

**“Virtual Fictional/Factual Positioning” as a Novel Approach to
the Dialogical Dimensions of the Self in Paul Auster’s *Man in the
Dark***

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This paper introduces the novel concept of Virtual Fictional/Factual Positioning (VFP) in the dialogical relationship between the author and his/her hero in literary works. VFP originates in Hermans' contributions to psychological studies in Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and the dialogical view of the relationship between author and hero in aesthetic forms by Bakhtin. VFP evaluates self-narratives and identifies the dialogical coalition of the protagonists' positions as I-the-artist/novelist and I-the-hero-of-my-story in the novel. This study presents a textual analysis of Paul Auster's *Man in the Dark* (2008). The results indicated that similar positions are interconnected in the actual world of the author and the fictional world of the hero, which influence one another in a dialogical manner. Finally, through this dynamic course of positioning and repositioning, the postmodern self of the protagonist/author as I-as-artist demonstrated a significant degree of dialogical self by letting go of the past, dealing with the present and generating a perspective for the future – hence responding to his conflicting situation in a quite innovative way.

Key words: Psychology of Self, Bakhtin, Dialogism, Literary Analysis, *Man in the Dark*, Paul Auster.

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