

Gender on *Jersey Shore* (2009-2012): An observation of normative and non-normative performances
of masculinity and femininity

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Dedication

I dedicate my thesis work to my family. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my late mother, Angela, whose love, final encouragements, and lasting strength made the completion of this journey possible. To my father, Joseph, who taught me about hard work and the privilege of an education. To my future husband, Salvatore, whose confidence in me is unwavering and complete.

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Working from a poststructuralist framework, using Butler's theories on identity performance, this thesis uses content analysis to observe and report on normative and non-normative performances of masculinity and femininity on the reality television show, *Jersey Shore*. This thesis argues that the gendered performances of the *Jersey Shore* cast members are intersectional. In particular, the cast members' gendered performances are heavily affected by their ethnicity, class, and geographic location (New Jersey, U.S.A.). This thesis unpacks the ways in which hegemonic gender embodiments are both reinforced and challenged through the *Jersey Shore* cast members' performances on the show.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis observes gendered performances on the reality television show, *Jersey Shore (JS)*, by analyzing the cast members' performances of their gendered identities. I focus on what it means to be feminine and masculine within the context of *JS*, and highlight how the cast members perform their genders in ways that both conform to, and resist, hegemonic norms of masculinity and femininity. In preparation for this work, I reviewed theoretical literature on reality television (RTV), as well as gender and performativity. My review of the existing academic literature in these fields left me grappling with the following research question: How do the cast members of *Jersey Shore* perform their genders, and what factors affect these performances? This thesis makes observations about the cast members' normative and non-normative gender performances to support the argument that gender performance is complex and intersectional – the *JS* cast members' performances demonstrate how ethnicity, class and geographic location are some of many factors that reinforce and challenge normative gender categorizations.

The goal of this thesis is to observe and report on the ways in which the cast members of *JS* perform their genders normatively and non-normatively within the context of their embodiment of Italian-American identity on a reality television show. In order to illustrate a broad picture of what the cast's gender performances look like, I am working from within a framework that acknowledges the fact that identities are layered and complex. Patricia Hill Collins explains that interlocking systems of oppression are “structured on multiple levels” (2015, 6) and any individual may be “both a member of multiple dominant groups and a member of multiple subordinate groups,” so any individual may be affected “in varying degrees on systemic versus interpersonal mechanisms of domination” (6). It is possible for people to be both oppressed and an oppressor – (very) simplistically explained, a black man may enjoy some benefits of privilege due to his identification as a man, while a white woman may enjoy racial privilege. Black women are excluded from both racial and gender-based privileges that white women and black men enjoy. Identity, privilege, and oppression intersect in multiple ways, with

social locations producing and being produced by hierarchies of power. These power dynamics place some people in more dominant positions, while others are left with fewer privileges, and this can even vary depending on the context. Individuals themselves are not wholly responsible for their position as oppressed/oppressor – the overarching systems in which we are embedded support and continuously recreate oppressions and inequities.

About *Jersey Shore*

JS is a reality television show that premiered on December 3, 2009 on MTV. The official MTV website describes the show as follows:

Grab your hair gel, wax that Cadillac and get those tattooed biceps ready to fist pump with the best this summer at the Jersey Shore. MTV's newest docu-soap exposes one of the tri-state area's most misunderstood species, the Guido. Our Guidos and Guidettes will move into the ultimate beach house rental and indulge in everything the Seaside Heights, New Jersey scene has to offer. Beach by day, dancing and partying all night. They'll live, work, and rage together until the summer ends. There's no spray tan too orange, no hair too spiked, and no bod too tight for this crew. (“MTV: Jersey Shore” 2012, n.p.)

As the above synopsis illustrates, MTV producers orchestrated an exotic context for viewers, offering a glimpse into the lives of “Guidos and Guidettes,” or the show’s eight “roommates,” in their pursuit of the “Guido lifestyle” for a total of six television seasons. A “Guido” is usually described as “...not necessarily of Italian descent, but most likely; usually native to the New York/New Jersey Tri-State area...[wears] tight zipper tracksuits, designer jeans, tiny hoop earrings, fake gold chains...[and] during the day...can be located at their local gym tanning or lifting weights” (soloshus 2004, n.p.). A “Guidette” is “...an Italian-American woman usually seen with long dark-colored hair or perhaps bleach blonde, wearing tight clothing...fond of leopard print, or any other print for that matter...usually wears a lot of makeup and bronzer...gets their nails done regularly and goes tanning” (Marie8773 2010, n.p.). I have used a few Urban Dictionary definitions in this thesis. I believe it is a useful online source for this paper because slang terms such as the ones I have mentioned here are usually not found in regular dictionaries. Urban Dictionary is used as “source material” because it provides common

understandings of these colloquial terms, which is helpful for the purpose of this thesis since the Guido/Guidette identity is constantly evolving.

The “roommates” are eight young adults who label themselves (and are described by others) as Guidos and Guidettes. The series’ producers arranged for the cast to spend their summers working and partying at a rental house in Seaside Heights on the Jersey Shore. Over the course of the six seasons, the audience met four male-identifying and five female-identifying roommates: Paul “Pauly D” DeLuca, Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi, Michael “The Situation” Sorrentino, Jennifer “J-Woww” Farley, Ronnie Ortiz-Magro, Sammi “Sweetheart” Giancola, Vinny Guadagnino, Angelina “Jolie” Pivarnick (Seasons 1–2), and Deena Nicole Cortese (Seasons 3–6) (“MTV: Jersey Shore” 2012, n.p.). The location of the show varied depending on the season. The first, third, fifth, and sixth seasons took place in Seaside Heights, New Jersey. The second season was set in Miami, Florida, and the fourth season took place in Florence, Italy (“MTV: Jersey Shore” 2012). This thesis’ Appendix 1 offers a summary of every first season episode, as well as any additional episodes from other seasons that I refer to in the content chapters that follow.

Why *JS*

I have been asked several times why I chose to study a show like *JS*. Prior to watching the show, I said that I did not like it because of how it portrays Italian people. Once I started actually watching the show, I felt the need to explain my choice to watch it with statements like: “It’s such a train wreck, how do you resist watching?” or “It’s so popular, everyone is talking about it.” I also belittled the show, calling it a guilty pleasure and admitting to its “trashiness.” One of the reasons I started studying *JS* was because I wanted to reconcile my need to explain, qualify, and justify the pleasure I derived from watching it. Why did I need to justify my choice to watch an extremely popular show? Why do many of us make excuses for our enjoyment of “mainstream,” popular, and culturally relevant RTV programs like *JS*? *JS* plays a part in a cultural conversation that people do not want to be left out of. As a feminist

media scholar, dissecting an interesting aspect of popular culture is reflective of my need to “get in on” this conversation.

In terms of where I “fit” into this project, while studying the critical space of gender on *JS*, I have also worked through my affective experience of hesitation and qualification as discussed above. I am personally invested in this work because of my identification as an Italian-Canadian woman, holding both Canadian and Italian citizenship. I am first generation Canadian, with stereotypically darker Italian features. My parents were born in Italy and immigrated to Canada when they were teenagers. My father worked in the automotive trade as a body man and eventually came to operate his own business. My mother, prior to staying at home to raise her family, worked at a textile factory (Coppley) that employed Italian immigrants at that time in Hamilton, Ontario. I grew up within a predominantly Italian-Canadian school system and community, where my closest friends came from similar ethnic and class backgrounds. When I was a teenager, I proudly identified as a “Gina,” which is the Italian-Canadian equivalent of a Guidette. Being an ideal Gina meant ascribing to a certain version of femininity. It meant having long, dark hair with “chunky” blonde streaks, and wearing Guess, Diesel, and Parasuco brand clothing. Ginas wear a lot of dark, thickly applied makeup, and do not play sports or engage in other “masculine” activities, because we were sitting on the sidelines cheering men on. As a Gina, I hung out in large groups comprised of other Ginas at the mall in my free time, and knew Sundays were family days. Although I embraced that “Gina” label throughout my teenage years, I was unaware of any social or economic consequences that my parents had experienced because they were immigrants. Truthfully, being Italian did not register to me as a “different” ethnicity until I began my undergraduate degree away from home, and my environment became more diverse.

It was during my first year at the University of Western Ontario that I was first challenged to define what having an Italian background meant to me in terms of my identity, because being Italian was no longer a marker I shared with everyone around me. However, it was not until I moved to Halifax to pursue my graduate degree that I noticed a much more significant shift in how I saw myself

(and how others saw me). I have often made the joke: “Okay, I realized I wasn’t *white* in London, but I am “exotic” in Halifax.” It was there that I really began to understand myself, my family, and my community as “other” in comparison to the imagined “normal” (white) Canadian citizen. Thus, when I began approaching this text, I was grappling with identity questions of my own. In university, I began echoing the same sentiments as many Italian-American groups who watched *JS*, particularly that this show represents “us Italians” badly. Having reflected upon my reasons for hesitating to admit that I enjoy and readily choose to analyze this text, I no longer feel the need to justify myself to others. I am not saying that *JS* does not portray cartoonish stereotypes of Italian-American culture, or that it is representative of all Italians; the show is problematic, and requires critical attention. My investment in analyzing *JS* comes from my ability to relate to the narrative, as well my recognition that I take pleasure in watching how the show constructs the Italian-American identity, however discomfiting it is.

My familial and social identities have deeply impacted my reading of this text. As I have already stated, my family immigrated to this country and felt that they had little choice when it came to the question of assimilation. My mother and her sister told stories about the social isolation they experienced in late 60’s and 70’s because of how they looked, dressed, and spoke. My father, who initially learned English from television, was always working on improving his accent in order to be perceived as less “ethnic,” and more professional as the owner and operator of his own businesses. Admittedly, prior to engaging in this topic of study, I never really got involved in these types of conversations with older members of my Italian immigrant community, many of whom have different opinions about what it means to reconcile their multiple identities than those of us more removed from the point of original immigration. Older immigrants faced material consequences from the widespread Italian stereotyping that the young people on *JS* are not penalized for, and have even profited from. The cast members of *JS* are not represented as feeling a constant or urgent need to assimilate in order to be successful; they are shown on *JS* as embracing their difference from the mainstream.

It is important for the reader to understand my complicated relationship to this text, as it gives context to the mixed feelings I have about the show's cartoonish portrayal of Italian-American culture and non-normative or "hyper" portrayals of femininity and masculinity. From my own identification as a "Gina" in Canada, and through my readings of the Guido/Guidette identities on the show, I feel confident in stating that the normative and non-normative gender performances on *JS* are inextricably tied to our understandings of ethnicity and class. Furthermore, the use of personal narrative and first person voice in this text, especially in the analysis section, is intentional. In Women's Studies, we are encouraged to explicitly locate our position in our produced texts, as our academic work cannot be wholly separated from our subjective perspectives.

Chapter Outline

In the second chapter, this thesis' literature review contextualizes the subject matter within feminist post-structuralist ideologies, reality television literature, and literature on gender and its intersections. The third chapter engages with the theoretical framework that informs my analysis of the text, drawing primarily from Butler's theories on gender and identity. In the fourth chapter, I discuss my content analysis method, and the qualitative methodological approach I take in this project. In chapter five I give a brief character sketch. Following this, in chapters six to eight, I discuss more deeply the ways in which the *JS* cast members embody their gendered identities, and which patterns and behaviors are most visible in these performances. I describe moments where the cast members align with, and perform outside of, normative gender scripts. I reflect on moments in *JS* that complicate "normal" gender expectations, specifically in relation to the cast members' ethnicity / race, class, and location. This thesis concludes in chapter nine, with an analysis of my collected data in a chapter on intersectionality and gender, followed by references and appendices.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Below, I outline themes from the academic literature that informed my research, particularly from the fields of Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies. This literature review presents a brief picture of what I found relevant for the description of gendered performances on *JS*. This chapter is divided into the following topics: television and reality television, introduction to gender, femininity, and masculinity.

Television and Reality Television

RTV: Background

In her chapter, “Stanley Milgram, Allen Font, and Me: Postwar Social Science and the ‘First Wave’ of Reality TV,” Anna McCarthy argues that reality television (RTV) emerged in the post-World War II era. In early post-war RTV shows, the subjects did not know they were under observation. McCarthy believes that quiz shows were RTV’s earliest incarnation, describing how quiz shows inspired Allen Funt’s *Candid Camera* (1960-1967), which, she argues, was the first official RTV show (2009, 26). Contrarily, Mark Andrejevic claims that *An American Family* (1973), originally broadcast on PBS, was the first reality television show (2004, 66). Despite McCarthy’s and Andrejevic’s disagreement regarding which RTV show marks the genre’s beginning, both authors land on the importance of *An American Family* as a reference point in the growth of contemporary RTV. *An American Family* is cited by both authors as the beginning of RTV as we know it today, a genre that involves subjects signing up to be filmed and then watched on television. According to Andrejevic, *An American Family* ignited a slow momentum of growth in RTV programming into the 1990s, and inspired MTV to produce several RTV shows, with *The Real World* (1992-2013) being a key example (Andrejevic 2004, 66).

One popular media source, *TV Guide Magazine*, agrees with this claim. According to PBS online, “TV Guide magazine acknowledged *An American Family* as the first reality television series and named it among ‘The 50 Greatest Shows of All Time’” (“Lance Loud!” n.d., n.p.). *An American*

Family was notable at the time for its “lack of contrivance” – it was “simply shown” (Zone 2002, n.p.). There was no host, no interviews, and no narration or story-telling voiceovers. This kind of “voyeuristic” look at a family, one that included an actual storyline rather than merely caught on camera moments, signaled for many the potential for RTV to reflect or react to culture (Zone 2002, n.p.). The 1970s show critiqued what society and television thought was the ideal “family” (white, middle-class) and inspired a number of conversations about sexuality, the family, patriotism, and what role television programs could play in our culture (Zone 2002, n.p.).

RTV's Popularity and Significance

The RTV we recognize today began to take off in the 1990s, with a “modest boom” in the production of RTV at that time (Andrejevic 2009, 66). Rachel E. Dubrofsky points to RTV shows such as *The Bachelor* (2002-present), as prominent examples of contemporary television’s line-up, attributing its success to forerunners such as *Survivor* (2000-present) (2011, 1). In the introduction to her book, *The Surveillance of Women on Reality Television: Watching The Bachelor and The Bachelorette* (2011), Dubrofsky argues that “since the phenomenal success of *Survivor* (2000 –) in summer 2000, reality TV has become a staple of primetime programming” (1). One can measure RTV’s popularity through its cultural recognition, including the creation of RTV Emmy categories and RTV’s permanent place in our television world. Andrejevic argues that RTV’s cultural significance is obvious given that there are two Emmy categories devoted to the genre (2009, 321). Furthermore, Jennifer Pozner suggests that the sheer volume of RTV programming taking up space on the network television schedule accounts for a measure of its popularity. By February 2003, Fox was devoting 41 percent of their sweeps offerings to reality shows, with ABC offering 33 percent (Pozner 2010, 11). By late 2015, FX announced that there were 409 scripted series running in prime-time and 750 unscripted series, 350 of which were new original unscripted series (Dehnart 2016, n.p.).

Aside from RTV being popular with viewers, it is also incredibly cheap to produce compared to scripted television programs. Chad Raphael discusses how the socio-political climate in the 1980s is

responsible for the surge in the production of RTV shows. In the 1980s, there were union battles going on within the television industry, resulting in its deregulation. This climate caused those behind television production to search for different ways to provide cheap production, licensing, and syndication (2004, 119). Due to the volume of strikes and structural issues associated with creating scripted television programs, networks began prioritizing RTV so that they could spend less money and avoid fighting with acting unions. The market became “flooded” with RTV shows, and since this was a time before services like Netflix, Hulu, or On Demand, audiences became accustomed to and fluent with RTV (119).

In pop culture, RTV is often dismissed as being a trashy guilty pleasure, despite its popularity. Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine (2012), discuss the history of the discourse of television in *Media Convergence and Cultural Status: Legitimizing Television*. Historically, television shows have been de-legitimized as “low brow”, or feminine entertainment (2012, 7). In the recent past, the quality of television shows has been evaluated according to a hierarchy of good vs. bad television (2012, 7).

Popular media, such as RTV and soap operas, is often feminized and delegitimized:

The legitimization of television we document is an increasingly powerful, emergent discourse, but in many respects it is still being formed. Inherently it depends upon a delegitimized “other” television – that of the past but also that of the contemporary genres, production modes, technologies, and practices that do not receive the stamp of legitimacy. Certainly, some instances of television (such as reality shows like *Jersey Shore* or hype-heavy local TV news) continue to be sites of disparagement, just as some modes of experiencing television (such as live over-the-air viewing, commercials and all) continue to be painted as inferior (2012, 13).

Newman and Levine comment on the continued cultural disparagement that RTV shows like *JS* and soap operas experience, especially because they are used as a balance against which more “legitimate” shows are compared. *Jersey Shore* is a docu-soap, as it seems to fit into the documentary genre and it follows real people, but it is also clearly crafted to deliver drama to its audience.

RTV: Edited and Crafted

The earliest forms of reality television programming were documentary-style. One of RTV’s key features is still its observational format, but it can also be characterized by its unscripted but mediated

nature, meaning that the creators of the show put the characters into situations and have a hand in “crafting” the narrative. Annette Hill and David Gauntlett define RTV as “a catch-all category that includes a wide range of entertainment programmes about real people [...] reality TV is located in border territories, between information and entertainment, documentary and drama” (1999, 2). Several features illustrate RTV’s unscripted-ness, including “non-professional actors, unscripted dialogue, surveillance footage [...] [and] handheld cameras seeing events unfold as they are happening in front of the camera” (41).

Pozner, like Hill and Gauntlett, agrees that RTV is unscripted, but adds that it is “carefully crafted” (2010, 8). Sitcoms are written by screenwriters and performed by actors, but “reality shows play fast and loose with context and editing. We know they’re at least somewhat fake That knowledge doesn’t stop us from passing judgment about the behaviors and personalities of people” (23).

Pozner states:

“[RTV today] is not ‘social experimentation’- it’s just an easier, quicker way to fill airtime with content created by nonunion labor [...] but all reality shows employ writers—just underpaid, nonunion ones. As for string-pullers, advertisers instruct writers to script dialogue about their products. We also can’t overlook the ideological agendas of executive producers like Fleiss who bases shows on the desire to make women extremely unhappy: it’s a lot of fun to watch girls crying, Fleiss said ‘never underestimate the value in that’ (23).

Other RTV scholars also speak to the carefully crafted nature of RTV, arguing that RTV series carefully mediate representations of gender and race. According to Dubrofsky, RTV shows portray a “reality of contrivance” (2011, 24), meaning that gender and race are actively produced, not naturally occurring, within the context of reality shows – just as they are in real life. *JS*, for example, starts with particular stereotypes about Italian-American embodiments of masculinity and femininity (both normative and non-normative) and then actively works to offer those identities to the viewer through character construction and editing. RTV editors actively produce characters that resonate with our stereotypical pictures of what people with particular identity markers (in *JS*’s case, Italian-American men and women in New Jersey) are like.

Sophisticated constructive techniques are used in RTV – the final product that we see on television is a mediated representation created for the viewers (and ratings). The product that finally goes to air is crafted out of thousands of hours of tape, so in theory, there are hundreds of different stories that could have been broadcast. What we end up viewing has been carefully pulled together to tell one particular story (Dubrofsky 2011, 10). Dubrofsky’s work draws from Robert Stam’s approach to the study of screen media. According to Stam, characters are “not [seen as by the viewers as] ‘real’ people, but rather as discursive constructions” (as cited in Dubrofsky 2011, 10). This discursive construction is effected through the production and editing processes, which Dubrofsky calls the “production relationship” (11). This “production relationship” is inverted in RTV in comparison to scripted shows – the cast directs the producers to the extent that they provide the raw material producers work with to create a story, rather than producers relying on the cast to realize a scripted story. But the work that goes into casting, editing, and creating scenarios for participants to navigate through shape the story throughout the entire process (11).

Introduction to Gender

Gender is a theoretically complex and multidimensional identity category. In *Feminism, Theory and the Politics of Difference*, Chris Weedon examines the question of gender difference. Positivists have long contended that biological sex differences explain behavioral differences between “men” and “women,” and this belief has led to the classification of certain behaviors as inherently “masculine” or “feminine” (Weedon 1999, 5-6). This understanding of gender, as being essentially connected to the physical body and thus causing individuals to behave in certain ways, is still a popular discourse (6-7). One of the dominant ways by which we classify and socialize people is through what is known as the gender binary (6). This binary consists of two genders (men and women); people are categorized according to their biological sex (male and female) but we attribute stereotypically (and sometimes culturally specific) “masculine” behavioral characteristics to men, while “feminine” characteristics are ascribed to women. Understanding gender through this binary means that individuals must perform their

gender in compliance with normative understandings of their gender in order for their gender to be legible or recognizable to others (6). Weedon rejects this line of thinking, arguing that gender is not inherently tied to biological sex. Rather, we actively perform our genders depending on our social context and facets of our identities, as well as by the gender we understand ourselves to be, which is not the same as biological sex (100). Weedon operates from a post-structuralist perspective, influenced primarily by the philosophical work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault (100). Post-structuralist theory “[challenges] ideas of fixed meaning, unified subjectivity and centred theories of power...[it] has been taken up by many within feminism as an effective tool for understanding subjectivity, gender and society” (100).

The lens through which I have examined the *JS* cast’s gendered performances is informed by Weedon’s post-structuralist understanding of gender, as well as by Judith Butler’s theories of gender performance. How an individual negotiates dominant discourses of identity impacts their performance and conformity to gender norms (Butler 1988, 22). These norms are reinforced through the everyday repetition of gendered behaviors and become part of our societal understandings of gender (23). Butler contends that ways of “being” become “natural” to bodies through our performances of gender, which operate as culturally constructed stylized acts that appear “natural” because they are frequently repeated. As Butler states, “the body becomes its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised, and consolidated through time” (523). Individual identities are created through the repetition of norms and conventions within which we are all entangled. We are not fully controlled by these, but are also not outside of them. That is, we are constrained by the discourses through which gender is made meaningful and brought into being (even though we may resist these discourses as well) (523).

JS is several years old now, and both Weedon’s and Butler’s texts that I reference several times throughout this thesis need to be partially viewed through a lens that considers the past contexts in which they were produced. That being said, in 2004 Weedon also expanded on her work to include concepts of culture and complex subjectivity in *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging*:

[as] individuals inserted within specific discourses, we repeatedly perform modes of subjectivity and identity until these are experienced as if they were second nature. Where they are successfully internalized, they become part of lived subjectivity. Where this does not occur, they may become the basis for dis-identification or counter-identifications which involve a rejection of hegemonic identity norms. (6-7)

It is important to note the difference between hegemonic and norms as it is used throughout the text. Hegemonic discourse is defined by overarching systematic powers (i.e. institutions/narratives/governments). The idea of “hegemony” is rooted in Marxist thought. Gramsci argued, “the proletariat needs, even before the fall of capitalism, to build a new order in which it establishes proletarian hegemony – the domination of class or alliance of classes over others, not only economically but also politically and culturally” (Samuel Clark in Teevan and Hewitt 2005, 328). Norms “are the relatively specific rules specifying the behaviours permitted and prohibited for group members (Michael Carroll in Teevan and Hewitt, 2005, 38). The collection of repeated gender performances become a norm that is “expected” from a person who we prescribe with a particular gender identity. The concept of hegemony is rooted in systematic discourse that is entrenched over time and recongized as normative.

Today’s scholarship on gender has broadened to include more work around non-normativity, queerness, and gender fluidity. For example, Leila Rupp, Verta Taylor, and Eve Shapiro (2010), in their article, *Drag Kings and Drag Queens: The Difference Gender Makes*, highlight how drag shows and the actual act of performing drag challenge meanings of gender:

By performing such a wide range of gender identities – transgender, genderqueer, butch, femme, as well as hegemonic male and female identities – DBT eroticized gender fluidity and non normative gender presentations in ways consistent with queer theory [...] [Drag kings and queens] transgress in different ways, sending different messages about what queer genders and sexualities look like. But both, in the process, contest binary gender and heteronormativity. (286-287)

These drag kings’ and queens’ challenges to heteronormativity and hegemonic gender go a long way towards helping dismantle rigid gender and sexual categories (Rupp, Taylor, and Shapiro 2010, 290).

Relatedly, another prevalent subject of study within Women’s Studies scholarship today has to do with

the labour involved in performing femininity, which is often also studied through profiles of people who perform drag (Nicholson 2017). I discuss this labour in the bodywork section of this thesis.

Femininity

Gender and Femininity

Weedon says that to understand femininity one must examine the historical context of the production of that identity – or where gender comes from (1999, 5). “[The] ‘sex’/ ‘gender’ binary has circulated throughout the social sciences, providing a powerful foundation for a material account of women’s oppression. ‘Sex’ referred to biological differences between women and men, whereas ‘gender’ signified the practices of femininity or masculinity in social relations” (Hird as cited in Wall 2014, 64). Femininity as a subject position has historically been defined, both explicitly and implicitly, through its differences from white, middle class, heterosexual masculinity – the centre against which “other” identities are compared (Weedon 1999, 5). This is not to say that I believe femininities to exist outside of intersectional subject locations such as race, class, location, sexuality, or ability. But in this dualistic organization of gender, the white, middle class, heterosexual man is the most highly valued identity, and according to essentialist gender theories, it is the norm against which all other masculinities and all femininities are read against and valued.

Femininity and masculinity are not homogenous categories. They are intricately tied with other subject locations, but hegemonic, normative gender identities are consistently defined as a particular version of femininity and masculinity that everyone is encouraged to embody. There are multiple expressions of femininity and masculinity, but different values are placed on these embodiments at varying places and times. For example, we can consider that women are stereotypically believed to be more “caring” than men, but if we expand a 1950s North American scenario that saw many North American (white) women staying at home to do the care work while their “ambitious” husbands worked outside of the home to support the family, we elide the reality that there were, in fact, many women who did work outside of the home – women who were predominantly poor and racialized.

These women still likely had to do the majority of the care work for their families, but they also had to financially care for them through work they did outside the home. Many descriptions of this time period imagine white, middle class womanhood as the only valid version of female identity.

In addition, the narrative of women as “different from men” – a biology-based argument about gender difference – is not one that is dominant in academic Women’s Studies literature anymore, but these narratives still permeate stereotypical representations of women in cultural spaces. These binary, biology-driven theories of gender are largely and loudly criticized, but they are still supported by conservatives and commonly understood as being “true” by much of mainstream society. In my discussions of femininity and masculinity, I have primarily engaged with literature that describes gender as a performance, rather than as a dualistic, biological imperative. Raewyn Connell, for example, talks about genders not being labels passively assigned to men and women, stating that “being a man or a woman [...] is not a fixed state. It is a becoming, a condition, actively under construction” (2009, 5). Genders, in this view, are not fixed, nor are they wholly imposed upon us by outside influences. We play a crucial role in constructing our feminine or masculine personas every day (6). Gender difference is not about biology or character; it is a structure that regulates everyday activities and practices to make us recognizable as feminine or masculine, and offers us ways of being in the world (6). Judith Butler is another scholar who troubles gender essentialism – I will talk more about her work later in the thesis (Butler 1990, 9).

Hegemonic Femininity

What is missing from my above discussion on femininity is a clear definition of what normative femininity looks like in our culture, as well as what performances of normative femininity are and how to recognize them in the text. Normative / hegemonic gender practices are “not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same” (Connell 1995, 76). Going forward, I will use Katerina Deliviosky’s definition of normative femininity to inform my analysis. In her book *White Femininity*, Deliviosky discusses ideal hegemonic femininity as a “white” aesthetic as well as a “white” way of acting (2010,

109). The way in which normative femininity is represented in popular culture “currently reflects [a] slender body that is typically blonde and tall,” as well as “young and middle class” (109-110). Women whose physical appearances fit these narrow criteria are held up as the “ideal” (111). Furthermore, the ideal woman is “a nice, happy person, constantly smiling, feeding and nurturing others – all the while denying herself self-nurturance and knowing her subordinate place in the hierarchy of gender” (111). The number of people who can claim access to this group is quite small – normative, hegemonic femininity excludes the majority of people.

Not only does hegemonic femininity have to do with the physical appearance of a woman, it is also connected to their expected behaviors. Part of the requisite behavior for an “ideal” woman is that she be “perpetually focused on [her] physicality” in order to be attractive to men (Deliovsky 2010, 110). Thus, hegemonic femininity is also heteronormative. Understanding how hierarchy structures femininity is vital for getting to the root of what normative femininity means. We place value on women according to how close they can get to a standard of beauty and behavior modeled by privileged white women. The farther away that a woman is perceived to be from this ideal, the more they “lose” (118). As Deliovsky states, “being a winner in this competition means behaving appropriately by rules of normative ‘white’ femininity, which is in line with white heterosexuality” (118). For a woman to “lose” means that she is not able to achieve white femininity status, losing the white man along with the ideal family unit (118). Again, while white femininity is the central feminine identity against which we are all judged, most women cannot reach this ideal. This push towards the center is a system that forces women into competition with each other to be the closest to reach the white feminine standard. There are, however, ways in which women and gender non-conforming individuals and communities resist competing with each other to “enjoy” the privileges of the hegemonic woman. An example of this is the butch lesbian community. Many self-identifying “butch” lesbians aggressively trouble the gender binary when they choose to embody masculine traits. Evelyn Blackwood, in her analysis of Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis’ work in *Boots of Leather*,

Slippers of Gold (1993), found that:

[their] work on butch-femme engaged a number of questions about binary gender [...] far from imitating heterosexuality, butches created and experienced themselves as different, ‘as “homos,” neither traditional men nor traditional women’ (374) [...] Butches were the distinct markers of the lesbian community; they were the ones who visibly expressed a gender difference. (2012, 96)

Femininity and Race on RTV

Discussing how race and ethnicity intersect with representations of femininity in RTV is another prominent theme in RTV literature. Normative femininity in RTV can be read by its audience as belonging only to white women, or those who embody the highly valued physical and social characteristics associated with the ideal white woman (Dubrofsky and Hardy 2008, 378). Dubrofsky and Hardy suggest that RTV is raced – that is, participants are divided along racial lines. In their article, “Performing Race in Flavor of Love and The Bachelor,” the authors examine “finding love” RTV shows, including *The Bachelor* (2002-present) and *The Bachelorette* (2003-present). *The Bachelor* is a show where embodying a white feminine ideal is advantageous; non-white women do not tend to succeed or “win” love, especially if they do not show attempts to embody the white feminine ideal (380-381).

RTV series often caricature performers according to their identities, and the rules of characterization (the subject norms the show sets up) can change depending on the show, context, or subject matter (Klein 2011, n.p). In many ways, *The Bachelor* and *JS* characterize femininity differently – *JS* depends on the audience understanding Italian-American femininity as something specific, something *different from* normative white femininity. Amanda Klein compares *JS* with another, similar RTV show, *The Hills* (2006-2010), calling both texts “self-conscious.” They both:

...[signal] that the reality TV images we are watching are not completely ‘real.’ Nevertheless, the coded viewing positions created by each program frame the viewer’s reception of each text. These aesthetic choices create a meta-commentary on each show’s cast: upper class, white Americans are treated like stars and given the classic Hollywood treatment, while working class, ethnic Americans are associated with the shady underbelly of American movie going practices. (Klein 2011, n.p.)

The stereotypes reproduced on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* help to construct an ideal citizen who can succeed in the “Bachelor Industry” (BI) (Dubrofsky 2011, 9). The position of ideal citizen is not attainable by everyone:

In the BI, this means examining how ideas about authentic and real people are produced, how these are privileged or discouraged... [And] what makes for an “ideal” citizen in the space of BI, and what makes for a less than ideal one, pulling apart what are constructed as essential virtues for women, pinpointing how the women’s behaviour comes to make sense in the space of the BI, thus highlighting the parameters and requirements of that space. (9)

In her examination of Mary, a Latino woman who was a contestant on *The Bachelor*, Dubrofsky explains that Mary’s performance does not fit into the “ideal citizen” behaviour required within the space of the BI. Mary’s failure to become an “ideal citizen” within the BI world, marked by her performance of common stereotypes of Latina women, likely led to her early removal from the program (9). Mary’s representation as “stereotypically Latina” confines her within gendered, racial, and class-based stereotypes of the Latina woman, which do not fit the ideal version of white femininity that the BI seems to require for “success.” The stereotypical representation of Mary is overtly sexualized, and revolves around her need to start a family, which fit “with the [monolithic] stereotype of ‘dark’ people from other countries being fecund and sexual [...] Bob ultimately eliminates Mary saying he is not ready to start a family and is not sure when and if he will be” (45). These examples describe some of the ways in which identities are limited within RTV series. Within the context of the BI, normative white femininity is rewarded, and other identities that do not fit within this narrow category are sent home for their “failure.”

Masculinity

Hegemonic Masculinity

According to Connell, mainstream conceptions of hegemonic masculinity are recent historical products (68). Hegemonic masculinity is a standard that men are measured against, and offer a set of rules for how they ought to be in the world. As with normative femininity, there are specific characteristics—such as strength, aggression, and competitiveness – that men are encouraged to

embody in order to approximate the male ideal (68-69). This version of masculinity is not accessible to all men, just as normative femininity is not for all women. Race, class, ability, and language affect how close a male-identifying person is able to get to that ideal standard. According to sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) in his book, *Stigma*:

...there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height. Every American male tends to look out upon the world from this perspective, this constituting one sense in which one can speak of a common value system in America. Any male who fails to qualify in one of these ways is likely to view himself during moments at least-as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior. (1963, 128)

In order to observe and describe how gender is performed on *JS*, it was important for me to conceptualize hegemonic masculinity, the standard against which people are measured in our binary, gendered social order. This is important to my research because, as in the case of femininity, there are several features of masculinity that come together to form a normative conception of this identity. The norm becomes a standard against which all narratives of masculinity are compared in order to deem whether a male-identifying person is, in fact, “man enough.”

Acts of Manhood

Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe (2009) agree with the above observations on hegemonic masculinity, defining masculinity as a series of performances (acts). These repeated acts become defined features of the masculine identity:

.. a masculine self is not a psychological entity, nor a built-in feature of male bodies. It is, rather, self-imputed to an individual based on information given and given off in interaction [...] the qualities seen as constituting a masculine self can vary historically and culturally. The practices that are interpreted as signs of a masculine self can also vary depending on other features of the actor (age, race, ethnicity, class), the audience, and the situation. (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009, 281)

Schrock and Schwalbe call these acts that give meaning to masculinity “manhood acts,” and they are:

...aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation. As suggested earlier, body types are irrelevant, except inasmuch as a male body is a symbolic asset and a female body a liability, when trying to signify possession of a masculine self and put on a convincing manhood act. The view we take here also focuses attention on what males do to create, maintain, and claim membership in a dominant gender group. (281)

Schrock and Schwalbe discuss how manhood acts and masculinity are first learned and acted out in

early childhood, as well as how the media informs and explains these acts. Boys play games in elementary school that “typically underscore heterosexuality [as they] enact superhero narratives, and genuine manhood [...] more is learned, however, than simply which models to emulate or how to do so. Media imagery also provides a shared symbolic language for identifying certain practices as signs of masculine character” (283). They also examine how boys and girls are born into language of masculinity, and sort themselves into groups of gender. In addition, they explain how many parents are complicit in supporting these gender trends (281).

Masculinity and the Working Class Man on Reality Television

There are several ways in which the manhood performances on *JS* are not understood through this same lens as “privileged,” and I believe that this is largely due to the fact that the men on *JS* are considered “working class.” Working class masculinity is often negatively stereotyped, especially in the media, which “shapes the value of other signifiers. Males in marginalized groups are often represented in derogatory ways. White working-class men are often portrayed on television as “dumb, immature, irresponsible, or lacking in common sense” (Butsch 2003, p. 576)” (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009, 282)

According to Christopher Lockett, several tropes of men on RTV exist, but one major trope is the working class man:

What is most interesting about this relatively small but striking subsection of reality television [...] is its idealization of working-class labor at a time when blue-collar workers as such have effectively disappeared from the cultural imaginary. While sitcoms occasionally feature a hapless or shlubby blue collar man as their main character (*King of Queens*, for example) the working-class figures making it onto the small screen usually embody something more than a nine-to-five, simple honest paycheque ethos—cops, for example, or firefighters, or EMTs (*Rescue Me*, *Third Watch*), whose jobs are who the characters are. The working stiff with the lunch pail, never a powerful presence in postwar popular culture to begin with, has effectively disappeared; the one great exception to this absence effectively proves the rule: season two of *The Wire* was centered on a stevedores’ union on the Baltimore docks and functioned as an elegy for the American working class. The unionized wage-earner has been reinvented by reality television as a weathered, laconic, gimlet-eyed professional who will get the job done, whatever the hardship or dangers. (Lockett 2010, n.p.)

The men on *JS* do not have the same work ethic as the working class men Lockett is describing, and this is partially due to the differences between the “white working class man” most commonly shown

on television, and the “Guido” working class persona the *JS* men are portraying to audiences. However, class is still a key factor in the characterization and identity of both groups, and these RTV shows are still bringing working class men into the public sphere. Class seems to play an important part in the embodiment of RTV characters’ identities, especially when it comes to gender performance: “That this idealization of working-class masculinity takes place by way of reality television speaks to its preoccupation with an authentic masculinity, one best accessed unalloyed and unmediated” (Lockett 2010, n.p.). When we take class into consideration, even a white man can be considered “marginalized” if they are portrayed as being working class.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I describe the theoretical framework in which my thesis is rooted. I begin by situating my work in a feminist poststructuralist context, primarily influenced by Chris Weedon (1990) and Judith Butler (1988, 1990). I draw from Butler's work on construction and performance of gender, remaining cognizant that gender is a fluid, complex category that is both imposed upon and negotiated by individuals in a variety of ways (Butler 1988, 519). The descriptions of gender performance on *JS* that I include in this paper are my informed interpretations of the cast's gender embodiments at a particular time and within the RTV context.

In Sandra Kim's article in *Everyday Feminism*, she describes feminism as:

...[striving] to end the discrimination, exploitation, and oppression of people due to their gender, sexual orientation, race, class, and other differences and supports people in being free to determine their own lives for themselves. It supports us in questioning what we've been taught about forcing people into traditional roles and valuing some groups less than others. It helps us to understand why some people hate, abuse, exploit, discriminate, and silence certain individuals and communities. It helps us stand up against oppression and demand justice. By engaging in feminist thinking and action, we can free ourselves to make meaningful choices in how we live our lives and pursue what makes us happy and fulfilled as human beings. (2012, n.p.)

In this description, Kim identifies the reality that people face discrimination based on various differences relating to their identities. Kim's definition of feminism encourages us to question gender roles, but also insists that we not limit feminism to a critique of gender, but must instead think intersectionally. Broadly speaking, feminism aims to end narratives that perpetuate oppression (2012, n.p.). Feminism is also about "articulating and validating insight that comes from women" (Scholtz 2000, 3). In placing women at the centre of analysis, and acknowledging the ways in which factors of oppression and identity intersect, this thesis approaches gender as a complex performance.

Feminist poststructuralism is the lens through which I analyze the cast of *JS*'s gendered behaviors and identities. In this perspective gender is not fixed – it is something we are born into, but we also possess agency, which allows us to navigate these discourses in various ways. Poststructuralism is a theoretical perspective that offers a critique of normative concepts, and one of its most important aspects is its focus on language (Luke 2011, n.p.). Feminist poststructuralists use language to resist

universalizing or normalizing the experiences, histories, and identities of woman-identifying people (Luke 2011, n.p.). Poststructuralists postulate that genders are constructed discourses (norms) that individuals are both born into and navigate: “[Poststructuralists] challenge ideas of fixed meaning, unified subjectivity and centered theories of power” (Weedon 1999, 100). Butler attempts to theorize the materiality of the body, specifically the ways in which “bodies are materialized as sexed” in her critique of heterosexism (1993, ix). Butler considers “how such constraints not only produce the domain of intelligible bodies, but produce as well a domain of unthinkable, abject, unlivable bodies” (ix).

Gender Binarism

A key idea that informs this analysis is critique of the gender binary; here, I ask how the gender binary comes into play when the *JS* cast members perform their gendered identities. The gender binary is a way of classifying and socializing people, which impacts how gender norms are created and maintained. This binary consists of two sexes, men and women, with opposing attributes. Attached to the sexes within this binary are behavioral characteristics, which in men correspond with masculinity, and in women, femininity. Understanding gender through this binary means that one’s sex must correspond with one’s gender and individuals must perform gender in compliance with particular gendered norms in order to fit in or be recognized as performing gender normatively. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler describes the gender binary and a significant consequence arising from it, namely that other ways of being become unintelligible to us:

...[it] requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ where these are understood as expressive attributes of the ‘male’ or ‘female.’ The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of ‘identities’ cannot exist—that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex. (1990, 24)

Although the way in which I have organized the analysis portions of this paper may appear to encourage a binary view of gender – one chapter on the female-identifying characters, and another on the male-identifying characters – this is absolutely not my intention. I am merely acknowledging that

gender is commonly understood in this way, which, first, likely affects the ways in which the *JS* cast members act and relate to one another, and second, I am using the normative feminine and masculine characteristics ascribed to “men” and “women” on this binary as a conceptual tool through which I analyze the *JS* cast’s gendered performances.

Performance / Performativity

Butler argues that “there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender [...] identity is performativity constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (1990, 24-25). I am working from the perspective that gender is not a concrete category, but a performance and identity that is concretized through continuous repetition of acts coded as specific to feminine or masculine identity (91). The idea of bodywork, which I use later, is intimately tied to Butler’s theory that gender is performative. Gender subjectivity is acquired through an individual’s repeated performance of actions coded as “feminine” or “masculine,” which includes work done to and through the physical body. Moreover, Butler argues “This performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act,’ but rather as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler 1993, 2). We create and recreate gender; it is a discourse that affects us but we also produce the discourse, and it is never complete – we have to keep doing it, over and over again.

Privilege and Gender

Privilege operates in a way that is multi-faceted and often goes unacknowledged. It is largely unseen by those who have it because it is highly normalized, which serves to keep dominant groups in power. Privilege creates and validates a group at the centre of society, and deems those who land farther from the norm as less valuable due to their differences from the normative subject. Weedon describes the politicized nature of “difference”:

Differences between individuals and groups – between sexes, classes, races, ethnic groups, religions and nations – become important political issues when they involve relations of power. Power takes many forms, affecting access to material resources as well as questions of language, culture, and the right to define who one is. Power relations of class, sexism, heterosexism, and racism have ensured that it has been largely white, Western, middle- and upper- class men who have defined meaning, controlled economics and determined the nature of relations between east and west and north and

south. In the process, women, of all people of colour and of non-Western nations have been defined as different and implicitly or explicitly inferior. Differences can be categorized in various ways, for example as social, political, cultural or natural. How differences are defined has implications for whether they are seen as desirable, changeable or fixed. (1999, 5)

The people with the most privilege are the ones who set the standard against which other people are measured, in both implicit and explicit ways. Although the cast members on *JS* are quite privileged within the context of the world the producers and the cast create for them in Seaside Heights, there are clear factors in play that affect our perception of their behaviors and lifestyle. The most obvious of these differences between the cast and the assumed audience is their class, ethnicity, and the effect that their geographical location has on their lifestyle.

Whiteness is another concept that is integral to understanding the social construction of identity on *JS*. As Weedon explains, constructions of whiteness are “rarely uniform other than in their claims – implicit or explicit – to superiority over the non-white” (1999, 158). In order to understand whiteness, one needs to develop “an awareness of the long history of many contemporary assumptions about whiteness and their roots in scientific racism and colonialism” (1999, 158). The ideas that we have ingrained about whiteness and the meaning of whiteness have been formed over time through different symbols and norms about beauty, as well as “judgments about intellect and character that implicitly function by distinguishing a white norm from others who are different” (1999, 158). Because norms of whiteness are also gendered, this point is particularly relevant to my analysis of the *JS* cast’s performances of their gendered identities.

In *Identity and Culture: Narratives of Difference and Belonging* (2004) Weedon states:

Following Foucault, the various chapters of this book see discourses of identity as part of specific discursive fields that are structured in relation to a range of cultural and other institutions. They constitute our subjectivity for us through material practices that shape bodies as much as minds and involve relations of power. Some discourses, and the subject positions and modes of subjectivity and identity that they constitute, have more power than others. For example, as suggested above, with the racist othering of non-white bodies in Western societies, only the white body enjoys an apparently neutral position as universal (Weedon 18).

The hierarchies that shape Western societies position whiteness as the top category in a hierarchy of identity. According to Peggy McIntosh, white privilege is:

[An] invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, passports, visas, clothes, compass, energy gear, and blank checks. (1988, 10)

As McIntosh’s definition articulates, privilege is subtle and unearned – it can be challenging for people to explicitly identify. McIntosh also notes that privilege is invasive and powerful because it supports the status quo, and thus becomes a naturalized concept taken as commonsense. The power for some to live freer than others with fewer qualifiers on their choices and behaviors is called privilege. Those who look and act closer to the dominant group enjoy more safety and comfort, while people who fall farther away from this standard can be affected socially, financially, and politically (10).

In contemporary culture, Italian-Americans are largely seen as white, and benefit from the privilege of this identification. However, this whiteness can be mitigated by other factors, like ethnicity and class. The history and context through which certain ethnic groups come to be associated with whiteness and its privileges are complex, and how “race” as a category of identity comes to have meaning is specific to certain locations (for example, the United States). In the introduction to her edited collection, *Are Italians White?: How Race is Made in America*, Jennifer Guglielmo discusses the context of claiming “Italian” ethnicity, and her personal experience of doing so (2012, 2-3). Guglielmo highlights the impact of the racial social systems in place during the peak of Italian immigration to the United States on Italian immigrants:

Democracy, freedom, and other ideals that Americans hold sacred have not been a given, but rather struggled for from the bottom up, often by those most excluded. Virtually all Italian immigrants arrived in the United States without a consciousness about its color line. But they quickly learned that to be white meant having the ability to avoid many forms violence and humiliation, and assured preferential access to citizenship, property, satisfying work, livable wages, decent housing, political power, social status and a good education, among other privileges. “White” was both a category into which they were most often placed, and also a consciousness they both adopted and rejected. (2012, 2 – 3)

Italian people who initially immigrated to North America in the early / mid-twentieth century were not accustomed to the kind of systematic inequality that stems from an explicit racial hierarchy. This hierarchy included people being classified into different categories along a scale of “whiteness” which entitled those with lighter skin tones to more privileges. Italians have been marked as white, but they always face a “but.” The “but” is that they are not always seen as *fully* white and therefore entitled to all the privileges afforded to white citizens of the United States (9 – 10). Therefore, Italian-Americans were / are privileged and disadvantaged simultaneously.

These theorists of ethnicity argue that the Italian-American subject is sometimes “at risk” of losing their white privilege. Guglielmo and Louise DeSalvo’s personal accounts of being Italian-American confirm this experience. Guglielmo writes:

We had both grown up hearing things like “we nothing but a bunch of guineas to the ‘mercani” and “why can’t these immigrants assimilate like we did?” Self-righteousness and blame were a way the Italians around us continually distinguished themselves from people of color. The collective memory of oppression, it seemed, was rarely used to fight racism and challenge systematic inequality. It was clear to us that we desperately needed to remember that we are white, that our whiteness has granted us access to an exclusive system of unearned, unacknowledged, and often invisible advantages that have not been available to African Americans, Latinos, Asians and other people of color. (2012, 3)

Most notable in Guglielmo’s account is the fact that Italian-Americans have, at least historically, been read as “other” to other white Americans, and yet, as at least “white-ish” subjects they are granted privileges associated with whiteness to a degree not available to explicitly racialized groups in America. 3rd, 4th, 5th, or even 6th generation Italian-Americans do not have the same history of discrimination or collective action as those who first immigrated to North America several decades ago and are now middle-aged or older. DeSalvo discusses her grandmother’s experience of naturalization¹. Italian-American immigrants from the South who have darker complexions were the largest population of immigrants to North America, “[but] my grandmother could not be fair, not to the clerk who inscribed this document and therefore not in the United States, because my grandmother was not only Italian, she

¹ “To adapt as if native to a new environment, set of circumstances, etc.” (“Naturalize” 2017, n.p.).

was from the South of Italy, a peasant, *terrone* - a creature of the earth, and the so the color of earth, and because of this, she had to be dark, not fair (DeSalvo 2012, 27).

Thus, although the Italian immigrants were “white on arrival” (Guglielmo 2012, 11) their whiteness was physically as well as culturally more complex than the whiteness of other American citizens (DeSalvo 2012, 27). Her grandmother’s immigration papers were another indicator that southern Italians’ whiteness was “provisional”:

Here, then, on a document that my grandmother kept until she died, and that my mother kept until she died, and that I will keep until I die, is evidence that my people’s whiteness is provisional, that agents of government were using their power to create rather than record difference in physical appearance [...] one of the clerks decided, perhaps without looking too closely (for who would want to look closely at poor Italian peasant women), that my grandmother’s complexion was *Dark*, and if my grandmother wanted citizenship, she had no choice but to sign her name on the line. (27)

But it is hard to argue that Italian-Americans born in the U.S. in the 1980’s are “not white” – even ethnically. One might argue that these particular ways of performing identity position the cast members slightly outside of normative masculinities and femininities, by problematizing their relationship to white, middle-class gender norms and privilege. I am not arguing that Italians are white – what I am saying is that the reading of Italian stereotypes on television is influenced by a legacy of ethnic relationships and discourses of immigration, and the ways in which ethnicity impacts understandings of identity.

As Homi K. Bhabha explains in the context of colonial India, persons could be white, but not quite: “The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from *mimicry* – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to *menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite” (Bhabha 1994, 131). He is talking about people who actually are not white—they are almost-the-same-but-not-white. Other scholars, including Michele Byers (2009), have used Bhabha’s discussion as a way of theoretically thinking through the way that certain ethnic groups are perceived as white, but whose whiteness appears to have a kind of precocity – they are always on the cusp of losing the white privilege afforded to them (Bhabha 1994, 131). Bhabha writes about different types of whiteness and different privileges: “the stereotype attempts to create fixity in a position better characterized by

‘productive ambivalence’ between ‘pleasure and desire’ and ‘power and domination’” (67). This concept of different kinds of whiteness, and a whiteness that has less privilege in society is interesting, and it is further taken up in Byers’ work on Jewish girlhood. Byers uses Butler’s concept of performance outside of gender, and applies it to a critical examination of ethnicity: “my understanding of how JAP [Jewish American Princess] becomes a meaningful social identity begins with Judith Butler’s work on performativity, in which she conceives of even those facets of ourselves that seem most innate to be the products of repetition of established social norms” (2009, 38). Our performances of gender both reflect social conditions that come before us as individuals, and produce social effects (38). Byers continues, “The JAP exists as a surplus, abject space, in which an uncomfortable ambiguity about the American dream resides” (38). For Byers:

The parvenu JAP – social climber, Nouveau riche – is always a pariah. She embodies all the markers of the cultured classes and yet is always in danger of being exposed as a fraud. The parvenu exposed is the pariah. In North American context this is an “assimilatory paradox” in which Jews are both quintessentially American, and never quite American enough (Most 2004: 21) [...] In Bhabha’s careful analysis, attempts to mimic dominant culture, in the inevitable incompleteness or failure, ultimately ensure that difference will be clearly visible. (39)

This same logic can be applied to the case of Italian-American Guidos / Guidettes. Through the text (*JS*) they are framed as outsiders or surplus for viewer entertainment. While they are American, they are clearly framed as not quite as “American” as the average (white) citizen. Through this discussion of Italian-Americans and other ethnic groups “not passing” I am not implying that this is a failure, or that these groups should be pitied for their inability to attain that privileged status. Rather, I hope that this discussion has exemplified the problematic nature of privilege itself, and how fragile the classifications and divisions inherent in systems of privilege really are.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Method

My aim for this project was to observe and analyze how normative and non-normative masculinity and femininity are performed and ethnically understood on *JS* using a feminist poststructuralist lens. To identify, organize, and analyze the gender performances on *JS*, I used content analysis as my method. In this chapter, I outline this method, which included a five-step viewing process. The first step was a viewing of the whole series, and the second to fourth steps required that I re-watch the first season because it was my main data source. It was during these middle steps that I pinpointed several emerging themes in relation to how the cast members perform their femininity and masculinity. In my observations I noted several examples of both normative and non-normative masculine and feminine performances. In the fifth and final viewing, I watched the entire series again to add any outlying examples from other episodes to fully explore how gender was performed on *JS*.

Content Analysis

According to Satu Elo and Helvi Kyngas, content analysis is a “systemic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena [...] a research method for making replicable and valid inference from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide to action” (2008, 108). I chose to employ content analysis because, as Elo and Kyngas explain, “[content] analysis allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance the understanding of the data” (108). I systematically observe gender and identity on *JS* to assess how gender presentation on the series relates to normative and non-normative understandings of gender, and to identify representational trends and open up questions about the intersections of gender with race, geographical location, and class. More specifically, I use a deductive content analysis to structure, analyze, and gather my data. Elo and Kyngas describe deductive content analysis as being used:

...in cases where the researcher wishes to retest existing data in a new context. This may also involve testing categories, concepts, models, or hypothesis. If a deductive content analysis is chosen, the next step is to develop a categorization matrix and code the data per the category. In deductive

content analysis, either a structured, or unconstrained matrix of analysis can be used, depending on the aim of the study. (111)

What is important in deductive content analysis is that the researcher is coming to the data with information, such as a theory or prior context. When I began analyzing data from *JS*, I had prior context in two ways. I have an academic background in gender studies, and have done literature reviews in the areas of both RTV and gender. I had also watched the entire *JS* series prior to writing this thesis. I knew I that I had a lot of material to work with, so I chose to employ a deductive content analysis. I first theorized that my descriptions of the *JS* cast's normative and non-normative gender performances would be complicated by ethnicity. I hypothesized that the data would point to questions about how gender is complicated by the cast's Guido and Guidette identities, which I believe I positively demonstrate in the remainder of this thesis.

There are many ways to conduct a content analysis. However, it has three common phases: preparation, organizing and reporting. The goal of a content analysis is that the many small words of the text are classified into smaller content categories (Elo and Kyngas 2008, 109). My work takes many themes and classifies them into categories. The goal is to manage large amounts of content and focus in on what you (the researcher) are trying to analyze. The amount of data I have on *JS* would be overwhelming to deal with all at once, but through the use of content analysis I was able to approach it in phases. The first phase is preparation, and it is key in determining structure. In this phase I chose a unit of analysis, a theme, and my sample, because “probability or judgment sampling is necessary when a document is too large to be analyzed in its entirety” (109) In this phase, I sampled mostly from the first season. However, I did not eliminate the option of finding supporting examples from other episodes in the series. I chose to describe moments of masculine and feminine performance as my unit of analysis in this first phase. Specifically, I chose moments that exemplified normative and non-normative performances of femininity and masculinity. The moments I have chosen as exemplifying the theme of normative and non-normative femininity and masculinity are not exhaustive; they are

merely the moments chosen that I felt best highlighted the working of this theme, based on patterns I observed.

After completing the literature review and theory portions of this paper, I spent a great deal of time reflecting on how I would measure gender on *JS*. In the literature review, I provide some descriptions of performances of femininity and masculinity. However, what is missing from the literature review are clear measures to look for when categorizing instances of normative and non-normative feminine and masculine performances. To this end, I looked outside my primary areas of scholarship for a structured definition of femininity and masculinity, one that I used as a benchmark against which to compare my data. Structured definitions do not account for the fluid nature or performance of gender, but describe markers of femininity and masculinity that I used as a conceptual tool.

It is also relevant to note that I have a personal and complicated relationship with *JS*. In order to come to terms with this relationship methodically, I have drawn on Sherif's concept of insider / outsider in the context of a researcher's relationship to what they are investigating when they are doing ethnographic or field research (Sherif 2001, 445-446). Although I did not conduct this type of research, the concepts of insider, outsider, and partial insider were useful for my work on *JS* / RTV. In the context of the "reality" part of RTV, one must acknowledge how the producers and writers are actively engaged in the framing and surveillance of the people on RTV shows, which can affect the behaviors of the people being observed even if the premise of the show (supposedly) rests on the viewer observing a "reality." Although my observation of the *JS* cast members' gendered performances is not technically ethnographic, it is observation of a kind of "mediated reality" with the consent of those being observed. I argue that television / film spectatorship can be a kind of ethnographic practice, as the discourses through which gender, race, class, and other markers of identity affect character and narratives are the same as those which organize everyday life. Michele Byers puts forth a similar argument in "The Pariah Princess: Agency, Representation and Neoliberal Jewish Girlhood":

My choice to focus on popular texts draws on the idea that “text [i]s a social, corporal, and material practice (Kirchenblatt-Gimblett 2005: 448-449). JAPs who live in the ‘real’ world come into being for readers through their discursive constitution in the public sphere in much the same way as ‘fictional’ princesses do. My choices are, to some extent, idiosyncratic but apt examples of the ambiguity with which mediated discursive practices produce Jewish girlhood today. They will be familiar to many people. They illustrate the theoretical points raised here, and are thus useful jumping off points from which other texts can be read. (2012, 34)

I identify myself as a partial insider in the context of my research on *JS*. A partial insider is a researcher who is in a context where they identify as an insider and an outsider at different times during their research process (Sherif 2001, 446). My relationship to the cast members’ experience has to do with the fact that I come from a similar ethnic background. My observations are thus informed by certain kinds of insider knowledges that might not be available to other audience members.

Conceptual Tools

Although Vicki S. Helgeson’s theoretical background is outside gender studies (psychology), I drew on her 1994 study, “Prototypes and Dimensions of Masculinity and Femininity,” to provide myself with an analytical tool for identifying markers of normative masculinity and femininity on *JS*. When I was going through my data with these markers in mind (and in a chart), I was able to identify trends in performance by highlighting particular moments of masculine and feminine performance. Below, I provide a discussion of Helgeson’s study before explaining how I applied it to my data.

In Helgeson’s two participant-based psychological studies, she seeks to “articulate the features of everyday conceptions of masculinity and femininity and to determine the dimensions that underlie these constructs” (1994, 653). I borrow the three ways of classifying prototypical masculinity and femininity that Helgeson conceptualizes to inform my method. Helgeson classifies prototypical masculinity and femininity based on factors of personality, appearance, and interests. She categorizes her study’s subjects according to degrees of variation in masculinity and femininity, so a person could be a masculine man, feminine man, feminine woman, or masculine woman (663-664). I also borrow the tables that list prototypes or normative features of masculinity and femininity from Helgeson’s study (663-664). Helgeson’s four research categories were: Masculine Male, Feminine Female,

Feminine Male, Masculine female (668). I use the categories in the tables as markers of the aesthetic and performance features of normative masculinity and femininity, and have two categories of results.

Masculinity: “Prototypical Features of Masculinity”

Helgeson’s first chart is called “prototypical features of masculinity” (Helgeson 1994, 664). She divides the features into three categories: personality, interest, and appearance. I have modified Helgeson’s chart to help me organize the data I collected from *JS*.

Masculinity Features	Compliance	Non-Compliance
<p><i>Personality</i> Self-Confident Arrogant Caring Strong Conventions Intelligent Dominant Emotionally Strong Honest / Fair Intense / Persistent Good Manners</p>		
<p><i>Interest</i> Likes Sports Dates Women Fitness Work Cars</p>		
<p><i>Appearance</i> Muscular Tall Dark Attractive Hairy Face Rugged Well-Dressed</p>		

Femininity: “Prototypical Features of Femininity”

Helgeson’s second chart, “prototypical features of femininity,” is divided similarly to the first chart. I have modified this chart for my *JS* observations as well (Helgeson 1994, 663).

Femininity Features	Compliance	Non-Compliance
<p><i>Personality</i> Caring Well-Mannered Confident Soft-Spoken Social Delicate Shy Friendly Intelligent Traditional</p>		
<p><i>Appearance</i> Wears Dresses Long hair Well-Dressed Attractive Small Smiles Manicured Nails</p>		
<p><i>Interest</i> Concerned with Appearance Family-Oriented Likes Music Likes Art Reads Books</p>		

While I used Helgeson’s markers of femininity and masculinity to help me organize my data, Helgeson's research itself is problematic. The study was done more than two decades ago, and the vast majority of the participants in the study were white, middle-class, and highly educated. As well, Helgeson’s only sample was a small group of young people and their guardians at Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh. Another problematic feature of this study lies in the method. The subjects were instructed to give their own descriptions of masculinity and femininity, but were given examples

as guidelines, which is leading and can skew the data. I acknowledge that no research is entirely completely unproblematic, and while Helgeson's research has problematic elements and does not neatly fit into my feminist poststructuralist viewpoint, her work did offer me tools that helped to concretize my own method. It allows me to conceptualize what normative femininity and masculinity looked like, and gave me a starting point from which to describe gendered performance concretely.

I am not arguing that the features of gender I observe in *JS* are "true," "inevitable," or biologically determined, but, rather, that they reflect discourses through which normative gender identities are often understood / constructed. I am aware that Helgeson's conceptual tool does not wholly align with my perspective, but this misalignment does not disqualify its use for my purposes. I used the broad frames offered by Helgeson in ways that fits with my thesis' goal of observing gender on *JS*, giving me a guideline for categorizing normative gender characteristics and behaviors. Helgeson's study offers a way of organizing evidence of normative masculine and feminine embodiment. I have not filled in the chart as a method of note taking; rather, I have used the chart as a reference when making viewing notes and approaching the text.

Method

My research method consists of a five-step viewing process, throughout which I categorized the cast members' normative and non-normative performances of masculinity and femininity into the above-mentioned categories.

Pre-First Viewing

To begin, I purchased the entire series of *JS* (six seasons in total). I scheduled a month to perform my five-step viewing method. Prior to beginning this thesis, I had watched the entire series for my own entertainment purposes. For the purposes of my research, I primarily used examples from the first season as my data set. However, I also used examples from other seasons when relevant. I chose to focus on season one.

First Viewing

During my first viewing, I watched every episode in the series in sequential order to enhance my understanding of the series' narrative as a whole. My first viewing was a "clean viewing," meaning that I watched the episodes without taking notes or analyzing the show too critically. Simply speaking, I tried to keep my academic agenda from interfering too much with the viewing.

In between my first and second viewings, I examined how to manage the data in order to address my research question in a consistent, coherent, and organized fashion. Based on my primary knowledge of the show in combination with my first viewing, I became aware of the mountainous amount of data I needed to sift through. I realized that, prior to the second viewing, I needed to employ a conceptual tool and design a method to approach the data that included systematically categorizing examples of masculinity and femininity, using Helgeson's work, as described above.

Second and Third Viewing

In my second viewing of *JS*, I printed the charts that I modified from Helgeson's study as a method of organizing my data. I used the charts as a reference, rather than using them to take notes. During this viewing, I made handwritten notes, outside of the chart, on the moments of normative and non-normative masculine and feminine performances I observed. I typed out all the viewing notes—they can be found in Appendix 3.

This stage involved a partial completion of notes, where I identified and thought through emerging themes. With regard to femininity, I grouped moments of normative performances into the themes of sex and sexuality, body image, and bodywork. I explored the women's nonconformity with normative femininity through the themes of sexuality and sex, body image, and aggression (which will be fully discussed in the femininity chapter). With regard to masculinity, I grouped examples of normative masculinity within the themes of the aesthetic and regime of masculinity, aggression, control and dominance, and men's desire and pursuit of sex with women. I grouped examples of the men's nonconformity with normative masculinity within the themes of men's aesthetic and beauty regime,

and same-sex friendships (“bromances”). During my third viewing, I made detailed notes, attempting to fill in any gaps.

Fourth Viewing

The intention of this viewing was to ensure that I did not miss any relevant points for my analysis of gender on *JS* in my first three viewings. I added examples and details to my existing set of examples of normative and non-normative masculine and feminine performances.

Fifth Viewing

In this final viewing, I re-watched the entire series, paying close attention to any additional details that I had omitted in earlier viewings. I filled in my viewing notes with details and transcribed dialogue. I also used this viewing time to note some key examples from other seasons that fell within the emerging themes I had identified from season one, in order to give my season one data set more context and to fill in the overall picture of the show.

Section Two: Analysis

Chapter Five: Character Sketches

In this, the second section of my thesis, I engage in an analysis of *JS* and the main cast members' gender performances. This part of my thesis is analytic, so in order to get a deeper understanding of the examples I use in this section, I first provide a brief introduction and glimpse into cast members' personalities and lifestyles as they are framed by the show and commentators.

Character Sketches

Prior to the *JS* release, Brian Moylan, a contributor to the popular Media Website GAWKER, released an article entitled, "Meet the Cast of Jersey Shore" (2009, n.p.). I have provided pictures from this article in Appendix 2. In the article, Moylan introduces the cast as follows:

Angelina "Jolie"

Age: 22

Hometown: Staten Island, New York

Relationship Status: Has a boyfriend who she is faithful to.

Claim to Fame: Claims to be the Kim Kardashian of Staten Island. Wait, is she Angelina Jolie or Kim Kardashian? We're confused.

Love or Hate: We love her when she's KK, and hate her when she's Angie. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Angelina:

Angelina is presented as confident. From the moment she is first introduced, she appears confident in her body / looks, her abilities, relationships, and sexuality. This confidence leads to her actions being policed by her housemates, and to her being shamed and bullied off the show (although she claims that she "chooses" to leave) in the second season. Angelina is primarily bullied for having a "manly" attitude, meaning she actively pursues casual sex with multiple men.

Jenni "J-Wow"

Age: 23

Hometown: Franklin Square, New York

Relationship Status: She has a boyfriend, but that doesn't stop her.

Claim to Fame: Absolutely no self-control.

Love or Hate: We love sluts! (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Jenni:

Jenni is introduced as a woman who is confident about her appearance. She claims to be a model,

and wears more fake hair, nails, and make up than the other female cast members (although they all share this overall physical aesthetic). She ‘fools around’ with Pauly D in the first season, but is forgiven and not framed in the same slut-shaming way as Angelina because she says she “owns it” and tells her boyfriend, Tom. Jenni seems to tone down her overt pursuit of sex when she is with Roger, but she does not stop wearing her revealing, “loud” outfits. Her narrative eventually changes, making it clear that she is trying to impress Roger rather than the entire male population.

Nicole "Snooki"

Age: 21

Hometown: Marlboro, New York

Relationship Status: Single and actively looking.

Claim to Fame: She "invented the freakin' poof!"

Love or Hate: We love her like we love Kim's wig from *Real Housewives of Atlanta*. PS— "I invented the freakin' poof" is officially the hottest new catch phrase. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Snooki:

Snooki is short, and wears a poof (teased bump) in her hair. She comes across as a party girl, and the rest of the cast reject her at first because it took a lot of effort to take care of her when she was sick from over-drinking. Later, the cast bonds with her when she gets punched, and she becomes a central part of the *JS* family, someone worth “protecting.” She is portrayed as loud and feisty.

Sammy "Sweetheart"

Age: 22

Hometown: Hazlet, New Jersey

Relationship Status: Recently single.

Claim to Fame: Has both cast members Mike and Ronnie chasing after her.

Love or Hate: We love bitches, we hate sweethearts. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Sammy:

Sammy is the “good girl” of the group. Ronnie and Mike actively pursue her. Mike calls her “wifey material,” – a woman who is “wife material” is a standard against which the male cast members measure the women on the show. This type of woman is worthy of dating, as opposed to just having casual sex with.

Mike "The Situation"

Age: 27

Hometown: Staten Island, New York

Relationship Status: Single, oh so single.

Claim to Fame: Got his nickname because his abs are so ripped they are a "situation."

Love or Hate: We hate that we love him. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Mike:

Mike struggles with his self-worth, so he puts forth a tough persona, one that is only reinforced by his nickname, "The Situation," and the constant attention he pays to his body. He wants to have big muscles and the ideal male body so he can steal every man's prized possession (their women). The viewer and the other cast members get to know that this is all a façade. The rest of the cast often call out his behavior as unacceptable, but the narrative highlights that his behavior is all a "front." This is made especially clear in the last season when he returns to the Shore house sober.

DJ Pauly D

Age: 28

Hometown: Johnston, Rhode Island (named after Levi)

Relationship Status: Surprisingly single.

Claim to Fame: Not only is he R.I.'s most famous DJ, but he has a tanning bed in his house *and* he does his hair twice a day.

Love or Hate: As the ultimate stereotypical Guido, we love him practically without irony. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Pauly D:

Pauly D is obsessed with hair gel, tanning, and his general physical appearance. He is one of the most likeable characters on the show. He is portrayed as being able to have (maintain a relationship with) a girlfriend, but will also have a lot of different sexual partners if he is single. A big part of his identity is being a good friend, as well as investing a lot of time in becoming a great DJ (his chosen career).

Ronnie

Age: 23

Hometown: Da Bronx, bitch.

Relationship Status: Adamantly single, possibly gay.²

Claim to Fame: Is the number one brawler in the house.

Love or Hate: The faux-hawk makes us hate. Sorry. The same thing happened to David Beckham back in 2001. (Moylan 2009, n.p.)

² It is important to note here that the use of language in this description is offensive and oppressive. I do not condone the use of homophobic language. Throughout the series, homophobic jokes play a large part in the overall narrative.

My reading of Ronnie:

Ronnie has the quickest temper of anyone in the *JS* house. He usually pursues sex with different women, unless he is in a relationship with Sammi. Next to Mike with his gym obsession, Ronnie is the cast member most interested in working out. He is the big guy with a sensitive side.

Vinnie

Age: 21

Hometown: Staten Island, New York

Relationship Status: Ladies love him, but he's single!

Claim to Fame: He's a momma's boy. Aww.

Love or Hate: We just want to pinch his cheeks and caress his perfectly sculpted eyebrows.

(Moylan 2009, n.p.)

My reading of Vinnie:

Vinnie is the most “authentically Italian” cast member on *JS*, identifying with his Italian heritage more than with the Guido / Guidette subculture. Vinnie boasts about the fact that he is well-educated. He is emotional, and the “smart one” who is just “sowing his wild oats” – we are supposed to read his presence on the show as a phase in his young adult life that he is passing through before returning to his real role as a responsible member of society. Even his manner of pursuing sex with women is portrayed as being less predatory than his other male cast members.

Deena Nicole

In addition to the original cast members, a new roommate was added in the third season after Angelina left in season two. Angelina was replaced by Deena Nicole. Maureen O'Connor from GAWKER Media introduced Deena to the *JS* audience in the following way: “Meet Deena Nicole Cortese, a 23-year-old friend of Snooki's from New Egypt, New Jersey. According to her defunct MySpace profile (don't worry, we've got screenshots) she is ‘ADDiCTiVE & ExPENiV3 LiK3 COCAiNE!’ She is America's newest court jester” (2010, n.p.). She continues:

The *New York Post* reports that the third season of the infamous MTV show will feature its first real, live Jerseyite: Deena Nicole Cortese, who will replace original cast member Angelina Pivarnick. (Angelina lost her job during the great *Jersey Shore* strike of 2010.) Deena graduated from New Egypt High School in 2005, then went to community college [...] Deena Nicole has since removed her Facebook and MySpace pages, the latter of which features phrases like “iM ADDiCTiVE & ExPENiV3 LiK3 COCAiNE!” and “I shOuLd JusT havE My oWn TV shOW.” Prescient! But not

prescient enough to avoid web caches and screenshots. America, meet your new monster. (O'Connor 2010, n.p.)

My reading of Deena:

Deena is often juxtaposed with Snooki. She even has a similar “overdrinking on her first night at the Shore” storyline that Snooki had in the first season. She is used by producers to “amp up” Snooki’s personality and to bring more loud and excessive behavior to the Shore house.

Chapter Six: Femininity on *Jersey Shore*

In this chapter, I describe femininity on *JS* in two ways. First, I provide examples of instances where the female cast members behave in accordance with what I described earlier as normative scripts of femininity. Their performances are coded according to the themes of sexuality and sexual activity, body image, and bodywork. Second, I discuss some of the ways in which these women do not conform to / refuse normative feminine scripts. I highlight how the women interrupt popular femininity norms, primarily those surrounding sex and sexuality, body image, and aggression. In the conclusion, I offer the hypothesis that the female cast members do not fully adhere to feminine norms because their identities – the intersecting social locations I discuss are class, ethnicity, location, and the Italian subculture (Italian-ness or Guido / Guidette) – do not fit the standard of conventional femininity. I unpack this question of intersecting social locations more thoroughly at the end of this thesis.

Moments of Normative Femininity

Sexuality and Having Sex

JS's first episode centers the introduction of the cast members and their location (Seaside Heights, New Jersey). Each cast member talks about who they are, and what their expectations of their time in Seaside Heights are to the camera. This introduction helps to establish the personality (“characters”) of each cast member, and gives viewers their first sense of what they can expect from them and from the show. The introductions and the drive to the Shore house also provide us with a rich perspective on how the cast members see themselves and their identities. They all drive in individually, providing revealing glimpse into their hometowns, lives, and families. These drives provide time for private interviews with the camera, where each cast member divulges what they think about this opportunity and what they want to accomplish during their summer at the *JS*. They also describe what a Guido / Guidette identity means to them. These introductory driving interviews offer the viewers a preliminary glimpse into the cast members’ perceptions of their own gender and ethnic performances.

Normative hetero-femininity is brought into tight focus right from these first moments. Conventional norms of femininity dictate that “real” women should have an inherent desire to engage in intimate relationships with men (Helgeson 1994, 673). Helgeson identifies the normative woman as heterosexual, a woman who engages in acts or behaviors such as “flirting” to get a man’s attention (1994, 673). Throughout the series, the female cast members discuss their romantic / sexual relationships with men, engage in flirtatious behaviour with men, and have sex with them. During her introductory segment, Snooki narrates her adherence to norms of heteronormative femininity. Both the producers / editors and Snooki’s words emphasize that being desired by men is a key part of her identity. This is made especially clear when she states that her dream is “to find a nice, juiced, and tanned Guido to get married and move to New Jersey” (S01E01). This is one of the first moments during which the female cast members’ identification with heterosexuality and desiring men is highlighted. The desire to meet a nice Italian man and start a family is repeated throughout the text as a core ambition of Snooki’s character. Another example of Snooki’s adherence to the rules of conventional heteronormativity is when her partner (now husband), Jionni, comes to Italy to visit and is embarrassed that Snooki is dressing in clothing that is too revealing, and dancing too provocatively (“exposing herself”) in public. He leaves Italy, and threatens to leave her. Snooki gets very upset when her heteronormative fantasy is threatened. She says she needs to change if she wants to get married (S04E05).

The *JS* editors frame women’s worth and sexuality primarily through a male perspective / lens. Women certainly police each other’s sexuality on *JS*, but men are also explicitly allowed / encouraged to shape—and are implicitly given authority to regulate – women’s sexuality by categorizing them as either a “good girl” (like Sammi) or a “slut” (like Angelina). Although heterosexuality is the normative standard for women’s sexuality, there exists a sinister double standard in what it comes to men’s and women’s relationship to sex on *JS* and elsewhere. Men are often praised if they have multiple sexual partners, whereas women who do the same are usually harshly shamed. There is some space for the

women on *JS* to resist this, however, the overarching narrative of the show does not allow for a lot of resistance to this structure (as I discuss at more length below).

As stated above, a very important part of the *JS* narrative is how the women are constructed by and through a man's perspective. Pauly D and Vinny, in particular, often play the part of men who judge and influence the women's behaviours and performances. Feminist journalist Jessica Valenti discusses this double standard in her book *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women*.³ Valenti observes that men can "hook up" with many women, but women are expected to set limits on their sexual relationships by hyper-controlling the frequency, conditions, and context of their sexual activity (2010, 108). Valenti comments, "[making] women the sexual gatekeepers and telling men they just can't help themselves not only drives home the point that women's sexuality is unnatural, but also sets up a disturbing dynamic in which women are expected to be responsible for men's sexual behavior" (108). Valenti further argues that women's inherent value is frequently associated with how "pure" they are, whereas the same standard is not set up for men: "[while] boys are taught that the things that make them men – good men – are universally accepted ethical ideals, women are led to believe that our moral compass lies somewhere between our legs. Literally" (13). Thus, it can be assumed that there is a socially accepted amount of sexual freedom that a woman is allowed to exhibit before people start calling her a slut, while men are not under quite the same constraints.⁴

The men on *JS*, especially Pauly D and Vinny, make distinctions between "good girls" and "sluts"; they treat women they deem good girls with more respect. This dualism is set up early in the first season, and reflects the societal pressure many women may feel to have less sex than men, or else

³ There is a lot written about *JS* and the cast members in popular culture blogs and news. Although academic articles have been written on the subject of pop culture analysis and on *JS* in general, it is often very inaccessible to non-academics. I have included popular culture critiques of these subjects in this paper because it is an important part of the conversation about *JS*.

⁴ This is not the same for all women. Class, racialization, queerness, indigeneity, subculture, etc. all play a role in "how much" sex is read as tolerable. Different women will experience different forms of policing, and shaming, in relation to (perceived) sexual activity / desire.

risk being compared to the DTF (“down to fuck”)⁵ women that the men of the Shore bring home from the club. Both Vinny and Pauly D sleep with multiple women. They are represented as seeing these women as having little or no value as people because they are “sluts who sleep around.” In season two, however, Vinny and Pauly D find themselves a couple of “good girls,” girls they want to date and be respectful of (S02E08). Ramona (Vinny’s love interest) and Rocio Olea (Pauly D’s love interest) are treated differently from other women who have spent time with the men on *JS*. They are framed as “ideal” women – women who men should value, date, and reward because they adhere to normative femininity standards of sexual behaviour. That is, these women limit their number of sexual partners, and only have sex within the confines of monogamous, heterosexual relationships. One way in which Vinny “rewards” Ramona for being “good” is by literally saying that she is worthy of dating him (which he sees as a high prize). Vinny says, “I treat some women like I treat my mother – like gold” (S02E08). On another occasion, Vinny states, “sometimes you meet the right girl who you wine and dine, and you wife up” (S02E08).⁶ Vinny and Pauly D refer to the women they are courting as “two of the rarest roses” (S02E08). Their characterization of these women as rare flowers further exemplifies their idealization of women who are not easily accessible sexually.

The producers of *JS* illustrate Vinny and Pauly D’s (and perhaps their own) preference for “good girls” over “sluts,” by focusing on the shift in their behavior when they are going out with these “good girls” in season two. The amount of time the men take to prepare for these dates, and the attention the producers pay to this preparation helps to drive this point home. For example, Vinny and Pauly D get their hair cut, and buy new clothes and flowers for their first dates with Ramona and Rocio (S02E08). Their actions, as well as the amount of time the narrative spends on them encourages the viewer to consider that women will be romantically and socially rewarded if they are “good girls” –

⁵According to Urban Dictionary, DTF is “a slang term meaning that one is just willing to have sex. It's like having a friend with benefits. Just make sure the participating members are clean and use as much birth control as possible” (TheSpectacularOne 2009, n.p.).

⁶According to Urban Dictionary, to “wife up” is “[the] act of taking a desirable woman to be your wife” (ElTigreNegro 2009, n.p.).

their dates will dress better, and they will receive gifts. Good girls are often rewarded with “wifey status.” This can explain why, narratively, more attention goes to Sammi at the beginning of the show, and Snooki and Jenni only receive good girl attention when they are in relationships.

Throughout the series, there are a lot of examples of the Shore house men treating women they sleep with disrespectfully because they deem them to be sluts and thus unworthy of respect. The “DTF women” that they have sex with – and who they expect to leave right afterwards so they can sleep restfully on their own – are reduced to a number in their sexual counts. In the second season, the Shore house men even have a “smush” (sex) board up, reducing their hook ups to points on the board (S02E08). Once the women they bring home to have sex with leave, the men usually get together to “talk shit” about them (S01E01). This performance of “sex and tell” is central to the show’s larger narrative that a woman’s worth is attached to their sexual history.

I discuss the significance of the men on *JS* defining and constructing women’s sexuality at some length here because it is a central narrative component of the show, not because the female cast members do not have any agency of their own. As I will demonstrate, some of the female cast members refuse to comply with the notion that their self-worth is tied to sexual behaviour. However, the show’s frame does not allow the resistance narrative to be larger than the good girl / slut dichotomy narrative. The best example of this is how the most defiantly proud female cast member, Angelina, is bullied into leaving the show at the end of the second season.

Women’s Agency and Resistance

The women in the Shore house are given more allowances by their male cast members than the girls their male roommates bring home when it comes to their sexual activities (at least up to a point), because they are regarded as “family.” The men “allow them” some space for sexual exploration because, ultimately, it is expected that they will eventually live with one partner and become a mother, thus fulfilling the heteronormative fantasy. However, we can speculate that they also understand that this is the work that RTV does. If the girls sit home all day cooking and cleaning it makes for a weak

narrative and then they all lose. One of the things we have to keep in mind is that these people are performers. Their labour is, at least in part, trying to figure out how to keep the show in the public eye / keep audiences watching. The drama and spectacle (including sexual spectacle) is part of this. The female cast members do face some shaming, but only Angelina experiences enough teasing and isolation as a “consequence” of her sexual behavior that she leaves the show. In the first season, Sammi starts out flirting with, and even kissing, both Mike and Ronnie. But since Sammi is the most normative in terms of embodying the “good girl” persona, her act of kissing both Ronnie and Mike in the same night (S01E02) is forgivable.

When Jenni cheats on her boyfriend by kissing Pauly D (S01E05), she resists the norm that states that good girls only kiss and have sex within the confines of a monogamous relationship. But because she ultimately tells her boyfriend what happened and they break up before she moves on to another man, she stays within the boundaries of acceptable female sexual behavior (S02E03). Angelina, however, crosses the imaginary line with her “promiscuity.” While the way she behaves would be accepted if she were one of the male cast members, since she is not, she receives abuse from both the women and men in the house (S02E10). Although the Shore house women demonstrate some resistance to the good girl stereotype when they take ownership of their bodies and sexualities, the show ultimately centers the narrative punishment of the one woman who does not “recognize” that she is supposed to regret her “slutty” actions and perform her femininity properly in the end.

Body Image

According to normative femininity scripts, women should be small and focus a great deal of energy on their appearance (Helgeson 1994, 663). In my literature review, I highlighted an overall portrait of patriarchal beauty norms found in many Western cultures. The way in which normative femininity is represented in popular culture “currently reflects [a] slender body that is typically blonde and tall,” as well as “young and middle class” (Deliovsky 2010, 109-110). Women whose physical appearance fits these narrow criteria are held up as the “ideal.” Furthermore, the ideal woman is “a nice,

happy person, constantly smiling, feeding and nurturing others – all the while denying herself self-nurturance and knowing her subordinate place in hierarchy of gender” (111). While the female *JS* cast members benefit from white privilege, their whiteness is problematized by class and ethnicity.

A prominent narrative found throughout the six-season run of *JS* is how well the female cast members embody the idealized, thin type of femininity. Using a woman’s size as an insult is commonplace throughout the series. All of the cast members use a variety of names or labels for anyone who does not fit the normative feminine standard for body size. “Linebacker,” “Hippopotamus,” and “Atomic bomb” are only a few examples of the kinds of names used by the cast members (mostly the men) to describe a woman they believe is “too large.” There are several specific scenes where women are either degraded based on their size, or women who upset men on *JS* are devalued, and all of the cast members use their size as an insult. In one first season episode, Snooki has an altercation with one of the women who has been spending time with the men in the house. The altercation begins because Mike wants the (fat) woman in a group of women the men have brought back to the Shore house to leave, and her friends to stay. Mike calls the woman a “linebacker,”⁷ and instructs Snooki to tell her to leave (S01E06). This leads to a physical altercation between Snooki and the other woman. In describing the incident, Snooki uses the woman’s size as an insult, saying, “[that girl] charged me like a hippo!” (S01E06). Women whose physical size is considered too large are considered unworthy of interacting socially / sexually with the men in the house – or of receiving respect from the women – because their bodies are considered not thin enough to be (sexually) desirable. The *JS* women fear being categorized as “fat” and do not want to be around fat women socially, perhaps because they do not want to be associated with bodies that are “undesirable” according to heteronormative rules. They thus reinforce an us / them dichotomy, where to be “us” is to have the ability to attract a man’s desire

⁷According to Urban Dictionary, a linebacker is: “A decidedly square girl, lacking in neck area, with a broad torso and disproportionate legs” (xdannox, 2006, para. 1).

through the deployment of recognizable traits of heteronormative femininity. The women on *JS* more often comply with, rather than resist, this narrative.

Mike, in particular, is one of the loudest voices in the group when it comes to degrading women because of their body size, and not showing women who are considered “fat” their due respect. Mike frequently uses a woman’s size against her when he engages in an argument. In season one, episode seven, the roommates go out for dinner in Atlantic City. During this dinner, Snooki and Mike engage in banter, making passive aggressive comments aimed at each other, which Mike later describes as “friendly shit talk” (S01E07). At one point, Snooki provokes Mike to the point where he becomes embarrassed and visibly distressed – his face gets red, and he deepens his tone as he shouts at Snooki. The conversation goes from being a lighthearted exchange to being hurtful, and the tension at the table is obvious. When Snooki asks Mike to pass the (bread) “rolls,” Mike angrily replies, “Don’t worry, you got a few already.” Following this comment, Snooki sits quietly, then runs to the women’s washroom where she cries dramatically while Jenni comforts her. While Snooki is in the washroom, everyone at the table informs Mike that the comment was inappropriate. Ronnie, Sammi, Vinny, and Pauly D all agree that calling Snooki fat – because she is not those “other” girls, she is part of their friend group who they often call their “family” – is not right. Ronnie acknowledges the inappropriateness of mocking a familiar woman’s weight, asking Mike, “What was your game plan? Embarrassing a female at dinner. Going after a woman’s weight is a low blow.”

Meanwhile, Snooki admits to Jenni how deeply she has internalized the message that women need to be thin to have value, and how she has struggled for a long time to attain the ideal body type. Snooki tells Jenni that she struggled with an eating disorder in high school in order to be thin. Later in the episode, Snooki illustrates the impact that Mike’s insult has had on her self-esteem when she asks Jenni and Sammi if she looks “disgusting” when she looks at herself in the mirror (S01E07). This interaction between Snooki and Mike reinforces the audience’s understanding that being thin is a valued feminine ideal. Snooki’s pain also reveals the physical and emotional toll of this policing.

Additionally, in order to be seen as a woman of significant worth according to a man (Mike), a woman has to have a slim body. Mike's use of this type of body shaming as a retaliation when Snooki upset him illustrates that not only does he know exactly how to hurt her (attacking her body size), but also provides a clear example of the type of public social sanction that a woman can receive for not fitting into a properly feminine body. No one in the friend group is okay with how Mike treats Snooki at the restaurant. There is a tension between the fact that Mike says these offensive things about Snooki's body, following the norm of reinforcing society's need for women to be thin and desirable to men, and the fact that within the context of the group the others were not okay with him hurting Snooki like that. The cast do regularly allow this to happen to other women, and they all participate in it. There is a disconnect in the "rules" on *JS*. The women who are part of the group or cast are valued more than the secondary women they meet and move on from.

On the other side of this equation, women who demonstrate a clear intention to reach thinness are praised for working toward attaining that ideal, thin body, and for losing weight. Both Deena and Snooki acknowledge that they are trying to lose weight at different points throughout the series. Before filming the last season, Deena lost a considerable amount of weight. This "effort" leads to Deena receiving a great deal of positive reinforcement from her male and female roommates. When she arrives at the house, all of the men congratulate her on her weight loss, commenting on her finally achieving that thin ideal (S06E01). This storyline also includes the framing of Deena getting her first boyfriend and getting more male attention due to her "new" body – Deena is being "rewarded" for her thinness (S06E01). In the first episode of the last season, she says, "I never really had, like, a real boyfriend before. This is the happiest I've been in my entire life" (S06E01). Mike, who is generally the first cast member to disparage a woman due to something related to her body, tells Deena that she looks good. Afterwards, a shocked Deena remarks that, "he usually says I look fat" (S06E01). Deena's mom also cautions her against putting the weight back on and losing all of the new respect she has

gained as a result of her weight loss, specifically telling Deena, “don’t drink and gain it all back” (S06E01).

Bodywork

According to Butler, “gender is instituted through the stylization of the body, and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which the bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the [...] abiding gendered self” (2009, 519). In her exploration of the importance of physical appearance to the normatively attractive female subject, Helgeson also draws attention to features that the narrative of normative femininity dictates women should embody, including the pressure to grow their hair long, be “well dressed,” be small, always smile, and always have freshly manicured nails (1994, 663). The performance of one’s gender requires “bodywork”: the repetitive actions and tangible work that goes into producing the perception of what femininity and masculinity consists of and should look like. Further, “feminine beauty has less to do with physical perfection [...] and more to do with behavior and decorum in service of ‘white’ masculinity” (Deliovsky 2010, 118). “Beauty” is not an objective thing – it is political. “Assigning value to women’s bodies, based on cultural and racial standards of beauty, is an expression of European masculine power relations, in which all women are ultimately losers; however, some lose more than others” (118). The value that we place on one ideal picture of beauty, a picture created by and in service of the hegemonic white man, creates a measure against which women are compared. The further away from this white, feminine ideal that a woman falls, the more censure she will receive (118).

The language of bodywork is useful for illustrating the ways in which the women of *JS* attempt to fit the mold of the normative feminine subject. In television, the theme song and first introductions are very important components that set up the focal point of the season and series, and they are played repetitively. In Sammi’s introduction, she specifically talks about her Guidette identity. While her words do not flawlessly line up with Helgeson’s ideal version of normative femininity, the concept of

putting “work” into your appearance is still apparent. According to Sammi, being an ideal Guidette means:

The smaller the shorts the better, because all the little Guido guys out there love them. I love to get dolled up. I love to look good. I can never go out without my hair extensions. A Guidette is somebody who knows how to club it up, takes really good care of themselves, has pretty hair, cakes on makeup, has tan skin, wears the hottest heels. Pretty much they know how to own it and rock it. (S01E01)

Sammi illustrates that her Guidette identity is tied to her appearance, and bodywork goes into attaining and behaving in accordance with that standard. She says she focuses on her appearance and follows a particular set of rules in order to be an ideal Guidette.

Although Sammi and the other women in the house strive for normative femininity, there are moments when they achieve it, and others when they do not. The women on *JS* engage in recurring activities related to bodywork, including going to the gym, dieting, and doing their hair and makeup. They stress the importance of keeping up with regular nail and hair salon appointments. There are several scenes over the course of the six seasons where the women talk about their nails or go together to get their nails done. In one episode, Jenni calls in sick to work because she needs to get her nails done (S02). When Jenni and Snooki return from Italy, they get the hair specialist they use to come to the Shore house because they have been away so long and not kept up with regular appointments in Italy (S06E01). Nails and hair seem to also play a specific role in the production of ideal Guidette / Italian-American identity (at least in some places), as we see this reiterated across other texts, in particular in RTV, and specifically on *JS*.

Bodywork is a process of repeated actions, and central to this work is the desire to make femininity or masculinity recognizable. The collection of moments in which the women on *JS* perform bodywork come together to create a picture of “proper” feminine performance within this text. While these moments seem to align well with the standards of femininity discussed earlier, I feel a slight discomfort in reading them purely in this way because of how the women’s engagement with normative behaviors plays out in the text as not *quite* right. They get their hair and nails done, but what results is hair that is bigger and nails that are longer and flashier (bright, with diamonds or patterns)

than what would be considered normatively feminine and attractive. They take care of their skin, but it is more tanned and they wear more make up than what might be considered normatively attractive for middle-class white women. Their bodywork is “excessive” – it results in an excessive version of femininity. They put a lot of work into achieving normative femininity – but what results is almost a parody of normative femininity. They clearly fit into the Guido / Guidette subculture’s standard of normative femininity, but compared to the standard set by middle-class white women, the Shore house women are too much, too big, too loud.

Interestingly, these descriptors – being too much, too big, too loud – have been used against queer, racialized, and working class women for a long time (Byers 2017, n.p). The Guido / Guidette stereotype is not new. This subculture and its aesthetic traces back to movies such as *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and television shows like *Welcome Back, Kotter* (ABC affiliate (WCVB-TV 1975-1979)). Women from this subculture, including the women on *JS*, wear 1980s-1990s western fashions. In a way, their over-the-top femininity seems almost to present a “drag.” Sin, a man who performed in drag from the age of 17 and was interviewed by Rebecca Nicholson for her article, “Workin’ it! How Female Drag Queens Are Causing a Scene,” states that “drag is not performing a woman, drag is performing femininity” (Nicholson 2017, n.p.). The “drag” style is, in my view (and as I argue later), tied to the *JS* cast members’ ethnic and class identities, and their style of dress (outdated, loud) are linked to representations of working class or “white trash” cultures.

Moments of Non-Normative Femininity

Sexuality and Sex

Although much of the text is taken up with the performance of feminine bodywork and the policing of normative femininity, there are moments on *JS* where the women refuse to follow normative feminine scripts. Although, as I have already discussed, the women who appear on the series are often penalized for engaging in romantic or sexual relationships that are not heterosexual and monogamous, the central female “characters” on *JS* have multiple partners and have sex with great

frequency outside of monogamous relationships even though they state that they want to be in a committed relationship with one man. By season six, all the main characters are in relationships. We are encouraged to see the women who “hook-up” with the male cast members, and Angelina (who crossed the line into being too predatory), as “sluts.”

There is a difference between how the sexual activities of the core characters and the peripheral ones are represented on the show. When these peripheral (not main cast members) “hook-up” women engage in multiple sexual relationships at once, they pay a high cost. Most often, the cost is psychological. They are regularly mocked and “slut shamed.” Slut shaming is used to “degrade or mock a woman because she enjoys having sex, has sex a lot, or may even just be rumored to participate in sexual activity” (Johnson 2014, n.p.). “Hook-up girls” are slut shamed, and none of the main cast members are represented as thinking that this is inappropriate behavior for potential girlfriends. These girls are labeled as DTF. In the second season, Mike says, “So, we have two girls on the burner. We can get the original chicks, which are DTF, or we can get the blonde ones.” Pauly D responds, “Ask them if they're DTF though. Don't waste no time today. It's Saturday” (Etkin 2010, n.p.). Pauly D illustrates here that these women are only worth his attention if they are “down” to have sex. DTF girls get Pauly and Mike’s attention until they have sex with them, then cabs are called for them and they are sent home – this fits into the culture of disrespect for women who enjoy sex that is pervasive on the series. In the second season, the cast members have a smush (sex) board, where they keep track of how many people they have each had sex with, exemplifying how central their sex lives are to the overall narrative of the show. This board demonstrates that women who are not part of the core group can literally be reduced to a tally (number) on board. Both female and male cast members are players on this board. The female cast members get names, whereas the other women are tallied. This board is also the beginning of the cast members’ abuse of Angelina – they start noting and judging the number of men Angelina has slept with.

Although the peripheral hook-up girls are slut shamed to a much higher degree than the main female cast members, the sexuality of the Shore house women is still policed more than the men's. A large part of the narrative in the first seasons is spent focusing on all the jokes the cast members make at Angelina's expense because she is the only main female cast member to cross the line into having "too many" partners. Angelina is, by far, the most harshly policed, but she is also the first of the cast members to slut shame another woman on-screen, which is ironic, as she later faces relentless slut shaming from her roommates. At the beginning of the first season, Angelina says, "if a girl's a slut, she should be abused" (S01E02). She judges the women that the guys bring home from clubs, beaches, or other venues they regularly frequent in order to meet women to have sex with. She mocks the women that her male co-stars bring home for sex by calling the women sluts, and she kicks them out of the house, telling her male co-stars, "don't bring dirty girls home" (S01E01). Angelina demonstrates the fact that women, like men, can (and often do) judge other women based on their sexual activity. Angelina demonstrates the impossibility of the rules for women – and their complicity in the maintenance of these impossible rules and standards.

Angelina gets slut shamed herself in the second season. Ultimately, this harassment (name calling and exclusion from group activities) leads to her leaving the show. The male cast members switch from thinking of Angelina as "one of the boys" – due to her active sex life – to mocking Angelina for the frequency and amount of sex she has with multiple partners. The switch happens when she hooks up with other people while dating Jose. One of the people she hooks up with is a roommate (Vinny) whom she hated, so her action is read as a purely physical encounter (just for sex). This is a problem because there is an arbitrary line of propriety established by the cast members for how much sex the women can have, and once Angelina crosses this line, she becomes an easy target for her roommates' abuse. It is not just about how much, but about with whom and what the specific context is when it comes to the judgment of female cast members' sexual relationships. It also suggests the

problematic nature of “hooking up” within the house, unless initiated by men or in the service of a monogamous relationship.

All of the cast members take part in slut shaming and excluding Angelina – especially Jenni and Snooki, who no longer include her in girls’ days or outings. As this abuse intensifies, Angelina justly identifies the double standard of slut shaming, pointing to the fact that her sexual behavior is only unacceptable because she is a woman having frequent sex with multiple partners. Angelina says, "I hate that whole thing that a guy can do it but girls can't" (S02E08). This is, however, a bit ironic considering the fact that Angelina also judges women who engage in similar sexual activities.

Angelina intentionally steps outside of normative feminine constructs and consciously and actively pursues sex. There are two episodes in the second season that highlight this (S02E08 and S02E09). In these episodes, Angelina presents herself as sexually available and willing to have sex with multiple partners, a fact which is presented as legitimizing her shaming by the cast members (and arguably, the audience as well). In these episodes, one of the men she has casual sex with is her roommate, Vinny. After this, Mike says, “Vinny wants to have sex because he is a guy, and Angelina wants to have sex because she thinks like a guy” (S02E08). Because Angelina is dating someone and sleeping with a roommate, Mike adds, “Angelina proves the whore equation. If you date and snuggle with a girl and if you are a nice guy she won't want to sleep with you, but she will play around and fuck another guy” (S02E08). Part of the issue for Mike is that he views this as an example of Angelina’s lack of ethics. Her boyfriend, Jose, is featured in several episodes, and he takes her out and buys her gifts. The male cast members know Jose, and think he is a nice guy, so Mike wants to expose her cheating saying, “He is a nice kid. I like him. If you don’t tell him, I will” (S02E08).

Angelina is not just failing to conform to normative femininity, but she is crossing the gender line and, potentially, encroaching on male space and privilege in relation to sex. Angelina interrupts the “good girl” narrative because her roommates consider her to be too sexually available. However, it is not just the men on *JS* who present a negative attitude towards women who engage in casual sex with

multiple partners. Snooki also has a negative reaction to Vinny and Angelina having sex. Snooki (who openly desires Vinny) also criticizes Angelina for their sexual encounter, calling her a “whore” (S02E08). Thus, women who engage in sex frequently, and with multiple partners outside of a relationship act outside of what is considered proper female behaviour. Angelina refuses to play the “good girl” role, and she acts according to her own desires. This situation also troubles the interpersonal relationships between the cast members. Snooki engages in this policing primarily because she is jealous, which reinforces mythologies about female competition as well.

Body Image

Snooki and Deena both receive praise from their fellow cast members (especially Mike and Ronnie) when performing athletic activities (exercising) and losing weight. Despite the fact that, overall, the cast members clearly believe that a thin female body (with large breasts) is an ideal body, there are moments on *JS* where the women challenge this norm. Angelina is vocal about the fact that she thinks curves are attractive, a belief that clashes with the normative belief that a slender feminine body is most desirable. Angelina believes that having curves is normal and offers the most attractive body type for Guidettes. I would argue, as I discuss further in this thesis, that this is one way in which ethnicity, in this case Angelina’s identification with a particular type of feminine embodiment I identify as prominent in Italian women, can affect how a woman understands and performs femininity. In her first season introduction, she proudly positions her body to draw attention to her buttocks and curves. She maintains that her curves are “all natural,” and that is why she is hot: “I am all natural. I have real boobs. I have a nice fat ass. Look at this shit, I mean, come on, I’m hot” (S01E01). Although Angelina appears to be happy with and empowered by her curves, she faces a lot of criticism about her body. Although Angelina links curves with her identity as a Guidette, the narrative the other cast members offer is different from hers. The fact that she is not normatively thin is pointed out to her several times, and is used as a verbal assault against her. In one episode, when Mike and Angelina get into a heated argument, Mike tells her, “lose five or ten pounds, then we’ll talk” (S01E02). This is not the only time

that Mike uses a woman's weight to get the upper hand in an argument, exemplifying some of the ways in which women are ridiculed for their failure to adhere to the normative, slim ideal. When Mike tells Angelina that they will talk when she loses some weight, he is trying to silence her, using her non-conformity to normative femininity scripts to do so. Interestingly, Angelina is only woman in the house who describes herself as curvy, and she is not particularly curvy or more so than any other woman in the house.

Aggression

According to Helgeson, aggression, both physical and verbal, is considered a predominantly male trait (1994, 664). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, aggression is, “[a feeling] of anger or antipathy resulting in hostile or violent behavior; readiness to attack or confront” or “the action of attacking without provocation” (2017, 3). For the women on *JS* to act aggressively means performing femininity non-normatively. Throughout the series there are several key moments when the female cast members act aggressively. During the pilot episode introductions, Snooki says, “I am small, but I have a loud mouth and can stick up for myself” (S01E01). Snooki boastfully declares her ability to be verbally aggressive if provoked, which resists the widespread belief that women should be non-confrontational (Helgeson 1994, 663).

In season two, there is some tension between the women on *JS*. The women do not welcome Angelina's return to the house, because they have heard rumors that she has been talking about the other cast members behind their backs (S02E01). The group takes two cabs to a local bar; one cab holds all of the male cast members, and the other cab holds all of the female cast members. The audience is able to watch both groups because the narrative bounces back and forth between the two cars, even splitting the screen to show both groups at once. In the men's cab there is silence and peace; no one speaks, and they have a pleasant cab ride to the club. In the women's cab, however, there is an escalating confrontation. The women raise their voices and get in each other's personal space. The girls are clearly bonding over their exclusion of Angelina, as well as over their engagement in a verbal battle

aimed at degrading Angelina. First, the other women ignore Angelina, and when she tries to enter into the conversation, the argument escalates to a point where Jenni threatens to “take her” (beat her up) right there in the cab (S02E01).

The women on *JS* regularly engage in both verbal and physical altercations. In season one, episode six, a verbal altercation between Sammi and Jenni escalates into a physical one. In season two, episode ten, Snooki and Angelina get into a physical fight at a nightclub. Interestingly, the women on *JS* are not only verbally and physically aggressive with one another, they also act aggressively towards men. In season one, episode seven, while the group is in Atlantic City, Jenni gets aggressive with her roommate, Mike. Mike does not help Jenni when she asks for his assistance at the club – she wants Mike to walk her home because she is too intoxicated to go home by herself, but he is too busy talking with a woman he has just met and hopes to have sex with. Jenni is intoxicated and becomes aggressive – she starts yelling and grabbing him. Jenni behaves so aggressively that club security tells her she has to leave. Jenni is then shown drunk and agitated, pacing in her hotel room while telling the other cast members (Ronnie and Sammi) how angry she is at Mike. She says, “He had the bouncers escort me out. So when he comes in here, I’m gonna punch him in the face” (S01E07). Ronnie and Sammi do nothing to defuse the situation prior to Mike’s return, and Jenni is still so angry when Mike gets home that she hits him – punches him in the face with a left hook. In this example, Jenni transgresses what are considered normative feminine behaviours. Female aggression is framed differently than male aggression. It is not praised – it is viewed as non-normative and unfeminine. However, ethnic women are often portrayed as being inherently more aggressive and less feminine than white women.

It is not only the incident itself that is relevant to a discussion of female aggression as transgression; rather, the men’s reaction to it is equally important. Vinny physically intervenes, and Mike appears to have to pause and think about how to react. Mike does not know how to react to physical aggression when it comes from a woman. He is very confused, and follows Jenni closely while being verbally but not physically aggressive in response. Before the confrontation escalates further,

Vinny steps in and stops Mike from doing anything else. Vinny tells Mike, “Bro, she’s a girl,” as if to reinforce normative gender roles in a situation where Jenni interrupted them (S01E07). Vinny is trying to get Mike to not hit Jenni back, even though he looks like he is considering it. It is important that he not physically hit her, because that transgresses the idea that men should protect women, not be violent against them in such an obvious manner. Vinny takes on the role of diffuser – he puts Jenni back in her “girl” role, by making it clear that Mike cannot physically fight her. This statement presumes all kinds of things about her femininity and the men’s masculinity, as well as the social order to which they all belong and give them all meaning.

Chapter Seven: Masculinity

In this chapter, I describe moments where the men on *JS* perform masculinity in normative and non-normative ways. I have categorized these moments of gendered performance according to the following key themes: stereotypically masculine appearance, masculine aggression, control, and men's desire and pursuit of heterosexual sexual relationships. In addition, I describe moments in *JS* where the men deviate from normative masculinity by highlighting the men's attentiveness to their appearance, and their close same-sex friendships.

Normative Masculinity on *JS*

Masculine Appearance

There is a clear set of rules or "how-to" guide the male cast members follow in order to be a proper Guido. This framing of what a proper Guido looks like is internalized by the male cast members, and is also discussed by the women when they explain what their ideal man looks like. According to Helgeson, normative masculinity has a specific look, which is big and muscular (1994, 663). From the beginning, the male cast members discuss their bodies at length, and the editors and producers of the show focus a lot of attention on the male cast members' muscular bodies and how they get them that way. For example, in the first episode of the first season, Mike shows off his abs, and explains how he got his nickname, "The Situation," by lifting up his shirt and stating: "That is the situation." According to Mike (and, apparently, the people closest to him), his abs are "so ripped up they call it 'The Situation.' I mean, what can you say to someone who looks like Rambo with their shirt off" (S01E01). During this same scene, there is a shot of him doing chin-ups and using an ab roller, shirtless (S01E01). This objectification of the men in the show is interesting, as it pushes them into the position of objects of female and queer gazes – even as the narrative tries to enforce normative sexual and gender ideals.

The acronym "GTL" (Gym, Tanning, Laundry) is a good example of what the "Guido rules" entail. GTL has become a well-known acronym associated with the show. The "gym" part of the acronym is important because it contributes to the normative ideal that men should be big and have a

lot of muscles. Mike's strict commitment to the "GTL lifestyle" is a key example of the male cast members' conformity to the muscular male ideal. At the beginning of season one, Mike says, "We do our thing at the gym, we work out hard, we take it seriously, we make sure we eat certain food after. If you want to look somewhat like The Situation, which is hard, you need to get some protein in your diet" (S01E02). Vinny's response to seeing the bodies of the other men in the house when they all first met was to comment on his own size, as he is noticeably the smallest of all of them (S01E01). From the first episode, the male cast members set up in a dynamic where each constantly compares their muscles against those of the other men in the house. Vinny half-jokingly says, "Shit, I am the smallest in the house now" (S01E01), but we can tell that he feels a bit embarrassed about this. In the Shore house, among the men, size equals privilege. Placing this narrative at the center of the audience's introduction to the series helps construct an expectation that male performance must include the pursuit of a big, muscular physique.

Because the primary goal of the normative masculine man on *JS* is to be desired by women, the female cast members' reactions to the big, muscular bodies of their male cast members cast members play a role in framing the male cast members' masculine performances. Just like the male cast members, the female cast members talk about how important it is for men to be muscular in the series pilot. Not only do the men subscribe to this muscular male ideal and police each other's bodies, the women reinforce this norm by openly stating that they desire men who fit the definition of masculinity that the male cast members attempt to embody. Snooki, for example, describes her ideal man at the beginning of the show's run, explicitly stating that it is her dream "to find a nice, juiced and tanned Guido to get married and move to New Jersey" (S01E01). She also is shown with her girlfriends walking down the street saying: "I like tanned Italian men with muscles" (S01E01). Sammi says: "Number one mission is to find the hottest Guido and take him home" (S01E01). Thus, their reactions validate the narrative that sexually desirable men have muscles. Having a big, muscular body is a primary requirement for getting a woman to notice you.

Aggression (Verbal and Physical)

A normative masculine performance, as represented on *JS*, also involves being (physically) strong and intense (Helgeson 1994, 663). Strength and intensity are measures men use in order to gauge how well they are performing their gender. Men are encouraged to embody strength, aggression, and competitiveness in order to fit the male ideal (Connell 1995, 46). On *JS*, the men consistently act aggressively, frequently getting into altercations publicly and privately. In the second episode of season one, Pauly D gets into a fight, and follows this fight by explaining that he was acting like a man by standing up for himself when threatened by an aggressor: “I can fight in a club, you shouldn’t fight anyway, but don’t let the spiked hair fool you, I am not a bitch.” (S01E02). When Pauly D says he is not a bitch and to not let his hair “fool you,” he is distancing himself from femininity (the femininity associated with particular concern with appearance) in order to fit more closely with the male ideal of strength, intensity, and aggression. A tension exists here between the desire to be seen as manly and strong / aggressive and the moments when the men engage in stereotypically “feminine” bodywork – such as focusing on their hair and appearance. Pauly D acknowledges that his fussy hairstyle is not completely normative when he suggests that other men may not think he is strong (able to fight) because of his polished appearance. But make no mistake, tells us, he is a “man” and knows how to act like one.

Later in the first season, Ronnie and Sammi exchange unpleasant words with another couple at a bar. After antagonizing Ronnie and Sammi, the couple follows them outside. At first, Ronnie does not engage with the couple, but Sammi begins making fun of the girl’s appearance and fake designer clothing. Ronnie only intervenes when he believes that the man has verbally harassed Sammi. He takes control of the situation, and says, “Listen man, she’s a woman. Like, how tough do you feel yelling at a woman” (S01E06). Ronnie believes he is being a “real” man by protecting “his” woman. By instructing the other man to not yell at women, he is schooling him in the proper way to be a man, and

showing him how a man should act. This instruction reinforces his own masculinity, and, as he compares himself to the other men around him, his manliness is validated.

In season one, episode eight, a girl makes fun of Snooki's dress. A group altercation breaks out, and when it appears that it is over, Ronnie ends up walking back to hit a guy after an additional comment is made as they were walking away. The guy Ronnie hits ends up blacking out from the hit. Ronnie gets arrested and spends a night in jail. Sammi is very concerned all night, and picks him up in the morning. When Ronnie and Sammi talk about his arrest afterwards, he tells her that he does not belong there. He later told a reporter from *People* magazine: "I definitely felt out of place [...] It's definitely a place I never want to go back to again. Definitely a lesson learned" (Oliver 2010, n.p.). This example once again demonstrates Ronnie's commitment to protecting the "honour" of a woman who is close to him. Thus, the *JS* men illustrate that a proper man should act aggressively if someone is acting aggressively against a woman they value (like a partner, mother, sister, or friend). Every male cast member on *JS* not only acts aggressively, but also attributes performing aggressively to being a man. However, the men are either protecting their own honour (manhood) or that of a female friend or girlfriend when they engage in these physical confrontations. Although Ronnie says that he has learned a lesson, and he does his best to other himself from the people in jail, I think he would act in a similarly aggressive way to defend a valued woman in his life due to the mentality ingrained in his mind that men are supposed to behave aggressively to protect their women.

Dominance and Masculinity

Fighting for dominance is commonly understood as being a normative male personality feature (Helgeson 1994, 663). There are several examples on *JS* where men act in a dominant manner, showing their power over others. Mike is very vocal about being the ultimate authority in the house. He feels that he should have the power to regulate house activities because he is the oldest male roommate. In fact, he states on several occasions that he is the house "patriarch," even insisting that he holds the title "Man of the House" (S01E06). In season one, episode two, he says, "Situation sits at the head of the

table,” and “I’m the mother fucking daddy of the house,” during Sunday night dinner (S02E11). Mike also feels like he can dictate Vinny’s flirting and relationship with Melissa, who is Mike’s sister. When Vinny flirts with Mike’s sister on the phone, Mike’s reaction to Vinny and his sister “hooking up” is, “I don’t mind them hooking up because I am the man of the house, and he knows not to push it too far” (S01E06). The *JS* men also demonstrate their desire to be dominant in their relationships with women. Angelina and Vinny never get along, but on one drunken night they have a one-night stand. The group shames Angelina, but Vinny is championed as a stud. He explains how sex with Angelina was about power and dominating her: “It’s called when you’re inside a girl, you own her, you win” (S02E8). The men repeatedly show dominance over the women in their lives, whether they are the women who live in the house, or women they meet socially / romantically.

Danny, the owner of the t-shirt shop, and the owner of the Shore house, makes regular appearances on the show. He tries to assert his dominance as “boss” and “owner” by having a talk with Angelina when she does not go work one day (S01E03). When he visits the house to ask why she skipped work, she tries to avoid him by going upstairs and telling Snooki to tell Danny she will only talk to him through a closed door in the washroom (which, in her defense, is the only place a camera is not placed). However, she is framed as lying to Danny, saying she is sick and faking a cough, when in reality the audience knows she did not want to go to work because she broke up with her boyfriend. Because of her avoidance and petulant behavior, Danny reminds her that working at the shop is part of the deal of living there, and she is told to leave (S01E03). This is an example of Danny showing his dominance by literally reminding her who is the boss, and the consequences of being disrespectful. This pattern of Danny’s becomes clearer in later episodes. In the third season, Snooki is caught drinking at work, so Danny sends her out to get a coffee. Later on, he goes looking for her and finds her at the bar (S03E03). There is no question that Angelina and Snooki’s behavior is not very responsible, but Danny does not respond to the male cast members’ irresponsibility in the same way. Mike is inconsistent about when he shows up to work and misses several shifts. He is shamed for this, but is

never lectured or followed out of the store. Danny thinks that his role as boss, homeowner, and older man gives him the perceived authority over the girls to kick them out if they do not work.

Heterosexual Desire and Sex

Heterosexuality is a key part of the script for normative masculinity; that is, men should desire women for intimate sexual relationships (Helgeson 1994, 663). This is a central narrative thread on *JS*. All of the male cast members focus a significant amount of their energies pursuing sex with women, both within and outside of monogamous relationships. In the first season introductions, the central focus of Ronnie's introduction is his looks and ability to attract multiple women at the same time. Ronnie says that one of his rules is to "never fall in love at Jersey Shore" (S01E01). His main goal in going to the Jersey Shore is to sleep with multiple women. Ronnie says that he does not have to try to get a woman's attention because when he takes off his shirt, women approach *him*. Due to his massive muscles, "women come to [him], like a fly comes to shit" (S01E01).

A major theme throughout the show is that Mike puts having sex and the pursuit of sex above his friendships. The most obvious example is when Snooki gets hit in the face by a man at the club (S01E06). All of the other cast members are angered by this, and show care and compassion for Snooki, but Mike's only interest is in hooking up (S01E07). The idea that a man should be pursuing sex above all else is extremely important to Mike. However, everyone else is annoyed. Even Ronnie comments that he was still creeping (hitting on girls) when everyone else was trying to help Snooki, and Sammi responds that this is because Ronnie is a good friend, but Mike is not (S01E07). We understand this because Mike puts his need for sex over helping Snooki, a member of the group.

Pauly D makes similar comments about his pursuit of sex. One woman Pauly D is interested in, Danielle, tells him explicitly that her faith forbids her from having sex before marriage: "We're not supposed to have sex until we get married" (S01E07). Pauly D takes this as a challenge, and still thinks he should try to have sex with her. Pauly D says that it would be his summer accomplishment. Danielle is Jewish, and he says, "I don't even understand that religion, or what it is. I just wanna get to the

business" (S01E07). To Pauly D, sex is the “ultimate goal,” above respecting a woman’s reasons for abstinence – we are supposed to read Danielle as a good girl, not a slut who sleeps with the men. Sex with someone who is not looking for it is a challenge. Because this woman is not part of the “roommate family,” Pauly D does not have to care about her as a person. Pauly D does not respect this woman, but he is not framed as a bad guy because he does respect other women in his life (his mother, friends, etc.).

Moments of Non-Normative Masculinity

Beauty Regimes

Focusing on one’s appearance is a stereotypically feminine trait, according to Helgeson (1994, 664). Women are encouraged, rewarded, or sanctioned, based on their performance of bodywork and their appearance (Deliovsky 2010, 111). Women are expected to spend a great deal of time on their appearance, whereas the same pressures are not traditionally placed on men – at least heterosexual men – although this pattern is changing a bit. The vanity of the male *JS* cast members is not readable as normatively masculine in comparison to the normative masculinity of middle-class, white men, but it is normative within their Guido subculture. The attention they pay to their hair, clothing, and skin is not perceived as feminized and queer as it might be in a more mainstream context. This is one way in which ethnicity impacts gender performance.

The guidelines the men offer for being a good Guido (GTL) significantly impacts the ways in which they represent and understand their masculine identities. The men constantly go to the gym in order to keep their bodies toned and muscular. Having a good tan is also very important to them, as is making sure that their laundry is done. Consistently maintaining their hair is critical as well. They regularly go to the barber and gel their hair. Getting dressed to go out (“t-shirt time”)⁸ is an event. Fashion is important; they distinguish between every day and “going out” outfits, and change clothes several times, until they are satisfied with their appearance.

⁸ “T-shirt time” refers to the time when the boys change into clean T-shirts (so they are *fresh*) before going out for some clubbing and *fist pumping* (an energetic thrusting of the fist while dancing).

During the opening sequence of the series, Pauly D, Mike, and Ronnie comment on the fact that appearance plays an integral part in their identities as men and as Guidos. According to Pauly D, appearance, especially tanning, is important to his masculine identity because “it’s a lifestyle, it’s representing, family, friends, tanning, gel, it’s everything. I have a fucking tanning bed in my place. That’s how serious I am about being a Guido, and living up to that lifestyle” (S01E01). Hair is also an important part of Pauly D’s identity. In the same opening sequence, he explains, “It takes me about 25 minutes to do my hair. It comes out perfect every single time. There is no way I am going to Jersey without my hair gel” (S01E01).

Mike also focuses much of his first season introduction on his appearance. In his words, he describes himself as “a good looking, smooth, well-dressed Italian” (S01E01). Additionally, Mike says that he attained his ideal body by working out at the gym at least five days a week (S01E01). Ronnie says, “First impressions are everything [...] Everywhere you go, you are always making a first impression on someone. Your bank account can be low but you always have to look good. You always have to get a haircut, get new sneakers, you always have to look fresh” (S01E01). Ronnie continues to describe the importance of appearance to his masculine identity, explaining, “Can’t forget my gel. Cologne. More cologne. My protein shake. Is there a type for a Guido? A guy that always looks prettier than his girlfriend” (S01E01). The focus on appearance as a central component of identity production for the men on *JS*, is often highlighted in the show’s narrative. The last comment, where Ronnie says a Guido must look “prettier than his girlfriend,” really gives the viewer a sense that the male cast members on *JS* are aware of the fact that their focus on “looking good” is something that is *usually* expected of women. However, it is a central and crucial part of their Guido lifestyle / identity and how they understand and perform this version of masculinity.

One first season episode in particular focused on the men’s preoccupation with their appearance. In episode four, the men spend an entire day working on their bodies. They call a day like this their “stay fresh day,” and it includes going to the gym and getting a haircut at the barbershop. When

explaining why the men take part in this kind of day, Pauly D states: “First impression is everything. So you have to stay fresh to death. I call it, fresh outfit, fresh haircut, fresh tan, just stay fresh.” This kind of event is comparable to the women going shopping and to the spa together, and calling it a “girl’s day.” Key to understanding this focus on male appearance is their appeal to Guido identity, which is deeply integrated into their sense of male self. Although we would ordinarily read their performances as non-normative, in the context of Guido subculture it is a guiding feature of conventional masculinity.

Bromance

A bromance “is comprised of three general constitutive elements: they are restricted to men, the relationship must be asexual, and they are locations for acceptable intimacy between men” (Chen 2012, 246). The term has become popular within the last decade and a half, and basically refers to an intimate but platonic friendship between two straight men (Chen 2012, 246). The appearance of the term “bromance” in popular culture indicates a move away from a narrow, more conservative definition of masculinity into a more inclusive and permissive one in contemporary white western culture (because there are certainly different ways of conceptualizing male friendship). (Hammarén and Johansson 2014, 4). Our definition of Western masculinity has expanded to encourage more positive ways of acknowledging male friendships. Defining a close relationship between two heterosexual men as a “bromance” and using bromance humour has also helped to mitigate against the anxiety or tension that some people feel over queer readings of these friendships. People joke about bromances because of our continued discomfort over men being close to other men:

In a culture of diminished homophobia, boys and men will be free to express emotional intimacy and physical expressions of that relationship with one another. Accordingly, this culture permits an ever greater expansion of acceptable heteromale behaviours, which results in a further blurring of masculine and feminine behaviours and terrains. The differences between masculinity and femininity, men and women, gay and straight, will be harder to distinguish, and masculinity will no longer serve as the primary method of stratifying men. (Anderson 2009, 97 as cited in Hammarén and Johansson 2014, 4)

Our current definition of normative masculinity is so rigid that intimate friendships between men are acceptable only if they are joked about. However, the acceptance of bromance as a category of

friendship signals the beginning of a broader, societal loosening of our definitions of acceptable masculine social performance.

On *JS*, the male cast members are engaged in sexually platonic but emotionally intimate relationships with the other men in the house. The most iconic bromance in the *JS* house occurs between Pauly D and Vinny. Pauly D and Vinny show their closeness by doing a lot of activities together, including tanning, going to the gym, going to the beach, and going to bars and clubs. In the first episode of season five, Pauly D tells the camera: “Me and Vinny are so excited that Vinny immediately jumps on my bed and, like, dry humps me on my bed just to break it in. Like old times” (S05E01). This joke is made in reference to the men’s connection and how happy they are to return to the comforts of the Shore house after being away in Italy. The explicit sexual tone of this scene both invites a queer reading and refuses it by suggesting that only men who are truly comfortable with their sexuality could play at this kind of queerness; their bro-mantic closeness is not threatening to their heterosexuality. In episodes three and four of season five, Vinny and Pauly D share many intimate conversations and goodbyes because of Vinny’s upcoming absence from the show due to anxiety. The goodbye between Vinny and Pauly D is long, with the narrative focusing on Pauly D missing Vinny. Pauly D even asks Vinny to “stay for [him]” (S05E04).

The performance of bromance fits into a narrative that men should not be close to other men, and if they are, it should be a big joke that everyone is also in on. Thus, in order to be normatively non-normative, Vinny and Pauly D perform this repeatedly “bromantic” closeness with particular humorous inflections. There are moments of emotion there too, so it is a bit ambivalent. Sometimes the cast members forget to make their closeness into a joke. We know (and they know) that they are acting outside of normative masculine gender scripts. Additionally, their close friendship is read somewhat differently because of their Guido self-labeling. As I have already explained, their identification with this ethnic sub-group, requires them to focus heavily on their appearance. I think that the *JS* men’s close friendships with each other are so much easier to accept because, first, they establish through the

show that they are all a “family,” and treat each other differently than they treat people outside of the family. Second, they have already established that their performances of masculinity are a bit feminized, and this feminization is tied to their ethnic identities. All of this does not mask the fact that their sexual jokes are problematic. When they joke with each other about being in a bromance, and make sexual comments towards each other, it can be argued that instead of expanding the ways that we can understand masculine performance, they actually reaffirm the boundaries of masculinity and heterosexuality (Chen 2012, 248).

Chapter Eight: Intersectionality

The subject of gender identity as it plays out on *JS* is complex. In order to fully engage in this conversation, I have taken into account the ways in which gender intersects with other social locations and markers of identity, specifically, how femininity and masculinity intersect with ethnicity, class, and geographical location on *JS*. It is essential that we view identities as layered because identities are not "unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather [...] reciprocally constructing phenomena" (Collins 2015, 5). For the purposes of this thesis, I propose that this exaggerated Italian-ness or Guido / Guidette subculture the cast members embody is produced at the intersection of ethnicity, class, and gender identity.

Ethnicity and Subculture

The *JS* cast members articulate a version of Italian-ness rooted in gender, class, and location, which finds expression in what they call their "Guido / Guidette" identities. In contemporary culture, Italian-Americans are largely seen as white, although this whiteness may be mitigated by other factors, like ethnicity and class. However, what I discuss here is not an argument on modified whiteness. It is a discussion of how the intersections/ethnicity and class create the particular location of Italian-ness or Guido / Guidette subculture. "Italian-American" is a white ethnicity. Several factors affect one's categorization as a white ethnicity, and differentiate one group from another:

White ethnicity also appears to be influenced by social forces such as religious salience, being from an urban community, and coming from localities that lean Democrat. We believe these findings indicate that the more diffuse category of 'white ethnic' that scholars showed came together in the later part of the twentieth century has persisted through to the twenty-first century in America. The composition of this grouping, however, appears to have shifted somewhat over time. Unlike the ethnic patterns of the 1980s, for example, our data suggest that education, being from the South, or being one generation removed from the family's immigrant generation no longer significantly relate to the odds of ethnic affiliation (Torkelson and Hartmann 2010, 1326-1327).

However, while white ethnics as a demographic category face specific obstacles that differ from their non-ethnic white counterparts, but there are commonalities in their viewpoints on certain subjects, including privilege:

Additionally, it appears that ethnicity has become more significant for white men than for white women, that white ethnics now tend to be married and from lower socio-economic strata...we would also note that our data show that white ethnics do not seem quite as unique as some of the most recent critical theorizing around whiteness and ethnicity would indicate. Our cross-tabulations show that white ethnics are not substantively different from non-ethnic whites regarding their views of white privilege, multiculturalism, individualism and support for race based compensatory measures. (Torkelson and Hartmann 2010, 1326-1327)

The above is important, even though historically, “white ethnics” have sometimes held less power and privilege than other white people, due to their social position at the intersection of whiteness and ethnic otherness. Interestingly, in the hierarchy of whiteness, Italian-Americans have traditionally ranked lower in the hierarchy than white people from Western countries that began colonizing North America before the beginning of the twentieth century, yet they uphold their privilege system.

Another example of white ethnicity is Jewish American ethnicity. Byers (2009) discusses the Jewish American Princess (JAP) which is a unique position that is comparable to the white ethnicity experienced by Guido / Guidette subculture. Byers (2009) explains the position of the JAP as an either / or position. They are either “too much” and a pariah or “not enough” and are parvenu. Thus the JAP:

...is not a true subject within the American culture: she is a parvenu at best, at worst a pariah. Zygmunt Bauman (1997) offers a way of thinking about the JAP as an identity that straddles the parvenu and the pariah. Bauman draws these categories at least in part from the work of Hannah Arendt, who stressed “the dichotomous categories of parvenu and pariah.. to analyze the Jewish condition (Vromen 2004; 179). For Bauman, the parvenu has arrived, while the pariah is still waiting. The pariah can only hope to become parvenu, while the parvenu lives in constant fear of returning to pariah status. The parvenu is a person in frantic search for identity” (25), Bauman writes; for the parvenu, “Having learned the rules of the game does not mean being wiser;” the parvenu must try and show the world they are trying (26) and yet they should not be too successful in this. (Byers 2009, 39)

However, the parvenu JAP:

...[the] social climber, Nouveau riche – is always a pariah. She embodies all the markers of the cultured classes and yet is always in danger of being exposed as a fraud. The parvenu exposed is the pariah. In North American context this is an “assimilatory paradox” in which Jews are both quintessentially American, and never quite American enough (Most 2004:21), which is very like what Homi Bhabha describes as colonial mimicry: “*a subject of difference that is most the same, but not quite*” (86, emphasis in the original). The fragile line pariah/parvenu/citizen is produced through the fear that “if one fails to reinstate the norm “in the right way, “one becomes subject to [further] sanction” (Butler 1997b: 28). In Bhabha’s careful analysis, attempts to mimic dominant culture, in the inevitable incompleteness or failure, ultimately ensure that difference will be clearly visible. (39)

The Guido / Guidette occupies a similar place to the JAP. An example of this is seen when Vinny's mom and family visit him at the Shore house. It is clear in these moments that the show's producers want us to see the cast members differently from other Americans. Although we can disregard a lot of the antics of the cast's Guido / Guidette performances as inauthentic or exaggerated for the show, we are reminded by Vinny's family that Italian-Americans *are* different. We are reminded by the cast and Vinny himself that he is a 'generational Italian' (generations of pure Italians) and a "mama's boy" (S01E01). The first time we meet Vinny's family is in season one, episode six. Many of Vinny's family members came up to visit, and they all brought a lot of food. Pauly D describes Vinny's family by saying that "they just kept coming" (S01E06). Vinny's mom tells Vinny in Italian that the house is so big and so beautiful, and that Vinny looks too thin (S01E06). She also brings her son some clean undershirts (S01E06).

Even Snooki comments on Vinny's mom being traditionally Italian. Snooki says, "Vinny's mom reminds me of my grandmother, like when she never sits down for dinner. 'Oh, do you need this or that.' That's a true Italian woman. You want to please everyone else at the table and then when everyone else is down then you clean up and eat by yourself. Right off the bat when she did that I knew she was a great friggin woman" (S01E06). Vinny's mom also cleans the house before she leaves. What is important is that Vinny's mom and family represent traditional Italian / Italian-American roles. The *JS* cast members represent a new subculture of Italian-ness (the Guido / Guidette performance). Nonetheless, both groups represent the embodiment of a white ethnicity, a performance that is clearly framed as "other" to a more normative group of white, middle-class Americans. Although not all white ethnics have the same experience of marginalization, the white ethnic is always stuck in the social position as not quite passing as white enough, although they benefit from plenty of white privileges.

Class

Another social marker that impacts the cast members' gender performance is class. Weedon (2004) states that "class is first and foremost an economic category that characterizes the relation of

specific groups within society to the mode of production. Yet class position is also a crucial determinant in the formation of subjectivity and identity” (11). Two examples of how class impacts the gender performances of the cast members are (i) their aesthetic – their very specific style of dress, fashion, tattoos, piercings, and (ii) behaviors, including their excessive drinking and partying. What I am discussing here is a cultural class; I aim to discuss the dichotomy of high/low culture. According to Weedon:

...class as a form of identity is still significant in many social contexts; it shapes, for example, the meanings given to particular ways of speaking and dressing, to exclusive forms of education, cultural pursuit, and the membership of particular organizations and clubs. It also affects the ways in which individuals interact with one another... Ideas about class are an important aspect of common sense as well as social and political theory. Commonsense assumptions tend to identify class with particular ways of living to which individuals are born or naturally suited. (Weedon 10-11)

The cast members come from varying class backgrounds (working class – lower middle class) and you (the viewer) are encouraged to notice this from the opening sequence. Viewers are invited to take a voyeuristic look into the cast members’ family homes and neighborhoods, and their journey to the Shore. From the beginning, we are encouraged to “other” them based on their perceived lack of class privilege. Most of them are adults who still live with their parents (except Jenni), parents who are not poor but are also not quite financially secure. These markers of class are framed and encouraged in this mediated text through visuals of the cast members’ family homes, their reactions to the luxuriousness of a ‘regular’ Shore house, and through filming techniques and editing.

Within privileged classes, status can be attained through the collection of material things, such as houses, cars, and vacation homes. Sometimes ideas of status can be attained / maintained through first impressions, including bodily adornments like designer brand clothing. Within their Guido / Guidette subculture, the cast members are compelled to pay particular attention to their manner of dress in order to gain status among the people in their group (both before and while they are on *JS*). As I have already discussed, the cast members’ focus on their appearance, including near obsessive gym training, nail maintenance, tanning, and hair and make-up rituals, have meaning in their particular subcultural context. Within their Guido / Guidette subculture, these performances are meant to help

them to attain a higher status than they hold at that moment. Although all of the cast members discuss first impressions, I think Ronnie's first impression introduction in the first episode best reinforces the (framed as lower class) belief that status can be achieved by a good first impression. Ronnie says, "first impressions are everything. Your bank account can be low, but you always gotta look good...always have to get a new haircut, always gotta wear new sneakers, always gotta look fresh" (S01E01).

Furthermore, the connection the cast members draw between first impressions and class perception is clear when Pauly D meets Angelina for the first time. Angelina is the last of the cast members to arrive at the Shore house, and she packed her belongings in garbage bags. Pauly D comments, "what, no one in her family has a suitcase she could borrow? That's kind of ghetto" (S01E01). Michele Byers speaks on the subject of white trash and JAPs:

Matt Wray (2006) asks us to consider "white trash:" "Which word is modifier and which is the modified?" (3). We might ask the same thing about JAP: Which words modify which and to what effect? Does the parvenu princess become a pariah because she's Jewish? Does her Jewishness make her less American, even as her Americanness makes her less Jewish? Crucial here is the way Jewishness, like trash, disrupts an understanding of whiteness as unmarked. Although neoliberal discourse hails a femininity that looks very much like the Jewish princess, this idealized femininity is never ultimately attained by those girls whose identities exist on the edge of legitimacy. If white and trash create three possible terms (white, trash, and white trash) then the triangle JAP creates at least seven possibilities none of which is the same as the others and which, taken together, ultimately reveal the fragile nature of gendered Jewish identity. (Byers 2012, 49-50)

Similar to JAPs, these Guido / Guidette cast members differentiate themselves according to class status, even though it is clear that their Guido / Guidette embodiments also distance them from normative forms of middle-class white masculinity and femininity. Having a lot of class and having a lot of money are not the same thing – someone can have money and still be considered "low class" or "trash" because of how they wear their hair or make up, or a lack of education. On *JS*, having certain clothes, accessories, and other belongings distinguishes the "haves" from the "have nots" within the group itself. Angelina, not having the proper luggage, gives Pauly D the impression that she is "trash."

Class representation on this show, and in society more broadly, frames the cast members' actions (concerning drinking and bodily functions) as low brow or low class (Klein 2011, n.p.). The representations of class on this show are based on stereotypes of what we view as respectable and not –

a standard set up by privileged elites. “Low class” behaviours are social constructions, and they are framed a certain way on *JS*. On *JS*, there is a constructed narrative that the cast members excessively drink and express a lot of bodily functions (vomiting, passing gas, etc.). These actions are presented to us as central components of their identities (ethnicized, classed, and gendered) on *JS*. There are hundreds of scenes of the male cast members vomiting and the female cast members (especially Snooki and Deeana) burping and farting (S01E01). There is also a scene of Jenni and one of Snooki publicly urinating at the club or in bushes (S01E05). These behaviours are very clearly framed as being “normal” to the cast members, and “low class” to viewers.

One of the ways in which ideas about class greatly impact the cast members’ gender performances is how their drinking is framed as excessive especially compared to the way the young people on the reality television series, *The Hills* (2006-2010), are portrayed as drinkers (Klein 2011, n.p.). *The Hills* also featured a cast of young adults – however, their partying was framed much differently than the cast members’ partying on *JS*. Unlike the lens of “excess” that is used to view the partying behavior on *JS*, the behavior of the cast of *The Hills* was framed as normal for young adults. This is evidenced through the focus put on the vomiting that occurs after a night of partying on *JS*, whereas on *The Hills*, their partying behavior is just them having a good time. The way the cast of *JS* is presented that frames them as “other” compared to dominant discourses of the acceptable “rebellious post-adolescent partiers.” When the *JS* cast members go out drinking it, and they, are represented as vulgar. On *The Hills*, drinking behaviours are not framed as vulgar or gross, and we are not inundated with close ups of the young people vomiting and having other bodily reactions to drinking and partying. This is likely due to the fact that the young people on *The Hills* are both white and upper class. Thus, it is not “young people drinking” that is framed as vulgar, it is lower class young peoples’ drinking habits that are constructed against what is seen as “normal” (read: white, Anglo-Protestant, rich). *The Hills* ran from 2006-2010, which overlapped with *JS*’s 2009-2012 run. Thus, it is worth mentioning

that people could see these shows at the same time and make comparisons themselves based on the shows' similar concepts of following the lives and partying of young American adults.

Geographical Location

Physical location is another factor that impacts the cast members' gender identity performances. Their performances of Italian-ness are framed as being deeply rooted in the location of Seaside Heights, New Jersey and their shore house. How these places are framed by the show's editors and producers impacts how we are supposed to see the cast members on *JS*. The drive into the Jersey Shore, the first look at the cast members' house, and the location of Seaside Heights, New Jersey becomes an important narrative in the Miami season, and even more so when the cast members are in Italy. I discuss the introduction sequence in the above section on class, but the opening scenes are important here as well. The narrative of the first episode of the first season focuses on each cast members' neighborhood, as well as their preparation for and journey to the Seaside Heights house. The drive sequences, in which viewers are given the opportunity to see an abundance of Italian restaurants, bakeries and shops (with Italian names & flags) leading to the house, help to set the initial tone of the show. We see the first shots of the shore. The beach is crowded, and is seen through a gate. In addition, there are shots of seagulls, rocks, and cement. Further along, you see a boardwalk and street fair (S01E01). These visuals position the location of the Jersey Shore as not being glamorous in comparison to the excitement that the cast members use to describe it. The focus on the house as the cast members arrive, and even in later framing, represents their overstated, exaggeratedly Italian identities – basically a caricature. The house is decorated with Italian flags, gold chains, and mafia movie posters, and “the retro feel is bolstered by the decidedly working class décor of the *Jersey Shore* house with its 70's style wood paneling and shag carpets” (Klein 2011, 4). The house becomes an important part of the narrative on *JS*. Although framed for the viewer as excessive and other, the cast members have a positive reaction to this accommodation, commenting that the décor is cool, and they feel at home at the shore

house. We are, in a sense, asked to accept the Shore house as another cast member and additional representative of what Italian-ness (on *JS*) looks like.

Every time the cast members are outside of Seaside Heights and the comforts of the Shore house, the cast members (and the audience) are reminded that the Guido / Guidette lifestyle is different from that of other Italian-Americans. This is particularly evident in the second season in Miami, and their difference from Italians in Florence is also very obvious when they spend season five in Italy. There was a huge build up to the cast visiting the “homeland,” as Vinny called it (S04E01). However, locals made it clear that the cast members were different and not welcome in Florence. There are even shots of locals telling them to go home (S04E11). The media coverage surrounding season four focused on these themes, and echoed the sentiments of many Italian-Americans in the United States who also insisted that the *JS* cast members do not represent the authentic Italian-American identity or experience. One Italian newspaper columnist wrote: “They embody the worst stereotypes of Italians, multiplied by thousands and Americanized.” An Italian TV critic said that he was “afraid” of what that season may do to the image of Italy abroad, which he described as “already weakened” (“Kidd Kraddick Morning Show” 2011, n.p.).

The central story of the Florence season was of culture shock. Even the cast members articulated their sense of the differences between themselves and the Italians in Florence. They observe and poke fun at the differences between Italians and themselves. In one episode, the women decide they are going to dress like “proper” Italian women – with large sunglasses and large hats. In reaction to the women dressing this way for dinner, Mike says, “The girls with their hats, they looked like the Kentucky Derby fucked the Easter bunny” (S04E04). Another difference between the cast members and the Italians around them in season 4, is in how they party. In one episode where the cast members feel homesick, missing the partying and clubs in Seaside Heights where they felt they belonged, they decide to “bring” Karma, their favourite club, to Italy. They dress in their usual club outfits, and get Pauly D, a DJ, to recreate the club experience that is particular to their favorite club in New Jersey,

thereby bringing Seaside Heights to their living room in Italy. While the cast members acknowledge that they do not fit in with the Italians around them, their actions demonstrate their awareness that they have a community which is rooted in their lifestyle and habits in Seaside Heights. They are not like native Italians, they are Guidos and Guidettes – they are Italian-*Americans*. By the show's fourth season, the cast members are fully aware of the public's commentary around their performances on *JS*, especially by those people in the Italian-American community who see their lifestyle of excessive partying as different from other Italians. They may also be playing to an audience that likes this type of performance, knowing the ratings of previous seasons.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I noted my position as partial insider, as well as my complicated relationship to this text. While working with this text as a critical researcher, rather than merely as a viewer, I had many conversations with people about stereotypes. There are some stereotypes related to an Italian-Canadian identity that I relate to, but there are others that offend me. During this process, I often asked myself, “Is there room to embody this identity while simultaneously challenging it? Can I be a ‘Gina’ as well as a feminist and an academic?” While I am still struggling to accept the complexity of my intersectional identity and fully feel at home in it, I believe that I can reconcile all of these parts of myself.

I began this thesis with the goal of describing how normative / non-normative masculinity and femininity are performed by the cast members on *Jersey Shore*. I was interested in how they performed their gendered identities, because I could tell from my first viewing of the show that their performances are inextricably tied to their Guido / Guidette identities. Based on my observations, I would argue that the cast members’ performances are amped up versions of what they portray in their everyday lives. These young adults were selected and encouraged to act out in the ways that they did because they were already immersed in this Guido / Guidette subculture. Of course, once the show became popular, the cast members exaggerated their behaviours further, perhaps seeking validation and certainly trying to capitalize on the show’s success. Not only do their complex and intersecting identities impact the cast members’ performances of gender, but so does the framing of the show. This is a mediated text – the producers, the editing, and the final product of Guido and Guidette embodiment on the *JS* (their embellished “Italian-ness”) is heavily framed. The viewer is meant to see these young peoples’ identities and performances a certain way.

The cast members on the *JS* did not all fade into the night when the show stopped filming. Arguably, most of them (aside from Ronnie and Sammi) actively did and are still pursuing media related opportunities based on the popularity from *JS* – with varying degrees of success. Immediately

after leaving the show, Angelina unsuccessfully attempted to start a music career, releasing one song entitled “I’m Hot.” Mike made appearances on other reality television shows like *Dancing with the Stars*, and Mike’s sister made an appearance with Mike on *Say Yes to the Dress*. Deena appeared on a celebrity couple rehab show, and Pauly D had his own spin-off show allowing his DJ career to sky rocket as a result. Vinny, Snooki, and Jenni have all had success on other reality television shows. Vinny went on the road with his mom, while Jenni and Snooki had their own show and have a YouTube Channel called #MOMSWITHATTITUDE. Vinny has an online talk show as well. Some of the cast members developed a substantial fan base, and it seems that viewers are still interested in how they are doing even though it has been years since *JS* itself stopped filming.

Due to the continued interest in *JS*, I think that this research could be expanded upon in several different ways. Some of these topics, themes, and further work include comparing performances of Italian-American identity on *JS* to performances of gender and identity of young people in other reality television shows. Another project might concern the gendered division of labour and how the cast members use gender roles / break from gender roles in dividing labour in work and home. Moments or expressions of queerness on *JS* could be explored as well. Deena and Snooki share several close moments, including what they term a “bar-sexual moment,” and they make plenty of “les-be-honest” jokes. Along with this, more work can be done surrounding the “bromantic” relationships between the men on the show. The narrative of gayness on *JS* is also a rich site of analysis. These are themes from the show that are worthy, in my view, of further analysis.

I previously discussed the limitations of Helgeson’s study and my use of her conceptual tool in my work. I used Helgeson’s study because it identified prototypical masculine and feminine personality traits and behaviors that I could use as a benchmark for comparison in my analysis of the text. One of the limitations of the study itself is that it is dated. It also has limitations around race (the participants mostly being white) and education (all of the participants were university students). However, the biggest limitation is that this psychological study falls within the realm of structuralism, while I use a

poststructuralist lens with my analysis in this paper. Gender, in the context of this paper and analysis, was not taken as a static measure but as something constantly changing and evolving in time and place. However, I still chose to use Helgeson's study as basis to identify and record moments of feminine and masculine embodiment, and at the close of this work I feel this is the right choice.

Two contexts specifically impacted this work to a great extent—The state of New Jersey, and the format of RTV. The cast members' identities are specific to North America and, more specifically, to particular parts of suburban New Jersey. The specificities of subculture and embodiment of the Guido / Guidette lifestyle would not necessarily be visible or meaningful in another place. For example, the cast members' performances do not align with that of the Italians they encounter in Miami or in Italy. This framing highlights, for the viewer, that this version of Italian-ness is specific to Seaside Heights, NJ. My findings are not generalizable to every Italian-American person living in that region, but you could read it intertextually alongside other texts like *Real Housewives New Jersey* and other New Jersey-based shows and movies. Another limitation to this study is the fact that these performances are mediated by the format through which I observed it. All of these people are participating in a RTV show, so it is difficult to measure how serious they are about their performances given that they are being paid to be on television and they want the attention. This is especially true with the seasons beyond the first one, when the cast members knew about the popularity and success of the show. That *JS* is so popular, and the original cast members continue to be so as well, is such a rich site of analysis where further work can be done, adding to the varied literature available on *JS* and subculture gendered embodiment. Furthermore, their performances are constantly edited because RTV shows are directed and edited. If the producers take 1000 hours of tape, they end up condensing it all into an hour's worth of coherent narrative.

Gender does not exist within a vacuum – it is complicated by intersections of different social locations, including ethnicity, class and geographical location, all of which I highlight as greatly affecting the gendered performances of the *JS* cast members. Studying *JS* has been a good way to see

how gender is, in fact, a performance, and how it goes beyond biological sex. I believe that the intended audience for *JS* is people between the ages of 20 and 30 who are not Italian-American. Some people, like me, who share ethnic identity markers with the cast members, may watch the show and feel both a pull and revulsion towards the portrayals of gendered ethnic identities on *JS*. However, it appears that the show creators, in combination with and as a consequence of societal expectations about exaggerated Italian-American identity, intend for the audience to view these performances as “other”, exotic, and vulgar.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Names of Episodes and Episode Summaries – used within thesis

The following synopses are the online descriptions of all the episodes found on www.tv.com

Season One, Episode One – A New Family

Eight soon-to-be roommates come together for a summer of excitement at the Jersey Shore. The self-proclaimed "guidos" and "guidettes" explore their surroundings and learn some crazy things about their roommates.

Season One, Episode Two – The Tanned Triangle

The roommates continue to party, which gets some of them into trouble. Romance blooms and confrontation arises among the Jersey Shore house residents.

Season One, Episode Four – Fade to Black

After a night of clubbing, Pauly D and The Situation must juggle multiple groups of girls. The housemates get into a serious confrontation at a bar which erupts when a housemate gets punched.

Season One, Episode Five – Just Another Day at the Shore

With the support from most of her housemates, Snooki recovers from the punch. Ronnie's family comes for a visit and Sammi does her best to make a good first impression. J-WOWW gets tired of all the haters at the club and gets in a fight. Mike, Pauly and Vinny continue their schemes to hook-up with as many girls as possible, but Vinny may have crossed a line when he takes the boss' girl home.

Season One, Episode Six – Boardwalk Blow-ups

When Mike invites girls back to the house, the situation gets out of control, and Snooki gets into her second fight of the summer. Meanwhile, Ronnie gets into a brawl of his own, leaving his tumultuous relationship with Sammi on the rocks.

Season One, Episode Seven – What Happens in A.C

The roommates head to Atlantic City where fun turns to fury when Mike manages to antagonize both Snooki and J-WOWW. One roommate reveals that she used to have an eating disorder.

Season One, Episode Eight – One Shot

The summer's winding down but the drama doesn't stop. Pauly's got a stalker and a fight lands another roommate in jail.

Season Two, Episode One – Goin' South

The cast heads to Miami in the season 2 opener, and the drama quickly heats up when Angelina crashes the party. Meanwhile, Ronnie and Sammi, find themselves in an awkward situation after their recent break-up.

Season Two, Episode Five – The Letter

Sammi finds the 'anonymous' letter. The MVP boys try to cope with handling four girls in one night.

Season Two, Episode Eight – All in the Family

Vinny and Angelina hook up. Mike threatens to tell Jose of the news. Vinny's family pays him a visit. Vinny and Pauly find the girls of their dreams, but one of their hearts will be broken.

Season Two, Episode Eleven – Girls Like That

Vinny decides between two sets of girls. Meanwhile, now that Angelina is gone, Snooki thinks it's time that she and J-WOWW bury the hatchet with Sammi. But Snooki's happiness is short-lived as Mike becomes increasingly hostile with her.

Season Four, Episode Four – Damage is Done

After The Situation's prank on Snooki backfires, the guys visit Vinny's family in Sicily and the girls class it up on a Tuscan wine tour. Snooki learns the truth from Vinny about their hook-up, and now she has to come clean to Jionni.

Season Five, Episode One – Hurricane Situation

The roommates return from Italy and couldn't be more excited to get back to the Jersey Shore. But a drama storm is brewing as The Situation threatens to destroy Snooki's relationship with Jionni.

Season Five, Episode Three – Dropping like Flies

The roommates struggle to adjust to life at the Shore without Vinny, while The Situation confronts his own internal demons. But it's also Pauly D's birthday -- and he gets the best present of his life! Mike deals with jealousy and storms out of the house.

Season Five, Episode four – Free Vinny

The Situation returns only to find out that Danny has threatened to get new roommates. The girls hire strippers for Pauly D and The Situation's wild birthday party. The night out turns ugly when Sammi gets into a huge bar fight. The cast then goes to Staten Island to get back Vinny.

Season Six, Episode One – Once More Unto the Beach

The cast return to the Shore for their last summer in the Seaside Heights house in the premiere of the sixth and final season. Mike opens up about his time in rehab and Snooki faces the challenge of being pregnant in a party house.

Season Six, Episode 13 – Icing on Cake – Series Finale

It's the end of summer and the end of a long road for the roommates as they prepare to say their last goodbyes to Seaside.

Appendix Two: Viewing Notes

In the viewing section, I did five-part viewing process. This is a typed version of all my notes.

Viewing Notes Taken From 2013- 2014

Viewing One - Season One* From Black Binder

Episode One:

Pauly D: - shows a lot of symbols of “Italian-ness” - His headphones have glass, he drives a cadillac, the camera holds focus on the scarface poster

- notes that he is from Rhode Island
- he says he tries “to live up...”

Snooki: - notes she is from Poughkeepsie, New York

- her dream is to find a nice, juiced, and tanned Guido to get married & move to New Jersey
- she says “I’m small but I have a loud mouth and can stick up for myself”

Mike “The Situation” - notes that he is from Manalapan New Jersey

- defines himself by his abs
- Guido is smooth, good looking, and well dressed
- works out 3 times a week
- says Girls love Guidos

Sammi “Sweetheart” :

- from Hazlet, New Jersey
- sweetest bitch you’ll meet
- breaks a lot hearts
- loves to get dolled up - can never go out without my hair extensions
- bring a Guidette-- means club it up, takes care of themselves

Vinny

- Staten Island, New York
- Italian = food, family
- defines himself as Mama’s Boy
- describes himself as a generational Italian
- his mother cried when he left

Jenni “J Woww”

- “I am like a preying mantis...I will play emotional games...other girls hate me”
- noted that she is from Long Island, New York

Ronnie - noted that he is from the Bronx, New York

- he said “never fall in love on the Jersey Shore”
- he says when takes off his shirt girls come to him like a fly comes to shit
- he says first impressions are everything
- he said bank account can be low, but you are looking fresh

Angelina

- notes she is from Staten Island
- “If I don't look good - I don’t go out”
- outgoing
- says she has a fat ass
- guys come to her

- can be bitch

- Mike was the first to arrive; upon Mike's arrival into the house the camera pans the house → shows the scarface poster (AGAIN) and lots of symbols that the audience is suppose to associate with Italian-ness
* JUST AN ASIDE → if you are ever going make the argument of the house as a character you would totally use this first episode
- Vinny arrives 2nd; panning continues
- Sammi is the 3rd to arrive → Mike thinks Sam is Hot, and Sam thinks both Vinny and Mike are typical Italian hot, but Vinny says to camera Sam isn't the Hottest
- Then, JWovv arrives
- Snooki is next to arrive → Mike calls her a little chihuahua
- Next, Ronnie Arrives
- Last to arrive is Angelina, she put her clothes in garbage bags → Pauly says what no one in her family has a suitcase she could borrow that's kind of "Ghetto"
- Then we meet Danni → the landlord and boss at the shore store - he attempts to set ground rules

Outline of Episode 1. Intro - as outlined above

2. Snooki gets very drunk and the group reacts negatively

- Snooki goes into the hot tub in her thong underwear

- Pauly D says Snooki's sloppiness is a turn off

3. Boardwalk → Mike has his arm around Sam, and held Sam's hand, Angelina is jealous

4. Snooki shows up late for work, and Vinny discusses his work ethic as important to him

5. Dinner → Both Ronnie and Mike call Sammi "Wifey material" → Pauly D says women should cook but Mike cooks so we can let him do his thing → Snooki apologizes to group for being 'sloppy'

6. Hot tub and fishing for girls from the rooftop → Ronnie says Mike should not be talking/bringing other Girls around because he was just vibing with Sam

- Angelina eggs on a jealous Sam

- Mike says Sammie and Angelina are in "stalker mode"

- Comment about Pauly D being 29, and with a 20 year old

- Snooki says she is leaving, because she thinks they are talking about her - when they are talking about the other random girls in the hot tube

- Angelina says shes a cock block

- Snooki calls her dad* write about that relationship

- when the girls hear that Snooki wants to leave, they go down and talk to her, and say that she is not an outcast and they want her to stay- Sam in particular talks to her

Episode Two:

- Now they show or represent Seaside New Jersey - you get to see the location

- Mike's voice over says hes a player, but he would give it for Sam

- Ronnie is in the corner lurking when Mike says to Sam, he likes her

- Sammi and Snooki have a heart to heart- and gets her to stay - I am here for you if you stay

- Ronnie says: "Sam carries herself well"

- Angelina has no work ethic

- Mike & Sam are mad that the group went out without them
- Angelina “cheating” on her boyfriend - Dancing with other boys
- JWoww and Pauly D flirt, dance and make out
- Snooki brings a friend Robbie home, and when he gets sick, she walks him home
- Ronnie gives Angelina a piggy back ride says “she weighs a lot”
- Angelina asks what she did last night, because she drunk & Mike says “ she knows she cheated”
- Vinny gets pink eye:- he tells everyone he has pink eye, angelina won't take Vinnys shift because she has to start getting ready to go out, Vinny says he needs the money and he has to talk to Dani face to face because he couldn't get anyone to take his shift
- RON RON JUICE - always a “filthy night” - noting language here
- Sam & Mike kiss in the club
- After Sam kisses Mike, Sam goes up and dances and kisses Ronni = Mike says I saw you kiss Ronnie = in a very verbally aggressive tone
- someone disses Vinny and Pauly D punches him; Mike however seems to have been the implied instigator of this situation
- Pauly d says you should not fight at the club or anywhere but he pushed my boy (referring to Vinny)
- Mike yells right in Sam’s face
- Angelina calls herself a cock block
- Angelina says “If a girl’s a slut, she should be abused”
- Mike says (to angelina?) “lose fucking 5 to 10 pounds then we can talk

Episode 3:

- Ronnie tells JWOW that she made with Pauly D, and she said she asked them to make sure before she told her boyfriend
- Snooki’s sexualized pickle scene
- I made note to highlight Ron & Jwoww's friendship
- carnival ride → pictures
- Danny went to go see Angelina when she skipped work
- Jenny and Tom broke up because Jenni told him she cheated on him
- “Angelina was like a halfass firecracker - who fizzled out and made a loud noise”
- Rider and Nicole make out and then Mike and Snooki make out
- Ron dances with another girl, and Sammi gets jealous
- Ron and Sam have sex

Episode 4:

- the episode states with Ron leaving the club mad, and Sam and Jwoww followed him home. Sammi thinks Ron and Jwoww were hooking up
- noted to analyze the Sam & Ron fights/Relationships
- “boys” Mike & Pauly reaction to girls leaving
- Ron and Sam have sex
- “Stay fresh day” - with the boys - Barber → so is this equivalent to spa day
- “beating up the beat” → fist pump dance
- Grenade- this is the first reference to that

- Snooki's Mom came for her Birthday for a beach
- Snooki gets punched → Vinny calls them typical frat boys, snooki tells them off, girls step in to take care of Snooki, and male roommates go after the boys who punched Snooki

Episode 5:

- Can't Snooki gets punched → they blacked out the actual punch on DVD set
- he gets arrested → as he gets arrest the boys are yelling at him Ronnie and Vinny seem the most upset and visibly angry - Vinny goes in to see and help Nicole
- Vinny says this about Nicole: “ She is just a regular girl, she could my sister, my friend , and he is a grown ass man”
- Mike still tries to pick up girls even in this situation
- Ronnie says Mike was instigating the boys who hit Snooki
- Snooki says she wants her dad
- Ronnie goes in and comforts Snooki, she was crying and Ronnie feels really bad, and said that Mike Saw it and encouraged it
- Ronnie's family came to visit
- Talk about Ron's mother, and how they reacted to Snooki getting punched
- Vinny makes a connection to Ron's family
- Mike feels bad that no one appreciated his cooking & Sam tells him to clean his own
- Everyone thinks Mike reacted 'wrong' to Snooki getting punched - should of had a stronger more aggressive reaction
- Snooki gets called fat & Jen gets mad and gets into a fight
- In Regards to Stephanie & Friends: it would take at least 3 dates to hook up= they're not hot whores; Vinny =they are pretty cool, you know they are some girls who just going to come here and strip off their clothes, and they are some girls who are respectful - you have to treat like girls, like human beings
- Vinny says I took the bosses girl
- Ron calls Pauly D the ultimate Guido because he has the italian flag on his equipment
- Mike gets stood up by Stephanie

Episode 6:

- Robbery - stealing women from another
- GTL - Gym, Tanning and Laundry
- Mike's Sister is introduced - Melissa
- Mike says he is the Man of the House
- the word Hippo is introduced
- a couple times the are compared to the other Jersey Girl
- Ron physically puts himself in the doorway, and hugs her = very confining
- Ron says you do something spiteful and ill do something spiteful back- he Sam to Creep
- Calls girls white trash
- Vinny cleans for his large family who is coming to visit, and he warns his roommate to keep it PG
- Vinnys Mom calls him skinny
- Vinnys Mom called house big
- Vinnys mom was born in Italy

- Vinnys mom brings him underwear, and cleans the house

Ronnie gets into a Fight

- Ronnie gets into a fight - Sam eggs on a guy and Ronnie gets in a fight; Ronnie pushes Sam but backs away from other girl trying to fight him but fights the guy.
- Ron blames Sam, and Sam gets really upset
- Ron says: “ I never raised a hand to a women, I was raised by single mother”

Episode Seven:

- Ron boardwalk fight & Sam pushes boardwalk
- Sam says “No man will ever touch me like that, ever, twice” “I will never be touched like I was touched today, ever”
- Snooki says: Can I have a roll, and Mike says “don’t worry you have a few”
- Snooki reacts to Mike calling her fat... opens up about having problems in High Schools
- Ron says commenting on girls weight is a low blow
- Snooki started questioning - am I fat? am I gross?
- Mike reluctantly apologizes
- Mike gets JWOWW kicked out of the club, so she punches him
- Vinny tells Snooki that she is belligerent, and escorts her away from a guy

Episode Eight:

- JWOWW calls Tom, and told him that she hit Mike; and Tom response is that she shouldn’t be drinking so much, and her response is that “you're not my fucking father”
- Keith is the farmer that Snooki went on a date with
- Danielle the stalker, Vinny calls her a stage 5 clinger because she called repeatedly
- a girl made fun of snooki - a fight ensued and ron hit him, and he was on the floor and so he got arrested and spent the night in Jail

Episode Nine:

-Gorilla Juicehead

Viewing One

Season Two

- Set in Miami
- to note- Ron & Sam broke up on the reunion show for Season 1
- Mike and Pauly D’s relationship
- Snooki & Jenny’s relationship
- Pauly D & Mike talked to Angelina outside the show, & hooked up
- No one knew that Angelina was coming back to the show
- Pauly D and Mike arrive first
- Then Angelina arrives, and decided to room with Mike and Pauly D
- Same makes Mike and Pauly d help her with bags
- Vinny arrives

- Ron arrives
- Snooki & Jen arrive last
- Jenni and Snooki arrive and don't say hi to Angelina
- Angelina's bum is referred to as the Staten Island dump
- Comparison shot of the girls and boys in the cab, the girls were loud, aggressive and ganging up on Angelina- and the boys had a quiet cab ride
- Ron calls Sammi a Cunt - while he is drink at the club
- Ronnie hooks up (kisses & dances) with Girls at Club Bed - the girls are described as "landmines" and "grenades"
- Angelina is watching Ron at the club

Episode Two

- Vinny tells Snooki: I am making you into a woman, and you need to know how to clean if you going to be my wife some day
- Snooki confronts Angelina: Says you can talk about me, but you can't talk about my girls, boys or my family
- The boys are amused by the "girls drama" - they are watching and laughing
- @ 25: 01 - Mike is about to tell Jenny something, Vinny says not to, mike says he trusts Jen, and says son tell her
- @26:30 Ron cries
- Save by the bell reference
- The summer job in Miami was at the Gelato Shop
- Angelina says I get along with the boys more than the girls
- Angelina dances with girls in a sexual manner
- Angelina slaps Pauly D when she drinks - she says she loves him

Episode Three:

- Ron dances with another girl at the club - Snooki asks if he thinks that is a good idea
- Ron pushes Snooki, and Pauly D steps in
- Ronnie dances with other girls and the goes home and goes into Sam's bed
- Vinny asks Snooki to sleep with him, and she asks him if he wants to fuck

Episode Four:

- Emilio and Snooki break up over the phone
- Snooki says guys are assholes is why the lesbian rate is on the rise in the country
- the girls write an anonymous letter to Sammi telling her that Ron cheated

Episode Five:

GTF: Gym, tanning, find out who wrote the letter

Episode Six:

- Jen & Sam fight

Episode Seven:

- when they get mad at Angelina - they call her fat
- Jenny calls into work, because she has to get her nails fixed
- The boys say Angelina should let Jose Hit that because he bought her a watch

- Obsession with “realness”
- Snooki says “ I am not white” ; “ I am tanned”--> I wrote it under other ethnicity
- At Tantra (Club)- Snooki outright asks a guy to come home with and fools around with Dennis with Jen in the room
- I have not made here - Why is Jenni called the beast
- Public sex and noises
- Jose tells Angelina to “behave”
- Angelina responds who are you my father
- Vinny and Angelina hook up: Vinny wants to have sex because he is a guy, Angelina wants to have sex because thinks like a guy

Episode Eight:

- Mike says Angelina proves the whore equation if you date and snuggle with a girl and if you are a nice guy she won't want to sleep with you, but she will play around and fuck another guy
- Vinny says: its called when you're inside a girl you own her, you win
- Snooki's reaction to Angelina and Vinny - she that angelina is “being a whore”
- UNCLE NINO is Vinny's uncle - he is called the original guido - he calls Snooki and JWoww MY Snooki and MY JWOWW
- The Girls (Sam & Angelina) helps Vin's mom in the kitchen
- Mike goes up to Jose and says did she tell you what she had to tell you? Angela says I hooked up with Vinny, and Jose thought hooked up meant kissing - she didn't correct him
- Romona (dancer and Vinny) : he likes her, and says he wants to introduce her to his family - he says sometimes you meet the right girl who you wine & wife up
- Pauly D meets Rocoli - he meets the he likes, and says he does not want to just have sex with her; so you gotta treat her differently
- the boys call them two of the rarest roses
- the boys buy date clothes and the girls flowers
- Romona cancels on Vinny on the phone, and he is upset- but then she says sure I'll go, but Vinny end up getting stood up. In this episode: “ I treat some women like I treat my mother - like gold”

Episode 9

- Angelina says I'm the woman so I pick and choose when to have sex
- Roommates Judge her and call her a whore - and they admit that they believe the double standard

Episode 10:

- She (angelina) called everyone in the house “fake”
- Rocoli and Pauly d hang out
- Snooki makes out with a guy (Alex) that Angelina has also made out with
- Angelina and Snooki get into a fight→ After Snooki removes her earring - While Mike removes the table so they have room to fight ...Alex tries to break it up

Episode 11:

- Mike: “I'm the mother fucking daddy of the house”

- Mike slaps Snooki in the face
- Mike is on edge according to everyone
- Mike tries to steal Romona at the Club
- I notes Mike's rage

Season Three

Episode 1:

- Snooki invites Deanna to be a part of the show and the other roommates don't know - Deena and Snooki drove down together to Jersey Shore
 - Deanna is from New Egypt, New Jersey
 - Jenni calls Tom her Long Island programs
 - Ron went to pick up Sam
 - Vinny says the Shore is in my blood -his father and their father went to the shore
 - Ron and Sam get there first
 - they all haven't spoken
 - Jen arrives 2nd
 - 3rd is Vin
 - 4th to arrive is Deena and Snooki
 - 7th is Mike and he has to room with Ron & Sam
 - Sammi was very Rude to Deanna
 - Vinny fucked Ryder, and Snooki confront him - he apologized and said he rejected her because he didn't want to hurt her
 - Sam laughs at Deanna and Deanna subsequently calls her a cut
 - & Then Ron gets involved & yells at Deanna, and then Snooki steps in for Deanna, and then Ron calls Snooki a loser from Poughkeepsie. and then Jen Steps in for Snooki
- **Note that I didn't take notes for season three for sake of time according to the post- it; although I did note that this was the most aggressive season**

Season Four

Episode Two

- "if she has a basket on her bike, she is too young for you"
- "if she still has colouring books... shes too young for you..."
- " if the bitch still plays laser tag--- shes too young for you" ---- these jokes are made about young girls at the club
- A made a note to look at Deena and Pauly d

Episode Three:

- " he speaks english good" - Deanna about the waiter - who goes to club with them (Ellis)
- Ellis and Deanna - make out at the club and and at home, and he tells her he is not easy
- Ellis sneaks out in the middle of night
- TWINNING
- Mik throws his head against the wall - when he fought with Ron

Episode Five:

- Track suit guidos = the boys dress up as “ultimate guidos” ** THIS IS A GOOD DRAG TYPE SHOW
- F. P. C= Fist Pump, Pushup, Chapstick
- Snooki and Deena was making out
- Snooki: “I need to change in order to get married”
- Johnny calls his family to get his flight changed - after his fight with nicole (for flipping up her skirt on stage)
- Deanna’s pregnancy scare: - Deanna says she is embarrassing her family - she doesn't want her parents to be mad?
- I noted to myself: why do they show the test?
- Ron says he wouldn't let Sam leave in that outfit
- Jionni says I have to accept that you are dancing like a pig? - He was embarrassed - Snooki and Jionni broke up when they were Italy
- The cast say they are bringing KARMA to Italy
- Mike and Pauly ds BROMANCE mimicking a heterosexual
- Mike said he had a ‘master plan’ and he apologized and brought the girls roses
- Mike yelled at someone at the club, and Vinny told him to Stop it, because that guy is young
- Snooki wakes everyone up for their last day in Italy - they all want to go back to Jersey
- Mike says “ I don't mind being the villain” - says he says something up his sleeve for Jersey
- In the end - we all love each other

Season Five:

Episode One:

- Snooki says “ I need my homeland of Guidos and boardwalks”
- They frame it that they went straight from Florence to Jersey Shore
- Welcome back party for the cast @ Seaside
- Roger and JWoww's dad is there
- Andy (Snooki’s dad), Jionni and Ryder are there
- Vinnys Mom, Uncle and Vinny’s Family is there
- Unit (Mikes friend) and apparent witness to Him and Nicole cheating is there
- Vinny has anxiety problems
- Deanna's hair was tangled so bad that she thought she would have to cut it off → she says its like losing her identity

Episode Six:

- Deanna lost weight

Other

- at the end of the final episode the duck phone dies - it said in said in memory of the duck phone
- It might beneficial to discuss the role of the after hours show
- What is a meatball: → there is a height requirement, you have to have a good heart, there is no rules and regulations
- Reunion show says how to make a Guido --- GTF- is how to make the Guido

- Mike killed the phone who is said to be a member of this family
- R-Sammie- put the fun in dysfunctional

Viewing Two = Project #1 *This is from the Green Coiled Notebook

Masculinity

- S.1, ep. 1 @ 6:35: Ronnie talks a lot about “looking fresh.. and first impressions – ie new sneakers”
- S. 1, ep, 2 (?) @ 33:30: Mike instigated a fight, Vinny gets punched, and due to that action Pauly steps in and throws a punch. Pauly says: you can fight in a club, you shouldn’t fight anyway, but don’t let the spike hair fool you I am not a bitch
- S. 1, ep. 4 @15:50: At the barbershop- “ we are @ the barbershop with the boys ... this is where stuff comes out”
- S.1 ep. 6 @ 02: 35-2:30: Vinny says- Gym, tanning, laundry, that’s how you make the guidos”
- S.1, episode 8: Ron hits a guy and gets arrested

Femininity

-S.1, ep.1, Angelina: Look at me I am hot

-S.1, ep.1 Mike and Ron call Sam “wifey material” – when she helps with dinner

-S.1, ep.2: Snooki said (after her male friend throw up) she took care of him and did the whole mommy thing

-S.1, ep. 5 @ 29: 30 there are some girls are going come, and strip their clothes off, and there are other girls who are respectable and you treat them like girls, like human beings

- S. 1 ep 6 @22:53: Snooki says girl charged her like a hippo[SF2] – Mike called the fat girl a linebacker

List of Themes and Corresponding Themes →Green Coiled Notebook

1. **Body**
2. **Sex**
3. **Division of Labor**
4. **Family**
5. **Violence (men fighting, women fighting, women and men fighting, and intimate partner violence)**
6. **Other possible themes: intoxication, control, class**

Violence

Incident: Ronnie Pushes Sam on boardwalk to fight with another men
[SF4]

-Ron blames Sam for the fight

- Ron pushes Sam and she walks away

-Ron says something to the guy and says you're fighting with a female

- the other guys girlfriend tries to hit ron, and he backs away

Ron says: he comes from a single mother and he mean to raise a hand to a woman and she (SAM) says he is traumatized; he apologizes

Incident: Ronnie Flipping Furniture

Incident: an intoxicated man in the club hits Snooki

- JWOW punches mike in the face

Family

- themes of loyalty and betrayal

Division of Labor

- work at the

Sex

- regulating females sexuality
And partnerships (or more than one incident of sex or date?)

Keith and Snooki

Mike and Paula

Daniele and Pauly

Vinny and Melissa

Body

- Women and weight(gain and particularly loss)
- Exercise
- Eating disorders

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### **Random Notes**

- look further into discussing Sammy's voice
- talk about attitudes toward work at the shore store
- define the jersey girl standard
- look into background of where each roommate of where each roommate is
- look at whose defining masculine and feminine - how girls or boys define the masculine and feminine
- should masculine and feminine be split into appearance and behavior
- note the use of the word dark
- talk about cheating and who confesses
- Note the Boss' girl ( S. 1 episode 5) Danni takes it well and Vinny apologizes the next day. However what happens was Vin steal Tonya (the hot cougar) who is Dani his Boss and Landlords date

### **Relationships**

**(S. 1 ep. 6 @ 5:00):** - Vinny flirts with Mike's sister on the phone. Mike's reaction to Vinny and his Sister "hooking up" is: " I don't mind them hooking up, because I am the man of the house, and he knows not to push it too far

(S.1 ep.6 @ 10:25 ) - The Flintstones Big Toe Fight Between Ron & Sam - "I can't help the way I look"

-Sam → she was drunk but this moment is about insecurities

(S.1 Episode 1) Keith and Snooki \*\* I question if this relationship is important

-a nice friggin guy.... hes got to be clean

(S.1 Episode 8) Danielle & Pauly D

-Danielle is on the boardwalk seeing him with other girls

= She begins 'stalking' him

-She makes him a shirt that says I heart Israeli girls

-Danielle is there when Pauly d gets off a ride, with another girl - who gets nervous and leaves

### **JEN HITS MIKE (episode 7)**

- Mike was too interested in hooking up that he wouldn't help Jen when she said she needed help going home... so Jen was drunk and agitated when she hit him got home (S. 1, Episode 7 at 40:27)
- Mike doesn't know how to react because she is a girl - He seems like wants to get aggressive and follow her, but Vinny Stops him, and says Bro shes a girl
- why is mikes response to this to call Jenny a whole
- there is a clear blurring between masculinity and femininity
- Vinny said Jen connected like out of a video game

### **SNOOKI GETTING PUNCHED (S.1 Episode 4)**

-S.1, Ep. 4 at 39:02 - the took their shoots at the bar, and Snooki yells at him

-S.1, Ep 4 at 39:43 Snooki gets punched in the face

- Julio was the first to react, while Mike just stood there, then Jenny and the others step in
- S.1, Ep. 4 at 40:08 The guy who punched Snooki gets arrested before a very angry Ron, Vinny and Pauly D can 'get to him'
- S.1, Ep.5 at 3:20 - Pauly says we are all heated at that point- who hits a female in the face; we can't believe that happened - I've never seen that in my life
- S.1, Ep.5 at 3: 20 - Vinny kicks the wall
- S.1, Ep. 5 at 4:20 - Vinny says to Snooki: That kid is never going to be able to walk this earth again because he'll be known as hitting a girl in the face
- \*HUMANIZES SOME GIRLS OVER OTHERS- S.1, Ep. 5 at 4:57 → this is just a regular girl like my sister or my friend & you are a grown as guy and you punch her in the mouth
- S.1, Ep.4 at 5:04 - Mike still tries to bring a girl home right after this incident
- S.1, Ep. 5 at 5:35 - Ron referred to perpetrator as grown man
- S. 1, Ep. 5 at 5:45- "all I wanted was my father" -Snooki
- Ron said Mike instigated the violence
- S.1, Ep.5 @6:57 - " I never expected to get hit by a guy, ever, never - Snooki
- S. 1, Ep. 5 @ 7:10 - Ron apologizes to Snooki and he loves her and they are one big happy family
- S.1, Ep 5 @ 8:15 - Ron's reaction
- this incident happened at beachcombers

RONNIE PUSHES SAM -during a fight at the boardwalk - S.1 Episode 6



- Ron & Sam leave alone, and Sam Antagonizes same guy from the who has been making fun of them all night
- Ron tells Sam to shut up- but also tells the man to stop yelling at Sam because shes a female (ep. 6 @33:07)
- Ron says “ listen man its a woman, like how tough do you feel yelling at a women” (33: 14)
- Ron pushes Sam ( @33:40 S.1 ep 6)
- the guy who they were fight with says domestic violence
- the guys girlfriend started swinging at Ron initially, he didn’t wait to respond to her so he kept back away
- Kayela Paulys friend called Pauly and Mike to tell them that Ron got into a fight at the boardwalk
- S.1 Ep 6 - @37:05 - Ron blames Sam & said he fought because of him - Sam called the other man a ‘faggot’
- Just a fyi ; it seems like the J.S show bodyguards are the ones that eventually the ones that broke up the fight
- S.1, ep 6 @ 38:38 - Ron said he had to cool down - he kicked the furniture outside
- S.1 ep 6 @ 39:50 - Ron says he should never raise a hand to women - I’m single mother raised and I don’t do that
- S.1, ep 6 @ 39: 52 - Sam says “you traumatized me”
- she did forgive Ron - S. 1 ep 7 @ 2:09 - no man will ever push me like that twice

## **THE SHORE & THE HOUSE AS A CHARACTER**

-Ep.1 @ 8: 27 - We first get to see the shore house

-Ep. 1@ 9:12- Shots of Sea Side New Jersey

## **FAMILY**

-Snooki & her dad’s relationship

-Cast eats Sunday dinner (S.1, ep. 1 @ 25:25): the roomates sit down to Sunday dinner

- “Situation sits at the head of the table”
- Mike sees himself ( I question if the other do) as the head of the family/house
- S.1, ep 3 (@ 23:50) Sammi says ‘she is not a part of us anymore’
- S.1 ep 4 Snooki and her MA are best friend

S.1 ep 5 Ron’s family comes to visit

- I noted Ron’s mom
- S.1 ep 5 @10: 23 = Sam makes Ron’s mom wait while she finished getting ready
- I made note to acknowledge Vinny’s relationship to Ron or any other Italian family throughout the series

Vinny’s Family

- Vinny cleans for his family visiting (S. 1, Ep 6 @ 25.56 )
- Vinny Family is big → in S.1 ep 6 @ 26: 8; Pauly D said “they kept coming”
- there were 4 trays of food brought out; Vinny’s mom said: my son looks thin
- S.1, ep. 6 @ 27:37 -Vin’s mom says in Italian - The house is big, and beautiful
- Vinny is Sicilian

- S1, ep 6 @27:52- Snooki says: Vinny's mom reminds me of my grandmother, like when she never sits down on dinner - oh do you need this or that. That's a true Italian woman you want to please everyone else at the table & then when everyone else is down then you clean up and eat by yourself. Right off the bat when she did that I knew she was a great friggin woman
- Vinny's Mom cleaned the house → S.1, ep 6 @ 28: 36
- Vinny Says I am a Mama's Boy

-Snooki asks for a family meeting because she thinks Ron & Sam are isolating themselves, and she wants them all to hang out (S.1, ep 6 @31:00)

-Lauren who is Paula's friend - comes to get her after she spends the night with Mike because she missed her first day of work - Paula's family send Lauren to get her - Lauren is really painted as Masculine

### WORK & DIVISION OF LABOUR

-Snooki shows up late for her first day of work

-Vinny really wants to work

- S.1, ep. 2 @ 3:52 → Angelina says "I don't really want to work. I feel this job is beneath me, I am bartender, I do great things"
- S.1 ep 2 @ 23: 51 - Vinny has to miss her first day of work because he has pink eye- he walks to shore store to tell Dani - he says he really wants to work, and he was excited about it
- S.1, ep 3 @ 17:40 → After not showing up for work on time, she eventually walks there said I was sick (which was not true) - then she got fired, and avoided Dani when he came to talk to her; eventually getting kicked out, and so she left the show

### Relationships #1 -

- Jenn & Pauly "hook up" kiss -Pauly doesn't care she has a boyfriend - Jenni says she guesses she technically cheated on her boyfriend
- they kissed twice; she said she left the club so that she doesn't cheat and also because she wanted water & Ham
- S.1, Ep 3 @ 05:23 - Ron says he is all about Sam
- S.1, Ep 5 @ 5:58 - Ron says that Jen is his relationship go to
- 'flowers' Tom/bfs are getting their girlfriends flowers when they come to visit
- S.1, ep 3 -Snooki & Ryder's friendship
- S.1, ep 3 @ 34. 38 - they show Sam & Ron in Bed together and before she kissed him she said: I'm like sorry Mom
- S. 1, ep 3 @ 34: 5- - Ron Says before I said I am not going shit where I eat - but for her I'll roll around in my shit all day

### SEX & SEXUALITY

- S. 1, ep 2 at 19:45 Vinny says obviously they are banging (re: Snooki & her friend) And Snooki replies who do you think I am, common

- S.1 ep 2: I question how Sam “got away” with kissing both Mike & Ronnie same night - she was vibing with Mike, and then moved to Ronni
- Sammi says Him & her where nothing
- S.1, ep 2 @ 33:30 → Mike instigates a fight & Vin gets pushed then Pauly D gets involved
- S.1 ep 2 @ 37:04 → Angelina says: “ I am a cock block not going to lie”
- S.1 ep2 @ 37:48: Angelina says : “If a girl is a slut, - she should be abused”
- S.1 ep 4→ Pauly D calls sex “ the business”
- S. 1 ep 3 @ 27:00 → Jen says when she was in a relationship with Tom - she was suzy fucking homemaker - a nun- a catholic nun
- S.1 ep 3 @ 32: 28 → Snooki & Ryder kiss in the hot tube - Snooki says “all the guys like that”
- S. 1 ep 3→ The girls they invite home Mike & Pauly D that they know they slept around

## BODY

- *So I totally want to discuss the weight and weight loss of Snooki & Deanna*
- S1 ep 2 → Angelina tells Snooki I would never do that Poof if I were you
- Pauly D has a penis piercing
- S.1 ep 2 @ 38:45 - Angelina says “look @ me, I’m all natural & I’m hot → Mike says lose five or ten pounds then we’ll talk
- Religious symbols (particularly the Rosary) as Jewellery
- S1. ep 3 @ 29: 40: Mike describes Snooki’s friend Ryder was “cute, teen, petite” I kind of like that
- S. 1, ep 4 @ 15: 11 *Body as Machine* - Mike says the following about Tanning: he says “ that you need the colour... a little touch up on that paint job”
- S.1 ep 4 @ 15: 18: Pauly D says you have to stay fresh to death hair cut...
- S. 1 ep 4 @ 18:30 - Snooki thong show as she dances
- S.1 ep 5 @ 30: 40 → Some girl at the club yelled ‘who is your fat friend?’ so Jen stepped in & a fight happened - she throw her drink in the girls face
- THE ROLL COMMENT: → Mike & Snooki - Mike got offended by friendly ‘shit talk’ , and she asked for a bread roll, & Mike said don’t worry you’ve already got few → Ron, Vin, Jen all say that saying that is wrong & then goes into the washroom to cry ( S.1, ep 7 @ 30:50)
- S.1 ep 7 at 32:10 - In the washroom following that comment she says she had an eating disorder - she just got over it ... Ron said to Mike, what was your game plan embarrassing a female at dinner ... “going after a woman’s weight is a low blow....” (Ron)
- Snooki wears a pink & black corset → S.1 ep. 8 → a girl tell Snooki is dressed like a whore, and a fight breaks out and Ron punches the guy who gets knocked out in one shot AND .. Ron gets arrested and has to spend the night in jail, he said he did it in self defence → Sam gets annoyed and does one to complain about having to sleep alone

## *List of Episodes - Season 1*

- 1) *A New Family*
- 2) *The Tanned Triangle*
- 3) *Good Riddance*
- 4) *Fade to Black*

- 5) *Just Another Day at the Shore*
- 6) *Boardwalk Blowouts*
- 7) *What Happens in AC*
- 8) *On Shot*

### **Viewing 3 & 4: From Purple Coilbook**

- In this, I switched back to doing this viewing notes by episode not by the themes
- House & Shore: the first 27 seconds before the opening theme intros. is describes what the JS/JS House or shore house is... Snookis says “Guidos everywhere, hot girls & house music
- In viewing two → I think I describe each character & now they are introduced in some length...
- Pauly d- “born & raised” a guido → serious about living it up too... - owns a tanning bed, and lots of gel
- Snooki says: her dream to marry a guido and move to Jersey
- Mike - “I know girls who just go for that (guidos)
- Sammi - “the smaller the shorts the better, because all the Guido love them” → “love to doll up...can never go out without hair extensions”
- Vinny: - a “generational” italian → college grad → describes himself as a momma’s boy → I have trouble being away from home like any other traditional italian boy → shows him as part of a group, part of a family
- Ron- lowest economic situation?
- Angelina - “If there is a time I don't look good, I don't go out” → I am going to show them what it is like to be a real Guidette
- NOTE: You should note the use of the word of real and fake
- Order that they arrive: 1) Mike 2) Pauly D 3) Sammi 4) Vinny 5) Jen 6) Snooki 7) Ronni 8) Angelina
- S.1, ep 1 @ 7: 54 - first shots of the shore - crowded, and the beach seen through a gate. We have see :  
1. Seagulls & Rocks, 2. cement & flag 3. Boardwalk & Street fair at 7:56
- First pan shots of the house at 8:27 → we see it through MIKE’S EYES? We see: 1) Italian flag 2) Scarface 3) License plate
- Pauly D drives a cadillac
- Snooki has cheap front-end damaged car
- Pauly’s D’s attitude to work is “ I hope its not hard work”
- note how the roomates feel about Snooki on the first episode
- In this episode Snooki goes drunk into the hot tub with her top, thong, and bra- they all laugh and reject her
- Her body’s back fat is being centered on in the shot
- Sammi is the only girl helping in the kitchen to which Mike says: “your a good girl helping in the kitchen” and Ron says: “ that’s wifey material (@ 22:15)
- Pauly d says “girls are suppose to cook, guys are suppose to eat, that’s how it is. But, Mike does his thing in the kitchen” → this makes me wonder okay, can boys cross gender lines and girls note?
- Mike says: Situation sits at the head of the table
- @ ep 1. s.1 @ 26:01 → Wears Big Gody Cross - Fashion & Body Note

- @ ep 1 S.1 @ 27:47: → Close up of Ron’s gold cross and cross Tattoo → Body & Fashion Note
- the two girls & one guy kiss @ 29: 43→ I am noting this because it happens several times throughout the series
- One of the “random” girls in the hot tub took off their underwear and bra
- It is important to note who has public sex and what sex is private → I think this is a very important note
- In this episode the girls talk about age difference a lot in this season but yet - the topic never comes up→ Pauly d is 29, and girls are 20

### **Episode Two:**

- (S.1, Ep 2, @ 3:38) → Angelina says: “when I think of Jersey Shore, I think of a playground ... not a place you to work”
- @ 3:53: She continues to say: I feel this work this job is beneath me ... I am a bartender- I do like great things”
- @ 5:01 - Angelina says also: the hours maybe too much for me ... eight or nine hours one day (voice changed)  
S.1, Ep 2 @ 7:00 → On Body: - “We do our thing at the gym ....we workout hard we take it seriously.... we make sure we eat certain food after... if you want to look somewhat like the situation which is hards you need to get some protein in your diet”

S.1, Ep 2 @ 7:35 Ron says (about Sam) “ there is something about her... she carries herself well

Note: The theme of growing up in particular with Snooki & Vinny

- Pauly D has a rosary as Jewellery - On Beauty & Fashion
- the men are wearing sunglasses at night - On Beauty & Fashion
- they went out for the first time without Sam & Mike because they are working
- Vinny says “I don’t give a fuck if you’re fat, you’re ugly, you’re fifty five years old... I dance with you its hilarious” \*\* significant @ 13:57
- On Sex/Sexuality @ 13:58 → Snooki says my ideal man is: “italian, dark, muscle, juicehead Guido”
- @ 37: 48: Angelina says “if a girl’s a whore she should be used” ; Mike calls Angelina a hater \*note use of the word hater\*
- @ 38: 43 Mike to Angelina in reference to her appearance and attractiveness: “...lose five or 10 pds & we can talk”
- @ 39: 10 ( Sam says regarding her relationship to Mike) : “ I was never his thing”

### **Episode Three:**

- boyfriends of girls in the house bring them flowers when they visit
- @ 8:27→ “ if JWoww was my girl, I’d break with her -your girl should be out there dancing or lifting her shirt & I already made out with her so...” (Pauly D on Jenni)
- @ 11: 16→ Angelina broke with her boyfriend; and he left her at the bar in the middle of the dance; then he tries to call her, and she refused to talk to him

- @20:40 → she doesn't go to work, because she doesn't feel like it after fighting with her boyfriend. She walks over to the store late and she says she was sick; then when Danny came to house to talk to her & she refuses to talk to him -- she even runs water to drown him out
- @ 16:09 Pauly says Angelina & her boyfriend are more trouble than its worth
- @16:36: Mike says about Angelina : “ I think she's just a drama queen ... she just wants mad attention”
- @ 17:25 Angelina says re: not going to work: “you know what I'm thinking about my BF, I don't want to work today I just don't want to do it”
- @ 22:00 Note on Body: Angelina pulled a grey hair from Mike
- A note on Body: @ 36:46 → Ron calls attention to fact that Mike looks in the mirror and makes satisfying noises & grunts: “mmm, mmm, mmm...”

#### Episode 4:

- @14:25 → this is the first episode that Ron & Sam admit to having sex = however, it is still somewhat private and shots of fireworks
- At the Barbershop @ 15:40 Ronni says I don't kiss and tell - makes me question by not showing sex - is there relationship framed as more legitimate
- Snooki said that she is miss her mom & this whole experience is making her grow up
- @18:04: Snooki dances with her thong
- @19:18: “ were beating up the beat” → Slang for dancing = makes me question why dancing is language is dancing aggressively?
- The boys ditch girls that there were walking with to “pick up” girls in a mercedes-- example of the girls being interchangeable
- in previous notes and subsequent notes I have extensive details on Snooki being punched incident
- @27 → Women are definitely a game - there are rules to it - “and boys take care of boys”

#### Episode Five:

- 1. Snooki gets punched
- Ron Family Visits: @10: 03: Sammi says: “definitely want to look good for Ronnie's parents, It's the first time I am meeting them, I want them to think wow thats her, shes really pretty”
- @11:15- 11: 28 Ron's mom said tell Sam she wasting our time on her hair... Ron responds drink your mimosa mom, smoke another cigarette and relax .... your so blunt its disgusting
- Vinny hangs out with Ronnie's family too! - Vinny in my opinion always seems to be part of the family
- -@14: 10: Ron's mom makes a point to say bye to Vinny
- @22:20→ Mike's reaction to Snooki being hit Via Ron & Jen→ Ron says Mike instigated the whole because Mike was buying them shots... Ron says he mentions earlier that you do not do anything for someone they don't do for you... thats what got Snookers hit
- @ 22:30 → Jen says Mike doesn't care about Snookers because he just stood there when the kid hit her

- -F COVE: they went on a boat called forget about it → Snooki said that one of the guys that Jen went on a boat with: “he looks like my dad”
- @25:50 → Ron wants to leave so he went to get Snooki, & throw her in the lake - when she was talking to guy
- Re: Stephanie @ 28:08: Mike says: “I rather do sweet things for you, then just hook up”
- Jen & Jacky are cool, smart, girls, they want to hook up & everything but probably take a few times to hook up because they are not whores
- She (Assuming Stephanie) told Mike she heard Mike’s sleeps around
- Note that the fights often start in an attempt to “protect” friends
- Vinny then dates the boss’ girl Tonya: → Vinny called her a cougar → At first Vinny didn’t realize he took the boss’ girl after she took him out and whined her and dined her before we hooked up → Vinny says: I usually don’t feel bad for taking someone’s girl- thats the girls fault

#### Episode Six:

- @ 5:58: Mike about Vinny and His Sister→ Mike says: Vinny knows I am the Man of the House and not to go too far or ill throw him in my truck
- @9:38: If one thing leads to another I am not going to tell him to get off
- @ 16: 20 Ron says about him and Sam’s fight: “ she did something spiteful to me, I’ll do something spiteful back
- @ 20:23 : Mike says : “the fat girls got to go:

#### Vinny’s Family Visits:

- Vinny cleans for his family to make his house more civil
- Vinny didn’t want his mom to see his messy room, because she would kill him
- Snooki said its fucking Christmas
- Vinny says my mom is from Sicily shes the real deal
- Pauly d says Vinnys Mom is old school italian

The boardwalk blowout → Most of the notes I took were in 2nd viewing → Sam’s insult was: “ what is that a fake lou boton bag?”

#### Episode Seven:

- @ 23:00→ Vinnys not taking care of my Sister - Mike says/thinks at the bar
- @ 23:10→ Vinny refocuses his attention on Mike’s sister as a sure thing so....
- @ 23: 37: Danielle said to Pauly D you should come see the Holy Land to which he replied I’m catholic dude
- @23:48→ Danielle says to Pauly D- “ we are not supposed to have sex until we are married” - Pauly d voice over says its almost impossible to hook up with this girl, but I like a challenge if I do that it’ll be my accomplishment for the summer
- Melissa sneaks out of her room with the girls to sleep with Vinny
- @ 28:27→ Mike said once I wake up everyone started getting ready for dinner

- @28:45→ Mike says I think I changed my shirt 4 or 5 times because I wasn't necessarily happy with my outfit & Ron says