” (p. 241) What does this mean?
16. Who are “guilty” AIDS sufferers? Who are the “innocent” sufferers? Do you think we all agree about this?
17. What examples does Farmer give of “blaming the victim?” He cites work by Ryan about this process; what are its characteristic features?
18. Farmer describes Haiti as “the world’s first ‘underdeveloped’ nation.” Scholars have argued that Haiti was the world’s first “developed” nation. What is the connection?
19. Do you think AIDS will become a chronic disease of the poor and vulnerable? Why or why not?