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The Canadian Convoy Protest as Memory Project

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Peyton Campbell

This year I engaged in a research project exploring how the signs, symbols, and language utilized by Canadian Trucker Convoy protestors functioned as a kind of memory project. I argue that protestors drew on various meanings tied to race and class that ultimately functioned to reassert white supremacy and neoliberal rationality. Neoliberal rationality here draws from the work of Wendy Brown, who argues that neoliberalism has come to define how one can understand the world around them. Protestors, along with evoking a neoliberal understanding of freedom, drew on broader cultural understandings of labour rights and worker solidarity that constructed freedom only in terms of worker's 'right' to work despite potentially unsafe conditions. Along with this, protestors engaged in an appropriation of Indigenous culture and activism in ways that asserted themselves as both true inhabitants of the land and as true victims of government oppression.