Overwatch to Oversnatch: The Mutually Reinforcing Gendered Power Relations of Pornography, Streaming, and Esports

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This chapter discusses misogyny in gaming cultures by examining the misogynistic themes in mainstream pornography featuring *Overwatch* (Blizzard Entertainment 2016). Both mainstream pornography and gaming cultures, of which *Overwatch* is a part, have widely identified misogynistic elements (Consalvo 2012; Tranchese and Sugiura 2021). In the case of *Overwatch* pornography, several misogynistic themes from pornography re-surface, but in a manner that is demonstratively peculiar to the sensibilities of the game. The problematic pornographic themes reinforce the notion that *Overwatch*—and by extension esports, and gaming cultures more broadly—are predominantly masculine and do not welcome women. As such, it encapsulates the contemporary zeitgeist of the intersection of pornography and esports. In January 2017, only a little over half a year since the game's release, Pornhub announced that "Overwatch" was the 11th most common search term for 2016 in their annual "Year in

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Review" (Pornhub's 2016 Year in Review 2017). While *Overwatch* attracted this quality of attention from many, not all of those interested in "Overwatch" pornography may consider themselves players, nor do all players necessarily make use of these pornographic materials.

Overwatch pornography is made in many formats, from professional pornographic digital films available only to subscribers, and repurposed footage of online sex workers from webcam modeling sites, to high-quality erotic photography available through OnlyFans or Patreon subscriptions to streaming or cosplay microcelebrities. It also prominently features in animated pornography made with 3D game engines and various other forms of fan-made art, which for reasons of space will not be discussed in this chapter.[1] While this material often takes deliberate artistic license with their depiction of the *Overwatch* heroes, in the processes of reproducing the characters into a sexualized context the artists and performers involved carefully convey a sense of their official aesthetic and backstory. This backstory is especially relevant in the erotic portrayal of D.Va—who according to Blizzard Entertainment's official lore is a former esports champion. The examples of *Overwatch* and esports porn discussed in this chapter have been selected because of their prominent circulation on pornography tube sites like Pornhub and XVideos. The erotic imagery that is discussed in the final section is selected from the cosplay of Meg Turney and Raychul Moore, who are both high-profile early adopters and prominent contributors in this cultural sector.

This chapter will focus on how mainstream pornographic themes appear to embed the notion that women gamers and esports players are "attention seeking." While there is widely reported hostility and ambivalence toward the presence and participation of women in esports (Loebenberg 2018; Ruvalcaba et al. 2018; Siutila and Havaste 2019), the notion of "attention seeking" is widely used to dismiss women in esports and gaming (Ruberg et al. 2019). Labeling women as "attention seeking" often extends to "slut-shaming," as misogynist elements of esports and gaming cultures use "attention-seeking" to refer to the presentation and use of the body to get that attention (Ruvalcaba et al. 2018; Zolides 2020). In pornographic reinterpretations of esports women players are depicted doing this deliberately to "unfairly" wield power over men players. Much of the fantasy world depicted in mainstream heterosexual *Overwatch* porn portrays the subversion of this "power" by men, as women's desire for attention leads to them losing control of the game and their bodies.

The chapter begins by situating *Overwatch* within gaming culture's long history of everyday misogyny, then highlights how some of the issues impacting on women's participation are exacerbated by the role that social media and streaming has in esports. Then, in the following sections the chapter examines the ways that the theme of attention highlights the misogyny in esports themed pornography, parody porn, and lewd cosplay. The esports themed pornography discussed in this chapter normalizes the masculinity of esports and the harassment of women, while the selected high-profile parody porn further embeds the "natural" connection between attention and harassment. Finally, the erotic or "lewd" cosplay tends to reinterpret heroes through the aesthetics of glamor and soft-core pornography, and to create imagery with more potential for diverse, non-binary readings of the relationships between gender, sexuality, and esports.

Overwatch, Esports, and Popular Misogyny

Overwatch is carefully designed to appeal to Blizzard Entertainment's diverse fan base and a wide range of potential players. One consequence is that the game has a variety of "heroes" (playable avatars) each with a carefully crafted back story that establishes them as a unique individual with a detailed history, cultural background, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and race. There are roughly even numbers of the traditional binary genders among the available avatars, and the roles taken by the avatars are not divided along gender lines. This means, for example, that both men and women avatars are assigned the healer role, a role which is stereotypically assigned to women characters and players (Butt 2016). However, the game also presents playable avatars with Arabic, Asian, European, African, African American, South Asian, and Indigenous backgrounds. Furthermore, two heroes—Soldier 76 and Tracer—are homosexual according to the official lore published by Blizzard Entertainment (Tassi 2019).

Blizzard Entertainment has gone to some lengths to avoid the conspicuous eroticization of the characters within the context of the game itself. This is illustrated by the careful revision of Tracer's victory animations during the development process of the game to avoid criticism from fans who believed her victory pose in the beta version of the game was objectifying (Good 2016). Even so, parallels between the revised victory pose and pinup art were noted on Reddit (Good 2016). The care which is taken to avoid presenting the characters as overtly sexualized is not

typically extended to extensive policing of how the fan community reinterprets *Overwatch* heroes. However, one of the cases where Blizzard Entertainment did act to enforce their intellectual property was to shut down the online magazine *Playwatch* which "mashed up" the aesthetics of *Overwatch* with that of glamor photography and pinup art (Grayson 2017). I suggest that this is because artwork and other fan creations, which work within the pinup/glamor aesthetic, are much more likely to be considered "official" content than that which contains nudity or explicit material. By presenting the heroes as "playmates" and "centerfolds" in ways that referenced their official fictional backstories, *Playwatch* blurred the lines of official and unofficial lore.

The inclusion of prominent and powerful women as characters in esports by Blizzard Entertainment has attracted negative attention from some esports players. This backlash from men within the esports community fits the pattern of "popular misogyny" (Banet-Weiser 2018). Banet-Weiser (2018) introduces the concept to describe the elements in networked culture which amplify and connect various misogynistic formations and coalesce around issues where male interests are perceived as being threatened. The representations of women that are found in *Overwatch* are hardly radical. However, they do challenge the once dominant perception that videogames were for boys and men and demonstrates a willingness to understand the audience and players of esports in a more inclusive manner. Popular misogyny is characterized by a sense of toxic masculinity (Banet-Weiser 2018, 118). Toxic masculinity often manifests itself in geek cultures where it "attempts to maintain a dominant, though always precarious, masculinity" (Banet-Weiser 2018, 169). The "concessions" toward inclusion made by *Overwatch* are illustrative of the qualities of activities which are targeted by popular misogyny because they are perceived as an unwelcome inroad made by feminism into esports and gaming more generally (see: Hayday and Collison 2020, 204). For some men who are invested in the notion that esports are a masculine pursuit the presence of powerful women heroes threatens the status quo by tacitly affirming the presence of women in esports.

The *Overwatch* pornography discussed below illustrates key inflections of everyday, networked misogyny which is threatened by the—albeit limited—visibility that women have obtained through their representation in the game and participation in esports. As Susanna Paasonen points out, in pornography the "female body becomes a distorted mirror onto which male vulnerability and mortality can be projected" (2011, 216). Thus, the

pornography discussed offers a "reassuring" continuance of the normative masculine heterosexual dominance in esports by suggesting that while women's sexual availability is a condition of their inclusion, their desire for the sexual attention of men ultimately limits women's successful performance. In this respect the limited narrative of the pornography recasts diversity in a peculiarly misogynist manner.

Professional esports players are predominantly male. While there have been considerable efforts from some professional leagues to address this imbalance (through initiatives such as the Frag Dolls, a Ubisoft sponsored all-women esports team active 2004–2015), esports is still quite palpably male dominated and many of the toxic and deliberately exclusionary behaviors, which have been previously pinpointed in gaming cultures, are also found in esports. Many women have reported facing hostile and condescending treatment in esports communities (Loebenberg 2018; Ruberg et al. 2019), and there have been several high-profile incidents which involved gender-based harassment. An enduring theme in this harassment and dismissal of women in esports is that they are exploiting their gender to get attention (Ruvalcaba et al. 2018; Siutila and Havaste 2019). This perception is formed in relation to the esports players putting their gender first, they are believed to present themselves as "girl gamers," and this is understood as asking for a particular kind of treatment where skill and performance are devalued in relation to style and appearance.

The hostility toward women among some esports players reflects the industry's historic composition. Early developments in videogames and videogame cultures in Europe and North America reflected a predominantly white, masculine, heterosexual audience. While several niche publishers focused on producing games for women and girls, most developments within the industry were primarily promoted to a masculine audience. When women were portrayed or included, they were ancillary figures that affirmed the dominant masculinity and heterosexuality of gaming (Kocurek 2015). Digital gaming became strongly associated with subordinated or "geek masculinity" (Braithwaite 2016; Massanari 2017; Taylor 2012), particularly because gaming was seen as an indoor and sedentary pastime in clear contrast to activities perceived as being more traditionally masculine activities such as sports and hunting (Consalvo 2003). Those who identify with geek masculinity often still feel like they are outsiders in the dominant culture (Braithewaite 2016; Massanari 2015), making them vulnerable to recruitment into organized misogyny (Salter 2018) and potentially the "alt-right" (Bezio 2018).

While women have made various inroads into gaming and esports in the past decades, they often still struggle to be included in gaming cultures on equal footing. Salter and Blodgett (2012) describe this situation as the formation of a "new gaming public," this gaming public includes women and other minorities, but only conditionally. Women and other minorities must accept game cultures as they are without seeking to reform or change to the masculine status quo (Salter and Blodgett 2012). In opposition to the positive diversity which is "imposed" by Blizzard Entertainment, this chapter illustrates how selected mainstream heterosexual *Overwatch* pornography allows some males to continue to idealize game cultures and esports as a masculine domain by making explicit some of the misogynistic attitudes within game cultures and esports.

ESPORTS PUBLIC PERSONA

Esports players are tracked and surveilled by esports platforms as part of their public performance. This has uneven consequences for women esports players, who can no longer use anonymity to conceal personal attributes—like their gender—which might single them out for attention and harassment. Whereas previously women and girls may have successfully hidden their gender in multiplayer games, for example through the oft-mentioned tactic of playing without a microphone (see: Gray 2012), the public aspects of esports enforce many players to maintain a consistent visible identity when competing. By extension, for many elite esports players, a part of their labor is maintaining a well-managed multiplatform social media presence to engage with their followers (Johnson 2021). This practice is crucial for maintaining visibility and profile and is also a potential source of revenue. The labor of maintaining social media networks is described as "visibility labor" (Abidin 2016) and "relational labor" (Baym 2020). Given the ambiguous elements of esports labor the social media presence of esports players may lack a clear line between public, work-based and private or personal information, an issue often described as "context collapse" (Marwick and Boyd 2011). Gender and sexuality have key roles in self-representation on social media (Burgess et al. 2016), although its role may be more apparent in the profiles of those from outside the hegemonic norm of male, heterosexual esports players. The norm of having a social media and streaming presence weighs unevenly on women in esports who additionally face everyday misogyny and even

criminal harassment through the exposure that their social media profile creates (see Friman and Ruotsalainen, this volume).

The importance of public social media, along with public streaming, is more laborious for women as they will face a higher level of scrutiny than men (Catá 2019; Ruberg et al. 2019). In game-streaming platforms like Twitch and in public-facing social media like Instagram how bodies are presented is highly regulated, and this unevenly impacts on women who face being banned or otherwise disciplined by the platform (Tiidenberg and van der Nagel 2020, 53). There is also the possibility of having their social media or streaming content edited, curated, and reshared in voyeuristic contexts. The regulation of social media platforms often reinforces the default masculine culture of gaming by emphasizing that women's bodies require extra scrutiny and discipline, supporting the misogynist notion that women use their bodies to get attention. This surveillance is extended by elements of esports culture that examine the streams and social media and engage in the decontextualization and republishing of images and film clips through various sites which specialize in sharing "leaked" content from internet microcelebrities such as Reddit (r/TwitchGoneWild, r/YoutubersGoneWild and r/StreamersGoneWild) and content aggregators such as "famousinternetgirls" and the now defunct "Thothub" (Cole 2020). These forums often gather opportunistic voyeuristic material, curated from everyday streams and social media to present women unsympathetically as "attention seeking" highlighting their clothes and bodies as signifiers that they are somehow not "real" gamers. These forums may also present "leaked" material—from phone hacks or even copyrighted material from an OnlyFans profile—with the intention of additionally shaming the women involved (see: Marwick 2017). This undercurrent suggests that the thematization of attention, exposure, and vulnerability in *Overwatch* pornography taps into a more general hostility toward the "visibility labor" (Abidin 2016) of women esports players.

Esports Players in Pornography

The notion that women use their bodies to attract attention while playing esports is used misogynistically in narratives of mainstream heterosexual pornography featuring esports. Of course, this theme is well established in the representation of women in pornography and has been for many years. Yet a concerning thematic undercurrent of the pornography films

discussed in this section—"Two Can Play At That Game!" which depicts an esports competitive event, and "The Space Invader Hers"—is that in the context of esports competition and training, sexual harassment is a legitimate and "natural" response from men toward women that conform to this so-called attention seeking behavior.

"Two Can Play That Game!" was released in 2016 on the website *Teens Like It Big* for the Brazzers Network. The vignette follows a high-stakes competitive game between a man and woman. The film is described on the *Teens Like It Big* website as follows:

> Kimber Lee and Sean Lawless are the finalists in a video game competition. The stakes are high and neither player can afford to get distracted! So, when Kimber finds herself behind, she decides to seduce Sean by flashing her tits and ass! When Sean starts to slip, he begins fucking her with his dick! Will Ms. Lee win the tournament, or will she succumb to her desire to suck and fuck the big dick she craves.[2]

Competing for attention is the focus of the written description of the vignette. First, Kimber Lee uses her body to distract her opponent when she begins to lose. Her opponent, Sean Lawless, responds by "fucking her with his dick." The described dynamic points to a complex interplay of attention and vulnerability: by using her body to gain attention, she makes herself sexually available. She is made further vulnerable to failure as her sexual desire ("the big dick she craves") may distract her from peak performance in the game. Using her body to distract her opponent thus highlights that she has the wrong kind of body to fit in the masculine sphere of esports. The film makes sexual the disciplining of the bodies of female esports players and streamers, through a narrative centered on Kimber Lee using her body to give herself an "unfair" advantage and explicitly illustrating through the subsequent responses of Sean how this leads to verbal harassment, non-consensual sexual touching, and the initiation of penetrative sexual intercourse without explicit consent. The film thus follows a logic of victim blaming and reinforces the notion that women are only conditionally welcome in the spaces of esports.

"The Space Invader Hers" was published in 2018 on the *DaughterSwap* website. The narrative elements of the vignette particularly reinforce the notion that sexual harassment is a part of the unofficial cultures of esports. While training for an esports competition, two younger college-aged women (*DaughterSwap* exclusively pairs young women performers with

older men performers) played by Lala Ivey and Layla Love have ensconced themselves in a dorm room, while their "fathers" (uncredited) offer them advice and encouragement. Concerned that their "daughters" are not ready to compete in front of a live audience, the "fathers" concoct a series of distractions which they believe will prepare them for the "high pressure environment" they will encounter in a professional esports tournament. First, they request that their "daughters" practice naked; they explain: "you've gotta be able to perform in intense situations." They then briefly attempt to distract them with noises, then begin to attempt to physically distract the women, who must continue to play without regard to the disturbance, when one "daughter" recoils, her "father" chides her: "focus—see a little distraction got you off your game." The "fathers'" physical hindrances begin with massaging, and quickly proceed to sexual touching, the performance of cunnilingus and fellatio, and finally, quasi-incestuous sexual intercourse, all justified as "just part of the game." The vignette narrates accepting and not responding negatively to sexual harassment as an unofficial part of esports training and professionalization. The vignette thus both suggests that women who are "serious" about competing in esports should focus on playing and ignore harassment (cf.: Salter and Blodgett 2012), and that by being in esports, women implicitly consent to harassment. As in "Two Can Play That Game!," "The Space Invader Hers" also suggests that women will need to "accept" that sexual harassment of women is a part of esports culture, maintaining the misogynistic subtext that it is a male and heterosexual domain.

Overwatch Parody Porn

After the release of *Overwatch* in May 2016, two porn parodies from large porn studios rapidly followed. Both featured relatively well-known performers, utilized game-like aesthetics, made reference to the experience of playing *Overwatch*, and clearly referenced the official Blizzard Entertainment heroes. The films—"Oversnatch A XXX Parody" and "Overcrotch—A XXX Threesome Cosplay"—capitalized on the considerable interest in *Overwatch*-related material that Pornhub had already registered among porn users. "Oversnatch" continues to explore the problematic theme of attention already identified, while "Overcrotch" further embeds the notion that esports are a male domain through the use of point-of-view camerawork from the perspective of the male performer.

The Brazzers-produced "Oversnatch A XXX Parody" was published on the *Pornstars Like It Big* website in September 2016. The video stars Aletta Ocean in garments which closely reference the character design of the *Overwatch* hero Widowmaker, and Danny D, who wears a costume that similarly references Reaper. They are introduced in the opening credits as "Aletta 'One cumshot, one kill.' Role: Cock Sniper" and "Danny 'If It Lives, I Can Fuck It.' Role: Cum Blaster." These details in the opening sequence both distance the material from the original and parody both the taglines of the individual characters and the highly defined roles that characters have in *Overwatch* (e.g., healer, tank, and sniper). In the paradigm of gaming as a male domain, roles within multiplayer FPS (first-person shooter) games are strongly gendered. Support roles such as healer/medic are considered "feminine," and by extension players holding such assumptions believe that women, if they do play, will play a support role (Butt 2016). *Overwatch* carefully works against this stereotype by offering both male and female avatars in all potential roles. "Oversnatch" reinscribes these stereotypes with the gender assumptions favored by those that fantasize that gaming is a space where males are naturally dominant.

The Widowmaker character is presented as a manipulative femme fatale who seeks to "restore" her "health and stamina" through "fucking his cock." Elements of gameplay parody are starkly contrasted with the typical hyperbolic language used in porn descriptions. The film is framed:

> Aletta wants to take down powerful Danny by fucking his cock until he comes from her sweet, tight pussy. This will restore the femme-fatale's health and stamina, giving her enough energy to continue down the gamefap. Will Danny D's massive Dick withstand her aching pussy? Or will he give her what she wants fucking her hard with his huge dick until it covers her face with his hot, white cum?[3]

The hyperbolic language ("massive dick," "fucking her hard," "hot, white cum") makes it clear that "Oversnatch" is a standard heterosexual pornographic text, while simultaneously embedding references to a gamelike structure for the events that are portrayed. The connection to *Overwatch* is signaled generically through references to "energy," "health," and "stamina," which could also be used to evoke many other games which shared these generic features. By drawing on the language of pornography and gaming the description of the film further sexualizes gender relations within the characters of the game and among the players.

The finale of "Oversnatch" reinforces the role of the Widowmaker character as a femme fatale. This is evident in the two post-cumshot sequences which feature game-like sequences. In the first, immediately after the "money-shot" Widowmaker stands and blows a kiss at the Reaper character, while words appear superimposed on the screen in the style of game "trophy" or "achievement" announcing: "Slut Kiss Activated." Then a short sequence of black-and-white highlights from the film is replayed featuring Widowmaker prominently with "Victory" superimposed over the sequence in a large *Overwatch*-inspired font. This infers that Widowmaker has "won" the encounter by activating her special abilities and has drained Reaper of his energy and taken it for herself. In the second sequence—which is the final sequence of the video and begins immediately after the sequence described above—"Oversnatch" parodies the process of leveling up. Widowmaker stands in an avatar-like pose while the experience points for the game are calculated according to "cum intake," "vaginal wetness," and "pornstar ranking." Widowmaker and by extension women players of *Overwatch* are portrayed as relying on using their bodies and sexuality to distract men in order to succeed in competition against men. "Oversnatch" also suggests that intercourse is a suitable compensation for the male player disadvantaged by attention-seeking women gamers.

"Overcrotch—A XXX Threesome Cosplay" was published in December 2016 on the *VR Cosplay X* website and features pornographic performers Alexa Tomas as Widowmaker and Zoe Doll as Tracer. "Overcrotch" shares many similarities with "Oversnatch," particularly the language play with the game terms "choke point" and "sticky mine." However, "Overcrotch" is also closer to an accurate cosplay of specific characters, rather than a stylistic reference. It is also shot in a VR point-of-view style and is calibrated for use with VR headsets. This perspective "forces the viewer into the subject position of a straight, white male" (Evans 2020, 4) and thus further entrenches the notion that esports is a hierarchical domain in which women must submit to the sexual desires of men. The portrayal of Tracer in "Overcrotch" reframes her homosexuality in an "acceptable" manner that does not exclude men as the point-of-view VR explicitly locates the viewer in the body of man, and when Tracer and Widowmaker have sex, it is for "his" entertainment.

"Overcrotch," contrary to "Oversnatch," uses the game's waiting room as the setting. "Overcrotch" thereby explores the affective structure of *Overwatch* gameplay, by imagining what the heroes do while they are

waiting to play in-between the intense action-filled periods of play. The film suggests a sexual undercurrent to these periods of inaction, rest, and even boredom:

> Even in between rounds, Volskaya Industries is a bleak map—especially when a cold-blooded assassin is waiting in the wings to surprise you. But the sexy Widowmaker has different plans to kill all this character-selection time: She's put her sniper rifle down and instead is looking for yours inside your pants. … Initially she seems upset by you fraternizing with the enemy, but looking at your dick, she doesn't blink and would rather join you.[4]

Sexualizing the character-selection phase of the game suggests the process of looking through and examining the avatars of the various heroes is not solely driven by gaming concerns, but also a fantasy of extended control over the women heroes which facilitates a fantasy of male domination over women. Again, this emphasizes the default masculinity of esports spaces, and how by entering them women make themselves vulnerable to harassment.

OVERWATCH COSPLAY

The D.Va and Tracer, as well as many other *Overwatch* heroes, have become popular cosplay subjects for online sex workers that use live camera streaming to perform, and popular cosplay performers who create "NSFW" content. Online sex workers such as Miss Banana and Purple Bitch have risen to prominence on Pornhub, in part because of their D.Va cosplay performances, both were nominated in the 2019 Pornhub awards, Miss Banana for top blowjob performer and Purple Bitch for Top Cosplay performer. Operating at the boundaries of online sex work are a number of prominent streamers and professional cosplayers that use sites like OnlyFans to distribute subscription-based content often described as "lewd cosplay." Typically, such material only features implied nudity, and the content creators emphasize their own creative contribution to their portrayal of characters. Often, creators working in the lewd cosplay space are able to work within the highly restrictive platform regulations of Patreon, which explicitly bans sex work in its regulations. Even so, lewd cosplay has a prominent role in the pornification of *Overwatch* heroes through the creation of safe-for-work, but "sexy" images that can be spread on social media. Two prominent cosplayers who are widely

acknowledged for their lewd content that reinterprets *Overwatch* heroes through cosplay are Raychul Moore and Meg Turney.

Raychul Moore is a Twitch partner who describes herself as a "gamer and cosplayer."[5] She is most famous for her reinterpretations of Cammi from Capcom's *Street Fighter* (1987–) franchise but has also made several lewd cosplay shoots as the *Overwatch* hero D.Va. These themed photoshoots range from reinterpreting D.Va as a contemporary "sexy gamer girl" wearing underwear, American Apparel thigh high socks and a hoodie, to a mashup of D.Va and a Playboy bunny. These reinterpretations reproduce the iconography and costume of the character into a new context, relying on make-up and costume to establish the reference to the original character. The Playboy bunny reference used by Moore is common for D.Va cosplay as her symbol is a pink rabbit head which has a palpable connection with the well-known Playboy rabbit head or bunny symbol. Cosplay artists, Moore among them, have extended this small connection by drawing on elements of the iconic Playboy bunny costume. Moore has also created a sequence of photographs which attempt to directly recreate D.Va's look and costume authentically. However, during the sequence Moore incrementally strips off D.Va's body suit until she is playing *Donkey Kong* (Nintendo 1981) in her underwear. By portraying D.Va in the act of videogame play in this sequence of photos and in the "sexy gamer girl" photos, Moore references D.Va's official history from the *Overwatch* canon where she is a pro gamer recruited to the military.[6]

Meg Turney is a well-known Twitch streamer, YouTuber, and cosplayer,[7] who makes and distributes lewd cosplay content through her Patreon and has previously partnered with content producers like *Esquire* and *Playboy* to produce widely available non-nude content. Turney is noted for her cosplay of the *Overwatch* hero Tracer. She has created several variations of Tracer which prominently include a lewd re-imagination of the character in her "boudoir." In this cosplay Turney replaces the original orange leggings with black webbing with a black garter belt with orange stockings, while retaining the iconic orange goggles and spiked hair from Tracer's original character art. Turney's interpretation develops and extends Tracer's sexuality through the exploration of the hero's private and intimate spaces. Thus, while Turney's images replicate a common theme of mainstream pinup and glamor photography which opens the private and feminine space of the boudoir, this is done to round out the sexual life of the hero and explore and express Turney's own sexuality.

Many other cosplayers work alongside Moore and Turney to reinterpret *Overwatch* heroes in many different contexts. While these artistic interpretations may extend the portrayal of heroes to include "lewd" or more explicitly sexual elements, it is crucial to distinguish these practices from the mainstream pornography industry discussed above. Cosplay artists may "play" with *Overwatch* lore by exploring the private, erotic, and sexual dimensions of fictional heroes in a manner that has superficial similarities with the pornography made by Brazzers and VR Cosplay X. However, cosplay artists represent the fictional heroes using their own aesthetic sensibilities, and crucially they enact this interpretation through their own bodies. The area of "lewd cosplay" palpably opens the erotic reimagining of videogames to a significantly more diverse perspective than the mainstream pornography discussed earlier in this chapter. Not simply because these practices allow the sexuality of women heroes to be explored and represented by women artists, but also because it creates a space for diverse interpretations of the heroes and for queer artists like Turney to explore portrayals of the queer sexuality of officially queer characters like Tracer.

D.Va's official backstory as a former competitive gamer makes her a particularly ambiguous subject for lewd reinterpretation. The hero's popularity among cosplayers speaks to the deep affection that women players, and the cosplayers themselves have for D.Va. But erotic explorations of D.Va may be interpreted in a wider scope where D.Va stands in as a representation of women in esports and gaming more broadly. Thus, for misogynist gamers an exploration or depiction of her sexuality in the area of lewd cosplay may be used to further justify misogynist and exclusionary behaviors. The pinup aesthetic favored by Moore and Turney utilizes sexist clichés from the twentieth century like the Playboy bunny, the French maid and the sexy nurse may exacerbate this ambiguity as it is not conspicuously at odds with the dominant framework of mainstream heterosexual pornography. Some of the subtleties of how these artists build on and play with decades-old practices of representing the female body is potentially missed. However, their extensive use of the emerging lewd aesthetic in their artistic re-portrayals of fictional characters forcibly distances the material from mainstream pornography and reasserts women's self-determination over the presentation of their own bodies and sexuality.

Conclusion

Overwatch porn discussed in this chapter is likely to reinforce the culture of everyday misogyny in esports. Existing work (Loebenberg 2018; Ruberg et al. 2019; Ruvalcaba et al. 2018; Siutila and Havaste 2019) has pinpointed that everyday misogyny is exemplified by the everyday disciplining of women's bodies on esports and streaming platforms. This chapter argues that a key theme in heterosexual mainstream *Overwatch* pornography is the desire to discipline "attention seeking" women. The pornography indulges a fantasy that gaming and esports are securely masculine, and men are dominant over women to the extent that sexual harassment and control over women's bodies are normalized.

Pornography that features generic esports themes addresses the disciplining of women's "attention seeking behavior," and even suggests that women esports players expect and sometimes want to be sexually harassed. This porn which deals with women esports players is thematically similar to the parody porn which sexualized the woman heroes of *Overwatch*. However, the parody porn suggests that the structure of the esports platforms also contributes to the everyday misogyny of esports culture through the sexualized reinterpretation of game mechanics to shame and exploit women heroes. The lewd cosplay discussed has substantial creative dimensions. Outside the heteronormative mainstream of pornography artists create erotic depictions of existing characters using their own bodies that explore their own affinity with the heroes. The different participants partaking in the creation of the erotic imaginary of *Overwatch* utilize their agency to both problematize and affirm the misogynistic structures of mainstream heterosexual porn, which has unquestionably diversified the erotic and pornographic representations that are available.

There is a great deal of further work to be done to further examine the diversity in (and of) *Overwatch* pornography. This chapter has focused on establishing the connections between esports cultures and mainstream heterosexual pornography which together reinforce everyday misogyny in esports and gaming culture by normalizing it as a masculine and heterosexual space. Other crucial topics for future research include examinations that develop scholarly perspectives on the diversity found in fan-made porn and erotica, the preponderance of pornography made with 3D engines, the prominent role of VR developers in the institutionalization of *Overwatch* porn, and work that situates these developments in a global history of gaming erotica.

Notes

1. See Paasonen (2017) and Saunders (2019), for general discussion of 3D animated porn.
2. From: https://www.brazzers.com/video/4024831/two-can-play-that-game.
3. From: https://www.brazzers.com/video/3985531/oversnatch-a-xxx-parody.
4. From: https://vrcosplayx.com/cosplaypornvideo/overwatch_a_xxx_parody-323578/.
5. From Raychul Moore's Instagram profile: https://www.instagram.com/theraychul/?hl=en.
6. "D.Va is a former professional gamer who now uses her skills to pilot a state-of-the-art mech in defense of her homeland." from Blizzard Entertainment's official website for *Overwatch*: https://playoverwatch.com/en-gb/heroes/dva/.
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