If you don't follow Olympic gymnastics, you may not have heard about Gabrielle Douglas before this year. But the amazing grace of this 16- year old African American propelled her to Olympic gold last week, and she is the first African American to win an individual medal in gymnastics.

Indeed, her performance toppled the Russians, who have portrayed themselves as unbeatable. So unbeatable, as a matter of fact that the winner of the silver medal, Viktoria Komova, "sobbed uncontrollably," because she so expected to win.

This calls for unqualified celebration. Sneaking into some of the celebratory comments, though, were snarky and rude comments that many reserve to tarnish African American accomplishment and victory. Channel surfing in the talk radio space, these comments came in two categories, equally objectionable.

First, there were comments about Gabrielle's hair. As the young gymnast did her thing, there were many – including some self-hating African American women – who commented that her hair wasn't up to par. Shades of the comments about Michelle Obama. I'm not sure what style would be appropriate for a gymnast, but let's celebrate Gabrielle's medal instead of railing on her hair. Are we still stuck on the Spike Lee version of "straight or nappy" as a contrast?

When Don Imus insultingly uses the word "nappy," we Black Folks are up in arms, as we should be. But when sisters excoriate an accomplished young woman, there are those who nod their hair in agreement. When will we, Black women, get over this hair thing? And when will we stop playing into other people's stereotypes? To be honest, hair was the last thing on my mind when I saw Gabrielle's stunning performance. Why was anyone thinking of hair?

In addition to thinking of hair, some commentators were thinking of fatherhood. Where was her dad, too many asked? One radio talk show host took a whole five minutes ruminating on absent dads. But the truth is that while Gabrielle's mom, Natalie Hawkins, and her dad, Timothy Douglas, are divorcing, Douglas, a soldier who has served both in Iraq and Afghanistan, is very much a part of her life. He was present for the Olympic trials, but had responsibilities that kept him from the rest of the games. His presence or absence should not be the fodder for speculation.

I wouldn't mind the commentary so much if the same folks spent any time speaking of the economic plight of African American men. The most recent jobs report shows that while the unemployment rate ticked up from 8.2 percent in May to 8.3 percent in June, the rate for African American men rose from 14.2 to 14.8 percent. Unofficial rates would put African American male employment near the 25 percent mark.

Furthermore, alternative sets of data more effectively explore the plight of African American men. The employment-population ration, which measures the percentage of men aged 10 to 65 who are working, shows that 57.7 percent of African American men in that age group have jobs, which means that more than 40 percent do not.

More than two of three African American men, then, do not have work, yet this statistic is rarely discussed. In contrast, the employment-population ration for white men was 68.4 percent, a full 10 percentage points higher than the rate for Black men. Timothy Douglas is employed, and he is, indeed, defending our country. Why is his presence or absence at the Olympic games subject to mean-spirited discussion, when it is clear that he supports his daughter?

It is easy to suggest that the Tea Party attacks on President Barack Obama have made it "open season" on Black people among the commemtariat. And certainly, coverage of the president and his family has been rife with stereotypes. Still, Tea Party attacks can't explain the ways that some African American women have talked about Gabrielle Douglas' hair. In the face of caustic comments about Black people from outsiders, must we turn on ourselves?

The only thing I want to hear about Gabrielle Douglas is how amazing her victory was, and how inspirational she will be for other young women. All of America ought to celebrate this victory because Ms. Douglas brought the gold home, not for herself, but for our nation. The stereotypes are simply unacceptable, whether African Americans or whites are wallowing in them.

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