How do you interpret the title of the book, *The Kingdom of this World*?

**Notes**

* Possible religious connotations in Voodoo tradition. The Kingdom of *This* world vs. The Kingdom of the *Other* which is spiritual.
* There are the Rulers of Plains, the First King of Haiti, the French. Etc. which all represent governance (and oppression) in the world, but then there is also the Rulers of the Other Shore, which are spiritual rulers. Not that all Voodoo spiritual rulers necessarily transcend the world (need to do more reading on this). Thinking about the animistic side of the religion.
* Also see it possibly as a direct reference to The Sans-Souci Palace and Citadel Laferrière. Henri Christophe as being the first King of Haiti and this focusing around the development of “his kingdom.” Though Haiti as a Kingdom that can be exploited is also represented before and after Christophe.
* The Back There
* The Kingdom of Heaven as being traditionally understanding as eternal, something that doesn’t end, while the earth is temporary. Subverting that idea by saying this earthy Kingdom is more “eternal” and our decisions are apart of that eternality - Ti Noël’s decisions with be an inherent part in the formation of Haiti’s future. He has cemented himself in the Kingdom passed his death.
* Also seeing political meaning behind it. The world is (seemingly) always perceived as something that can be ruled and considered a kingdom.

**Important Quotes**

* “For that reason slaves from that kingdom brought a very poor price on the market.”
* “It seemed that he had visited the plantations of the Plaine one by one, establishing direct contact with all who worked on them.”
* “Macandal, the one-armed, now a houngan of the Rada rite, invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with supreme authority by the Rulers of the Other Shore, he had proclaimed the crusade of extermination, chosen as he was to wipe out the whites and create a great empire of free Negroes in Santo Domingo. Thousands of slaves obeyed him blindly. Nobody could halt the march of the poison.”
* “The Plaine—stinking with green flesh, charred hooves, the domain of the worms—echoed with barks and blasphemies.”
* “That afternoon the slaves returned to their plantations laughing all the way. Macandal had kept his word, remaining in the Kingdom of This World. Once more the whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore.”
* “Besides, it was a good thing to keep green the memory of the One- Armed, for though far away on important duties, he would return to this land when he was least expected.”
* “Then, when the thunder had died away, he stated that a pact had been sealed between the initiated on this side of the water and the great Loas of Africa to begin the war when the auspices were favorable.”
* “His gaping audience had no clear idea of where all these things had taken place. Some thought it was Madagascar, others Persia or the land of the Berbers.”
* “It was a white, cold, motionless world, but its shadows took on life and grew under the light of the lantern, as though those beings with unseeing eyes, who looked without looking, were moving about their midnight visitors.”
* “He lived, for the space of a heartbeat, the finest moments of his life; he glimpsed once more the heroes the finest moments of his life; he glimpsed once more the heroes who had revealed to him the power and the fullness of his remote African forebears, making him believe in the possible germinations the future held. He felt countless centuries old. A cosmic weariness, as of a planet weighted with stones, fell upon his shoulders shrunk by so many blows, sweats, revolts. Ti Noël had squandered his birthright, and, despite the abject poverty to which he had sunk, he was leaving the same inheritance he had received: a body of flesh to which things had happened. Now he understood that a man never knows for whom he suffers and hopes. He suffers and hopes and toils for people he will never know, and who, in turn, will suffer and hope and toil for others who will not be happy either, for man always seeks a happiness far beyond that which is meted out to him. But man’s greatness consists in the very fact of wanting to be better than he is. In laying duties upon himself. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no grandeur to be won, inasmuch as there all is an established hierarchy, the unknown is revealed, existence is infinite, there is no possibility of sacrifice, all is rest and joy. For this reason, bowed down by suffering and duties, beautiful in the midst of his misery, capable of loving in the face of afflictions and trials, man finds his greatness, his fullest measure, only in the Kingdom of This World.”

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From *Other* to *This*:

Centering Haiti in

*The Kingdom of this World*

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Jacob Moose

KU Leuven

- Introduce text and emphasis on Haiti

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Notably, Haiti as “this world” becomes syn

world of Mighty Powers (62)

But what surprised Ti Noël most was the discovery that this marvelous world (66)

“First Crowned Monarch of the New World” (82)

“Macandal had disguised himself as an animal for years to serve men, not to abjure the world of men”

“world of the insects”

- Kingdoms of Africa

- Kingdom of Haiti (Royal Palace and Christopher Henri)

While Carpentier’s conversation surrounding literary expression and authenticity questions ethics of representation, it simultaneously speaks to the

“That afternoon the slaves returned to their plantations laughing all the way. Macandal had kept his word, remaining in the Kingdom of This World. Once more the whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore. And while M. Lenormand de Mézy in his nightcap commented with his devout wife on the Negroes’ lack of feelings at the torture of one of their own—drawing therefrom a number of philosophical considerations on the inequality of the human races which he planned to develop in a speech larded with Latin quotations—Ti Noël got one of the kitchen wenches with twins, taking her three times in a manger of the stables

I view the title through the novel’s attentiveness towards black Haitian identities and use postcolonial theory to flesh out a potentially subversive approach to repressive binary thinking.[[1]](#footnote-1)

the title simultaneously alludes to Western motifs and is associated with Christian dogma in the novel’s final chapter. In light of this, I simultaneously question Carpentier’s ability to authentically represent Haitian subjectivities.

“This world” becomes defined by Black Haitian experiences, there is an opposing colonial “world” unable to see “this world” in the same way.

Carpentier’s transformed structure of opposition to these distinct “entities” each can be understood as opposing forces existing within different “worlds” – the Black Haitians representing “this” world (the “us”) and the colonizers representing the implicit “other.”

Each perceive society in importantly varied ways that dictate what features of “this world” will be brought to the forefront.

1. As discussed in class, there is also a strong connection between “this world” and conceptualizations of a spiritual other (i.e. “The Other Shore”). Without discounting this position, my examination will remain focused on how the determinative “this” distinguishes black Haitian experiences of Haiti from colonizer’s experiences. In other words, the binary opposition, for me, remains on earth. I will use spirituality as a means to reinforce my argument, but I do not explicitly delineate “this” world’s opposite as something otherworldly. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)