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A New Dimension of Authenticity. Finding the Self in Autobiographical
Narration

“I have become the greatest question to myself”. So Augustine claims in *The Confessions*, and with this claim he opens the door to the prismatic debate on identity and self-narration. Hardly ever as in the research of the self, literature and philosophy had shared a common boundary; and even more peculiar are the patterns enhancing the complexity of such research.

The pronoun “I” has lived through a variegated history, one filled with vexing questions ranging from the necessity of transforming our experiences and memories in a coherent and revealing narrative, to the very difficulty of even seeing in our memories and present experiences a reliable testimony of who we really are.

The lack of certainty in our capacity of recollecting and narrating memories has often led to the accusation, held against autobiographers, of providing a deceptive account of their lives, one constellated with distortions or even lies. More recently, and specifically with the post-structuralist tradition, the accusation has been soothed by the belief that even the non-fictional lives of autobiographers are in a sense fictional works, and hence not liable of being deceptive.

In my analysis of self-narration I aim at dismantling this latter claim; I want instead to structure self-narration entirely within the boundaries of nonfiction, and to reconsider the uncertainty of personal identity under a different perspective in which uncertainty is ultimately embedded in the structure of what has been analyzed by cognitive psychology as a “narrative self”. My belief is that uncertainty is a signature not of truth but of authenticity, and that the difficulties of self-narration, as well as the uncertainty surrounding the problem of personal identity, are based on the establishment, through literature and philosophy, of a new conception of this notion.