Abstract

Nowadays we tend to regard the idea of a university as an outdated subject. The world of universities is today so complex and diverse that no general doctrine of the university seems possible. In a recent article Alasdair MacIntyre challenges this view and points out that by giving up the question "What is university?" we also give up the question "What is an educated mind?" In this article I will return to the old discussion on the idea of a university. I will go all the way back to Plato, but my main theme is J. V. Snellman's essay On Academic Studies (1840). There Snellman, a young university lecturer at the time, defends his view that the university is a community of selves. The essay strongly emphasises that students should not only learn to know but also to act in a responsible way as selves. However, the text also reflects on Snellman's own activity before the publication. He had defended academic freedom against the rector of the Imperial Alexander University of Finland. As a result, Snellman was in the end sentenced in an open court and forced to leave the university. Snellman's view is certainly not the final definition of the university, but as it, besides presenting a theoretical view on the essence of the university, also reflects on activity in a university community, it gives us elements for reflecting on the idea of a university and an educated mind.

Keywords: idea of university; self and higher education; history of university; reflection

Introduction

In their article "Defining the essence of a university: lessons from higher education branding", Arild Waeraas and Marianne Solbakk examine the difficulties of defining the essence of what a university 'is', what it 'stands for' (Waeraas & Solbakk 2009). Their example is a regional university in northern Norway. The researchers found that a university may actually be too complex an entity to be
encapsulated in a single definition: "The data show that the University is not an organisation with a coherent, single identity." (458) The result is no surprise. Alasdair MacIntyre begins his recent article on the idea of a university by quoting authors who no longer see a general doctrine of university as possible.¹ MacIntyre disagrees strongly with such views. He follows John Henry Newman's argumentation in the *The Idea of a University* (1852) and turns from the question "What is a university?" to the question "What is an educated mind?" (MacIntyre 2009: 353) It now follows that if we overlook the first question, then “whatever universities are achieving, they are not producing educated minds or, to put matters more justly, they are doing so only incidentally and accidentally” (354.)

MacIntyre also highlights how difficult an innocent looking question such as "What are you doing?" actually is. Possible answers might be: "solving an equation; predicting next week's stock prices; pleasing my employer; working late in the office; absenting myself from dinner with my family; alienating my oldest child." (MacIntyre 2009: 359) In order to answer the more specific question "What are you doing at the university?" we ought to have some kind of a general view of a university. Where should we start to search for such an idea?

Actually, even Waeraas and Solbakk, despite their view that a university is not a coherent unity, give us an outline for a kind of identity of the university. A university is not to be understood as a singly coherent identity but "rather, it should be understood as a 'parliament of selves'". Waeraas and Solbakk refer to research by Stuart Albert and David A. Whetten in their organisation studies from the 1980s (Albert & Whetten 1985), but in fact, the idea of the university as a community of selves is as old as the idea of a university itself.

In this article I maintain that the idea of the university as a community of selves is not an empty one, but actually determines a great deal about how a university should be organised and how we should teach and learn there. The connection between the self and higher-level learning has a long history, which reaches as far back as Plato. I will here show that this culminated in an essay called *On Academic Studies (Om det akademiska studium)* written by the Finnish statesman and philosopher Clark Kerr wrote about the idea of a multiversity already at the 1960's. According to him "... several competing visions of true purpose, each relating to a different layer of history, a different web of forces, cause much of a malaise in the university communities today. The university is so many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war within itself." (1963: 8–9).

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Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881) and published in Stockholm 1840. As we will see later on, Snellman understood what he called "knowing" as a relationship between the self and tradition. In order to elucidate Snellman's view, I will in this study first examine the long tradition behind his views, beginning with Plato.

**Plato's Meno**

In his dissertation on the concepts of exercising and learning in ancient Greece, Frank Hieronymus makes an interesting observation: the beginning of Plato's Meno is the first place in which the words meaning teaching (didakton) and practice (askéton) are used so that one excludes the other (Hieronymos 1970: I/59). The dialogue begins with a question posed to Socrates by Meno:

"Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?" (70a)

The beginnings of Plato's dialogues can sometimes be the key to the whole text. John Sallis, for example, interprets the counting of people present at the beginning of Timaeus – "One, two, three,--but where, my dear Timaeus, is the fourth of our guests of yesterday, our hosts of today?" – as a model for reading the whole dialogue (Sallis, 1999). The beginning of Meno hints that the dialogue will take us deep into the idea of learning and teaching. Here we will concentrate on the famous passage in which Socrates teaches a slave boy how to double the area of a square.

The problem of doubling the area of a square was well-known in antiquity. In the dialogue, Socrates chooses this problem to illustrate what it means to learn. He asks the master of the house, Meno, to "Call over one of your many retainers over there, whichever you want, so that I can use him to show you." (82a–b)

Socrates starts the lesson by asking the boy: "Tell me, boy, you know that a square is like this?" After an affirmative answer Socrates then makes sure that the boy really knows the concept of a square: "A square has all these four lines equal?" The boy answers "Yes". The questions then continue by pointing out that a figure can be of any size. Socrates then asks: "Can there be another figure twice the size of this one, but like it, with all its sides equal, like this one." After the boy has answered affirmatively, Socrates continues: "Now, try to tell me how long each of its sides will be. ... What will be the side of the one twice its area?" The boy answers: "It'll be twice the length, obviously."
Socrates then turns to Meno and asks for a confirmation to his observation of the teaching: "Do you see, Meno? I'm not teaching him anything; I'm simply asking questions." Socrates further points out that the boy thinks he knows the length of the side that will produce the square twice as big. Meno agrees with Socrates that the boy does not really know the right answer.

When Socrates asks: "How large is it? Isn't it four times the size?" and: "So four times is the same as twice the size?" – the boy answers: "Of course" and: "Certainly not." Thus, the boy has to admit that his first answer was incorrect. Socrates then gives the boy a second chance to give the right answer. The boy's answer turns out to be incorrect again, and finally he has to admit: "Socrates, I just don't know."

Now Socrates turns to Meno for the second time and this time they discuss whether the boy has progressed in his process of learning. In comparison with the opening situation, the boy is now aware that he does not know the answer, and he has also achieved a desire to know the correct answer. In order to reach this state, where the boy has realised that he does not know the answer, Socrates has asked almost forty questions. He now proceeds to teach the right answer.

We can suppose that the figure that Socrates then draws is the following:

![Diagram](image_url)

In what follows Socrates asks the boy to count the number of the triangles in the middle – the result is four (Arabic numbers). Socrates then points to one of the four original squares and the boy counts that there we have two (Roman numbers) similar triangles. We now have a square in the middle that consists of four triangles and another square that consists of two similar triangles of the same shape and size. Socrates asks: "And four is how much larger than two?" and the right answer is reached as the boy
Socrates now asks him to point to a line (the dotted line in the figure above) that is one side of a square that is twice as big as the one of the four original squares. The boy finds the answer to the problem and all that is left is to tell him the correct terms. Socrates continues: "Knowledgeable men call this the diagonal: so if its name is diagonal, the figure that is twice as large would be based on the diagonal, according to you" (my emphasis.) The lesson has ended for the boy, and what is left for Socrates and Meno is to discuss what was essential at the end of the lesson.

Socrates now turns to Meno for the third time. He asks Meno to confirm that the answer was actually found by the boy himself. "So he will have knowledge without being taught but only by being questioned, and by finding knowledge out of himself?" (My emphasis, translation modified.)

Here we will not enter into the question whether learning is a process of recovering or recollection (Cf. Salmenkivi 2010). From our point of view the achievement of this reflection is that the boy has learned this geometrical truth by himself.2

During the whole process, Socrates asks about seventy questions. Such an approach certainly takes more of a teacher's time than simply telling the answer with the instruction to memorise it. Yet the manner of teaching and learning is also essentially different. Now that the boy realises the answer himself, he becomes motivated to learn; he also learns how to study further. The aim is that the student will become a member of the community who not only knows, but also creates knowledge. As we will see later on with Snellman, a university should be a community which treats students from the very beginning as selves, as people who decide about knowledge and taking action for themselves.

Within the limited framework of the present study I will only scratch the history of the ideas of education. However, we need some further background in order to understand Snellman's concepts of self-consciousness. Snellman's immediate background was the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), which can be seen as an enormous synthesis of Western cultural history. It is

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2 The self (autos) was a wider theme in ancient Greek culture. The legendary inscription in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi reads gnôthi seauton, "Know thyself". The self in antiquity is a very difficult theme indeed to thematise. There is a general understanding among scholars that we who in modern times understand ourselves as subjects understand ourselves essentially differently from how people understood the self in antiquity. My aim here, however, is to give some background to modern views of the relationship between learning and the self, and I choose not to take on the difficult task of pointing out the differences between the ancient autos and the modern self. (Cary 2000, Jaeschke 1989, Remes & Sihvola 2008, Schrader 1989, Seigel 2005, Taylor 1989.)
therefore helpful to travel one of the many possible roads from Plato to Hegel. On this road we will be guided by a combination of the self and higher education.

From Plato to Hegel

François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651–1715) greatly admired Plato. In his lectures on the philosophy of history, Hegel introduces Fénelon as an educator of princes (Hegel 1977: 110); as a matter of fact, Fénelon was the tutor of the Duke of Bourgogne. As the royal tutor, Fénelon carefully educated the duke to be an enlightened successor to Louis XIV, but unfortunately, the duke died before the Sun King. Fénelon also wrote a book about educating a prince, *Telemachus, son of Ulysses* (1699). The story supplements the *Odyssey* by telling how Mentor educated Ulysses’ son, Telemachos. Mentor gives good advice to the prince, who nevertheless decides to act otherwise and gets into difficulty. Telemachos does not really learn what Mentor has to say, but rather learns to know himself. Fénelon writes:

"He who has never felt his own weakness and the violence of his passions, cannot be said to be wise; for he is unacquainted with himself, and knows not how to distrust himself."

(Fénelon 1994: 92; my emphasis)

Although Fénelon's royal tutorship did not lead to the desired result, his Platonic view of higher education was a spectacular success. After the Bible *Telemachus* was the most widely read book in eighteenth-century France. (Riley 1994: xvi.)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau admired both Plato and Fénelon. The influence of both men can be found in Rousseau's view of education as presented in *Émile: or On Education* (1762). In the first book Rousseau writes: "If you wish to know what is meant by public education, read Plato's *Republic*. Those who merely judge books by their titles take this for a treatise on politics, but it is the finest treatise on education ever written." (Rousseau 1762: 30) Rousseau's advice here is somewhat strange, as *Émile* is generally against using books as tools for education. Émile was actually to read only two books: *Robinson Crusoe* and then later Fénelon's *Telemachus*.

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3 One could also choose a shortcut. Friedrich Schleiermacher, Hegel's rival and one of the main figures in establishing a new university in Berlin, writes that a lecture should have the nature of an old dialogue, though not its outer form. (Schleiermacher 1808, 62) Plato's *Meno* would serve well as an old dialogue in this reflection.
As we might also expect, Rousseau emphasises the role of the self in learning. Rousseau writes about how to raise Émile: "It is less a question of teaching him a truth than of showing him how to set about discovering it for himself. To teach him better you must not be in such a hurry to correct his mistakes." (Rousseau 1762: 728) Such advice is fully in line with Fénélon's views: Mentor lets Telemachus make mistakes again and again in order to learn for himself. A few pages later Rousseau continues: "Forced to learn for himself, he uses his own reason not that of others. For in order for there to be nothing given to opinion there must be nothing given to authority". (Rousseau 1762: 737)

In Émile, Rousseau made his famous prediction that a revolution would come, an event that could perhaps have been avoided had the king of France been educated by Fénélon. But as it happened, the effects on higher education were enormous. A *History of the University of Europe III* opens: "The political upheavals of the French Revolution and Napoleon's conquests devastated the university landscape in Europe. In 1789 it was filled with 143 universities. In 1815 there were only 83." (Rüegg 2004: 3) Yet the situation also provided opportunities to renew higher education. In the aftermath of the revolution there was good reason to think again how to organise higher education. In this rethinking there is a crucial role for the self. To explain this, let us turn to the German landscape.

We have followed a chain of influence from Socrates and Plato to Fénélon and Rousseau. Immanuel Kant, who had Rousseau's portrait in his office, is the next short stop in our way. For our purposes, it is enough to illuminate Kant's role in preparing the role of the "self" in the philosophical movement that was born of his ideas, German Idealism.

It was actually in English that the concept of "self" was first introduced in modern languages (Schrader 1989), but for our purposes it is essential to take up the German discussion on the matter. It began with Kant's "Copernican" revolution, which reversed the focus from objects to "self-consciousness", *Selbstbewußtsein*. This concept was one of the main themes that, following an intensive period of philosophising, came to be called German Idealism. Hegel's system can be seen as a culmination of this movement, but strangely enough, this system does not explicitly deal with the kind of community we call university. As we will see later on, this omission was soon supplemented by Hegel's followers. In this study, I see Snellman's *On Academic Studies* as a culmination of a development that started with Plato: Meno's exposition of the relationship between the self and higher learning. Because Snellman was a Hegelian philosopher, we need to introduce a few of Hegel's concepts before turning to *On Academic Studies*. 
Hegel and self-consciousness

*On Academic Studies* was meant for a wide audience. Consequently, Snellman mainly avoided the technical terms of Hegelian dialectics. That facilitates our task of reading the text and we need only to consider two concepts in order to follow his argument. I will first examine briefly the key concept of *self-consciousness* in a Hegelian context and then explain what is meant by *moment* [*das Moment*].

Hegel's first *magnum opus*, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, begins from the experiences of consciousness. The first major transition takes place when we turn from the point of view of consciousness to the point of view of self-consciousness. How this transition actually takes place is a much-debated problem among Hegel scholars, but what changes is rather clear. At the first level, consciousness is alone in perceiving the environment. When we turn to self-consciousness, we are no longer alone. The rest of the book discusses the different possibilities of experience with others. The view that a self is essentially not alone is also acknowledged by Charles Taylor, for example, who writes in his *Sources of the Self*: "One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it." (Taylor 1989: 35) In order to understand Snellman's view we need to take into account the social nature of being a self.

In Hegel's terms the possibilities of the spirit [*Geist*] are defined as "'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (Hegel 1977: 110.) Spirit means the totality of the relations between an individual and a group. Hegel's idea is that self-consciousness learns about itself in relation to others; the task of his book is to map out the different possibilities of such learning. In other words, the entire aim of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to achieve a better and wider self-understanding. In order to succeed it is not enough that an isolated individual reaches for self-understanding; rather, we need the right kind of spirit, the right kind of relations between *I* and *we*. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Plato in *Meno*, Fénélon in *Telemachus* and Rousseau in *Émile* chose a form of dramatic presentation that also brings out the social settings of learning.

In German one can speak of *das Moment* as well as *die Moment*. The latter means a short period of time, whereas *Das Moment* denotes a particular kind of part, and this is the concept that interests us here. The tradition of thinking about wholes and parts started with Plato. *Das Moment* was particularly important for Hegel, but the tradition also continued after him. For our purposes the most suitable way to introduce this concept comes from Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901). The *Third*
Investigation is entitled On the Theory of Wholes and Parts. There Husserl introduces two possibilities of being part of a whole. Firstly, pieces are the kind of parts that are separable from their wholes. A door is part of a house, but as there is no problem separating it from the house, it is a piece (das Stück). Secondly, moments are the kind of parts that are inseparable from one another and from their wholes. Robert Sokolowski gives an example of such a moment (das Moment): "I cannot disengage brightness from colour, I cannot consider colour without locating it within a certain surface, and I cannot consider it without seeing it as a moment of an extended thing." (Sokolowski 1968: 538–9.) What Snellman has in mind when he writes about moments in On Academic Studies are such parts that are so essentially tied to other moments that the whole does not exist without all of its moments.

We started from a connection between learning and the self in Plato and have followed how this connection also plays a role in later reflections on higher education. We ended with German Idealism, a philosophical view in which self and self-consciousness play a central role. The key work from this point of view is Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, which endeavours to account for all the experiences of self-consciousness in different ways in society. The word 'university' was originally tied to a special kind of community: universitas means a community that is legally responsible as a community (Pedersen 1997). And as Hegel well knew, since the days of Pythagoras the highest education had taken place in special kinds of communities. Furthermore, Hegel lived in the middle of the reformation of the university, and this reformation was closely connected with the philosophical views of the time. One would expect the university to play a major role in Hegel's explication of the different possibilities of self-consciousnesses relating to each other. One might suppose that one of the highest possibilities for self-consciousness to appear would be the spirit of a university community. Strangely, Hegel does not explicitly deal with the university at all; all we find in his writings about the topic are several letters to the ministry of education and a few speeches he held as the rector of a gymnasium (Hegel 1949: 246–263, 301–317). Hegelian philosophers, however, supplemented Hegel's system later on and used a Hegelian framework to create new models for universities. That work was not done in Germany alone; in France, Victor Cousin⁴ (1792–1867) was very influential, and in Finland, Snellman eventually had a strong influence on the university system.

⁴ Cousin, too, thought that the aim of higher education is self-cultivation. It is interesting to see how Cousin and his followers tried to argue that women and members of the working class are not entitled to higher education although, from the point of view of Cousin's Cartesian theory, there is no principal difference between a woman’s and a man’s self. (Goldstein 1994, 2005.)
J. V. Snellman

Snellman was a Finnish philosopher and statesman, who had a powerful impact on the developments that led to Finland's independence in 1917. An idea of his status in Finnish cultural life can be gained from the number of cultural events honouring his two-hundredth birthday in 2006: merely to list them required a book of 156 pages. One of Snellman's main philosophical achievements was *Om det akademiska studium* (*On Academic Studies*), which is considered a classic of university studies in Finland.5

As a young university teacher at the end of the 1830s, Snellman ended in a serious conflict with the council of the Imperial Alexander University of Finland6; as a result, he was given a court sentence for refusing to obey the council. The conflict started when Snellman was denied permission to teach a course on academic freedom and came to a head when Snellman realised that he was being ordered to do things that contradicted the main principles of a university. Snellman disobeyed publicly and even accused the professors of not understanding what the university was really about. Snellman's attempt to defend what he considered to be the basic values of a university interrupted his very promising university career.7 What are these views of the fundamental duties of a university that Snellman considered so important that he chose to sacrifice his career in order to defend them? Snellman was not allowed to publish his views in Finland, but fortunately, he managed to do so in Sweden, where his essay on academic studies was published in 1840.

*On Academic Studies* states that there is an essential difference in the nature of knowing between school and university (Snellman 1992: 152). Snellman clarifies this difference by explaining the aims of each institute: "The school is an institution in which an individual is educated to self-consciousness... The university is an institution in which a thinking and willing subject is educated to knowing and ethical life, to a reconciliation between self-consciousness and tradition." (Snellman 1992: 158) In school the aim is to reach the stage of self-consciousness, which then serves as a starting point for higher education. Since the highest level of education starts when a person has reached the level of

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5 The text is written in Swedish and unfortunately has not yet been translated into other languages besides Finnish. In the Finnish school of Hegelian thought, education has been a major theme from very early on (Väyrynen 1992).

6 Since 1919, the University of Helsinki. Finland was a part of the Russien Empire from 1809 to 1917.

7 Later on, however, he became a professor in education.
self-consciousness, the community where this education takes place should be arranged to coincide with the level of the student's development. What does this mean in practice?

According to Snellman, the early stage of education is based on the authority of the teacher and passive learning by heart. The task is typically to memorise assigned homework and repeat it when asked. For example, first the alphabet is learned and then one learns to read. At that stage we do not expect a pupil to be able to reason why the alphabet is in a particular order or why we read from left to right. The pupil might also learn that Paris is the capital of France, but is not expected to reason why. When pupils become university students they are expected to be able to reason about the facts they learn. In an examination on Shakespeare, it is not enough to repeat what Shakespeare wrote. One must be able to explain different interpretations of selected passages. In an examination on the history of France, it is likewise not enough to state that Paris became the capital and in what year, but one must also be able to explain the circumstances that led to this status.

Snellman was not the first to emphasise the difference between school and university. We find similar differentiations in Friedrich Schelling's lectures on the method of academic studies (Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studium, 1803), for example. Nevertheless, Snellman's text is an original contribution to the philosophy of higher education in many respects. I will here concentrate on how his view of the difference between school and university relies on what he means by knowing.

According to Snellman, memorising facts alone does not constitute knowing in a strong sense of the word. Real knowing has two sides, two moments in the philosophical sense explained above. These moments are acts of self-consciousness and tradition: "Knowing, therefore, means that the subject grasps what is rational in the tradition" (Snellman 1992: 157, original italics). If either of these moments is missing, then we are no longer dealing with knowing in Snellman's sense. How are we to understand this?

If learning is merely the adaptation of a tradition offered by authorities such as parents and schoolteachers, then the facts a person learns depend solely on what kind of education the person receives. In antiquity pupils would have learned that the sun revolves around the earth; in the nineteenth century, pupils were taught the reverse. Today we are told that movement in general is relative. In that kind of learning, what is learned "accidentally depends on what kind of education the individual has received" (Snellman 1992: 155, original italics). Therefore, real knowing does not merely mean that one knows the answers that are valid in that culture, but that one should also have
realised the validity of these facts by oneself. If Socrates had simply told the slave boy the correct answer to the problem of doubling a square, then the boy would not have known the answer in the Snellmanian sense, although he would have been able to give the correct answer when asked. Yet because the boy learned the way to the correct answer by himself, he knew the answer in the strong sense; he could demonstrate the result to others, not merely repeat the fact when asked. The difference in Socrates' teaching is that it leads to the students themselves knowing the answer. From Snellman's point of view, if the boy had only memorised the answer, he would not have known the answer really, as knowing demands that one has realised the truth of an answer by oneself.

On the other hand, mere subjective realisation of something without tradition does not constitute knowing, as in that case knowing would lack general validity. If I am to claim that the earth does not actually move at all, then I should connect this view to tradition in order to state it as knowledge, something more than my subjective opinion. In order to know in the Snellmanian sense, we should also be able to explain how we ourselves understand that tradition to be truthful. Within the university community, the aim is not merely to memorise facts, but rather to know the truth. How are we to characterise such a community?

The relationship between a professor and a student is "completely different" (Snellman 1992: 163) from the relationship between a teacher and a pupil. In school the teacher is the authority who states the facts, and the pupil should not normally question them. In university, however, a professor explains how he – in Snellman's time not yet she – has himself arrived at certain results. A professor should lead the listener down the paths that led himself to knowledge. Snellman's view can again be illustrated with Socrates' lesson in Meno. Socrates' aim was not to give answers to the questions, but instead to show how to arrive at an answer by oneself. In that kind of teaching the dead ends that do not yet lead to an answer are a substantial part of the process.

According to Snellman, the goal of university teaching is not to learn facts, but students should rather take on the professor's understanding and conceptualisation of new knowledge themselves. In school it might be a problem to present different or even conflicting views of the same topic, whereas in the university this is exactly what should be done. The professor should present different points of view, compare them and demonstrate how he himself came to support one of the possibilities. Students, furthermore, should be encouraged to choose a different point of view and argue for it. It is also a good idea to make corrections to textbooks and show how knowledge changes through the thinking of self-
consciousness. Students should be given the freedom to evaluate what is genuinely truthful as well as models showing how to think for themselves.

According to Snellman, students ideally enter the university at a stage when their self-consciousness is newly awakened and they have started to think for themselves. At that stage students typically overestimate and overemphasise their abilities. Snellman calls this attitude abstract selfishness. He writes: "The purpose of university education is, as has often been said, to guide a young man away from this abstract selfishness and to reconcile within him self-consciousness and tradition, subjective freedom and the valid just." (Snellman 1992: 161) The aim is to become self-responsible and honour the rights and views of other selves within the community.

In order to succeed the community should acknowledge or recognise students as self-conscious beings. Recognition, Anerkennung, is also the key term in Hegel's treatment of self-consciousness: what self-consciousness basically wants is recognition from another self-consciousness. What, then, does the recognition of a student as a self-conscious being mean in practice? In Snellman's view it means academic freedom; it means that students are given the freedom to judge questions of knowing and questions of actions for themselves.

One of the main ideas in Snellman's text is that knowing and action are connected. It follows that as we acknowledge the students' right to gain knowledge for themselves, we should also acknowledge their right to act freely: "A person, who has once demanded the right to decide on knowing for himself, will also demand the right to decide on his actions" (Snellman 1992: 169). Truth and freedom should go hand in hand within the university community. Consequently, the students should decide on disciplinary measures themselves and produce rules to be followed within the student community of the university. In his student years Snellman himself was very active in his student organisation or "nation" and valued its autonomy highly. Student organisations or "nations" had in fact a strong role in the formation of the first universities (Pedersen 1997); in the 1830s, Snellman still saw their role as vital to the university community. When students are not just ordered to obey rules handed down from above they will also learn to think about how to construct a well-functioning community.

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8 The quarrel between Snellman and rector Pipping can also be seen as a struggle for recognition. Pipping refused to acknowledge Snellman's right to teach and Snellman refused to recognise Pipping's right to give orders to him. The quarrel is well documented in the minutes of the university board and court sessions from November 1837 to June 1839. Here we have to leave this interesting theme aside.
Conclusion

The ethical dimension of higher education follows from the understanding of the university as a community of selves. Charles Taylor writes: "What I have been calling the self ... can exist only in a space of moral issues" (Taylor 1989: 49). If we are not simply ordered to follow the rules, but must also create them, then along with freedom we will also gain responsibility. In Snellman's view ethics is an internal part of university education. It is certainly not enough to enact laws and rules for students to follow. Rather, the aim is to think together how a community of selves aiming to truth could act freely. In other words, how we, as responsible beings, should behave.

We saw earlier that MacIntyre is worried about the fact that we no longer think together about the idea of university. MacIntyre also points out a symptom of this condition: in the contemporary university, it is very difficult to reach an agreement "on what, if any, general education requirements should be imposed on undergraduates" (MacIntyre 2009: 349.) Another antiquity scholar and philosopher, Martha Nussbaum, however, has a clear view on the issue. While defending the Platonic or Socratic view on university education she states that all undergraduates should be given a set of courses in philosophy and other subjects in the humanities, because these "will stimulate students to think and argue for themselves" (Nussbaum 2010: 48.) That would no doubt have happened in Snellman's lectures about academic freedom if he had been permitted to give them.

I conclude with a very simple example of what Snellman's view means in practice. In a recent dissertation with the interesting title *Det pedagogiska självet*, "The pedagogical self", Anne Huhtala has collected material from essays written by students studying to become teachers of Swedish. The students were instructed to decide on the length of their essays themselves. (Huhtala 2008: 11) It certainly would have been easier if the students had received more precise instructions and had simply been told to write from 1,000 to 1,500 words, for example. If we follow Snellman's view, we should trust the students and allow them to decide for themselves, as Huhtala did. Students should understand, however, that by freely deciding themselves how long the essay they are going to write will be, they will be making an ethical decision on how long an essay suits the purpose of the researcher and what parts are meaningful from the point of view of the research project. It follows that the students also learn to think from the point of view of another self within the community, that is, from the point of view of future readers of the text. If the students were given exact instructions on how long the text...
should be, they would not learn to evaluate the length of their writing themselves. In a Snellmanian university, these students would never graduate.

What Snellman's *On Academic Studies* teaches us is to see how such a small difference in the way students' assignments are given, for example, can be decisive to judging whether the teaching is truly university teaching or simply teaching that takes place in a university. In order for teaching to be real university teaching in Snellman's sense, it should start with the recognition of the students as selves, as persons who can decide for themselves.

References