SEA SICKNESS: THE VIRAL SPREAD OF SEA SHANTIES

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by

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ABSTRACT

During the early months of 2021, an unexpected new trend went viral on TikTok: sea shanties. A few short months later, our world was drastically changed by the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing much of our society indoors and away from social gatherings of any kind. What was a typical viral trend evolved into something greater, gaining new life as all other forms of community music making were reduced or eliminated. This thesis will evaluate how this viral phenomenon sheds new light on the culture and history of sea shanties, as well as how sea shanties have developed new meaning in our pandemic era.

I will focus on three main ideas surrounding ShantyTok. First, due to social distancing and the spread of COVID-19, community music making was extremely limited to prevent spread of the virus. Consequently, music making communities adapted to online formats such as TikTok. Second, I will present the cultural perceptions of sea shanties and their inherent "Whiteness." Then I will juxtapose that with the history and origins of sea shanties presented by Whates and Schreffler as African American labor songs. How has this false narrative impacted their virality, who participated in the trend, and does this change the meaning behind the phenomenon? Finally, I examine emergent new meanings surrounding sea shanties in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic through their cultural rebranding and viral success.

The endless expanse lies ahead. There is no telling where it leads or where you will end up. You know you will never be able to see it all. New and exciting things wait to be discovered. You follow maps that lead you to your destination or goal, and meet with others as they explore our shared world. The internet has become the modern adventure of exploration for its users. You never know what you'll find and the internet can be just as dangerous as sailing open waters without a life vest if you are not careful. Similarly to the oceans depths and trenches such as the Mariana trench, the internet has the dark web that describes its own depth. The expression is not called surfing the web for nothing. To help organize their treacherous voyages, ancient sailors used communal songs called sea shanties to synchronize labor. Ropes needed to be heaved and tied, cargo needed to be loaded and stowed, and sailors needed to accomplish these tasks together and quickly. Shanties, with their call-and-response structure and steady, rhythmically accented tempo, aided sailors by providing entertainment, coordinating labor, and contributing to a sense of community.[1]

Sea shanties can also bring people together across the vast expanses of the internet. During the early months of 2021, sea shanties unexpectedly became a new viral

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[1] Sea shanties and forebitters are differentiated by their relationship to the labor on naval vessels. Shanties would be led by the Shantyman, have antiphonal response by the crew to signal when to heave or pull, and would be sung during labor and not for enjoyment. Forebitters would have been sung in the crew's off time and still retain many aspects of the shanty except for their more ballad-like nature.

trend on the video-based social-media platform TikTok.[23] Chief among the shanties to

make waves was "The Wellerman," which originates from Australian and New Zealand

whalers in the seventeenth century.

Adam Neely (2021), a composer, bassist, and popular music YouTuber,

chronicles the "ShantyTok" trend in his video essay "The Music Theory of Tik Tok Sea

Shanties," in which he describes the inciting event on the platform. In October 2020,

videos from TikTok user @forwardspiral97 adapted the seventeenth-century shanty

"The Wellerman," as recorded by the modern folk band The Longest Johns (who have

recorded several albums of shanties), into joke videos that were the early precursors to

the ShantyTok trend. Another user, @rysmith, then used the apps duet function (which

allows users to film a second video alongside the original) to record himself singing in

harmony to his original recording of "The Wellerman." Users can then "duet" the

existing duets, creating what I will call "chains" with ever-increasing numbers of

participants.[4] The video from @rysmith had 4 parts forming the beginning of the chain:

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[2] TikTok, from its origins as Musical.ly, was created with the purpose of allowing users to create and share their songs and for others to add and collaborate. Collaboration on the app is done by using the stitch or duet features. The stitch feature allows other users to stitch new audio and video to the original post. The duet feature allows other users to record simultaneous audio and video with a previous post. These features require the consent of the original creator in their settings on the app. It is the stitch and duet functions that elevate TikTok from a creator and consumer environment into and collaborative community.

[3] Originally, TikTok limited users to 15 seconds, but removed this limitation and now users can record videos up to the current maximum of 3 minutes (reached in July of 2021).

[4]TikTok does not identify videos that have been dueted more than once with any nomenclature. Because the musical definition of a duet refers to an ensemble of two, I will be using chains to refer to any video that includes three or more videos (the first being the original recording and the following being 2 "dueted" videos regardless if they are from the same user).

bass, baritone, tenor and alto/melody. Other TikTok users continued to contribute new musical lines, creating ShantyTok's first chain. On December 27, 2020, Nathan Evans (@nthnevnss) created another recording of "The Wellerman," which ultimately became the public face of the ShantyTok viral trend. Evan's Recording appeared on *A Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, *CBC news*, and on everyone's TikTok feed.[5] Shanties not only appeared on TikTik but on other social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. While the massive wave of ShantyTok's virality has come and gone, I still occasionally see a shanty or shanty meme in my feed. In this project, I explore how this viral phenomenon sheds new light on the culture and history of sea shanties, as well as how sea shanties have developed new meaning in our pandemic era.

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed our world, and forced much of our society indoors and away from social gatherings of any kind for much of 2020 and 2021. What would normally be a relatively unremarkable internet trend thus took on new significance as the pandemic reduced or eliminated many other forms of community music making. Any understanding of the ShantyTok phenenomenon must first begin with a brief overview of this unique cultural context.

TikTok, Pandemic Music Making, and Community

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected culture in the United States and across the world. It separated communities, isolated individuals, and disrupted life as

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[5] As of January 12, 2022 Nathan Evan's original video has 19.1 million views, 2.4 million likes, and 134.4 thousand shares on TikTok alone.

we knew it. In the face of this adversity, communities and individuals needed to adapt. During the early stages of the pandemic and lockdown, many people quickly realized that meeting others in-person was unethical and unattainable due to potential transmission of the virus. As every household became its own isolated bubble, people turned to online platforms as substitutes for in-person interactions—especially social media. TikTok, with its potential for musical collaborations, became a go-to source for many seeking solace and inspiration in creative activity. Catja Christensen (2021), for example, describes how creatives used TikTok to compose original songs for new musicals. These creations fed off of the community's "pent up artistry" and created music that, while niche, united and built the TikTok spontaneous musical community from the ground up. On October 12, 2020, TikTok's community post focused on its Broadway community and the use of the duet function for users to "add their own twist or harmony to bring the piece to a new level." TikTok recognized its own ability to provide a space for music making communities and ShantyTok became the vehicle for that process to go viral.

Musicians needed technology to fill the gaps for ensemble playing. However, due to the limitations of social media platforms some forms of music more easily made the transition. In general, the less collaborative the genre, the less innovation needed to make the jump to digital platforms. A soloist with a backing track would be much easier to record or produce than a 30–50 member orchestra or wind ensemble. Different websites and apps such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and previously Vine allowed the transmission of videos to audiences (and some limited interactivity through

comments), but they did not allow users to directly contribute to the work of others.[6]

Built into the program, TikTok's duet function uniquely encourages users to engage

directly in collaborative creative expression. The resulting duet chains form a

constellation of branching collaborative paths, and it is in this context that we can

understand the ShantyTok phenomenon. Audiences should view popular videos such

as @rysmith's or @nthnevnss as brighter stars in the constellation—part of a whole

rather than an individual artistic event. Their meaning becomes greater knowing the

trend behind them. This is why in many ways one should not separate the artist from

the artwork. Doing so removes meaning and purpose that inspired the work.

TikTok is an avenue for spontaneous musical communities and ensembles. When

TikTok users started posting ShantyTok videos, no one knew where the trend was

going or when the "final version" of the Wellerman would be created—because there is

no "final version." There is just the process of making something with other users on

the app for the enjoyment of others. TikTok's platform allowed for the creation of

spontaneous ensembles of users that otherwise would likely not have collaborated. But

what about TikTok has contributed to this phenomenon and other trends' massive

popularity and success?

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[6] One could respond to someone's content with a video made using other software, but these processes are not inherent to the platform and require understanding of other video making software to accomplish the same goal.

TikTok, the platform, is inherently musical and is a prime platform for memes, and especially musical memes. Richard Dawkins coined the term meme in his book *The Selfish Gene* (1976). In his words:

> We need a name for the new replicator, a noun that conveys the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. "Mimeme" comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like "gene." I hope my classicist friends will forgive me if I abbreviate mimeme to meme. If it is any consolation, it could alternatively be thought of as being related to "memory," or to the French word même. It should be pronounced to rhyme with "cream."

> Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. (Dawkins 1976, 192)

While "a unit of cultural transmission or imitation" is the most baseline definition, I will further use Shelley's "Trichotomy of Functions: (about) recalling previous versions, (about) making a statement, and (about) projecting a future" to identify memes (Shelley 2020, 28:38). While the first two of the functions are applicable to all memes, the third specifically deals with a memes virality. Projecting a future specifically refers to possible applications of a meme for future replication. The longevity of the meme and distinction of whether a meme is dead or not relies entirely on this function. Paula Harper's "Unmute This" (2019) gives us another useful definition of a meme: "a constellation of material, comprised of recognizable iterations of a particular pattern or form, sometimes with no particular single referent or point of origin." Harper's definition helps illustrate that a meme cannot be viewed as an individual but as a group or pattern that is difficult/impossible to track in its entirety. This is why it is not useful

to view Nathan Evan's success with "The Wellerman" as the defining moment of ShantyTok.

Antiphonal Songs and Their Transition into a Virtual Space

As we might guess from its earlier name Musical.ly, TikTok as a platform allows its participants to interact with each other in a musical nature. Creators make videos that loop until the user on the platform pauses or moves on to the next song, meme, or video. This repetitive video presentation gives each video a musical form on the platform. The antiphony of TikTok is not limited to it in the nature of how creators and users interact. The Creator makes content, original or not, and other users are allowed to react and add to the video, parody it, or like and share thus propagating the content. This does not make all content on the platform memetic. Anything can become memetic, but until transmission of the original begins it is not. Because a meme must recall previous iterations, the origin of a meme is not a meme. For example the motif of Beethoven's 5th Symphony is not in itself a meme, but the transmission and uses of the motif as cultural imitation is memetic. The original item/source of the imitation can never be a meme. In our case, the shanty "The Wellerman" is not a meme, but the performances and iterations that have been created in this trend *are* memes.

We might understand musical memes like "The Wellerman" as a form of what Braxton Shelley (2020) describes as "digital antiphony." In Shelley's words, digital antiphony is

the emphatically intertextual and intermuscular product and process of meme culture. Digital Antiphony is a rich and emergent conversation that simultaneously materializes and refigures social categories and concepts like race and gender, belief and authorship. As antiphony's animating force, the meme reveals a digital preoccupation with form. The meme then, offers one sense of what it might mean to be musical in the 21st century. (Shelley 2020, 8:48)

TikTok and much of its content is a direct avenue for the creation and transmission of memes because its format reinforces and promotes repetition.[7] Repetition gives musicality. This concept can be seen in language, as Juliana Margulis notes in her book *On Repeat*: "when language is being repetitive, in other words, language is being musical" (Margulis 2014, 162). Language can both add meaning to music through lyrics or can be musical through rhyme as is standard in poetry or lymeric. In her dissertation, "Unmute This: Sound, Circulation, and Sociality in the Rise of Viral Media," Paula Harper (2019) also shows that this concept extends to images:

> That early Internet content creators used assumed constraints of bandwidth and their own resources to create simple, absurd creations…the small-unit repetition in these objects, born of necessity, rendered them musical—often, repetition functioned to musicalize the non-musical, the barely musical, or the implied-musical…. (Harper 2019, 47).

If memes are musical in their repetition both on the platform and in their transmission from one user to another, I would argue that the ShantyTok trend was doubly musical.

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[7] In Shelly's presentation, he shows that by the repetition of a meme into a cycle (by having it repeat over and over) gives the meme musicality through form. Creating the repetition and therefore the expectation of what is to come is the musicality of digital antiphony.

As a meme this trend was musical through musical antiphony and its digital antiphony. As a song, it already possessed musicality through its form and melody. By possessing both aspects of musicality on the platform, "The Wellerman" and ShantyTok increased their viral potential which the trend actualized when it went viral.

TikTok and much of its content is ephemeral. Scrolling down your feed—the selection of videos TikTok chooses for you are based on their algorithm—you will likely never see the same video twice.[8] TikTok's videos are doubly fleeting: on the one hand, they are short in length, and on the other, they are likely to get lost in the mountains of content generated daily on the app. Paradoxically, however, this ephemerality adds to these memes' value. Because there is so much content, you will not want to miss out on being with the "in crowd." In other words, FOMO ("fear of missing out") compels many users to keep up with the latest trends. This desire for inclusion is why compilation videos exist. Compilation videos attempt to capture a holistic view of a meme, trend, and group together different memes the viewer enjoys, resulting in a meme playlist. Compilations are usually longer form and reside on YouTube where users can post longer form content. The life of a successful meme on TikTok often ends on YouTube in a compilation video with YouTube serving as an archival hub. FOMO, which occurs due to TikTok's ephemerality, creates the audience for compilation videos and the additional virality of the platform. It is FOMO in addition to other aspect of

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[8] Twitter also attempted to capture on its ephemerality with its feature fleets. Fleets, in their name,
describe their ephemerality in their name being fleeting. Fleets were similar to other features on Snapchat (stories), Facebook (stories), and Instagram (stories) that still exist to promote virality on their respective platforms.

virality ShantyTok possessed, that created the hit success that still ripples on the platform.

But why is meme culture important? I would argue that the linking of societies and creating of global communities is central to both music making and meme making. Music has been described as universal by many because of its prevalence in almost all cultures across the globe. Musicians of all backgrounds make music every day and there are many diverse musicians that come together to create something beautiful that they couldn't do by themselves. Memes are similar to music in this way. The global community intersects and interacts on platforms like TikTok to create, react, and share content that is larger than themselves. No individual video of ShantyTok compares to the impact of the trend as a whole. Both music and memes also motivate or entertain us. That is why we continue to create and explore despite the limitations the pandemic has posed us.

Current Perceptions of Shanties, Their Inherent "Whiteness," and Their Origin

But why did shantys of all things "blow up"? I believe that the reason is directly tied to the shantie's history. Prior to the shanty craze that took TikTok by storm in early 2021, sea shanties have been a small but consistent feature of western popular media. The folk band The Longest Johns, formed in 2015 to perform folk songs and shanties, helped popularize "The Wellerman." They made waves, so to speak, in the online video game *Sea of Thieves* (2018) by entertaining other players with shanties, and then posting these videos to YouTube. Another pirate-themed video game, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*

(2013), allowed players to collect sea shanties for their crew to sing. Even before sea

shanties became a mainstay in video games, however, they existed in other forms of

popular media. One prominent example is the introduction song of the popular

children's TV show *SpongeBob SquarePants* (1999–Present); the shanty "Blow the Man

Down" inspired the creators of the show (Neuwirth 2003, 50–51). Shanties are even

recognized as the official songs of the Pastafarian movement/religion, started in 2005,

as Pastafarians idolize pirates (Henderson). Shanties have been a part of the Western

media diet, albeit a small part, for decades. We might point to the German singer

Freddy Quinn's song "Sie heißt Mary Ann" (1956) for a relatively uncommon

midcentury example. The call to the sea and similar nostalgia is a pervasive and

widespread fixation of many different intersections of popular culture. What is unique

to the 2021 ShantyTok invasions, however, was the degree to which a shanty—explicitly

identified as such—became an instant mainstream media sensation and just as quickly

retreated into relative obscurity.

ShantyTok: An Overview

In terms of subject material, shanties typically depict the lives of European sailors,

whether working for crown and country as a deckhand, or coin as a pirate.

Consequently, the same topics reappear in the vast majority of the ShantyTok videos

because many of them use both the melody and lyrics of the original shanties.[9] Social

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[9] Other videos that fall under ShantyTok's umbrella are lyric remixes that keep the shanty's original melody but change the lyrics (often for comedic effect).

media users take up the role of the shantyman and crew as they sing the antiphonal song as suggested in Adam Neely's (2021) "The Music Theory of Tik Tok Sea Shanties." TikTok is both a visual and musical platform, thus both aspects influence a video's virality. In what looks to be an attempt of historical authenticity, white male creators dominate many of the renditions of "The Wellerman" and other shanties on TikTok, a feet that may be an attempt of historical authenticity though their long unkempt beards, plaid shirts, and other "manly" British and Irish traits/stereotypes.[10] One might question why Ryan Smith's recording of "The Wellerman" went viral and is considered by many to be the most popular version.[11][12] Attempts at historical authenticity not only impacted visuals, but also the timbre of voices and instruments as performers sought a folk or "authentic" vibe to their performances. Neely describes the abundance of bass and bass-baritone singers which gave the chain a rich and warm acapella texture. With the exception of the techno remix instruments, performers often included the fiddle or other folk instruments. This pervasive framework for the genre to conform to pre-assumed historical authenticity contributed to a lack of diverse representation during the 2021 ShantyTok phenomenon.

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[10] Nathan Evans, the perceived center of the trend, is Scottish and is not culturally appropriating Scottish/British traits. Despite this, some other users who dueted his video do appear to fit the stereotype as described above.

[11] Nathan Evans, as a result of his recording of "The Wellerman" and its success, took an offer to make a single with 220 Kid and Billen Ted as producers.

[12] While I do not assert that Evan's success is based on his nationality or heritage, I do wish to point out the irony that the most popular artist to claim fame from ShantyTok fits the broad cultural perception of the shanty's origin as English heritage.

"The Wellerman" and Covid-19

The vast majority of participants in the trend were white males, who presumably in some way identified with the song/genre's perceived nostalgia, wanderlust, and authenticity—but in what way did the climate of a global pandemic amplify the virality of the trend? To dive into why shanties were viral during the Covid-19 pandemic, first one must look at the text of "The Wellerman." The lyrics of the chorus are:

> Soon may the Wellerman come
> To bring us sugar and tea and rum
> One day, when the tonguing is done
> We'll take our leave and go.

The Wellerman tells the labor of whalers off the coasts of Australia and New Zealand. Each verse narrates the story of a whale and the crewmen who chase it at the behest of their captain. In opposition to the narrative each verse brings, the chorus tells of the crew's hopes for relief via the Wellerman who brings sugar, tea, and rum and the crew's anticipation of the future when they will be done with the laborious task of whaling. The last verse of the shanty goes:

> As far as I've heard, the fight's still on
> The line's not cut, and the whale's not gone
> The Wellerman makes his regular call
> To encourage the captain, crew and all (huh)

The labor of whaling in the narrative of the shanty is not resolved. The crew and captain are exhausted and need to be motivated by the Wellerman to continue their voyage.

Whether intentional or not, the shanty at the eye of the storm depicts themes of the endless grind, wanting relief when none is in sight, and burnout, all of which relate to those going through this new reality we find ourselves in. (Add 1-2 sentences about our covid reality) The virality "The Wellerman'', in respect to Covid-19, compounds the importance of the themes it presents for participants and users alike.

Shanties, Identity, and Revisionist History

The shanty as the "white man's" work song likely dates back to the era of exploration, colonial expansion, and wanderlust. Current popular understanding of the sea shanty's origin is that the genre is a form of English heritage. However, this false narrative is only slightly over a hundred years old. The earliest written codification of this concept is from the inclusion of shanties in Cecil Sharp's 1914 *English Folk-Chanteys*. Schreffler (2011) describes Sharp's methodology as "Having collected the songs only from White Englishmen… most of their tunes 'must originally have been drawn from the stock of peasant-tunes with which the memory of every country bred sailor would naturally be stored'" (4). This revisionist mindset of denying the true origins of the shanty is clear in Sharp's writings. Sharp stated that "It is necessary, however, to distinguish between music of negroid origin and European music that has been modified by the negro" so that he could claim the tradition and legacy of this art form, but this puts the cart before the horse as will be discussed (4).

In truth, it can be seen in some of the earliest writing on shanties that the transmission of style comes from slave work songs. Oberlin College's student journal

contains one such article that heavily compares the nature of shanties to that of African

American work songs (Allen 1858). Allen states

> we invariably find that the strain of the sailor's worksong has the
> same plaintive minor key, strongly reminding one of their similarity in this
> respect to the sad-toned melodies of the negro race… (3)

Schreffler (2011) contextualizes this sympathetic viewpoint by likening the work

condition of sailors to that of slaves rather than humanizing the slaves (3). Many direct

influences for shanties are from minstrel songs despite Sharp's objections. Examples of

this are numerous, but a few would be Schreffler's example of "Jim Along Joesy," a

well-known minstrel song, and the shanty "Haul away Joe" (3). Hames would argue

that the origin is ambiguous as shanties were spread as boats and their crew traveled

between ports in the Americas and England. Hames (1991) referenced shanties that are

clearly influenced by the blues of African American work songs such as "John Come

Tell Us As We Haul Away" also known as "Mobile Bay" (3). Despite the differences

between the two, one of clear African American work song influences and the other of

mixture as sailors traveled to new and different places, neither would categorize

shanties as purely English heritage or downplay the nature of African American

influence in the genre. Changing this revisionist history and mindset is difficult as it still

deeply permeates our popular culture and therefor the accepted history of the shanty.

Purpose on the Waves and Web

As noted previously, to fit the original purpose and definition of a sea shanty the song must be antiphonal and it must be used for the purpose of organizing the labor of the crew. However, modernization of naval vessels rendered the backbreaking labor of previous ships obsolete. With the necessity of the shanty lost, only the sailors who passed on the oral tradition of these songs understood their importance. "The Wellerman", the shanty of the 21st century, if sung to a sailor from the 19th would not be recognized as a shanty but a forebitter (Whates 1937, 260).[13] These songs were sung in the sailors off time or during a meal. It still had antiphonal nature, but did not have specific cadences for specific types of labor. A forebitter would likely have elements of a ballad. According to Whates (1937) no self respecting sailor would "swallow the anchor" until they were old and wanting to reminisce after a dinner (260). Songs such as "The Wellerman" are not technically sea shanties but sea songs. It would only have been sung in a sailors off time. Despite this loss of the shanty's original purpose, its resurgence on TikTok has restored the antiphonal nature of both shanties and sea songs.

One question that must be raised after noting shanties altered historical perception is the shanty of the 19th century is not the shanty of the 21st, therefore is the problem of historical revision still a valid concern? Has the shanty and what it represents in 2021 become too separated to link the genre to itself? Traditional shanties from the 18th century were designed as work songs to rhythmically align the laborers,

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[13] Risko refers to sea songs as forebitters (16). The nomenclature of the type of song only differentiates based on purpose and use of the song. A forebitter would have no call and response and would likely start with "come all ye sailormen" making their other name "come-all-ye's".

so that the hard labor of their task could be accomplished. Shanties lost their purpose during the industrialization of sailing technology. Thus, they died with the sailors who sung them with the exception of the songs that were archived by historians. Shanties as we know them today are a homogenization of traditional shanties that still show their purpose as labor songs, forebitter that were sung in the sailors off time, and ballads about sailing that were composed post industrialization of sailing vessels. The Wellerman is such a song that calls to the ideas of sailing and labor, but doesn't follow a form that produces rhythmic labor. Despite these differences, what is widely accepted as a shanty is an antiphonal song about the sea. The ShantyTok trend, in its antiphony, brings back the antiphonal element to both shanty and sea song alike. This antiphonal aspect of the Wellerman and other songs does bring back an essential aspect of the shanty that many TikTokers used to create and spread their renditions of shanties. I would argue that while the antiphonal nature of ShantyTok did bring back an essential aspect to the shanties of the 19th century, they still fall victim to portraying shanties as English/white heritage. This return of the shantie's purpose while not breaking the imposed historical narrative reduced diversity in their creation and overall virality. What defines and distinguishes the shanties of ShantyTok from other occurrences of shanties in popular media? I would argue that the key differences lie in the community participation and interaction afforded to users on TikTok. Shanties transformed from vehicles for hobby and appreciation to a method of interaction. By taking on their new purpose they transformed the sea songs and forebitters back into shantys through their purpose and execution.

Projecting a Future

ShantyTok 2021 has been coming to a slow but inevitable stop as the general public has lost interest in the trend. The new purpose of the shanty being fulfilled, the shanty will slowly fade into the background as newer and more applicable memes rise to take its place. If you are lucky you will still see memes surrounding ShantyTok, but it will likely be a remix of "The Wellerman" with different lyrics. The measure of the trend, genre, and meme's importance should not be diminished because it is no longer a mainstay on TikTok. Shanties, specifically "The Wellerman", filled a need as our society was forced into a new reality and brought together a community in their time of isolation on never ending waves.

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