

# William Burroughs as poet- scientist

**‘CUT MACHINE WORD LINES AND  
YOU ARE CURED’** - *BATTLE INSTRUCTIONS*

**‘inoculation is the weapon of choice against  
virus.’**

‘Poet-scientist’ is a term which describes someone who uses both scientific and artistic methodologies in the creation of their work. I am using this infrequently used term to highlight that Burroughs’ cut-up project (1959-69) was a poetic-scientific operation and his texts are ‘alive’, as both toxin and cure.

**D** **ANGER**

‘ the most unworkable formula is the whole concept of a dualistic universe [...] As soon as you get two you get trouble.’ - *The Job*

**Good**

**Communism**

**Man**



**Evil**

**Fascism**

**Woman**

Although the (toxic) outsider is traditionally placed on the right side of a binary opposition, or ‘formula’, as Burroughs’ examples of dualism above show, there is an innate ambiguity within these formulas, and, ultimately, Burroughs’ readers are left asking the question: **Who or what is the outsider?**

