Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West by Cormac McCarthy

Based on incidents that took place in the southwestern United States and Mexico around 1850, this novel chronicles the crimes of a band of desperadoes, with a particular focus on one, "the kid," a boy of fourteen.


About the Author: Cormac McCarthy was born in Providence, Rhode Island on July 20, 1933. He attended the University of Tennessee, but interrupted his studies for four years to join the U.S. Air Force. His first novel, The Orchard Keeper, was published in 1965. His other works include Outer Dark, Child of God, Suttree, and Blood Meridian. All the Pretty Horses, the first part of the Border Trilogy, which also includes The Crossing and Cities of the Plains, won the National Book Award in 1992. His novel No Country for Old Men was adapted into a film in 2007. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 2007 for The Road. He has also written plays and screenplays. (Bowker Author Biography)

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think the overall pint of Blood Meridian is? Is there any kind of final moral to the story? What is it?
2. Is there any particular group of people in this book that seems more vicious than the others? Why?
3. Is it fair to label Glanton and his men as a bunch of psychopaths, or is it possible for human compassion to be totally gone from some cultures?
4. Do you agree with Judge Holden's views on the universe? Why or why not?
5. What do you think is the kid’s main motive in this book? What drives him?
6. Does the violence in this book ever get boring? If so, what does that tell us about ourselves?
7. Is it fair to say that Blood Meridian is a pessimistic book? Why?
8. What do you think happens after Judge Holden pulls the kid into the outhouse at the end of the book? How does the outcome of this event affect the book as a whole?
9. What is the role of animals in Blood Meridian? What is the difference between the characters’ attachment to humans and their attachments to a horse or a dog?
10. Why does McCarthy choose to have words that describe the journey across the top of each chapter? How does this affect the process of reading Blood Meridian?
11. What kind of picture does McCarthy pain of the American government during this time?
12. Why do you think that McCarthy chooses to depict violence in such a brutal way? What does this say about the moral code of the *Blood Meridian* world?

13. Why do you think Glanton trusts Holden so deeply? Do you believe that Judge Holden feels the same way about Glanton?

14. How does this novel compare with the pop culture idea of Westerns?

*(Questions provided by shmoop.com and gradesaver.com)*