

## Tethered to whiteness: Complicating resistance in Jason Reynolds' *Miles Morales: Spiderman*

The history of whiteness in children's and young adult speculative literature (science fiction and fantasy broadly defined) is complex and extensive. The majority of writers are white males and narratives favor the white male gaze in representation, values, and narrative arcs. While black writers such as Nalo Hopkinson and Nnedi Okorafor make vital antiracist moves within the genre, speculative literature remains entrenched in whiteness (Baker). This presentation considers the complex nature of whiteness, speculative literature, and resistance through Jason Reynolds' *Miles Morales: Spiderman*. This novel adaptation of the Marvel comics series follows Miles, a black Puerto Rican youth with Spiderman superpowers, as he battles an "ancient organization" bent on framing and jailing Brooklyn's black youth. In my presentation I will show that, despite a narrative helmed by Reynolds, a well-respected author of narratives that "rework and dismantle [racial] societal damage" (Reynolds), the novel remains tethered to whiteness. I first consider paratextual elements including background information on the white-created origins of Miles and his superficial differences from Peter Parker, the white original Spiderman. I then consider textual elements including the novel's minimization of white atrocity through its representation of the school-to-prison-pipeline (created by an evil antagonist, not structural racism) and Miles' family history of trouble with the law. I use this discussion to complicate Andre Carrington's notion of "the whiteness of science fiction" which argues that white characters and white experiences are over-represented in the genre. I argue the novel shows whiteness permeates the genre of the speculative in nuanced ways beyond representation and experience.