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Student Movements: The Sixties and Today

The last few years have seen renewed activity in student movements in the US, Europe (including Greece), and elsewhere. Particularly salient for this paper is the ongoing movement in California, which arose in reaction to the defunding of higher education in the wake of the fiscal crises in the U.S. states. Many movement activists, however, view their activities as closely linked to student movements in Austria, Greece, and elsewhere. Writing from the movement—manifestos, blogs, websites—often deploys a 60s vocabulary, particularly Situationist vocabulary, while simultaneously seeking to assert the current movement's difference from the 60s. This paper attempts a broad analysis of the relationship between current and 60s student movements, with particular attention to historical changes in the nature of the university and in the identity of the "student." I pay particular attention to the nature of futurity and utopianism in the two periods.