James Joyce and the Making of ‘Ulysses’, although not generally available in Britain in recent years, has long been held in high esteem as one of the two or three indispensable books about Joyce and his works. While I had been familiar with it since adolescence, I did not meet Frank Budgen until the 1950s when, after having been employed in various jobs, I went up to Cambridge as a research student working on Joyce. Despite a difference of nearly half a century in our ages, we soon established a friendship which was easy and natural, and which contained no hint of paternalism or patronage on his part. From then until his death in April 1971, we grew intimate, and while I could never, of course, have hoped to be as close to him as were the friends he had made in his young manhood, he was among the half-dozen people whom I knew and loved best.

One of Budgen’s many fine qualities was a gift for making new friendships with people of all ages. Although he used occasionally to grumble about the unfortunate effects of technological progress on the quality of life in London and elsewhere, he never failed, even in his last years, to welcome new life, new experience. In his thirties, when he and Joyce were closest, Budgen must have been a most stimulating companion. Even in his eighties he was an excellent man at a party, enjoying the company of people of all kinds, being lionized by many of the men and by virtually all of the women, talking with zest, listening (as few people do) with equal zest. It was when he was in the company of a number of his friends that one saw most clearly the vigorous, intelligent, endlessly curious man whom Joyce had known.

Budgen was of medium height, solidly built, with quite remarkably powerful shoulders and one of the soundest physiques I have ever seen. He was very much at home in the physical world, being visually and tactilely sensitive, as plastic artists must be, to all that was going on around him, and always keen to be physically in touch.
The world was, for Budgen, a real and solid place, and, although he was capable of extended abstract thought, it was never in abstraction that he wished to live. Apart from the personal attentions of a loving family, he disliked having anything done for him which he could conceivably do for himself and was still, in his mid-eighties, to be seen clearing blocked drains with his bare hands and (until his wife and daughter persuaded him to have central heating installed) carrying anthracite to the stove in the spacious living-room of his home in north London. Since childhood he had been used to turning his hand to almost anything. As he tells us in his memoir of his early life, *Myselfes When Young* (1970), he had worked at a variety of jobs, had been an active and vocal socialist politician, stumping the country as far north as Dundee, and had become a practised soap-box orator. In all this he was, of course, Joyce’s opposite. Joyce, too, savoured the physical world, but he did so at something of a remove. Sinewy, but hardly tough, Joyce liked to have things done for him rather than to do them himself. Budgen was very much ‘the other’. A man self-taught since the age of twelve provides a sharp contrast to a Jesuit-trained artist with a university degree. Temperamentally, too, there were great differences: Joyce disliked water, dogs, lightning; Budgen had been a sailor, loved and had a natural affinity for animals, was awed but not at all frightened by spectacular natural phenomena.

Budgen sometimes spoke of himself, deprecatingly, as having been a Shaun to Joyce’s Shem, but the pattern was more complex than that and, despite his awareness of Budgen’s otherness, Joyce recognized that he could never be reduced to a simple anti-self. For Budgen was also an artist, and an artist in a medium which Joyce never claimed to understand. That kind of otherness could not be written off as Joyce sometimes tried to write off the otherness of his brother Stanislaus. Budgen commanded respect, and he did so not only because of the complete seriousness of his approach to his art, but also because he was never in the least inclined to be subservient to Joyce. In Joyce he recognized a master of words, and this he admired and enjoyed. But being self-taught he belonged to no schools, had no time for cliques, cultural fashions, or critical movements, and was totally without affectation of any kind. For Budgen James Joyce was not only Joyce the writer to whose work one paid
due homage, but also Joyce the man, with many faults as well as many virtues. Furthermore, Budgen, the self-taught man, had taught himself remarkably well. He had spent some years painting in Paris in the great days before the First World War, and he was quite as much at home among writers and artists as was Joyce. He was a rare and interesting mixture of artist and practical man, in some respects a more complete person than Joyce could ever be.

While Budgen was pleased to be of assistance to his sometimes purblind friend, he also had a very full life of his own to lead, and the idea of devoting himself almost body and soul to Joyce and Joyce's art, as Paul Léon was to do for a time, would have been wholly repugnant to him. It was partly because Budgen respected Joyce, was prepared to help, as one helps any intimate friend, but had no intention of being subjected to Joyce's will, that Joyce found him so refreshing and valuable a person. Budgen had resilience and a kind of toughness which must have proved attractive to Joyce (also in his own way resilient) and which must have been still more highly prized in later years when Joyce was surrounded, as was so often the case, by yes-men, faddists, and cultists. Not only that, but Budgen's attitude to the arts, though less experimental than Joyce's, less intellectual, was at bottom not so very dissimilar. The thought in Joyce's works was, by his own admission, always (or almost always) simple. His novels, though superficially avant-garde, were composed on a groundwork of accurate realism, both physical and psychological. In their fundamentals, *Ulysses*, and even *Finnegans Wake*, are artistically, aesthetically, utterly unlike the dadaist, surrealist, transitional, revolution-of-the-word works which they sometimes superficially resemble. And because they are so positivist, so grounded in common sense and cause and effect, they were much more clearly understood in principle, if not always in detail, by a Frank Budgen than, for example, by a Eugene Jolas.

Among the visual artists Budgen's heroes were, as he himself used to say, the impressionists, and he continued to paint in that now unfashionable mode until, in his last years, his eyes began to fail. His canvases, which are almost always full of light, are representational in a suggestive rather than a denotative way, and the best of them shimmer with multicoloured sunshine and shadow. On the surface they seem to have little to do with Joyce and his books, but both
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men, although going beyond simple representation, made it the essential structural basis of their work. As Budgen himself says at the end of 'Further Recollections of James Joyce' (1955):

When I met Mrs. Joyce in Zürich after the war, she told me that during the day preceding the sudden onset of his fatal seizure Joyce had been to an exhibition of French nineteenth-century painting. Somehow there seems to me to be an affinity there, I mean between French nineteenth-century painters and Joyce, in the sense that all the work of his imagination and intellect was rooted, as was theirs, in a natural sensibility. (P. 366.)

Neither Budgen nor Joyce had much patience with abstract art; neither of them was interested in automatic creativity which short-circuits the connection between spirit and hand; each believed in the artistic value of hard work and the rational application of technique. (Budgen once said that he would like to be able to paint 'the way Brahms writes symphonies'.) But above all it was in their conception of the relationship between the art-work and the rest of the universe that they were alike: although their creations might depart from the day-to-day reality of ordinary people, they were rooted in it, and ultimately responsible to it.

Bloom is pre-eminent in Ulysses not only as the most important centre of consciousness, the most important 'character', but also as the bearer of the central values and the perceiver of the central percepts. He is near to being, as Joyce wanted him to be, 'a complete man, a good man', and while Ulysses transcends him aesthetically, it celebrates him morally. Furthermore, although the art of Ulysses goes beyond anything of which Bloom could conceive, it is based on his own Weltanschauung. Among other things this is, as one critic has said, a novel of 'cups and saucers, chairs and tables, sticks and stones', a novel in which the physical world, perceived as real by the simple act of knocking one's sconce against it, counts for a great deal. The moral and psychological problems of Ulysses, which are explored with such sensitivity, are the problems of men and women who live in, and respond to, a real physical environment. Without that environment the problems, and the characters, would simply fade away.

Budgen was, of course, a far more substantial figure than Bloom, and he shared neither Bloom's nor Joyce's sexual obsessions, but
allowing for differences of scale and of important detail, Joyce could recognize in Budgen a man who understood the Blooms of the world from the inside. Again, while Joyce had managed to shake off the chains of a mighty religious organization and emerge into common life fairly unscathed but necessarily conscious at all times of his Catholic background, Budgen had quietly slipped, with no great effort, from a sometimes fanatical but ultimately low-powered evangelicism which left him, for most of his life, an orthodox agnostic, indifferent to the claims of religion, though not disposed positively to deny the existence of a god—some god—and an afterlife. Budgen's personal disinterestedness and his natural respect for the spiritual and emotional value which belief may provide for others, made him, once again, similar to the kindly, doubting Bloom. Indeed, Budgen might almost have been speaking of himself when, describing Bloom's reactions at the funeral, he wrote: 'His mind is proof against the pathos of religion, but, seeing that some rite is necessary, as well this as another.'

Criticism of Ulysses has shown, over the first half-century of the novel's existence, that it can be all books to all men. Some read it as strenuously Catholic—a cry from a man eternally shut out; others see it as bitterly anti-religious. For some it is a celebration of the virtues of the bourgeois; for others it is an indictment of urban civilization. Budgen's view of the general tenor of Ulysses was undoubtedly influenced by Joyce, who had consciously tempered his comments on the book to the personality and tastes of his friend. Budgen reports:

Joyce's first question when I had read a completed episode or when he had read out a passage of an uncompleted one was always: 'How does Bloom strike you?'

Technical considerations, problems of homeric correspondence, the chemistry of the human body, were secondary matters. If Bloom was first it was not that the others were unimportant but that, seen from the outside, they were not a problem. (Pp. 106–7.)

At other times and with other interlocutors Joyce was capable of suggesting other emphases, but the version of the truth which he both implicitly and explicitly conveyed to Budgen comes closest to the spirit of the book as I read it. Budgen concludes that the novel as a whole is amoral but accepting, contemplative but sceptical:
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... it seems to me that Joyce neither hates nor loves, neither curses nor praises the world, but that he affirms it with a 'Yes' as positive as that with which Marion Bloom affirms her prerogative on the last page. It is not to him a brave new world, about to set forth upon some hitherto unattempted enterprise. Rather is it a brave old world, for ever flowing like a river, ever seeming to change yet changing never. The prevailing attitude of Ulysses is a very humane scepticism—not of tried human values, necessary at all times for social cohesion, but of all tendencies and systems whatsoever. There are moods of pity and grief in it, but the prevailing mood is humour. (P. 73.)

Budgen was able to adopt this point of view because he was content to let the book mean what it says. Although he was widely read in literature and philosophy of all kinds (more widely read, I believe, than Joyce) he was not disposed to treat Ulysses as allegory, to search for recondite meanings, to translate its plain sense into something else, to say, as so many seem to want to do these days, 'A = B, hey presto, we have proved something!' Reading a book was for Frank Budgen both a simpler and a more arduous matter than that: he wanted to know what it was actually saying. James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses' was the first attempt to provide a reading of the novel in those direct terms, and it is still one of the very best. The length and complexity of Ulysses make the shaping of a complete commentary a singularly difficult matter. Budgen found for his book a most satisfying rhythm and structure, matching biography to criticism in a way which not only allows each to illuminate the other, but shows their fundamental interdependence.

Joyce's response to Budgen's suggestion that he write the book is summed up by Budgen himself in the preface to the 1960 edition:

Joyce's attitude ... changed from that of benevolent scepticism to one of enthusiastic approval. During my short stay in Paris he gave me many suggestions for improving and enriching my text and when I moved on to Ascona letters dictated to Paul Léon followed in the same strain. Some of these are incorporated in the text of the present book.... (P. 5.)

While this is accurate, it is insufficiently detailed to convey the full flavour of Joyce's participation in the writing. Though by far the greater part of the book stems from Budgen alone, in 1932 and 1933
Joyce sent sheet after sheet of suggestions which, when adopted, turned some parts of it into a collaborative effort.* In the beginning there was no difficulty in incorporating new material, but as Budgen's book went to press changes became increasingly troublesome to make. Joyce, who was merciless to publishers and printers, had no hesitation in suggesting that Budgen should act in the same way as he himself had done in 1921 when seeing *Ulysses* through Darantière's in Dijon. At the end of a sheet of suggestions called 'Les dernières des dernières', Paul Léon wrote, on Joyce's behalf:

Revis proofs: What you do not get in on the galleys you can add on the revise. He advises you to get in all these small points and if the expense exceeds the usual six shillings per sheet-page he will defray the cost himself but by cheque coming through you, so long as the publication is not retarded.

The suggestions on that sheet, which Budgen incorporated, were followed by at least one further batch, headed 'Les Toutes dernières des Dernières (leaving only one other possibility which is les toutes dernières des toutes dernières)'. Most of the material consists of additions to passages of local colour, autobiographical details and corrections, and explanations of parts of 'Work in Progress'. Sometimes Joyce would simply list items under various rubrics without further comment, as he did for example on four sheets headed 'Zurich Figures', written out for him by Lucia:†

*Metzger Lenz.* A more than Velasquez figure meat warrior. He occupied all the tram platform.

*The King of Oil's daughter,* born Edith Rockefeller, ill favoured, malsaine fantastic distinguished and benevolent, she stalked about the town distributing charities houses and jachts. Rossen

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* Joyce's note-sheets, which were found among Budgen's papers after his death, are with one or two exceptions unpublished. In what follows, I have had space to quote only a small proportion of the material. Except for a few words written by Joyce himself, everything was taken down by Lucia and Paul Léon at Joyce's dictation. Some of the notes are in the hands of the amanuenses; others, generally the most important, are in typescript. Many were annotated by Budgen as he worked on them, and a few contain, in the margins, drafts of sentences for his book. Most of the note-sheets are undated. They are quoted here by permission of the Trustees of the Joyce Estate.

† The notes printed here reproduce the sometimes idiosyncratic spelling of the amanuenses.
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[Rawson] taught her husband Mc Cormick to whistle the song it ain’t gonna Waltza no more.

_Ôom Paul_ Of Niederdorf Ministre de la Grille, Dutch interior mais où sont les Bifteks D’Antan?

_Le homme qui rit._ He had a lion’s mouth from ear to ear and walked about the bourse with a copious English newspaper held up to his face.

Budgen made use of these passages in various ways, toning down the violent description of the recently deceased Edith Rockefeller (and omitting altogether a sardonic marginal addition written by Joyce himself: ‘She is the daughter of one Rockefeller/Whose oil brought more death into our/World and much of our woe’):

Mrs. MacCormick has a suite of rooms there. She is daughter of a king, an oil king, born Edith Rockefeller, and one of the richest women in the world. . . . Fantastic, distinguished, benevolent, she walks the town scattering right and left charities, houses and yachts. . . . Mr. Rawson, a friend of Joyce, taught Mr. MacCormick to whistle ‘It ain’t gonna Waltza no more.’

Here and there about the town one sees a tall bearded man of royal carriage. An exiled king? They are becoming common. No, a reignning monarch. His realm is called the ‘Meierei,’ a grill-room in Niederdorf. . . . His name is Oom Jan. . . . I heard with grief of the death of that great Dutchman. Où sont les bifteks d’antan?

. . . Butcher Lenz, in girth surpassing Velasquez’s actor, takes up all the platform of a tram designed for five and a conductor. _Le homme qui rit_ walks round the bourse with a copious English newspaper held up to his face. He has a lion’s mouth that stretches from ear to ear. (Pp. 28–9.)

Joyce’s suggestions fitted very effectively into Budgen’s extended collage of Zürich life in wartime.

Most of Joyce’s notes, although lively enough, are set down without noticeable intrusion of the linguistic experimentation and mythico-symbolic grotesquerie in which he was by 1933 so immersed. Occasionally, however, he indulged his love of word-play, and in such cases Budgen used or discarded as seemed appropriate. Joyce’s comment on the Zürich figure Sigmund Feilbogen, for example, is taken over only in part:

_Sigmund Feilbogen_ Ear trumpet which he oriented and occidented night and day to catch rumours of peace anywhere at any hour.
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The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune had hit him hard. Said to have lost his proffesorship in the higher school of Commerce in Vienna because his wife (Rubens type with one eye gone West) urged by female curiosity half consumed the host the pope gave her in St. Peter's and then spat it into her handkerchief.

Budgen, no doubt sensing that this colourful passage was not entirely in keeping with the tone of his context, reduced it to:

One time professor in the higher school of commerce in Vienna, Sigmund Feilbogen haunts the Café des Banques, with an ear-trumpet which he orients and occident night and day to catch rumours of peace anywhere at any hour (p. 29).

'Orients and occidents' exemplifies a kind of word-play which Budgen found natural to his own linguistic temper (potential non-posters of letters were warned against leaving them in 'poche restante'), but the last part of the story probably struck him as vaguely distasteful.

Where the tone was appropriate, Budgen was quite capable of using late Joycean methods himself. In the 'dernières des dernières' Léon wrote to Budgen to say that Joyce had inquired about the motto of the city of Zürich:

He wrote to prof Fehr for the arms and motto: . . . The latin motto is: Nobile turricum multarum copia rerum. The version on the gate is phonetic: it means Noble Zürich abounding in all manner merchandise. Turricum for the Zurcher in war time meant only a boot polish and the abundance in merchandise could be worked in about the butter cards.

The passage about the butter cards occurs on page 31 of Budgen's book, but he chose, instead, to work in Joyce's suggestion at a point more convenient for the printer, in the last paragraph of Chapter II, where, like the Joyce of 'Work in Progress', he leaves it to his reader to recognize the hidden allusion to the Zürich motto, crowning his celebration of the city: 'noble Turricum, in spite of rationing, abounded in all manner of goodly merchandise'.

Special mention should perhaps be made of the long set-piece on women's underclothing on pp. 213-14. Although Budgen, who looked upon Bloom's obsessions with kindly interest but without
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involvement, could not share Joyce’s intense concern with the paraphernalia of sex, he responded to a plea from Joyce, sent through Léon in a letter dated 30 March 1933:

As a personal favour he would like you when treating the subject of the Nausikaa episode to reconsider the way you have dealt with the mysteries of ladies’ toilet and to remember that some words are too sacred to be either said or written.

Joyce later repeated his request in a further letter, dated 7 May 1933.* The disquisition on underwear, and Budgen’s illustration for the Nausikaa episode, among those reproduced in the first edition of his book, were included as gestures of friendship.

As Budgen himself points out in the ‘Further Recollections’, he felt no obligation to accept those suggestions of Joyce’s which were alien to his temperament. On several of the note-sheets he made annotations indicating his opinion of the offerings. One of Joyce’s notes, quoted in part in ‘Further Recollections’, is headed ‘BIRTHNIGHT chez J.J.’:

We did not sing either the Wearing of the Green or And Shall Trelawney Die? in honour of our respective Irish and Cornish forebears ... but the evening was sure to close with a rendering by Ruggiero and J. of the Greek National Anthem—χάρε, χάρε, 'Ελένθερην (Hail Hail oh! Liberty!)

Against this Budgen wrote, at various times, three notes: a bold ‘Left Out’; ‘Don’t remember’ (in ‘Further Recollections’ he is more positive: ‘we didn’t’); and ‘don’t like quoting Greek’. Under the heading ‘TENOR’, Joyce, via Léon, writes about what is now Finnegans Wake 427.10-13:

W i P Pt II sect. 1 and 2 contain frequent lyrical reminiscences of count MacCormack’s voice. He is alluded to in J.J.’s letter to S published in the New Statesman as the tuning fork among tenors. W i P part I almost closes with a suspired rendering of the famous recitative E lucean le stelle by a pipe smoking Cavaradossi beginning: ‘And the stellas were shining’ and breaking into the moving romance measure with the version: O dulcid dreamings languidious! Taboccoo!

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In the margin of this illuminating paragraph Budgen, never a particularly musical man, adds the simple remark: ‘Can’t write about music.’

A great many of Joyce’s suggestions concern, as this one does, his real love of the moment, ‘Work in Progress’, which now interested him much more than did Ulysses. Mentioning Chapelizod, which Budgen had recently visited at Joyce’s suggestion, he invites Budgen ‘to work in actual names of persons there, from your visit’; he is particularly concerned with the Blake parallels, duly emphasized by Budgen towards the end of his last chapter; and there is one highly interesting passage about the fundamental principles of ‘Work in Progress’ (paraphrased in ‘Further Recollections’, page 361):

Yeats’s defence & definition of magic: a) The borders of our minds are always shifting tending to become part of the universal mind b) The borders of our memory also shift and form part of universal memory c) This universal mind & memory can be evoked by symbols

It should be pointed out that Mr J. lived amidst all this (including Yeats) and his library was full of theosophic works though he did not use any of the recognised symbols—using instead words trivial and quadrivial and local geographical allusions (Trivial meaning literally—carrefour—where three roads meet).

Some valuable remarks of Joyce’s had to be omitted altogether from the book. Among the most interesting is a reference to Bloom’s bath, in Lotus Eaters: ‘Does your reader realize what a unique event this was in the Dublin I knew up to 1904.’ Another refers to the ‘King v. Humphrey’ sequence of ‘Work in Progress’: ‘You say this is a difficult case [Budgen, p. 307] but some years ago I read a court in India had to try a case of a hindu goddess (who was allowed to plead by proxy) versus Rabindranth [sic] Tagore.’

While Budgen’s book is the only extended account of any part of Joyce’s life written by someone who knew him intimately, in matters of detail it is not, and was never intended to be, everywhere literally true. Budgen himself gives a hint in his preface to the 1960 edition:

With a number of false starts in front of me I began to wonder if Joyce’s confidence in my original method of approach were not a
litter too optimistic. Then out of the fog I was moving in I saw emerging the shapes of a man, a book, a place, a time. I was able to begin at the beginning and my memory was set free. It is remarkable how much hindsight it takes to perceive the self-evident. (P. 4.)

Both the portrait of the man and the book as a whole are shaped by Budgen the artist. Time also, as he implies, is consciously shaped, moulded, adapted to the overall design. *James Joyce and the Making of ‘Ulysses’* is a partly fictionalized biography, the general impression of which is as true as Budgen can make it, but the details of which are often manipulated in the interests of that greater truth—*Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in fact. Many, perhaps most, of the remembered conversations—‘We were walking down the Rämistrasse when, the Uetliberg before us suggesting a giant, Joyce said . . .’—are worked up from comments in letters and note-sheets. Budgen was not content merely to set down recollections of his day-to-day contacts with Joyce. Memory being fallible and fragmented, he would deliberately fictionalize in order to approach truth indirectly.*

Joyce was well aware of the creative element in Budgen’s book, and he was at pains to encourage its development. A decade earlier he had clearly recognized a parallel between Budgen and his hero, Ulysses. Budgen, absent from home for some years, had returned to London after the war; Joyce wrote to him on 10 December 1920:

> A point about Ulysses (Bloom). He romances about Ithaca (Oi want teh gow beck teh the Mawl Enn Rowd, s’elp me!) and when he gets back it gives him the pip. I mention this because you in your absence from England seemed to have forgotten the human atmosphere and I the atmospheric conditions of these zones. *(Letters, I. 152.)*

In 1933 Joyce continually urged Budgen, another Ulysses–Bloom, to include in his book more material about himself: ‘Speaking of the importance of the landscape more should be worked in about your art’; ‘Curtail quotations or insert short explanatory sentences less

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* Chapter VIII of *Myselfs When Young* includes other recollections of Joyce, generally of a more factual nature. In a book written so long after the deaths of Joyce and Nora, Budgen also felt able to deal with certain aspects of Joyce’s life and personality as he could not have done in 1934.
of J. more of yourself’. And in a note about Shaun the Post he made the importance of the Budgen–Ulysses parallel explicit:

A passing allusion to your work in the GPO especially if you did any nightwork would not be amiss in this connection. The more bewildered the reader is as to whether you are painter, sculptor, civil servant, sailor, postman etc. the better as the same applies to Ulysses.

Budgen’s book retells the story of Ulysses just as Ulysses retells that of the Odyssey; it was written by a similarly accretive method, with last-minute changes; and the two characters who figure most prominently in it, Joyce and Budgen, are often shown leaving aside their real many-sidedness to play the roles of Stephen and Bloom.

That Budgen’s book is such a happy mixture of clear-sighted exposition and sympathetic personal understanding is due mainly to the quality of the human relationship which he and Joyce were able to establish with one another. With many people Joyce was, in minor ways, something of a poseur. As Budgen subtly indicates in the scene of their first meeting and throughout the biographical passages, he was never taken in by the poses, which Joyce seems wisely to have abandoned, except on rare occasions, after the development of their intimacy. Budgen, although the most direct and unaffected of men, knew how difficult it is to attain complete sincerity and thorough self-knowledge. His comments about self-portraiture—the artist being condemned to paint himself in the act of painting himself, inevitably watching himself act to himself—contain some of the wisest things ever said, directly or by implication, about the relationship of writer to subject in Joyce’s basically autobiographical art. But Budgen was more than the ideal commentator: he was, as Joyce realized, the successful embodiment of that desired fusion which never occurs in Ulysses—the spiritual marriage of Stephen and Bloom.

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October 1971