

Paper New Media & Politics



Being anonymous or not?

An exploration on flirting on the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein'

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Chapter 1: Introduction

During the 1990s the upcoming phenomenon ‘the internet’ changed the way that people exchange and share information and the way people communicate with each other a lot.¹

In the twentieth century the use of computers changed also because of the internet. These new technologies made it possible to get and stay in touch with people all over the world.²

Today, new forms of access to information and new ways of representing ourselves and the world are upcoming. There are also new types of relationships between people and how they connect with each other. These relationships between people and media technologies and the kinds of media they use and what these media offer them, are also upcoming. For example communication through social media sites and blogging.³

One of these ways of connecting with other people through the internet is online dating. This is a way of meeting new people through specifically designed websites. It is a virtual space where people can meet online and eventually can meet face-to-face after connecting with each other online.⁴

Before 2000 online dating was not popular in The Netherlands , but since then eight per cent of the couples met each other through dating sites or social online networks.⁵

Besides meeting new people through specially developed dating sites, there is also a possibility of staying in touch with others through social media sites like Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.⁶

The founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, wanted to make a site to communicate with his fellow students from Harvard University and came up with Facebook in 2004. In 2005 Facebook came worldwide online and became a really popular way among people to

¹ Barraket, J., & HenryWaring, M. S. (2008). Getting it on(line) : Sociological perspectives on e-dating. *Journal of sociology*, 44(2), 149- 165

² Verschraegen, G. (2002). De digitalisering van cultuur. *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie* 2002. Volume 23 - Nr. 3-4

³ Varis, P. (2013) *College 1. Introduction New Media And Politics*. Tilburg University

⁴ Barraket, J., & HenryWaring, M. S. (2008). Getting it on(line) : Sociological perspectives on e-dating. *Journal of sociology*, 44(2), 149- 165

⁵ CBS. (2011, 5 oktober) *Partner steeds vaker via internet of werk*. Geraadpleegd op: <http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/bevolking/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2011/2011-3485-wm.htm>

⁶ Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2009) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons* Volume 53, Issue 1, January–February 2010, Pages 59–68

keep in touch with each other.⁷ Facebook is the most popular social media website in The Netherlands with 7,9 million users. These users are mostly between 18 and 34 years old.⁸

On social networking sites like Facebook, users can connect with other people by creating profiles with personal information, invite friends and other people to have access to their profiles and can send messages, chat with each other and post photos, videos and blogs.⁹

Facebook is nowadays not only a way to connect with people we know. There are also options to get to know strangers, people we met and didn't dare to talk to.

Since December 2012 the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein' (Passion in the train) offers one of these options. People who travel by train and meet people they like can send an anonymous message to the editors of this Facebook page to get in touch with the person they liked.

'You're sitting in the train, looking around and then there he/she is. The love of your life in the train. But then you're too shy to say something. Maybe you will get lucky here. Find the person you really liked. Make your message as detailed as possible (date, place you travelled from and to, name, description).'¹⁰

On this page the message will be published anonymous, but people can of course react with their Facebook account, so it is no longer totally anonymous. The page 'Hartstocht in de trein' has almost 90.000 likes and more than 1300 people are talking about it.¹¹

§ 1.1 Thesis

This Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein' uses the online concept of dating sites, it is a specially created environment on the internet in which people can meet each other and perhaps start a relationship after meeting in real life.¹² But it uses also the offline concept of meeting people: the train.

⁷ Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2009) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons Volume 53, Issue 1, January–February 2010*, Pages 59–68

⁸ Marketingfacts. (2013). Social media in Nederland 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.marketingfacts.nl/berichten/social-media-in-nederland-twitter-en-facebook-het-meest-actief-gebruikt/>

⁹ Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2009) *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*. Business Horizons Volume 53, Issue 1, January–February 2010, Pages 59–68

¹⁰ Facebook. (2013). Hartstocht in de trein. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/HartstochtInDeTrein>

¹¹ Facebook (2013). Hartstocht in de trein. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/HartstochtInDeTrein>

¹² Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2009) Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons Volume 53, Issue 1, January–February 2010*, Pages 59–68

That's what makes this subject really interesting for me. This page has both the concept of online dating and of offline dating and the next thing that makes it interesting is that the way people act online and offline depends on the possibility of being anonymous. So the identity they construct for themselves is also different in online and offline situations.¹³

Because this page is designed for people to flirt with other people, the difference between flirting online and offline is also important in this case. 'Hartstocht in de trein' has an online flirting element and an offline element. I think this is an fascinating way to get to know other people and I really want to know more about this page and how people act on it.

In this paper I will discuss the way people flirt, identify themselves and how anonymous they are on the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein' and what difference the offline/online function makes in this case.

In order to discover how people act online and offline in this case, this paper will also cover the concept flirting on 'Hartstocht in de trein' on Facebook and flirting in the offline situation.

It is therefore important to know how people construct their identity online and offline and how anonymous people are online and offline.

The next chapter of this paper will form the literature review and I will discuss some theories. In the reflection these theories come together with the phenomenon 'Hartstocht in de trein' and discussions in the classes of *New Media and Politics* will also be mentioned. Finally there will follow a conclusion.

¹³ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter will discuss the identity construction of people and how anonymity differs in online and offline situations.¹⁴ On the differences in online and offline flirting and dating are also a couple of useful theories. It is also important to know what the Facebook page ‘Hartstocht in de trein’ is like, because on this page the offline and online situation comes together.¹⁵

§2.1 Identity construction and anonymity

Identities that are produced in a nonymous (not anonymous) environment are different from identities created in an anonymous environment.¹⁶

‘Identity is an important part of the self-concept. Self-concept is the totality of a person’s thoughts and feelings in reference to oneself as an object and identity is that part of the self ‘by which we are known to others.’¹⁷ To construct an identity there is an ‘identity announcement’ of an individual who claims the identity and then there is the ‘identity placement’ in which others accept this identity.¹⁸

Identity construction offline

In an offline situation the identity construction is represented by the presence of the corporal body. This body prevents people in social encounters from forming an identity of themselves that doesn’t fit with the psychical characteristics like sex, looks and race. In this situation the only way to present a ‘better’ version of yourself, is to do your hair in a specific way or to wear jewellery. It is also possible to talk different or act different. Face-to-face meetings with strangers can also be manipulated by hiding your background.¹⁹

¹⁴ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

¹⁵ Facebook. (2013). Hartstocht in de trein. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/HartstochtInDeTrein>

¹⁶ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

¹⁷ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

¹⁸ Stone, G. (1981). Appearance and the self: A slightly revised version. In G. Stone & H. A. Farberman (Eds.), *Social psychology through symbolic interaction (2nd ed., pp. 187–202)*. New York: Wiley

¹⁹ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

People want to give other people a good impression in offline situations. This can happen in situations like meeting your parents-in-law or when you want to wear an outfit that fits with your personal identity because you want to look young and stylish.²⁰

Identity construction online

The internet changed the way people produce their identity. In the online environment there is no physical body, so it became possible for people to interact with others without any notion of their body. This is a situation in which people can be anonymous. They don't need to say anything about their personal background, job or place where they live. In this situation of disembodiment and anonymity people can create a whole new identity of themselves.²¹

Anonymity online

In anonymous environments online like Chat rooms individuals can re-create their personality and biography. It is possible to reinvent themselves and create a new identity online. They feel liberated to be whoever they want to be.²² In this online world women can pretend that they are men or people can lie about their education, occupation and income.²³

Being anonymous online can help people who are shy and would never speak to another person in face-to-face contact to get in touch with other people. It is also a way to explore non-conventional identities and to reveal hidden characteristics, because nobody can see you.²⁴

Less anonymous is the environment of dating sites, because these are designed to exchange personal information like looks, sex, age and occupation. In this environment anonymity (not being anonymous) is important. Meetings online can result in meetings offline. Even though, the identities constructed on Internet dating sites differed from the identities people would construct face-to-face. People stretched the truth a bit, for example they have a profile picture

²⁰ Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books

²¹ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

²² Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

²³ Whitty, M. T. (2002). Liar, Liar! An examination of how open, supportive and honest people are in Chat Rooms. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 18(4), 343-352

²⁴ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

in which you can't see that they are over weighted.²⁵ In the nymous world of Internet dating, people see their online identity as an part of their whole identity. On these sites people can make public identity statements that they wouldn't do offline. They can make a statement by telling what music they like, which hobbies they have or where they go out. Through these statements they construct an identity.²⁶ Because dating sites are oriented towards develop offline romantic relationships, people think about the way they represent themselves.

Not on every dating site being nymous is the standard. There are also sites on which you don't need to fill in your real name or personal information.²⁷

Nonymity

In a nymous environment online people establish an identity of themselves that is socially desirable. It is an identity that a person would like to have and that he believes he can achieve under the right circumstances.

In a nymous offline world, people suppress their characteristics that are not socially accepted and put on a mask. This is their real identity in daily life.²⁸

Anchored relationships

The online world is not totally anonymous. Colleagues, family members, neighbours and more offline friends are also online. These offline-based online relationships are called 'anchored relationships'. This online relationship can be anchored offline in different ways. For example through institutions and mutual friends.

It is a nymous relationship because there is information known about a person. As Facebook has the function of displaying the real name of people and their connections with institutions and other people, it is also a nymous environment.²⁹

²⁵ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

²⁶ Walker, K. (2000). "It's difficult to hide it": The presentation of self on Internet home pages. *Qualitative Sociology*, 23 (1) (2000), pp. 99–120

²⁷ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

²⁸ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

²⁹ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

§ 2.2 Facebook

On Facebook people can present themselves in a couple of ways. They can display pictures in their online albums, choose a profile picture, add personal interests, like pages and add friends to their network.³⁰ College students use Facebook to stay linked with people with whom they used to be more connected.³¹

'Hartstocht in de trein'

The page 'Hartstocht in de trein' on Facebook is specially designed for people who met another person in the train and were too shy to talk to them. They can send a message to the editors of the page and then their message will appear anonymous on the page. It is also possible to just post an update on the page in which you tell who you're looking for.

The effect of this Facebook page is that other people react on these posts. They tag a person when they think they know for whom the message is. It makes it really interactive and the functions of Facebook are used really well (the tagging and the connections between people).

§ 2.3 Online and offline flirting

The way in which people send messages to the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein' is called flirting. Because it is a specific way of flirting that has offline and online characteristics, I will explain both ways.

Flirting can imply a relationship between two persons in which one person suggests or both persons suggest that they want to be intimate with the other one. It can also be an action to let another person know that he or she is interesting.³² Flirting is a way to tease and communicate, a way to create intimacy.³³ It has a hidden message for the other one, it is communication to find out what the other person thinks of you and if he or she wants to get intimate or is sexual attracted to you.³⁴

³⁰ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

³¹ Ellison, N.B., Lampe, C. & Steinfield, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook 'Friends': Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12:4. 1143-1168.

³² Downey, J.L., & Vitulli, W.F. (1987). Self-report measures of behavioural attributions related to interpersonal flirtation situations. *Psychological Reports*, 61, 899-904.

³³ Feinberg, L.S. (1996). Teasing: Innocent fun or sadistic malice? Far Hills, NJ, US: New Horizon Press.

³⁴ Whitty, M. T. (2003) Cyber-Flirting : Playing at Love on the Intern. *Theory & Psychology*

Differences online and offline flirting

The biggest difference between online and offline flirting is the absence of the body.³⁵ Face-to-face flirtation consists especially of non-verbal signals. Body language can be a sign for attraction and when the other person doesn't flirt back it is not too obvious that you're humiliated.³⁶

Offline flirting

Flirtation offline includes hair tossing, licking your lips, copy behaviour of the other person, giggling and laughing. But also making eye contact, glances and eye movements are ways of flirting. Accidentally touching the other person, talking loud and being at the same body angle are also flirtations.³⁷

Online flirting

In online flirting, the body has to be represented, because it is absent. So, instead of looking good on your first date, you have to describe yourself to the other person and tell how attractive you look. In cyberspace people can pretend to be prettier than they really are.³⁸

Instead of non-verbal gestures, in online flirting people can use smileys to express how they feel or acronyms like LOL (laugh out loud) and <BG> (Big Grin).³⁹

³⁵ Givens, D. (1978). The nonverbal basis of attraction: Flirtation, courtship, and seduction. *Psychiatry*, 41, 346–359

³⁶ Whitty, M.T. (2004). Cyber-flirting: An examination of men's and women's flirting behaviour both offline and on the Internet. *Behaviour Change*, 21(2), 115-126.

³⁷ Whitty, M.T. (2004). Cyber-flirting: An examination of men's and women's flirting behaviour both offline and on the Internet. *Behaviour Change*, 21(2) 115-126.

³⁸ Whitty, M.T. (2004). Cyber-flirting: An examination of men's and women's flirting behaviour both offline and on the Internet. *Behaviour Change*, 21(2), 115-126.

³⁹ Whitty, M. T. (2003). Cyber-Flirting : Playing at Love on the Intern. *Theory & Psychology*

Chapter 3: Reflection

The Facebook page ‘Hartstocht in de trein’ has two online elements. One is that it is a social media site on which people can connect with each other.⁴⁰ And the other one is that it looks like an Internet dating site. It is a virtual space where people can meet online and eventually can meet face-to-face after connecting with each other online.⁴¹

Then this page has also an offline element. That is, the meeting spot of people who send a message to this page: the train. So these offline and online elements come together on ‘Hartstocht in de trein’. I will reflect here on the way people construct their identity, are anonymous or not and flirt on ‘Hartstocht in de trein’.

§ 3.1 Identity construction and anonymity on ‘Hartstocht in de trein’

Someone who sends a message to ‘Hartstocht in de trein’, met someone in the train. Sometimes he or she spoke with the other person or sometimes they just looked at each other in the train (offline).



Figure 1: Screenshot of Facebook page ‘Hartstocht in de trein’

The identity that is constructed here, is represented by the presence of the corporal body. In this face-to-face meeting people want to give a good impression of themselves. In the

⁴⁰ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

⁴¹ Barraket, J., & HenryWaring, M. S. (2008). Getting it on(line) : Sociological perspectives on e-dating. *Journal of sociology*, 44(2), 149- 165

message in figure 1 the girl explains that she was too shy to talk to a boy and was ashamed of her hair and make-up at the end of the day. This is an example of wanting to present a better way of yourself to make a good impression.⁴²



In an offline situation as in the train, it also possible to act different to impress the other person. In figure 2 someone shared her newspaper with a boy and she talked with him about movies for children. In face-to-face meetings with strangers you can show yourself from your best side like this girl did and hide other parts.⁴³

The next part of 'Hartstocht in de trein' is the online part. The identity that people construct here is without their physical body.

Figure 2: Screenshot Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein'

In this situation the person who sends the message to the editors of the Facebook page is anonymous. There is only a short description of the way they look (like the girl in figure 1 who described herself as wearing not so much make-up and having weird hair). But in the first place there are no names or photos involved. In a way the person creates a new identity of him-or herself: the person in the train- identity.⁴⁴

⁴² Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) *Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships*. Human Behavior 24. 1816-1836

⁴³ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) *Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships*. Human Behavior 24. 1816-1836

⁴⁴ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) *Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships*. Human Behavior 24. 1816-1836

Being anonymous online can help people who are shy and who in face-to-face contact would never speak to another person to get in touch with them.⁴⁵ This is also what happens on the page 'Hartstocht in de trein'.

You can be anonymous on 'Hartstocht in de trein', until somebody tags you and people can see your personal profile. Another option is that the person who you're looking for recognizes you from the message and contacts you.

Facebook itself is a nonymous concept, in which people identify themselves in socially desirable ways. The pages you like, the comments you posts, the photos you publish, all your friends can see them. Facebook depends on anchored relationships. These offline-based online relationships are friends, family and other people you know offline and also are connected to online, on Facebook.

For 'Hartstocht in de trein' these anchored relationships are really important. This page is based on the community of people knowing people of other people. The message that someone sends to this page is read by almost 90.000 followers, so if someone recognizes the description of a person, they tag the person they think it is about.⁴⁶

§3.2 Flirting on 'Hartstocht in de trein'

The way in which people send messages to the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein', is called flirting. Maybe they didn't really flirt in the train, because they were too shy, but on this page the intention is to flirt with the person they liked and to get in contact with him or her.⁴⁷ People use flirting here to create intimacy and it is a way to communicate.⁴⁸ There is no hidden message, because it is very clear what people want when they post a message.

Flirting starts in this case offline, in the train. In this situation there is a face-to-face situation. In figure 3 a boy wanted to hit on a girl, but he was too shy to say something to her. The girl smiled at him, so this is a way of offline flirting. He also made eye contact with her

⁴⁵ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008) Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Human Behavior* 24. 1816-1836

⁴⁶ Facebook. (2013). Hartstocht in de trein. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/HartstochtInDeTrein?fref=ts>

⁴⁷ Downey, J.L., & Vitulli, W.F. (1987). Self-report measures of behavioural attributions related to interpersonal flirtation situations. *Psychological Reports*, 61, 899-904.

⁴⁸ Feinberg, L.S. (1996). Teasing: Innocent fun or sadistic malice? *Far Hills*, NJ, US: New Horizon Press.

when his classmate offered her a cookie and she refused. This is another way of offline flirting.⁴⁹

The flirting part online uses the absence of the body. In figure 3 the boy wrote a poem for a girl in the train. In his message he also mentions that she looks really nice and likes her smile. He also uses smileys to express how he feels about her. These are all ways to flirt online.⁵⁰

§ 3.3 Discussions

In the colleges of the course *New Media and Politics* there have been discussions about anonymity online and whether it is a good thing or not (especially in class 4 & 5). It was not really about anonymity in online flirting or dating situations, but still there a lot of arguments that have been stated during the courses that can help. First of all, being anonymous can result in acting different online then offline.⁵¹ For example in a discussion on an online forum or when people who post threats on a personal weblog anonymous.⁵²



Figure 3: Screenshot of Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein'.

⁴⁹ Whitty, M.T. (2004). Cyber-flirting: An examination of men's and women's flirting behaviour both offline and on the Internet. *Behaviour Change*, 21(2) 115-126.

⁵⁰ Whitty, M.T. (2004). Cyber-flirting: An examination of men's and women's flirting behaviour both offline and on the Internet. *Behaviour Change*, 21(2), 115-126.

⁵¹ Zhao, S., Grasmuck, S. & Martin, J. (2008). Identity construction on Facebook: Digital empowerment in anchored relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior* 24,(5). 1816- 1836.

⁵² Citron, D.K. (2010). Civil Right in Our Information Age. In Levmore, S. & Nussbaum, M.C. *The Offensive Internet* (pp.31 -49). England: Harvard University Press.

People feel the right to say more and offend people, because nobody knows who it says. It is kind of safe for them to abuse this anonymity.

This abuse of anonymity is also possible on online dating sites. People can pretend they are much older or younger or can lie about their gender. This can be really dangerous when it involves children under the age of 18 and also very disappointing for people who are looking for a real relationship.

As also discussed in class, it is sometimes even better to just be nonymous. Then people know who says something and sometimes it gives you more respect than hiding yourself behind a fake name.

Still there are people who can't express themselves really well and feel safe with a fake name. They can explain themselves very well on for example political subjects without offending other people, but are too shy to put their real name out there.

In class it is also discussed if there should be a law or a protector for the cyberspace. The reactions were that it is kind of impossible to control the whole cyberspace, but that there has to be some control. And there is control, there are webmasters and editors who control their own websites.

§ 3.4 My own opinion

I think that being anonymous online and especially in online flirting and dating situations is a good thing for people who are really shy or have a disability of which they are ashamed. But in the end, when you want to meet someone in real life, you are the person you are. Maybe it will help people to take the first step of dating, but being anonymous and act different then you are, doesn't really help in the end.

Besides that, I think the dangerous part of anonymity is that there are people who abuse this ability. When you're looking for a real relationship and it turns out you're chatting with a girl when you're looking for a boy, it doesn't really give people confidence for a relationships.

A page like 'Hartstocht in de trein' is a great initiative for flirting offline and online and the reactions are great on this page. Still, it would be more nice if people just talked with each other instead of hiding behind a social media site. When you're in the train in The Netherlands, most of the people (including myself) are listening to music or playing with their phone. So to start a conversation is kind of difficult sometimes. Maybe we should do that more, instead of flirting online.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this paper I wanted to discuss the way people flirt, identify themselves and how anonymous they would be on the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein'. I also wanted to see what the difference of offline and online made in this case.

I think that this page has a really interesting way of combining offline flirting and identity construction with online flirting and identity construction. The anonymity changes in this case because there are both online and offline situations.

In fact, the flirting and identity construction starts in the train. The first connection is made there. It depends on the situation if people talk to each other or just make eye contact or laugh. Still, the flirting has begun offline. The identity that is constructed here is represented by the presence of the corporal body. In this situation people want to give a good impression of themselves. It is also possible that people try to impress the other person by talking about specific subjects or by hiding some characteristics.

In the train people are sort of anonymous. Other people can see what you look like, but they don't know your name or your personal information. This changes of course when you're introducing yourself to the other person, like in the situation of 'Hartstocht in de trein' can happen.

The next part then, is the online part of 'Hartstocht in de trein'. When a person sends a message to the editors of 'Hartstocht in de trein', it starts anonymous. The identity that people construct here is without their psychical body. He or she can describe what he or she looks like, but it is not necessary. At first there are also no names or photos involved. There is a new identity for this person: the train-identity.

The way the flirting online happens, is with the absence of the body. The flirting happens through the text that is written. It can also be that someone describes the way someone looks, how they smile and that they use smileys to express how they feel about the person they want to flirt with.

The anonymity disappears when someone else tags you on Facebook or when someone recognizes the person to whom the message is addressed. Because Facebook itself is a nonymous environment, you can't stay anonymous when you've sent a message. Other people can at least see your personal profile when you're tagged on 'Hartstocht in de trein'.

These other people are very important for this Facebook page. Facebook depends on anchored relationships, that is: offline based online relationships like friends, family and other

people you're familiar with offline. The page 'Hartstocht in de trein' is based on a community of people who know other people who know other people.

The message that someone sends to this page is read by almost 90.000 followers, so if someone recognizes the description of a person, they tag the person they think it is about.

So the Facebook page 'Hartstocht in de trein' is a combination of offline and online flirting, identity construction and of anonymity and nonymity. The meetings starts offline, then it continues online and when everything goes well and two people have found each other, perhaps their meeting can continue offline, nonymous.

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