

Revitalizing Seriality: Social Media, Spreadability, and *SKAM*'s Success beyond Scandinavia

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At 2:32 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2015, the Norwegian public broadcasting corporation, Norsk rikskringkasting (NRK), posted the first clip of the show *SKAM* on P3, its youth website (NRK P3). The transmedia show was a new concept. Clips were posted in “real time”—if the characters were at a party on Tuesday at 11:00 p.m., a short clip of what happened at the party would be posted at 11:00 p.m. on Tuesday. Moreover, posts were not limited to video clips but also included characters’ snaps and text messages, and characters had their own social media accounts on sites such as Instagram or YouTube¹ and appeared to actively post to those accounts and reply to each other in real time. Every Friday, the previous week’s posts would be gathered in a more traditional, video-based episode, posted to NRK’s central streaming site, which provided an overview of the week’s posts and occasionally included new material, but these episodes also sometimes left out information that had been shared in other media. Unlike traditional broadcast television, the episodes’ lengths varied depending on what information had been shared that week.

This new approach to serial media—including characters’ digital interactions on the official website as an integral part of the series, as well as using social media sites to deepen the perceived authenticity to real life, or mimesis, of the series (e.g., Andersen and Poulsen; Magnus; Sundet)—resulted in overwhelming popularity. According to NRK, 25,000 viewers accessed the dedicated *SKAM* website in the show’s first week. One year later, 900,000 viewers, equivalent to a whopping one-fifth of Norway’s population, were tuning in weekly (NRK kommunikasjon). In fact, during the show’s third season, *SKAM* became so popular

amongst national and international fans alike that NRK was forced to place a geoblock on the official website to prevent international fans from accessing the site—because the site was crashing every time a new clip was posted. However, this did little to prevent the spread of the series to international audiences not only through the series’ official website (accessed using a Norwegian VPN) but also via social media sites such as Tumblr and YouTube, aided by Norwegian fans’ enthusiastic and immediate translation of all new material into English (Dahl and Duggan). In fact, although *SKAM* was not commercially available to fans outside of Scandinavia, in 2017, season three protagonist Isak and his romantic partner, Even, were voted *E-Online*’s best TV couple, beating out couples from shows available around the world on Netflix like *Shadowhunter*, *Teen Wolf*, and *Vampire Diaries* (Bricker), and the series has been widely discussed by international media as a surprise cult hit (e.g., Bacare; Donadio). Adapted versions are, at the time of writing, being screened for Belgian (*wtFOCK*), Dutch (*Skam NL*), French (*Skam France*), German (*Druck*), Italian (*Skam Italy*), North American (*Skam Austin*), and Spanish (*Skam España*) audiences. Indeed, no Norwegian series has ever been so popular either nationally or internationally (Sundet).

This article explores *SKAM*’s unexpected success by demonstrating how the series knowingly exploits the affordances of the complex digital social networks we use in our daily lives in the twenty-first century in order to encourage viewers to share the show, to participate in fan cultures (and thus increase audience loyalty and excitement), and to engage with the characters as if they were real. *SKAM*’s novel use of transmedial storytelling amplifies many elements of the serial form and uses them to better advantage than, for example, print media or broadcast television. Through both its form and its content, as well as through the fan practices it invites, the series purposefully enhanced its own “spreadability” (Jenkins et al.), thereby increasing its international appeal and reach. In this way, creators of the series successfully revitalized seriality for youth in the digital age—finding a way to make a serial

series appeal to youth used to on-demand access to content. Indeed, *SKAM*'s form promoted viewers' fannish engagement with the series and thus the transnational spread of the series despite the official limitation of transmissions to Scandinavian audiences (due to limited copyrights on the music used in the series).

SKAM's close representation of the real-life experiences and practices of young people through its form, temporality, and content encouraged young viewers around the world to recognize their own and their friends' lives through the series and to accept *SKAM*'s representation as both more valid to them and more reflective of their lives than older modes of representation. This demonstrates the creators' deep understanding of "the strategic and technical aspects they need to master in order to create content more likely to spread, and . . . what motivates [youths] to share information" (Jenkins et al. 196), as well as the central role that social media plays in youths' lives today (e.g., Boyd; Buckingham; Ito; Papacharissi). This is not to claim, however, that audiences were limited to the young. NRK rather cleverly also provided weekly summative episodes, posted online at a predictable time, to provide both an overview of the week's key events to eager young followers and to encourage viewers invested in traditional modes of broadcasting to tune in. As such, the series was clearly aimed at an intergenerational dual audience: not just teens but also their family members and educators. The show thus tapped into two forms of seriality—one novel and one traditional—in order to reach the widest possible audience and to encourage them to tune in regularly. By unpredictably posting content both to the official website and elsewhere, the series' creators were able to provide daily suspense (Sundet) and thereby increase viewers' "frustration" and desperate desire to know what would happen (Graatrud).

SKAM is, at present, the darling of Scandinavian scholarly publishing. To date, articles have been published regarding its reception (e.g., Bengtsson et al.; Rustad), its pedagogical potential (e.g., Aamli; Krüger and Rustad), its appeal to and use for the Norwegian LGBTQ+

youth community (e.g., Bissenbakker and Petersen; Svendsen et al.), its intersectional feminist orientation (e.g., Christophersen; Oxfeldt), its temporality and the effect of this on affective intimacy (e.g., Andersen and Poulsen; Jerslev; Magnus; Sundet), its use of language (e.g., Andersen and Poulsen; Duggan and Dahl), its blurring of diegetic boundaries (e.g., Magnus; Pearce; Krüger and Rustad; Sundet), and also its forms, media, and distribution methods (e.g., Andersen and Linkis; Sundet). However, only one article delves deeply into what *SKAM* might mean for the future of the serial form and for understanding audience interactions with serial texts: Tore Rye Andersen and Sara Tanderup Linkis's article "As We Speak: Concurrent Narration and Participation in the Serial Narratives '@I_Bombadil' and *Skam*" places *SKAM* firmly within theories of seriality and reception.

Anderson and Tanderup Linkis argue that the immersive, "real-time" experience of the narrative allows a specific type of audience participation, which they term *concurrent participation*. Such participation, which mimics participation in friends' and families' lives via social media, "results in a strong engagement" with the serial narrative and its characters (87), as well as with a community of viewers. As Danah Boyd argues, "Just as shared TV consumption once allowed teens to see themselves as connected through mass media, social media allows contemporary teens to envision themselves as part of a collectively imagined community" (9). This effect seems to be amplified when a truly transmedia series makes use of social media as a mode of distribution and allows audience members to follow characters' "live" social media updates.

Precisely how *SKAM* reinvigorates serial forms deserves further attention, however. Serial fiction is considered to have become one of the, if not *the*, main modes of narrative in Western culture during the nineteenth century (Hagedorn; Hayward). Throughout its history, the serial narrative has been associated with both popular and youth cultures, and as such, has often been subject to ageist and classist exclusions from scholarship, awards lists, and library

shelves (Reimer et al.). As Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer argues, “the connection between popularity and seriality is often considered to be so obvious that questions are rarely raised concerning the specific nature of serial narratives, the cultural and historical circumstances they presuppose, and the differences between popular seriality and serial structures in other cultural fields” (170–71). She further argues that the serial form tends to be associated with young people because serial narratives are seen to offer a “sense of security which is particularly appealing to children whose literacy skills are developing” (171). Nonetheless, although the serial form tends to be associated with young people and their developing literacy and social skills, very few studies have actually explored the serial form and its reception (Kümmerling-Meibauer; Reimer et al.). Reimer and colleagues suggest that this is due both to snobbishness regarding what constitutes “good” fiction on the part of the adults who control the flow and content of commercially published texts and to the unfair assumption that series fiction is both simple and repetitive. They argue that recent scholarly interest in series fiction is largely due to the unforeseen popularity and global spread of the *Harry Potter* series, a series that made critics question their assumptions about serial fiction due to its creative and complex use of the hallmark of serial fiction—repetition with difference (2–3; see also Kümmerling-Meibauer 170).

The attention paid to serial fiction has therefore largely been cursory, as Shane Denson argues, paying attention to serial forms’ popularity rather than what seriality means for texts and readers. Despite scholarly inattention to seriality, however, in the twenty-first century, serial fiction is the dominant narrative form, in particular because seriality “functions to promote consumption of later episodes [or works] in the same series” and, thus, to secure and build audiences over time within a competitive capitalist system (Hagedorn 5). Since serial narratives first appeared in the nineteenth century (Hagedorn), they have developed certain characteristics that increase the likelihood that a given audience member will continue to

follow the series. They are moreover shaped by industrial forces and the media in which they appear: indeed, “industrial norms and viewing practices help shape the creative possibilities available to producers” (Mittell 119). Many norms for producing and consuming serial narratives have been shifting, however, with the sudden technological leaps of the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, including the development and widespread use of mobile technologies like smartphones and tablets as well as the move of media online, often to streaming platforms like Netflix and Spotify. It is perhaps for this reason that scholarly interest in serial narratives is suddenly booming and that we are now seeking to find new definitions for *seriality* and new ways of understanding how it shapes texts, media, and audience consumption, participation, and sharing practices (e.g., Goodlad; Grossman et al.; O'Sullivan).

In the present moment, due to increasing competition between carriers, across borders, and between various forums, such as broadcast television versus YouTube or streaming services, producers of commercial content are relying more heavily on serial forms to build up a reliable base of consumers. They may also feel pressured to experiment with media and form in order to attract and keep hold of audiences, as the appeal of serials functions not only to promote the narratives they convey but also through the media in which they appear (Hagedorn; Mittell). Television as we knew it only a decade ago is no longer the dominant channel through which most of us access serial narratives; instead, new media distribution platforms have “challenged and subverted” not only the distribution of serial narratives but also their forms, media, and temporality (Mittell; Sodano).

This disruption of “traditional modes of production and distribution” has “significantly changed consumption practices and discourses,” as well as facilitating “more advanced narrative techniques” that must no longer conform to “the limitations of traditional linear broadcast flow” or scheduling (Sodano 28, 30). As a consequence of these shifts, patterns of

production and consumption have diversified (Mittell; Sodano). Viewers must no longer wait a full week between episodes but are instead able to stream entire seasons instantly (Mittell; Goldmann). Production and consumption patterns have also shifted to cater to new modes and temporalities of consumption, for example, on mobile devices. Consumption is no longer limited to the home but can happen at any time—on the bus to school or work, under the desk during a lecture or meeting, or on the side of the football pitch, as well as at home. Thus, as Reimer and colleagues contend, “in the twenty-first century, to talk about seriality is necessarily to talk about texts in multiple forms and modes” (3).

One significant movement in the production of series is that towards transmedia storytelling. Jenkins defines transmedia storytelling as “a process where integral elements of fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.” Although the ideal in transmedia storytelling is the equal distribution of the narrative across media (Mittell 293), this is rarely the case. As Mittell argues, “We need to avoid confusing general transmedia extensions with the more particular mode of transmedia storytelling” (293). In particular, it is important to consider the ways in which transmedia series blur the boundaries between text and paratext, as well as how transmedia series are distributed across the media used and whether that distribution is balanced (294). We need to distinguish between paratexts whose main purpose is to advertise or promote a series and those that act as sites of “narrative expansion” (293), and centrally, to consider how the expanding gaps in serial fiction caused by the transmedial expansion of narrative change audiences patterns of interaction with series, encouraging audience speculation, participation, and, potentially, transformative reception practices (e.g., Jenkins et al.; Mittell).

SKAM is a truly transmedia narrative series, distributing key narrative elements across media as well as expanding its narrative universe through media that can be considered to act

as both text and paratext. Through its innovative use of multiple media, as well as temporal and transmedia narrative gaps, the series reinvents more traditional uses of gaps in the narrative as well as enhancing characters' mimetic likeness to young people today. Gry Rustad argues that *SKAM*'s success comes down to the ways in which it mimics modern-day patterns of media engagement, basing his argument on Tania Modelski's suggestion that the "flow" and "aesthetics" of television shown during the day fit within the daily rhythms of "housewives" lives, underscoring the centrality of "how reception contexts affect aesthetical experiences[,] . . . narrative form[, and] . . . the phenomenological experience of watching as an everyday practice" (506; see also Magnus; Sundet). Because *SKAM* was created with mimesis in mind and based on in-depth qualitative interviews with Norwegian teenagers about their media habits, daily lives, concerns, and desires, the show managed to repeat this patterning for a modern audience (Magnus; Sundet): the series' "innovative model of distribution" fit perfectly within "the rhythms and flows of the [target] audience's daily digital networked lives, in order to create new aesthetic and cultural forms" (Rustad 506–07).

At the same time, *SKAM*'s creators designed it to fit within the rhythms of varied, intergenerational audiences. Although the main target audience was teenagers, a secondary audience of their teachers, parents, and relatives was also considered. By posting summative episodes on Fridays, following the traditional hebdomadal format of broadcast television, the producers not only encouraged their target audience to repeatedly engage with series' content—and thereby encouraged fannish attachments (e.g., Hills; Jenkins)—but also encouraged audiences who might not enjoy radical new methods of distribution to follow the show. The timing of these summative end-of-the-week episodes, uploaded on Friday evenings, also strategically invited viewers to (re)engage with key content right before the weekend, ensuring that viewers had as much free time as possible at their disposal to discuss

the show both in person and online. The show thus further encouraged deep, community-based fannish engagement.

Moreover, as individuals' use of social media and immersion in the digital world varies, the creative team distributed information across various platforms simultaneously—the main narrative was distributed on a dedicated webpage in “real time,” using “concurrent narration” (Andersen and Likis; Magnus; Rustad; Sundet); the summative Friday episodes were distributed via NRK's main streaming site; and further social media (para)texts, such as various characters' Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube posts, were distributed on social networking sites so that fans who wished to immerse themselves deeply in the text and have access to extra clues regarding what would happen could do so. As Emelie Bengtsson, Bebecka Källquist, and Malin Sveningsson have shown, it is clear that this tactic worked: audience members engaged with *SKAM* in a wide variety of ways. As a result, while the main flow of concurrent narration and distribution, intended to create the illusion of depicting real-time events (Andersen and Linkis 86), “seems to be intended to bypass older, traditional—and particularly parental—media channels” (Krüger and Rustad 77), the show's creators also catered to more traditional patterns of consumption. Thus, *SKAM*'s varied forms of distribution suggest an intended intergenerational dual-audience appeal typical of many young people's narratives (e.g., Falconer), but it achieved this in an innovative way and encouraged varying levels and modes of engagement.

Another aspect of seriality that these layered modes of distribution amplify is audience obsession through an innovative use of narrative pauses. A key characteristic of serial fiction is the use of “imposed textual breaks,” such as the time between episodes or novels in a series, to leave audiences wanting more (Hagedorn 7). Of course, gaps in narrative that require audiences to fill them have long been considered a central aspect of all narratives (Iser), but the diegetic gaps central to serial narratives function more acutely—they compel

audiences to imagine for themselves, or in concert with other viewers, what happens next, and then to read, watch, or listen to the next segment of the narrative when it is released (O'Sullivan 51). As such, serial narratives are often designed such that episodes do not achieve closure but rather end with “a certain openness due to their incompleteness” (Goldmann 32).² By pausing narrative flow “at a point of unresolved narrative tension,” serials purposefully “leave . . . readers [or audience members] in suspense” (Hagedorn 7) and thereby encourage their continued interest in the narrative. A continual introduction of questions and tensions that must be resolved in later episodes, books, or segments is therefore a central aspect of serial narratives, and as such, “the serial can be characterized as a form or narrative presentation in which satisfaction is perpetually deferred” (Hagedorn 11).

SKAM's amplification of the suspense associated with narrative breaks occurs not only because distributing the series through social media and social media-mimicking forms on the official website is necessarily fragmented but also because the producers chose to have the updates mimic the temporality of social media. Andersen and Tanderup Linkis term this aspect of the show “planned unruliness” (91; see also Sundet). Viewers could not know when a new clip would be released, which resulted in compulsive checking of the website by audience members and encouraged them to follow characters' social media for rapid updates. This further encouraged audience members to join communities related to *SKAM*, so that they would be made aware whenever a new post was made to the website (Sundet). The increased frequency of publication of narrative parts combined with the “planned unruliness” of those parts being posted at unknown points in time intensified the affects commonly associated with serial narratives—*anxiety and suspense*—as well as increasing the frequency of reward, and the increased speed of this cycle of anxiety/suspense and reward further magnified audience attachment.

The rewards associated with serial narratives are, of course, predicated on a (deferred) sense of closure. Audience expectations of particular types of closure are often encouraged by serial narratives' use of genre. The appeal of genre fiction is, of course, in part due to its having plots that allow audiences to anticipate what will happen next, prompting pleasure when the development of the plot aligns with their expectations and disbelief or displeasure when it does not. As such, serial narratives have been variously defined in affective terms, or rather, in terms of somatic response—as promoting suspense (Ruth 32, 39; Mittell; Grossman et al.) or anxiety (Hughes), both affects that compel resolution and thus further engagement. *SKAM* uses this serial tradition, mixing together multiple genres (Sundet) such as the school story, the coming out story, and the romance. These genres not only shape the temporal flows of the series' narrative—for example, through the rhythms produced by school life (Tanderup and Linkis)—but also audiences' expectations of how closure will be achieved—for example, we can expect a romance plot to culminate in an actualized relationship. Moreover, the show made intertextual references to well-known examples of genre fiction, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, often explicitly recreating known scenes both cinematographically and through the use of music in order to hint at possible plot structures. One key example of this is season three's recreation of the kiss-in-the-pool scene from the Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes version of *Romeo and Juliet* (Sundet; Tanderup and Linkis). By referencing such a widely known story, the series was able to increase the audience's emotional investments and the suspense and tension they felt at specific moments. For example, in season three, we are encouraged to believe that the protagonist's love interest may commit suicide (as occurs in *Romeo and Juliet*), and the inclusion of explicit references to the tragedy throughout the season exponentially increases our terror that this may happen.

It is important to note, in addition, that the gaps in serial fiction take on various forms both within and between narratives. As such, the wait between *Harry Potter* novels—each

complete story arcs depicting what happens to Harry during each year at Hogwarts yet part of the larger narrative arc depicting Harry's battle with Voldemort—has a distinctly different feel than the wait between television episodes of *Game of Thrones*, although perhaps a similar feel to the wait between seasons. Although some serial narratives go against these trends, distinct seasons and novels very often offer some form of narrative resolution; final episodes in a season or a novel of a continuing series are likely to introduce new points of tension, while the tensions and questions between episodes will usually relate to the main narrative arc of the single season or novel. Moreover, narratives in which genres are blended together may allow the resolution of a plot associated with one genre while leaving the audiences waiting for the resolution of a plot associated with another genre. As such, in shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, we are likely to find out whether the likeable father whose personality has changed after a fall will be “fixed” by neurosurgeon Derek Shepherd, but we will have to wait to see if Meredith Grey and the aforementioned Dr. Shepard overcome the barriers separating them in the current season. This creates a heady mix of frustration and satisfaction, and the comingling of the two compels further viewing, reading, or listening. Through its innovative form, *SKAM* also amplifies this aspect of seriality. Because it is a transmedia series, different tensions and expectations can be shaped by and emphasized in each of the various channels of distribution simultaneously. Links between different plots, occurring in different media, may come together at the end of the week in the summative episode, while the overall plot structures associated with the genres being drawn on in each season will not resolve themselves until the end of the series.

Moreover, the transmedial nature of the series can be used to emphasize character development, another key characteristic of serial fiction (Goldmann; Mittell). Characters in serial fiction must be “multifaceted” in order to encourage an “intense engagement” with the series (Goldmann 32).³ Although the so-called obsessions of audience members with fictional

characters have historically been pathologized (Jenson; Mittell), such relationships ought “instead [to] be viewed as an active, participatory facet of media consumption”—engaging with stories depends on readers’ and audiences’ engagement with characters (Mittell 127). Indeed, developing parasocial bonds with fictional characters is an essential way in which we develop not only self-reflexive insight but also sympathy with and empathy for those who are different from ourselves (Bishop). A great many theorists have discussed the importance of repetition both to identity-building practices and to our enculturation. As such, fiction in general, and series fiction in particular, has been seen as central to our interpolation within a set of cultural norms, including, for example, heteronormativity and nationalism (Reimer et al.). In post-Hegelian thought, this process is seen to take part through a continuous fracturing and reforming of the subject in its repeated encounters with the Other—an Other which may be, in the case of serial fiction, a character with whom we can identify but who is also different from us and therefore compels us to reflect on ourselves and our own identities. As Judith Butler argues, “The self seeks and offers recognition to another, but it is another which claims that the very process of recognition reveals that the self is always already positioned outside itself . . . ‘We’ who are relational do not stand apart from those relations and cannot think of ourselves outside of the decentering effects that relationality entails” (151). As such, any act of self-recognition, imitation, or identity-building taking part in relation to the Other is both a citation and a resignification—and a moment in which subversion, parody, and insubordination can occur (Butler; Reimer et al.).

Characters, and viewers’ parasocial bonds with characters, are thus essential to viewers’ affective and fannish attachment to series (Barnes). Not only are engaging with characters and imagining their emotions key reasons why fiction in general, and serial fiction in particular, have such appeal (Barnes 76) but close engagement with characters also increases our investment in the outcomes of their stories: the more we care about a character,

the more we worry over whether their story will end well or tragically. Jennifer L. Barnes argues that we know very little about the social, psychological, and affective benefits of individuals' parasocial relationships with fictional characters and emphasizes that this is a key area of future research in reception studies (77). However, it is clear from previous research that parasocial, affective relationships with fictional characters are "central to reader-writer-text transactions, as readers shape their identities in effortful dialogic interrelationships" (Thomas and Stornaiuolo 316). Moreover, fiction allows us to learn and troubleshoot. As Reimer and colleagues suggest, reiterating DuBois, audiences are safely able to affectively experience events and situations that they may later encounter themselves through repeatedly identifying and empathizing with characters in serial fiction (13; see also DuBois). Thus, A. O. Scott argues, "one of the clichés about television . . . is that it's character-driven," and watching television is "about the complicated ways that people identify with . . . hate, or root for, or just want to be with these people who become a circle of friends and intimates and familiars—across all different genres" (qtd. in Grossmann et al. 125).

By emphasizing social media use, the show's creators also, through form, emphasized characterization and audience-character intimacy (Jerslev; Magnus; Sundet). The show as a whole followed a group of friends through high school, but each season of the show on the main website focused on one character's experiences, and this focalizing character changed with each season. Almost all of the social media posts and text messages posted to the main website each season are part of the lived experience of this central focalizing character. Video clips follow only this character and create an impression of intimacy (Andersen and Linkis; Magnus; Sundet); indeed, there are moments when we literally see through the focalizing character's eyes—the cinematic equivalent of free indirect discourse, or moments when we, the audience, move from watching a character to watching *through* a character.⁴ This zooming in and out of the focalized character's perspective encourages audience members to

quite literally see through his/her eyes and, thus, “rather than neutrally observing the characters” (Andersen and Linkis 92), we are encouraged to experience life as they experience it (Sundet) and to form an emotional attachment with this season’s protagonist, an attachment we may not have had in previous seasons.

This results in notable shifts in the characterization of all characters between seasons. For example, in the first season, the focalizer is Eva. At this time, she is dating Jonas, who is a higher achiever in school and often makes her feel insecure about her academic work. In this season, we are often encouraged to see Jonas as arrogant and, at times, a bit cruel. However, in the third season, when Isak is the focalizer, Jonas is presented in a much kinder light—he is Isak’s best friend and the one-time object of Isak’s suppressed homoerotic affections. As such, the moments in which Jonas appears through Isak’s perception of him contrast strongly to the moments in which he appears through Eva’s perception (see also SunDET). Moreover, with these shifts from one focalizing character to another, friends within the group slip from foreground to background and back again—Isak barely appears in the second season of *SKAM* because he is not, at this point, close to the focalizing character, Noora. Camera angles are also used to cement the impressions of characters emphasized by each season’s focalizer: Isak looks up to Jonas to a degree, and as a result, the camera sometimes literally looks up to Jonas. The ways in which *SKAM* uses focalization manipulates the audience into identifying closely, or at very least, empathizing, with the season’s protagonist and thus emphasizes the importance of audience identification with characters to the series (see also Andersen and Linkis). It also demonstrates how important characterization and audience identification with characters are to the overall design of the show (Sundal), influencing narratological structures.

This encouragement of audience members’ development of parasocial bonds with the central characters is further achieved through the show’s use of social media. As the series progressed, audience members were exposed to the views and experiences of four focalizing

characters as well as invited to see other central characters from these focalizing characters' perspectives. Some audience members may have developed stronger bonds with one character than another. As such, the use of social media accounts, where central characters regularly posted information about their lives, was essential to maintaining audience interest in the series, as audience members were able to follow their favorite characters regardless of whether they appeared in the central narrative on a regular basis. The audience were also able to comment directly on characters' posts through their own social media accounts. Indeed, to heighten the stakes of such engagement, the series' producers sometimes had characters "respond" to viewers', as well as other characters', comments or integrated scenes depicted in fan fiction or fan art into the show itself (Duggan and Dahl; Sundet). This practice amplified the sense of intimacy central to the audiences' experience of the series (e.g., Magnus; Sundet) and further blurred the diegetic boundary between the fictional and the real.

Social media also brings me to my final point regarding why *SKAM*'s form can be considered innovative: its spreadability and resultant transnationality. Jenkins, Ford, and Green define *spreadability* as "the potential—both technical and cultural—for audiences to share content for their own purposes, sometimes with the permission of rights holders, sometimes against their wishes" (3). Publishing *SKAM* in short video clips, small images, and social media posts increased the ease with which fans could copy, share, translate, and transform those clips (e.g., Duggan and Dahl). Rather than feeling that they must use a great deal of time to translate a traditional half-hour episode, fans could instead translate and share the show piecemeal. As such, the very form of the series encouraged the participatory cultural practices that are required for media to spread transnationally (Jenkins et al. 260–90). Fans quickly and eagerly made use of the "like" buttons and comment fields on both the official *SKAM* website and the social media sites used by the show's producers, but they also quickly created spaces of their own on other social media sites such as Tumblr and YouTube, where

translated content could be easily shared—particularly after NRK placed a geoblock on the official site to prevent the server from crashing regularly due to the sheer number of viewers accessing content.

In conclusion, through *SKAM*, we can see why seriality has become a renewed site of interdisciplinary interest in the last decade. Changes in the temporalities and modes of publication and consumption—for example, the concentrated consumption of binge watching made possible first by recording technologies (e.g., VCR, DVR) and later by streaming sites (e.g., Netflix)—have caused us to reconsider what seriality entails as well as the participatory and creative possibilities offered by serial forms. As a show that transforms serial forms, modes of distribution, and audience engagement for a modern audience while simultaneously catering to the needs of more traditional viewers, *SKAM* offers unique insight into the future of serialized fiction and provides a possibility model that many shows are sure to follow. It demonstrates the affordances of immersive, transmedial content, providing insight into how blurring diegetic boundaries can engage audiences and augment their engagement with series.

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NOTES

¹ Instagram accounts for the characters include @isakyaki (Isak), @jonas9000 (Jonas), @evamohn2 (Eva), @therealsanabakkoush (Sana), and @chrisschistad (Boy Chris), while the so-called Balloon Gang posted videos to YouTube account Hei Briskeby.

² “Eine gewisse Offenheit aufgrund ihrer Unabgeschlossenheit” in the original German.

³ “Vielschichtige” and “eine intensive Beschäftigung” in the original German.

⁴ I do not agree with Anderson and Tanderup that this approximates homodiegetic narration, as I believe that would require that we constantly see from a first-person perspective.