

## **Where are we going? An Interview with Javon Goard, PhD Student at IU Bloomington**

### **Kishonna: What got you into game studies?**

Javon: I have always been fascinated with understanding videogames beyond just its entertainment value. I would read articles from gaming magazines such as GameInformer Magazine because they would have articles that discussed gender, race, and sex in videogames, at times. I decided in my junior year of undergrad that I wanted to study videogame culture. I just knew that I loved videogames and it would be awesome to have some kind of career in that area.

### **Kishonna: Tell me, from your perspective, what does game studies look like to you?**

Javon: I see game studies as an all encompassing term relating to a spectrum of things we as society have chosen to call a game or have some state of “play” involved. Game studies is this multifaceted, inter or transdisciplinary field of study in which scholars with different academic backgrounds can take part in the conversation about games.

### **Kishonna: What do you wish game studies would do more of? Less of?**

Javon: I wish games studies would do more to consolidate game studies related work on to a central website. It would help finding older and newer work specifically towards games. I am not sure what games studies should do less of.

### **Kishonna: What kinds of folks, perspectives, stories should be more present in game studies?**

Javon: Ideas, perspectives, and stories from people of color and in general narratives from other parts of the world. There is a growing videogame industry scene in South Africa I believe, but I have no idea what that entails because of the lack of literature. Yes, studying American gamers is quite telling, but the gamers represented in these studies tend to be white, between 18 to 24, and in college/university. Videogamers are diverse in multitude of ways, I wish games studies research reflected that.

### **Kishonna: Would you consider yourself a game studies scholar?**

Javon: I do, but specifically a videogame researcher. I run a blog called [jstonee.wordpress.com](http://jstonee.wordpress.com). This blog is a combination of personal anecdotes of my life being a person of color, a student, and a gamer. I also discuss news, issues, etc. that happened in the gaming industry. I have presented my work on gender and racial portrayals in popular videogame trailers at several conferences

and plan to conduct some new research on African American gamers this summer.

**Kishonna: What do you see as the future of game studies?**

Javon: I see stronger collaboration across disciplines and even having a friendlier rapport with those in the games industry.

**Kishonna: How does your family and/or friends, colleagues feel towards your particular career path?**

To be honest, I was quite nervous to ever consider myself a videogame researcher in my undergrad. Simply because I felt as though no one would ever take me seriously, however things have changed since I started graduate school. Now, I am one of many other games studies scholars here at IU. My mother has always been supportive of my endeavors. People in general think it's pretty cool that I get to study videogames as a grad student as well!

**Kishonna: Ok. The most important question: what's your top 5?**

Javon: In no particular order:

Bioshock Infinite (Xbox 360)  
Overwatch (PC)  
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 (Xbox 360)  
Sonic the Hedgehog (Sega Genesis)  
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (Nintendo GameCube)

Javon Goard is PhD student in Informatics at Indiana University, Bloomington. Goard obtained a B.A. in Sociology with Honors from the University of Maryland, College Park. Goard's research takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying aspects of videogame culture by working in the domains of Sociology, Informatics, and Media Studies. His blog, [jstonee.wordpress.com](http://jstonee.wordpress.com), bridges the gap between academic discourse and personal anecdotes in discussing a wide range of topics from gender, race, and economics as they relate to virtual spaces.