Microsoft's Auto-Correction, And What It Tells Us

I have just discovered that the auto-correction feature of Microsoft Word changes — without so much as a by-your-leave — the word "Bodleian" into the word "Boolean." The logic and the symbolism of this mechanical metamorphosis, this transmuting of the name — without human intervention— of a celebrated repository of the past into the name of a part of mathematics indispensable for the development of the computer, are telling. Things are in the saddle, and ride mankind, said Carlyle. Or was it Emerson? More precisely: software is in the sadddle, and rides mankind. And as for living, our algorithms will do that for us.