# A Brief Statistical Look at Blood Meridian by Cormac McCarthy 

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In creating a complete concordance for the book Blood Meridian by Cormac McCarthy I gathered several interesting statistics that bring to light several characteristics of the book that are otherwise lost to the reader. By stripping the book down to it's bare words and their occurrences I have found the following:

The book, although only 334 pages of text, contains 10,257 individual unique words. Some of these words occur on nearly every page but a large percentage occur only once within the text. In fact, 5,308 words occur only once in the book representing nearly $52 \%$ of the unique words used to create this masterpiece.

Not only does this number appear surprisingly high for a book originally written on a typewriter, but the distribution of singularly used words is relatively consistent throughout the whole book when examined by chapter.

Could this be a window into the style or process used by the author or is it just a side-effect of the writing talent. I plan to continue my examination of McCarthy's other work by the same method in search of a mathematical "finger print" that may be consistent across multiple works by the same author or may be able to predict the re-readability of a literary work.

Below are some of the data from my ongoing work with Blood Meridian.
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| Chap Num | Raw Word Count | Number of Unique Words in Chapter | Number of Words in the Chapter that Occur Only Once in Book | Num Pages in Chap | Average Number of Unique Words Per Page in the Chapter | Average "Words Used Once In Book" Averaged Per Page in Chapter | Average Word Count per Page | Percentage of Unique Words in the Chap that Occur Only Once in the Book |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1 | 4158 | 1152 | 190 | 12 | 96.00 | 15.83 | 96.00 | 16.49\% |
| 2 | 4653 | 1219 | 163 | 13 | 93.77 | 12.54 | 93.77 | 13.37\% |
| 3 | 4164 | 1159 | 180 | 14 | 82.79 | 12.86 | 82.79 | 15.53\% |
| 4 | 4663 | 1409 | 233 | 13 | 108.38 | 17.92 | 108.38 | 16.54\% |
| 5 | 6743 | 1646 | 279 | 19 | 86.63 | 14.68 | 86.63 | 16.95\% |
| 6 | 2060 | 804 | 104 | 7 | 114.86 | 14.86 | 114.86 | 12.94\% |
| 7 | 6362 | 1685 | 331 | 19 | 88.68 | 17.42 | 88.68 | 19.64\% |
| 8 | 2560 | 793 | 89 | 8 | 99.13 | 11.13 | 99.13 | 11.22\% |
| 9 | 4818 | 1416 | 242 | 14 | 101.14 | 17.29 | 101.14 | 17.09\% |
| 10 | 5206 | 1199 | 214 | 14 | 85.64 | 15.29 | 85.64 | 17.85\% |
| 11 | 5460 | 1418 | 263 | 15 | 94.53 | 17.53 | 94.53 | 18.55\% |
| 12 | 5522 | 1457 | 198 | 15 | 97.13 | 13.20 | 97.13 | 13.59\% |
| 13 | 7336 | 1958 | 412 | 20 | 97.90 | 20.60 | 97.90 | 21.04\% |
| 14 | 6391 | 1785 | 365 | 18 | 99.17 | 20.28 | 99.17 | 20.45\% |
| 15 | 6970 | 1580 | 273 | 19 | 83.16 | 14.37 | 83.16 | 17.28\% |
| 16 | 6407 | 1671 | 250 | 18 | 92.83 | 13.89 | 92.83 | 14.96\% |
| 17 | 5238 | 1535 | 320 | 15 | 102.33 | 21.33 | 102.33 | 20.85\% |
| 18 | 988 | 423 | 42 | 4 | 105.75 | 10.50 | 105.75 | 9.93\% |
| 19 | 6043 | 1607 | 302 | 17 | 94.53 | 17.76 | 94.53 | 18.79\% |
| 20 | 6249 | 1355 | 206 | 18 | 75.28 | 11.44 | 75.28 | 15.20\% |
| 21 | 3204 | 963 | 143 | 10 | 96.30 | 14.30 | 96.30 | 14.85\% |
| 22 | 4133 | 1205 | 192 | 11 | 109.55 | 17.45 | 109.55 | 15.93\% |
| 23 | 6786 | 1620 | 296 | 20 | 81.00 | 14.80 | 81.00 | 18.27\% |
| Ep. | 208 | 111 | 21 | 1 | 111.00 | 21.00 | 111.00 | 18.92\% |
|  |  | (Not Totaled) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals | 116,322 | 10,257 | 5,308 | 334 |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Book | 116,322 | 10,257 | 5,308 | 334 | 30.71 | 15.89 | 30.71 | 51.75\% |





