

## **The Unreliable Self-narration in The Pastoral Symphony of André Gide**

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*La Symphonie Pastorale* (translated as *The Pastoral Symphony*), a seminal novella by French Nobel laureate André Gide, has garnered widespread international recognition for its profound exploration of moral ambiguity and psychological complexity. The narrative centers on an entangled and ethically fraught love triangle involving a pastor, his biological son, and his adopted blind daughter. While existing scholarship has predominantly focused on the pastor's unreliable narration as a defining textual "label," a systematic, narratologically grounded analysis of this unreliability—particularly through the lens of James Phelan's tripartite framework—remains underexplored.

This study addresses this critical gap by employing Phelan's rhetorical narratological approach to dissect the novella's unreliable narration across its three axes: facts/events, knowledge/perception, and ethics/evaluation. Phelan's taxonomy identifies six subtypes of unreliability: misreporting and underreporting (pertaining to factual distortion or omission); misreading and underreading (reflecting flawed interpretation or cognitive limitations); and misevaluating and underregarding (ethical misjudgment or neglect). These categories, rooted in Wayne C. Booth's foundational theories of narrative unreliability, illuminate the pastor's rhetorical strategies, which construct a labyrinthine narrative designed to obscure his moral failings and self-deception.

Through this analysis, Gide's distinctive stylistic and philosophical vision emerges. Far from merely serving as a device for textual ambiguity, the pastor's unreliable narration becomes a vehicle for expressing Gide's preoccupation with human duality—a theme permeating the novella. The narrative dramatizes existential tensions between divine morality and earthly desire, altruistic love and selfish remorse, societal constraint and individual freedom. By unraveling these contradictions, the text invites readers to confront the universality of duality in human experience, urging a conscious reckoning with the constraints that bind both the narrator and the self.

Ultimately, this study positions *La Symphonie Pastorale* not only as a masterclass in unreliable narration but as a philosophical meditation on the inescapable dualities that define existence. Gide's narrative techniques transcend mere literary experimentation, challenging readers to acknowledge their own ethical complexities and to navigate the labyrinth of human consciousness with greater self-awareness.