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No Such Thing as Standard Beauty¹: Intersectionality and Embodied Feeling on *America's Next Top Model*

What is wrong with you? Stop it! I have never in my life yelled at a girl like this. When my mother yells like this it is because she loves me. I was rooting for you. We were all rooting for you – how dare you. Learn something from this. You go to bed at night, you lay there, and you take responsibility for yourself. 'Cause nobody's going to take responsibility for you. You rolling your eyes and you acting like you've heard it all before. You've heard it all before. You don't know where the hell I come from. You have no idea what I've been through. But I'm not a victim. I grow from it and I learn. Take responsibility for yourself (Tyra Banks on *America's Next Top Model*, Cycle 4, Episode 7).

First aired in the U.S. on 13 April 2005, Tyra Banks' outburst of emotion earned episode seven of the fourth "cycle" (Season) of *America's Next Top Model (ANTM)* the title: "The Girl Who Pushes Tyra Over the Edge". By the fourth cycle, audiences of *ANTM* are accustomed to Banks' particular variety of emotional guidance, repeatedly packaged as "tough love" and delivered to anxious and troubled contestants in an ostensibly pastoral relation of care. From tenderness to outrage, Banks' expression of feeling takes place within a landscape of visibility that consciously and overtly capitalises on difference. The show's conditions of visibility are shaped from the standpoint of Banks' championing of class and race mobility, which is reinforced through the deployment her own "rags-to-riches story" (Thompson, 2010: 336). The limit of this story, and its post-feminist and post-race refrain, undergirds the emotional intensity of Banks' enraged response to defiant contestant Tiffany.

Indeed, "ghetto fabulous" (Thompson, 2010: 345-346) Afro-American model Tiffany, can be understood as a subject of what Mary Thompson (2010) identifies as a "double bind of ethnic identity". In Thompson's analysis, the commodification of multiculturalism on *ANTM* entraps participants of colours², asking them to both embrace and conceal signs of racial, ethnic differences according to the show's post-race and post-feminist logic of visibility. In the episode in question, Tiffany's failure to adequately balance racial display and concealment costs her a place in the "talent show/job search game" (Ouellette and Hay, 2008) to become "America's next top model". In this article, we extend previous accounts of the construction of gendered racial identities on *ANTM* (Hasinoff, 2008; Squires, 2008; Thompson, 2010) by examining the emotional cost and labour involved in inhabiting this double bind. We demonstrate how experiences of feeling, constantly in the process of refiguring difference, can extend current feminist media studies frameworks for theorising gender, race and class as intersectional categories differently embodied by participants of *ANTM*.

Similarly to Lisa Blackman (2004; 2006), we are interested in analysing how gendered neo-liberal values of choice, flexibility and self-transformation come to be differently embodied according to the social specificity of identity categories. We therefore respond to her suggestion to think of gender, class and race not as "structural positionings enabling or constraining certain ways of understanding" but as "designations that are embodied and inhabited by actual subjects in complex ways" (Blackman, 2004: 222). Positioning feeling as an experience of the embodied subject is an approach increasingly and diversely explored by many scholars in feminist philosophy and cultural studies (e.g. see Ahmed, 2004; Campbell, 1997; Probyn, 2005). Feeling thus offers a way to render our analysis of intersectional identities "embodied": by paying attention to experiences of feeling represented on *ANTM*, we gain further understanding of the role of embodiment in the subject's reproduction of neoliberal values. Extending Thomson's (2010) analysis of the performance of race on *ANTM* as a double bind through an analysis of the show's representation of emotional feeling reveals that *ANTM* produces and capitalises on the relationship between feelings and identities, evoking Arlie Hochschild's (1983) call to think about feeling as commodified. Hochschild's (1983) critical dissection of the "emotional labour" (1983: x) required by service sector industries therefore underlines the connection we make between the labour of the model's performance of difference, and her emotional work. The show's use of feeling as an embodied labour of the self to be undertaken by models, demands thinking about feeling in a way that connects neoliberal values with experiences of feeling by women of colours.

Situating *America's Next Top Model*

We approach *ANTM* as a popular cultural enterprise as much as an isolatable media text, taking into consideration the role of the show's creator, producer, and host Tyra Banks. Banks is responsible for a

FURTHER INFORMATION

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growing plethora of media products and self-branding strategies (Joseph, 2009: 241-242), including: *The Tyra Banks Show* (2005–2010), *Stylista* (2008), *The Clique* (2008), *True Beauty* (2009-2010), alongside the on-line magazine *Tyra: Beauty Inside & Out* (recently re-named F-Type) and several websites. Banks' own reproduction of femininity is central to how the show delimits the conditions of visibility for its participants. As with all popular and consumer culture products, *ANTM* is a complex and multilayered media text that is genre specific. *ANTM* is reality television that is also located in a history of television representations of blackness in America (Gray [1995] 2004). In relation to this tradition, *ANTM* has been criticised for its commitment to assimilationist discursive practices that conceal race based inequalities and racism as a structural reality (e.g. Thompson, 2010). Here, we follow Herman Gray, who classifies as assimilationist those discourses that:

(...) treat the social and political issue of black presence in general and racism in particular as individual problems. As complex social and political issues, questions of race, gender, class, and power are addressed through the treatment of racism and racial inequality as the result of prejudice (attitudes), and through the foregrounding of the individual ego as a site of social change and transformation (Gray, [1995] (2004): 85).

In the context of *ANTM*, the characteristics of an assimilationist discourse identified by Gray must be reframed as particular to the genre of reality television. The assimilationist standpoint of reality television is contradictory, in that it is contingent on the heightened visibility of racialised subjects (Squires, 2008) and racial visibility ostensibly runs counter to assimilation. Indeed, representations of race and race relations have gained an extraordinary visibility within reality television programs that increasingly rely on racial drama and conflict to ignite action, maintain audience attention, and engender emotional identification (Bell-Jordan, 2008; Squires, 2008). Both representations of intra and inter-racial tension and conflict rely on stereotypical representations of blackness (Bell-Jordan, 2008, Boylorn 2008; Squires, 2008; Springer, 2008) that inevitably end up representing race hegemonically (Bell-Jordan, 2008), reproducing what can be described as “a racial common sense” (Gray, [1995] (2004): xiii). However, as Gray identifies, this visibility frames race as an individualised experience of a category of identity, rather than an effect of historical, social and cultural discourses that needs to be approached collectively.

As a “talent show/job search game”, *ANTM* is also located within the makeover trend increasingly characterising American television, which Laurie Ouellette and James Hay (2008) claim forms a “new technology of governing at distance”: this television format takes up the governmental role of familiarising viewers with the ideal of a neoliberal self-governed citizen. *ANTM* often deploys an authoritative disciplining of the self, which Banks defines as “tough love”, through which harsh criticism is justified as a stimulus to do better in the competition. In these cycles of competition, participants subjugate themselves to Banks' philosophy of “tough love” and mould themselves according to the practices of self-conduct on offer. Their willingness to subjugation is driven by the hope of obtaining what is necessary to become a successful model (for further discussion on the willingness of participants to change according to expert's directions, see also McRobbie 2009). On a regular basis, the vast majority of participants willingly undergo an often painful process of transformation to achieve a neo-liberal ideal of femininity. This femininity is characterised by the execution of a confident but soft, exotic but not too ethnic, flexible, hard-working but always smiling persona. For example, participants are repeatedly scolded to “zip their mouths” and must know or learn when to “shut up”. They are not allowed to complain, make excuses, or blame external circumstances, and are always told to take responsibility for themselves, their actions, and consequences of their actions. The authority of the show functions pedagogically and is based on an unequal distribution of knowledge and expertise. The authoritative and paternalistic nature of the “tough love” is finely concealed by the fact that the relationship between participants and experts takes the form of a discipleship, structured by a hierarchy of wisdom that is held in place by participants' wishes to achieve the show's promise of delivering a better self (Rose, 1998). This hierarchy of wisdom is pervasive, visible not only during the formal stages of evaluation by the judges, but throughout other events. For example, an episode early on in the cycle is dedicated to participants' hair and make-up makeovers, during which the participants not only do not have a say in their new styles, but are prevented from expressing feelings of frustration and anger that can arise from their submission to the choices of professionals, whose expertise takes precedence over participants' stylistic knowledges.

As a reality television program that interweaves elements of the makeover format with those of the game show, *ANTM* has a double-layered structure. The first part of the show follows participants competing in weekly challenges, showcasing their reactions to one another in the ‘private’ spaces of the house and confession booth. Here, the program's format greatly relies on narratives of inter- and intra- racial and class conflicts as the most important “textual device” (Bell-Jordan, 2008: 353). Participants are selected on the basis of their capacity to represent race and class, or on their ability to function as role models for other young women. For instance, cycle by cycle, we witness stories of sexual assault (Rae in Cycle 13), abusive relationships (Dominique in Cycle 10), loneliness (Heater affected by Asperger's syndrome in Cycle 9), debilitating illnesses (Mercedes affected by Lupus in cycle 2), and female genital mutilation (Fatima in Cycle 10). The show plays on distinctions between urban women of colours and rural southern white women to further engender tensions and possible conflicts. In this part of the episode, participants are endowed with subjective depth, attaching to them a narrative of transformation that varies accordingly to class, race, sexuality, physical ‘flaws’, body shapes or past experiences. Indeed, at the beginning of each cycle, participants tell the truth of their-selves before the panel of judges. This truth is generally an expression of “feminine discontent” (McRobbie, 2009; Thompson, 2010).

In the second part of the episode, participants are asked to show themselves before the judges to be evaluated on their weekly performance. Participants line up before a panel of judges whose collective opinion embodies the perspective of the “fashion industry”. This representation of the perspective of the fashion industry justifies deployment of its norms. The *ANTM* house thus becomes the space within which the participants negotiate the transformation of their existing identities and histories in light of these norms.

Many moments in the confessional booth allow viewers to witness feelings of anxiety and distress about their own ability to adequately change and meet judges' expectations. For instance, white participant Kahlen says, "twenty years of my life is really hard to overcome in two weeks" (Cycle 4, Episode 7). African-American contestant Marvita, before being eliminated for giving up on the competition "before the competition gives up on her" (as stated by Tyra Banks, Cycle 10, Episode 5), similarly reflects on her situation:

I like here. It's a nice spot to live in. I'm just a spiced girl from the streets that they just picked, and now I'm just taking pictures. But, now I think that this competition starts to hit on me. I don't know anything about modelling. Maybe I'm just *too ghetto* (Cycle 10, Episode 5).

Indeed, the criteria of the evaluations are not only based on participants' improvement as models – for example, whether or not they took a good photo – but also on the ability of developing a "personality" and enduring throughout the competition. The creation of a space for judgement mobilises a distinction between home and work, and public and private space. The representation of racial difference within the semi-private sphere of the *ANTM* house is a dramatisation of what David L. Eng (2010) describes as the "racialization of intimacy". In Eng's account, it is the confinement of racial difference to the domestic sphere that facilitates the renewal of the public sphere as colourblind.

The disciplining of the model on *ANTM* occurs through a double process of elevation and erasure, wherein class and race differences are turned into matters of cultural style. The commodification of differences as styles treats race and class as superficial signs of identification that can be transcended to facilitate a performance of idealised femininities. These femininities are represented as the purview of the fashion industry, but are understood to be sanctioned by hegemonic norms of whiteness; white femininity is repeatedly positioned as the standard bearer of "all American" femininity (Thompson, 2010: 332-333, but see also Hasinoff's discussion on the re-affirmation of upper-middle class white femininity in the idea of being a "blank palette" 2008: 338). The world of fashion is positioned as a vehicle of social representation with a capacity to produce social change only when the norms of fashion are challenged safely. Examples of this include incorporating plus size models, and dedicating cycle 13 ("Petite Models") to girls shorter than 5'7". Fashion capitalises on the assertion of difference, or what Trinh T. Minh-ha ([1987] 2003) aptly terms "planned authenticity" (as cited in Thompson 2010: 335). In Minh-ha's analysis, difference must be remembered and asserted – to a certain extent. What is significant about this performance of difference is that "it constitutes an efficacious means of silencing the cry of racial oppression" (Minh-ha, [1987] 2003 as cited in Thompson 2010: 335). As we noted earlier, it has already been argued that participants of colours on *ANTM* are promptly asked by Banks to embrace their racial identity and be proud of who they are (Hasinoff, 2008; Thompson, 2010). This pride is a disposition in feeling that must be articulated as a visually legible quality of femininity; pride, as a guarantee of self-esteem, enables participants to open their selves to the malleability of race and ethnicity required for modelling. Yet, at the same time, contestants are repeatedly asked to conceal the most visible markers of race and class that risk making the models appear too ethnic, and hence unpalatable to the fashion industry. In this process, differences are reduced to a mere state of appearance, "a matter of surfaces and styles" (Thompson, 2010: 340).

The makeover process of evaluation thus materialises the transcendence of categories of race and class by separating out the embodied history of racial difference from phenotype and skin colour. Signs of the past and present experiences of oppression, struggle and subordination are reproduced as temporary obstacles that can be overcome with determination and hard-work (Hasinoff, 2008). The aesthetic of racial difference is manifested as an artifice of image that allows phenotypological difference to be embraced, as long as the politicized connotations of race are hidden. The suspension of structural inequalities associated with race and class is part of what enables *ANTM* to sensibly position socially marginalised contestants within post-race and post-feminist values. The post-feminist message of individualised achievement, which denies how the power of structural and discursive inequality orients inhabitations of bodily difference, travels from the space of the show to the space of the viewer's living room. The visibility given to participants of colours valorises the possibility of performing hegemonic femininities with a trace of racial difference; in Banks' post-race view, the trace of racial difference generates a more celebrated aesthetic. In this light, participants of colours are caught in a space of representation that allows for the articulation of racial and class difference, but this articulation is paradoxically confined to a very specific reification of normalised femininity as the condition of successful visibility. This paradoxical confinement is structured by adherence to the standardisation of beauty that is historically white; if not in skin colour, then in the cultural imaginary of the female body in the Western fashion industry manifested through posture, pose, manners, runaway walk, speech, facial expression. Despite Banks' ideological instruction that "[w]omen should understand that there is no such thing as standard beauty" (Italian Vogue Website, 2010), assimilation requires standardisation, making *ANTM*'s representations:

(...) assimilationist to the extent that the worlds they construct are distinguished by the complete elimination or, at the best, marginalization of social and cultural difference in the interest of shared and universal similarity (Gray, [1995] (2004): 85).

In this way, the show "enforces the neo-liberal idea that 'we' are not so different (unequal) after all" (Thompson, 2010: 340) and contributes to making "race and ethnicity fall into the category of precious ready-to-wear difference" (DuCille 2003 as cited in Thompson, 2010: 340). At the end of each episode, cycle by cycle, participants of colours are asked to make of their differences a palatable commodity for the fashion industry (Hasinoff, 2008; Thompson, 2010) and, simultaneously, to inhabit these new commodified identities for the sake of success. As Hasinoff (2008) analyses, this paradoxical process was particularly evident when participant Danielle was persistently reproached by the judges for her black southern working class accent. Banks describes having an accent as an important part of who you are (Cycle 6, Episode 12) and therefore asks Danielle to gain control over the way she speaks. To be able turn her accent "on or off"

at will, Danielle is allowed to retain her identity as long as she can enact its modification.

Post-feminism, Race, and Feeling

While in the previous section we show how women of colours in *ANTM* are asked to inhabit a contradictory racial identity described by the double bind of simultaneously embracing and transcending racial and ethnic difference, in this section we examine the emotional pain and cost of this contradictory positioning. Hence, in this section we begin by furthering the analysis of the specificity of reality television as a genre, particularly in contrast to the successful television genre of drama. By doing so, we show how neoliberal discourses of choice, flexibility, and self-transformation shift in meaning, not only in relation to who they interpellate (Blackman, 2004: 2006), but also according to the grammar and content of the television genre by which they are operationalised. Genres of television persist in representing specific audiences: television serial comedy-dramas such as *Lipstick Jungle* (2008-2009) and *Desperate Housewives* (2004-present) privilege the representation of white, middle-upper class and suburban womanhood, whereas reality television shows such as *Extreme Makeover* (2002-2007) focus on the empowerment of others in the American melting-pot. Television dramas such as *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002) or *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) envision viewers' identification with the ideal of affluent, educated and urban women, as well as the pleasures these women take in consumerism. Characters, narratives, and landscapes embody the post-feminist ideal of having successful working and family lives. In the representation of post-feminist pleasures, the costs involved in self-transformation are hidden. In contrast, in reality TV, pedagogical strategies such as "tough love" are taken on by participants whose self-transformation lies in their capacity to transform femininities that are explicitly classed, raced, and marred by the pains of human experience.

Post-feminism can be approached as "a distinctive sensibility, made up of a number of interrelated themes (...) that characterizes increasing numbers of films, television shows, advertisements and other media products" (Gill 2007: 147-148). In reality television programs that capitalise on minority status difference, it might be more useful to think of post-feminism as a gendered, neoliberal "cultural technology to govern at distance" those female subjects who are labelled as "at risk" or "needy" (Ouellette and Hay 2008, see also Ouellette, 2008), such that working class and lower income women are both normatively constructed as in need of interventionist governing. In this context, *ANTM* is revealed to govern experiences of difference for those populations it represents. The genre of reality television exposes the ways in which post-feminist and post-race discourses work together to further complicate the contradictory positioning of women of colours within neoliberalism. In her research on lifestyle magazines, Blackman articulates an approach to media consumption that comprehends the production of the psychological in and within the social (Blackman, 2004; 2006; for further discussions on this topic see also Billig, 1997). Blackman argues that dominant sociological accounts (e.g. Bauman, 2001; Beck 1992; Beck and Lash 1994; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim Elisabeth, 2001; Giddens, 1991) have failed to explain how the injunction to understand and act upon ourselves as subjects of freedom and choice changes in meaning when culturally translated into popular discourses across the designations of gender, class, race and ethnicity. Following this, *ANTM*'s participants are caught in yet another problematic contradiction: they are hailed as post-feminist neoliberal subjects able to make the right choices and improve their lives and, simultaneously, as flawed subjects in need of close supervision and discipline to achieve a better version of themselves (Ouellette and Hay 2008).

Also analysing the construction of active and passive subjectivity, the longitudinal study by Valerie Walkerdine, Helen Lucey, and June Melody (2001) shows how British working class girls are addressed and positioned as pathological and inadequate by scientific discourses on the working class, and simultaneously, as subjects of freedom and choice by commercial and popular culture. As working class girls' accounts testify, these contradictory injunctions are not inhabited without consequences, but lived in ambivalent and painful modes. Working class girls' disclosures of humiliation, guilt, shame and feelings of powerlessness stand in stark contrast to the irony, sarcasm and knowingness characteristic of post-feminist representations in popular television series. On *ANTM* subjects who are contradictorily interpellated by white middle class values are therefore more likely to face the weekly challenges and the judges' scrutinising gaze by bursting into tears with hurt, disappointment and frustration. This double positioning of women of colours as in need of help and as subjects of choice does not stand apart from the post-race double bind earlier described: both these double positionings require emotional labour and exacerbate the emotional difficulty of inhabiting de-politicised positions of identity.

In the episode "The Girl Who Pushes Tyra Over The Edge", two contestants, rather than one, are simultaneously eliminated at the end of the episode for the first time in the history of the show. Both Rebecca and Tiffany are eliminated by *ANTM* judges on the basis of a perceived lack of motivation. Specifically, while Rebecca is eliminated because of her struggle to perform in the last photo shoot, Tiffany is eliminated for not adequately attempting to complete the task of reading a text full of fashion jargon (on the elimination of Tiffany, see also Thompson, 2010). Once eliminated from the competition, both Rebecca and Tiffany – who is an African-American, single mother and "reformed ghetto-girl" (Thompson, 2010: 345) – say goodbye to the other participants in the room. While Rebecca expresses her disappointment through crying, Tiffany smiles at and jokes with the other girls. Tiffany's emotional state is not solely determined by disappointment, but by a sense of relief from the emotional burden of the double-binds detailed above. In this moment, Banks' scowling face visibly starts to show her emotional disappointment in Tiffany. She asks both girls to come back and stand before her; witnessing Tiffany's behaviour, she has something more to say. Banks' approval of Rebecca's expression of appropriate emotion is followed by her scolding of Tiffany:

Tyra: Tiffany I'm extremely disappointed in you. This is a joke to you. You've been through anger management. You've been through your grandmother getting her lights turned off to buy you a swimsuit for this competition. And you go over there and you joke and you laugh. This is serious to these girls, and this should be serious to you.

Tiffany: Looks can be deceiving. I'm hurt. I am. But, I can't change it Tyra. I, I...
 Tyra: Yes you can. You can't change what?
 Tiffany: I'm sick of crying about stuff that I cannot change. I'm sick of being disappointed. I'm sick of all of it. I'm not-
 Tyra: You're not sick of being disappointed.
 Tiffany: Obviously I am (Cycle 4, Episode 7).

In her embodied experience of feeling in this televised confrontation with a superstar, Tiffany's disappointment is tempered by the feeling that she cannot change the material and embodied reality of her raced and classed identity. On one level, Banks' commitment to post-feminist and post-race discourses of meritocracy shapes her criticism of Tiffany's refusal to minimise the ways that gender, class and race have shaped her embodied experience.

It seems unlikely that being on *ANTM* is a "joke" to Tiffany, with its promise of a way out of poverty. But in order for this way out to materialise, Tiffany needs to take on the double bind that determines the successful performance of her racial difference: Tiffany needs to learn to distinguish a personal sense of self from her fledgling identity as a professional model. This is an art of transcendence that requires an emotional labour, acknowledged by *ANTM* for example, in the support of certain participants undergoing "anger management courses". In fact, Tiffany is originally selected for cycle three, but after engaging in a bar fight, the judges established that she is not ready for competing. When Tiffany returns the following cycle, she is finally selected on the basis that she has acquired a "new attitude that earned her a second chance" (Tyra Banks' voice over narrative, Cycle 4, Episode 2). Similarly, contestants Marvita (Cycle 9-10) and Angelea (Cycle 12-14) were initially eliminated, and later readmitted after undergoing anger management courses. Their stories exemplify the range of emotional dispositions that are allowed by the show, by clearly including, in order to then exclude, anger from its repertoire of feeling. The show's process of inclusion and exclusion around feeling produces a kind of emotional labour as participants are asked to perform appropriate feeling in the competition. The demand to perform an identity by managing feelings, in a way that estranges the subject from their personal feelings, is described in Hochschild's account of how "the private management of feeling is socially engineered and transformed into emotional labour for a wage" (Hochschild, 1983: x). The show's representation of hardship or disadvantage as something that must be overcome through hard work (Hasinoff, 2008) is also the register in which painful feelings – especially anger – are situated. Anger is particularly potent in the context of race because it can be a visceral reminder of the intractability of ongoing conditions of racial subordination (also see Greer, 2008). On another level then, Banks' anger with Tiffany is not just about Tiffany's refusal to disavow her racialised history. Acceding to the transcendence of race that the fashion industry demands, Banks self-imposed technique for managing race also engenders for her an experience of deep emotional conflict.

In order to accede to Banks' expectations, Tiffany must move aside from her anger and claim her hurt as a sign of vulnerability: "I'm hurt. I am" she says. Claiming her hurt, Tiffany also gives an account of herself. By being hurt, Tiffany situates herself within the subjective category *ANTM* is constructing for her: a black girl from the ghetto who aspires to performing neoliberal post-race femininity. Banks continues:

Tyra: If you were sick of being disappointed, you would stand up and take control of your destiny. Do you know that you had a possibility to win? Do you know that all of America is rooting for you? And then you come in here and treat this like a joke. You come in here and look at that and say "I can't read that". You read ten times better than half those girls. And you come in here with a defeatist attitude.

In line with the show's assimilationist strategy, in which the individual ego is positioned as the site for social change, Banks reframes Tiffany's feelings of powerlessness as a question of her individualised, negative attitude. Banks offers no recognition of Tiffany's ambivalence towards her own disappointment as anything other than a failure to transform. The emotional labour of transformation is absolutely crucial to Tiffany's place in the *ANTM* competition. By figuring Tiffany's feelings as "attitude", Banks situates Tiffany as responsible for her embodied experience, and as capable of wilfully transcending unwanted emotion. Tiffany is not only the subject of inappropriate feeling, or "outlaw emotion" (Jaggar, [1989] 1992) but is a responsible agent of that feeling. Nonetheless, Tiffany tries, from the standpoint of her experience, to give an account of herself. Predictably, Tiffany is silenced by Banks' "tough love":

Tiffany: I don't have a bad attitude. Maybe I am angry inside. I've been through stuff so I'm angry. Ok, but everybody don't listen –
 Tyra: This is not - (speaking over Tiffany) Be quiet (raising her voice) Be quiet!
 Tiffany: I'm trying...
 Tyra: What is wrong with you? Stop it! I have never in my life yelled at a girl like this. When my mother yells like this it is because she loves me. I was rooting for you. We were all rooting for you – how dare you! Learn something from this! You go to bed at night, you lay there, and you take responsibility for yourself. 'Cause nobody's going to take responsibility for you. You rolling your eyes and you acting like you've heard it all before. You've heard before. You don't know where the hell I come from. You have no idea what I've been through. But I'm not a victim. I grow from it and I learn. Take responsibility for yourself. (Tiffany, silenced, lowers her face and leaves the room.)

The switch from emotional feeling to attitude is confirmed in Tiffany's response, which separates her feelings of anger from her attitude: Tiffany owns her anger, but refuses to position this anger as a consequence of or productive of a negative attitude. Indeed, in an episode of an earlier cycle, in a conversation with the other girls following the bar fight that caused her elimination, Tiffany aligns herself

with Malcom X not Martin Luther King (Cycle 3, Episode 1). Tiffany's refusal of the framing of her feelings of anger inside as embroiled with a negative attitude re-politicises her experience of feeling in relation to post-race and post-feminist discourses that traffic in the very erasure of the significance of Tiffany's feeling. The specific capacity to act that is endowed to Tiffany is the capacity to overcome her anger and her pain. As many feminists have demonstrated, in contexts of racism and sexism, consciousness of these feelings is vital to the ways in which embodied subjects experience, resist and survive their oppression (e.g. see Jaggar, [1989] 1992; Lorde, 1984; Spelman, 1989; Torres, 1996). Ironically, Tiffany is exercising agency through refusing to take on the erasure of racial and class difference facilitated by the embodiment of post-feminist and post-race femininity.

Banks' intensity of feeling reveals a further contradiction in the operation of post-race, post-feminist ideas. In her feeling of being overwhelmed by anger at Tiffany's ingratitude, Banks historicises her own experience: "You don't know where the hell I come from. You have no idea what I've been through". As bell hooks (1996) tells us, moving between locations of subordination and privilege is painful; a movement in feeling, in language and place. For hooks, this pain must be recognised but refigured as that which must be witnessed by those who colonise: "I am waiting for them to bear witness, to give testimony" (hooks 1996: 53). In asking Tiffany to bear witness to her pain, Banks is unable to witness Tiffany's. The pain that hooks describes, as a result of moving between the centre and the margins of mainstream, racialised culture, could be related to the pain that contestants experience as a result of the double bind exerted on their performance of racialised identities. In order to gain recognition as subjects the young women must forfeit their attachment to the marginalised identities through which they have previously experienced recognition. It is not that this attachment can be entirely disposed, but that as models subjects must learn to disguise and transform their habitual ways of being, including the habitual visibility of anger.

As Banks recalls being yelled at by her mother "like this", she expresses a familial relationship to pain; a relationship with her mother that is an embodiment of the historical experience of identity. Yet, her belief in the individual as the site of struggle forcefully removes her from historically named, collective struggle that, in hooks' account, offers a cultural space of recognition for a differently politicised self-transformation. And it is this collective experience and redefinition of pain that hooks values in the margin as a space of radical openness. Without acknowledging the ongoing effects of structure, even within the context of *ANTM* imbued as it is with neoliberal values, this exchange between Tiffany and Banks fails to reinscribe the political status of feeling. Nevertheless, the expression of feelings renders tangible the limitations of post-race, post-feminist discourse, and at least points to the ongoing need to acknowledge that it is through "suffering and pain, through struggle" that we can come to the site of resistance – "a location of radical openness and possibility" (hooks 1996: 52).

Looking Back

In 1992, bell hooks writes that Black women do more than resist; they can also look back, they can return the gaze that tries to confine, entrap and control them. Significantly, Tiffany leaves the stage without looking back; she goes away in silence. She was not allowed to articulate her feelings from her perspective. Unlike the other participants who obtain partial visibility under the controlled conditions of the show, a politicised account of Tiffany's experience is erased by the post-feminist and post-race performance of Tyra Banks. In 1994, bell hooks writes that "when we desire to decolonize minds and imaginations, cultural studies' focus on popular culture can be and is a powerful site for intervention, challenge and change" (hooks, 1994: 5). Tiffany's silence is the place where we conclude our attempt to shift the focus of attention from disembodied texts to embodied participants – to the persons that, despite a regime of hypervisibility, still leave the stage of representation barely saying a word. In the experience of embodied feelings produced in relation to post-race, post-feminist discourses, we find articulations of race through gender and class; these experiences of feeling mark a site for intervention, challenge and change. Post-feminist, colourblind discourses play a key role in the dissemination of difference in the ideological field of mainstream television, and the cost of this dissemination is not distributed equally, but painfully embodied by some more than others.

Notes

1. The title is a shortened quotation from a post written by Tyra Banks in the website of Vogue Italia in occasion of the end of *America's Next Top Model*, cycle fifteen, that was won by Ann Ward. We want also to thank Jessica Cadwallader, Anitra Goriss-Hunter, and two anonymous reviewers whose comments were invaluable to improving the cogency of our analysis.

2. We use the term "participants of colours" following Analouise Keating's (2009) suggestion to remember that racial and class differences that are usually collapsed within the term "women of colour" as if racial difference can be represented in a homogenised way.

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[Back to top](#)