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Why ABC Matters: Lexicography and Literary History

By Jon Helgason

Abstract

The purpose of this article is twofold. First, I wish to discuss the origins of *The Swedish Academy Dictionary* against the backdrop of the social and cultural history of lexicography in 18th and 19th century Europe. Second, to consider material aspects of lexicography – the dictionary as interface – in light of German media scientist Friedrich Kittler's "media materialism". Ultimately, both purposes intend to describe how letters and writing have been constructed and arranged throughout the course of history. In Kittler's view, "the intimization of literature", that took place during second half of the 18th century, brought about a fundamental change in the way language and text were perceived. However, parallel to this development an institutionalization and disciplining of language and literature took place. The rise of modern society, the nation state, print capitalism and modern science in 18th century Europe necessitated (and were furthered by) a disciplining of language and literature. This era was for these reasons a golden age for lexicographers and scholars whose work focused on the vernacular. In this article the rise of the alphabetically ordered dictionary and the corresponding downfall of the topical dictionary that occurred around 1700 is regarded as a technological threshold. This development is interesting not only within the field of history of lexicography, but arguably also, since information and thought are connected to the basic principles of mediality, this development has bearings on the epistemological revolution of the 18th century witnessed in, among other things, Enlightenment thought and literature.

Keywords: Lexicography, media archaeology, Friedrich Kittler, technological threshold, Walter Ong, Benedict Anderson, Swedish Academy Dictionary, saob

Introduction

According to the German media scientist Friedrich Kittler, the very moment I sit down to read aloud to my children I also reproduce one of the key scenes of modern literary culture. Kittler argues that around 1800 literature constituted a cultural inscription programme tied to the rise of the bourgeois family and the bourgeois individual. Kittler's analysis of the "discourse networks" of the end of the 18th century in his work *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* is based on, among other things, social and psychological models of interpretation where, for instance, children's acquisition of reading and writing skills within the intimate sphere is regarded as pivotal to the rise of modern culture of literacy. Around 1800, the activity of reading became linked with an intimate process of literacy. New learning techniques connected to reading and writing acquisition, such as sounding, marked, according to Kittler, a radical break with previous traditions of teaching, where reading was based on orthographic recognition and instead each letter was connected to a specific sound. This change in learning techniques corresponded to a change in both handwritten and printed texts. Gothic script (Fraktur style, black letter) was gradually replaced by the softer letters of the cursive style (antiqua). In Kittler's view, the intimization of literature brought about a fundamental, radical change in the way language and text were perceived. The learning techniques that were developed involved reading and writing techniques that rendered them automatic – as something incorporeal and general. In the reading process language became transcendental. Individual letters and single words ceased to exist. The text became a transparent carrier of meaning.

It is highly significant that this process coincided with (and contributed to) the increased significance of emotion in literary interpretation. This development took place about the same time all over Europe, during the second half of the 18th century. For instance, around 1770 the German education system began to emphasize the significance of emotion in the interpretation of literary texts. Authors were not primarily judged, as previously, on whether they could be recited or imitated, but on how they could be interpreted and understood by the reader on the basis of moral and emotional values. For Kittler these processes are intimately connected. They show that information and thought are connected to the basic principles of mediality. It is this inner production of meaning, an internal realization that Kittler refers to when he writes: "Literature established itself as a medium that could transform words into flowers and flowers into women. Not technically, but psychologically; not by the aid of machines but through human interfaces" (Kittler 1985: 414).[1]

Kittler views the establishment of philosophical aesthetics and aesthetical sciences, such as the history of art and literature, as symptoms of this process. Literature was attributed a function as a source of morals and values within a rational, humanistic educational system which focused on the production of civil

servants who were meant to implement the values of the increasingly influential bourgeois public sphere. The function of literature within the educational system was that of a medium of cultural memory and social knowledge.

It is however possible to turn Kittler's reasoning upside down. It is equally true that this era not only brought about an intimization of language and literature but also an institutionalization and disciplining of these two functions. This line of thought constitutes a bridge of sorts between Habermas' theory of public spheres in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (1962) and Kittler's media archaeology. One of the most fundamental historical changes concerns what I wish to call the disciplining of public language.

Coinciding with "the intimization of literature" there were radical institutional attempts to, on scientific grounds, regulate and discipline language, to codify spelling, inflection and, not least, meaning. The craze for systematization of the 18th century can also be attributed to "The Encyclopaedic Idea" – the will and ambition to collect and order all human knowledge. Works such as Johann Heinrich Zedler's *Großes vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste welche bishero durch menschlichen Verstand und Witz erfunden und verbessert wurden* (1731–1750) and Johann Georg Sulzer's monumental theory of art, *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste in einzeln, nach alphabetischer Ordnung der Kunstwörter auf einander folgenden Artikeln abgehandelt* (1771–1774), can be regarded as a symptomatic expression of these ideas. The concept of national literatures thus coincided with the need for a public language. Ideas concerning national literature and the significance of the language of the nation were furthered by and reproduced through the development of the educational system during the 19th century. The importance of Latin was significantly reduced during the 18th century and, through the growth of literacy, the written vernacular had a growing influence on refined language. This influence constitutes a significant linguistic foundation to the public spheres described by Habermas.[2]

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first I will describe the origins of *The Swedish Academy Dictionary* against the backdrop of the social and cultural history of lexicography in 18th century Europe; and second, to consider material aspects of lexicography – in this case the rise of the alphabetical dictionary – in light of Kittler's "media materialism". "Materiality" in this sense can, in a broad sense, be seen as the result of the interplay between physical reality and the technology we humans use to shape and create meaning.

I

Disciplining Language

Benedict Anderson writes that more than any other factor capitalism has contributed to the merging of closely-related vernaculars. A mechanically reproducible print language for the dissemination of texts to the market lay in the interests of capitalism. The interplay between capitalism and printing created single language mass audiences by establishing unified areas of exchange and communication. Print capitalism created a language of the public sphere that contributed to the weakening of some dialects. Even ethnic groups that did not comprehend each others' dialects, something that was the case in many European countries, could understand each other through printed matter. This gave a new stability to language. The difference between public and private language was reduced as dialects were forced to retreat in the face of an expanding culture of literacy. The specific language traits of the nobility and upper classes faded gradually during the 19th century and refined spoken language approached that of the written language.

Printed matter after the Gutenberg Revolution contributed to the formation of an understanding of the past that later became central to the subjective idea of the nation. The prerequisites for the imagined communities of the modern nation originated in the interplay between capitalism, technology and language diversity.[3]

For these reasons, the 19th century was a golden age for lexicographers, grammarians philologists and scholars whose work focused on the vernacular. Vernacular languages were an important tool in the administrative centralization that took place in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. The great European dictionary projects were powerful instruments in the process of standardization that most European languages underwent during this period. The history of lexicography is for this reason a part of the history of the written language and thus a part of the history of public language.

The creation of rules for commodity production within the bourgeois public sphere was vital to the authority of the sphere of public power. One of the essential perquisites for this regulation, which is evident in Anderson's description of the importance of print capitalism, was that the potential of writing as a mass medium was realised during the 18th century.

Even today, writing is perhaps our most efficient medium. As a medium, writing has an unsurpassed stability when it comes to preservation, transport and duplication. It is this quality which provides the public sphere with part of its authority. The claims of science in the 18th and 19th centuries were furthered by the fact that writing as medium could ensure that the scientific observation of complex processes could be correctly verbalised (Cfr Ong 2002: 125). At the same time, language was conceived of as more "textual". The printed text became its most

complete, paradigmatic form. The standard of the language for compilation in the dictionaries was the language used by authors writing texts intended for printing. The printed text became a putative definitive form. Changes could not be added as was previously the case with the hand-written text. The literary text was viewed as denser, more verbally (textually) closed. A printed work was complete and separate from other works. It was from this perception that the humanities derived their claims to scholarship. Scholarship in the humanities has been defined as researching texts in their capacity as sources. This is the reason why the elucidation of the authenticity of the sources, their tendency and intention has characterised almost all humanistic research.

In Sweden (as with many other European countries), this progress was manifested in the expansion, adaptation and modernization of the vocabulary to Swedish conditions. Orthography became more uniform and the alphabetical order thus became more consistent. Lexicographical information expanded and became more precise. Concurrently with this intense phase of development in lexicography, a Swedish written language was stabilised – an important prerequisite for an extensive literary public sphere.

Lexicography was a node in a network of institutions formed to support the public sphere around 1800. A dictionary is, from an historical perspective, often a cementation of a local dialect that for political, geographical or religious reasons later becomes accepted as a national language. The printed dialect – the grapholect – has a much greater degree of normative force than the dialect. The veritable explosion of dictionaries during the 18th century is, therefore, a significant marker of the transition from an oral to a written culture.

The dictionaries brought about the understanding of language as an historical product as well as the idea of "correct language" and accordingly the possibility to normatively affect language use. However, at the beginning of the 19th century, none of the Nordic countries had achieved lexicographic descriptions in monolingual, defining dictionaries.

The Dictionary as a National Monument

The Swedish Academy Dictionary (henceforth the *SAOB*) is a monument to writing and as such a manifestation of the public spheres of literature. The first installment of the *SAOB* was published in 1893 and the first volume in 1898. The last volume is planned for publication in 2017. However, the ideological incentive for the *SAOB* project originates to a great degree from the national romantic period and the world of ideas that have been mentioned previously in this essay. The *SAOB* is a national, scientific dictionary of Modern Swedish as it appears in written sources. Within the context of the history of language the period of Modern Swedish begins in 1526 with the first Swedish translation of the New Testament. The *SAOB* is primarily a historical dictionary that stresses written language. It

describes not only words actively in use, but also words that have gone out of use as well as meanings that never or almost never appear in contemporary usage. The *SAOB* describes the vocabulary of written Swedish, but not without restrictions. As a rule names of persons and places, technical terms and dialect words are omitted.

The dictionaries in the Germanic languages that are roughly comparable in scope, historical extension and ambition to *The Swedish Academy Dictionary* are the Grimm's *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1852–1961), *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (1864–1998) and the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1888–1928), officially re-named *The Oxford English Dictionary* from 1933 onwards.[4] The establishment of the two first-mentioned was associated in particular with one of the basic tenets of nationalism: One nation, one people, one language. In several Central European countries, among them Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the birth of the nation coincided with the lexicographical enterprise. The 19th century definition of a nation, that it comprised a community of language, strongly contributed to the formation of the German Reich and to the national processes in the Netherlands and Belgium. Although the *SAOB* is characterised by the same ideas, the connection between language and nation is not as explicit. Modern linguistics had gained too strong a foothold in Sweden at the time the *SAOB* project actually started for this to happen. Instead, the *raison d'être* for the *SAOB* was essentially to make the literary heritage of the nation available to its citizens. This connected literary heritage to the history of the nation and of its language. This was an idea that could easily be reconciled with the rise of modern linguistics during the latter half of the 19th century.

The commission to compile a dictionary was incorporated into the Statutes of the Swedish Academy from 1786. In §22 of the Statutes it states "That the finest and most pressing duty of the Academy" is the work "on the purity, strength and nobleness of the Swedish language". The aesthetic refinement of language was seen as an important task for any nation with self-esteem. The *SAOB* was to contribute to the embellishment of the Swedish language by providing guidance on the correct spelling of words, their inflection and meaning – all in accordance with the wishes of the founder of the Swedish Academy, Gustav III of Sweden, who wanted "to make Laws for the language" because "no language can be written well without firm rules". On the 10th of February 1787 the decision was taken to start work on a dictionary of the Swedish language and the work was to be modelled on that used in compiling the dictionary of the French Academy, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*. Following in the footsteps of the French Academy, the members of the Swedish Academy simply divided the letters of the alphabet among themselves: the poet Johan Henric Kellgren (1751-1795) was allocated the letters A and U, and the historian Anders af Botin (1724-1790) was allocated the letters H and S. However, this working method proved far from efficient. In 1808 the poet and linguist Carl Gustaf af Leopold (1756-1829) was appointed editor of

the *SAOB*, but his interest diminished over the years, and the project came to a standstill in 1814. Several years later, in 1883, the project was recommenced, when Knut Fredrik Söderwall (1842-1924) was appointed editor of the *SAOB*.

The vocabulary that is treated in the *SAOB* is Swedish written language from 1521 to present day. The examples of usage are "authentic", meaning that they have been selected from a comprehensive data bank containing excerpts from actual texts. Some sources have been subjected to a more comprehensive excerption than others. This applies of course to the Bible (first translation in 1541) and the Swedish Hymn Book, *The Official Registrature of Gustav Vasa (Konung Gustaf den förstes registratur)*, *Excerpts from public records since 1718* (*Utdrag utur alle ifrån ... 1718 utkomne publique handlingar)*, encyclopaedias, records of the city courts of law, the parliamentary records of the Swedish Parliament, *The Work and Letters of Axel Oxenstierna* as well as the records of the Swedish Academy and the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The sources listed above clearly show the strong attachment of the *SAOB* to the public sphere. As a consequence women's language has been less well documented than men's and the documentation of female experience has been underrepresented (Cfr Mattisson 2006).

One of the most interesting phrasings in the commissioning of the *SAOB* is that "important works of literature and well-known literary passages are to be prioritised". And it is particularly pertinent that Gustav III of Sweden did not, in the first instance, appoint linguists or grammarians to the Swedish Academy but poets, politicians and men of state, i.e. men who could provide practical guidance in poetry and eloquence. The principal idea being that their own feeling for language should be codified.

Both of these factors are to this day still reflected in *SAOB*. "Vitterhet" (belles-lettres) is by far the largest category among the sources of the SAOB.[5] Swedish 18th and 19th century literature is particularly well excerpted. In the (isolated) studies that have been made, "belles-lettres" accounts for 42% of the total sources for the year 1975; for the year 1898 the same figure is 29% and in 1939 it was nearly 22%. These two last-mentioned figures are in reality higher since several "collected works" were treated as a single source at this time (Svensson 1992: 372-373). In 1990, this figure was 18%. In the *SAOB*, at least, the Swedish national romantic poet Esaias Tegnér lives up to his fame as the national poet. He is by far the most quoted author and before the *SAOB* is completed he will have been quoted more than 10 000 times. *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,* the children's story by the Noble Laureate Selma Lagerlöf, is the single most quoted work (slightly more than 1 400 times), followed by *Jonas och draken* ("Jonas and the Dragon", 1928) the work of the early 20th century author Sigfrid Siwert and *Vapensmeden* ("The Weapon Smith", 1891) by the 19th century author Viktor Rydberg (Mattisson 2006: 63-64).

II

The Alphabetical vs. the Topical Dictionary

One of Kittler's basic assumptions is that technology possesses the power to shape and control human lives as well as our ability to critically think about these phenomena. This is a perspective that focuses on the material structures of technology rather than the meaning of these structures or the messages they convey:

> What remains of people is what media can store and communicate. What counts are not the messages or the content with which they equip so-called souls for the duration of a technological era, but rather (and in strict accordance with McLuhan) their circuits, the very schematism of perceptibility. (Kittler 1999: xl–xli)

Kittler focuses on the historical conditions of the emergence of new media and the structures of communication and understanding they bring forward. Kittler has paid special attention to "technological thresholds", i.e. points in history where different media networks compete with one another. Arguably, one such threshold is the rise of the alphabetically ordered dictionary and the corresponding downfall of the topical dictionary that occurred around 1700.[6]

Nowadays the most common macrostructure of dictionaries is the alphabetically order. "Macrostructure" is a term used to describe the organization of lexical entries in a dictionary in either lists (semasiological; from Greek *semasia*, meaning of a word, or alphabetical dictionaries), tree structures (onomasiological; from Greek *onoma*, name, or sometimes called topical, thematic, conceptual or ideographical dictionaries) or, in our present day, networks (electronic or online dictionaries). Semasiology is a term belonging lexicography. It is a term which denotes the co-ordination of language and meaning, of linguistic form and matter, by listing lexemes in the arrangement of the alphabet. Onomasiology, on the other hand, is a term which denotes the co-ordination of meaning and language, the technique of listing lexemes according to some order which is not that of the alphabet.

It is known that historically the onomasiological dictionary precedes the alphabetical one. The construction is basically as old as written culture in Europe (Hüllen 1999: 15).

The onomasiological dictionary orders its entries according to the presumed encyclopaedical knowledge of its users. The arrangement of entries in non-alphabetical type of dictionaries indicate that the order of entries is not determined by external criteria but by a certain attitude towards the relation between meaning and form in language (Hüllen 1999: 16). Generally, onomasiological dictionaries were ordered by keywords into semantic domains. The first domains would typically include God, the universe, heaven and nature. These would be followed by categories relating to man as a physical, spiritual and social being. Parts of the human body were given from head to foot. Typically, visible parts of the human

body outnumbered those of the inner organs whereas the lower domains would include insects, stones etc. Although such a list is an important document of the biological and medical knowledge of the time, Hüllen warns that such lists represent a tradition of words rather than of things. They cannot be regarded as fully realistic mirrors of the world of their time (Hüllen 1999: 132).

The structure of onomasiological dictionaries remained remarkably consistent throughout the centuries. There was, as McArther describes, a "core" of thematic ideas that showed "a considerable consensus down the centuries, in the Classical-to-Christian-to-Rationalist culture of the Western world, as to what the primary categories need to be in any ordering of cosmos from a human point of view." (McArthur 1986: 151) The structure of the onomasiological dictionary into thematical, philosphically meaningful semantic categories can be regarded as remnants of a mnemotechnical organization of data originating from the oral tradition of the classical and medieval world. The art of memory (*ars memorativa*) recommended a "spatial" arrangement of knowledge by associating memories to visualized locations. This arrangement was based on presumed harmony between the structure of memory and reality (Hüllen 1999: 50).

The hierarchy of the system included above and below, high and low, outward and inward, life and death, animate to inanimate. Contrary to an alphabetically ordered dictionary, an onomasiological dictionary does not per se explain what is unknown in language. Rather it is a classification of concepts in taxonomy or ontological structure, that was constructed to facilitate the transformation of general encyclopaedic knowledge into concrete linguistic knowledge. This means that topical dictionaries typically are organized according to the semantic structure of a whole language. This structure, Hüllen states, "depends on the structure of reality as language users believe they understand it at a given time" (Hüllen 1999: 15). They contain an ontology – a theory of the world.

Dictionary as Interface

The intention of the onomasiological dicionaries up to 1700 was to present a comprehensive image of the world in its entirety. The underlying lexicographical matrix was that of the *liber naturae*. The world was regarded as book written by God. The dictionaries were conceived as mirrors of this book. The dictionaries were written by authors who had read and fully understood the world as God's scripture. For this reason the dictionaries often had titles containing words such as *imago* (likeness) or *speculum* (mirror) or *thesaurus* (treasure). Thereby either stressing the character of these books as reflections of the world and its divine order or that their wealth of information was an analogy to the grandeur of God's creation (Hüllen 1999: 438).

The onomasiological dictionary differed also in terms of use from its semasiological counterpart. The former were intended for encyclopaedic and didactic pur-

poses, constructed to store knowledge and to be used as textbooks. They were intended to provide new words as the carriers of new knowledge. The order in which the new words and their meaning were arranged also acted as a principle for teaching and learning. These functions were fused (Hüllen 1999: 24-25). Also, it was common to learn long passages of word-lists and even entire dictionaries by heart. Onomasiological dictionaries were used as texts and conceived as a textual unity. This makes the usability of onomasiological dictionaries much wider. This can be illustrated by the fact that the onomasiologically ordered children's dictionary *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (World in Pictures, 1658), by Czech scholar John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) became one of the most widely circulated school textbooks in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The onomasiological dictionaries up to 1700 were important precursors to the terminological systems that became increasingly important within several fields of science, perhaps most notably in botany (Hüllen 1999: 442). However, from the 17th century onwards there was a strong decline in the onomastic tradition. McArthur stresses the basic materiality that paved the way for alphabetic arrangement:

> Although some properly alphabetic works appeared before Gutenberg printed his first book, the printing press seems to have been the factor that changed everything in favour of non-thematic ordering. Compositors were constantly re-shuffling the letters of the alphabet around as small hard metal objects in trays and in composites. They and their associates – which included many writers who were wont to frequent print shops – became as a consequence increasingly at home with the convenience that the alphabet offers an invariant series. […] Sheer familiarity with hard physical objects in a very practical craft appears therefore, to have promoted interest in ABC order in other, related but more abstract fields. (McArthur 1986: 77)

Onomasiological dictionaries continued to be re-edited and new ones appeared but by mid 18th century they became more and more scarce (Cfr Hüllen 1999: 26-27, 443-444). This is illustrated by the fact that Samuel Johnson, in his great *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) with perfect authority could define a dictionary as a book "containing the words of any language in alphabetical order, with explanations of their meaning".

The matter I wish to address are not the facets of an historiography of consciousness imbedded in the semantic categorization of the onomasiological dictionary, but the question of technological ordering, directionality of reading paths and the dissemination of data that lies embedded in the "interface" (i.e. a point of interaction that communicates information from one system to another) of a dictionary (Cfr Kress 2003: chapter 4 & 9). Because, unlike the onomasiological dictionary, the semasiological dictionary is concerned with words and word use, rather than with the classification of concepts. Typically it may provide information on orthography, syntactic class, pronunciation, inflections and etymology, as well as meaning. More importantly in this context, the alphabetical structure, an "invariant series", does not encompass an ontology:

> This is an epistemological framework which, being entirely free from metaphysical concepts, places the acquisition of knowledge solely on words. It is their function to

> bind together the various simple ideas which are integrated into one hole, to act as a *node*. Words are not oriented towards a preordered reality, they *mean* a creatively collected bundle of simple ideas which they stabilize for recording and communication. (Hüllen 1999: 446)

As such, the alphabetical order placed no necessary limits upon human knowledge. The notion of Divine Order could be replaced with a radical humanism based on belief in social progress, social equality and the perfectability of society and the individual (McArthur 1986: 105).

III

This essay is, to some extent, inspired by the ideas of the Swedish critic Thomas Götselius who conceived a "literary historiographical research without literary history". His materialist literary history, influenced by Kittler, involves "a *literal* history of literature": a *historia litterae* – a history of how letters and writing have been constructed and arranged throughout the course of history (Götselius 2008: 12). In this essay, following in the footsteps of Kittler, it has been possible to sketch a primitive line of development from the papyrus scroll to the parchment codex, from hand-written copies to the serial printing of the print revolution and in its wake follows pagination, table of contents, the index et cetera, by highlighting the materiality of lexicographical indexing (Cfr Kittler 1988).

The index, i.e. an arrangement that ranks and refers to entries, not only horizontally or vertically but also crosswise – such as in the typical instance of a alphabetical dictionary – represents a way of thinking that differs from that of the processes of oral language. The use of the neutral spatiality of writing far exceeds what had previously been possible. Oral cultures have "no experience of a lengthy, epic-size or novel-size climactic linear plot." (Ong 2002: 140) Oral works are seldom constructed with a climax or peripeteia – something that is included in the horizon of expectation of the modern reader.[7] During the 18th century the "flat" character was replaced by a more complex, psychologically "round" character, made possible by the rise of the novel (Cfr Ong 2002:148-149). It is this textual organization, the increasing interiorization of the world, that Benedict Anderson refers to, when he writes about "the structural alignment of post-1820s nationalist "memory" with the inner premises and conventions of modern biography and autobiography" (Anderson "Preface to the Second Edition" 2006: xiv).

The encyclopaedic and lexicographic boom of the 18th century was one of the factors that finally affirmed the cultural authority of the printed word. This process was, as I have tried to demonstrate, furthered by the ontological void of the alphabet. The breakthrough for a culture of literacy meant that information exchange became standardised to a larger extent than had previously been possible with the human voice or the hand-written document. Skills in reading and writing thus became an important indicator of social class. Reading and writing became activities that demanded seclusion. As Ong writes "what is inside the text

and the mind is a complete unit, self-contained in its silent inner logic" (Ong 2002: 147). Literacy in this sense thus contributed to strictly internalised and individualised modes of reflection – one could say a textual organization of consciousness.

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Notes

1 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. In the orginal German: "Dichtung etablierte sich als ein Medium, das Worte in Blumen und Blumen in Frauen verwandeln konnte – nicht technisch, aber psychologisch, nicht durch Maschinen, aber durch menschliche Interfaces."

2 It should be noted that Habermas' concept of "bürgerliche Gesellschaft" should be interpreted in terms of a "civil society".

3 Anderson's use of the word "imagined" as in "imagined communities" should not be interpreted as "invented" or "fake". The community is imagined in the sense that an individual of the nation does not know each and every one of the citzens of the nation, none the less these citizens share an imagined understanding of a national community. To Anderson this is the prerequisite for those mental and psychological, basically irrational forces that constitute the individual's feeling of participation in a national collective (regarded as a psychological mass-movement) and the construction of the nation as a mental landscape.

4 For DWB and OED the year stated is when the first volume was published, for WNT when the first instalment was completed.

5 The Swedish category "vitterhet" is a somewhat imprecise term covering a wide field. It is often translated as "belles-lettres, i.e. a term which the OED describes as sometimes used for elegant or polite literature or literary studies and sometimes used in the wide sense of 'the humanities'.

6 The historical description of the onomastic tradition is largely based on Hüllen (1999, in particular chapters 1, 2, 9 and 11) and, to a lesser extent, McArthur (1986). I wish to stress that I have not attempted to give a complete overview of the history of the onomasiological dictionary. Certain aspect have been highlighted in order to draw tentative parallels to the developments outlined by Kittler (and Ong).

7 This is of course particularly the case for oral epic poetry. The term "peripeteia" was coined by Aristotle in his description of the ancient Greek drama.

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