

**ALYOSHA'S ANGEL**  
**A STUDY OF NARRATIVE IDENTITY IN *THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV***

*Повествование в «Братьях Карамазовых» разочаровывающе противоречивое. Оно постоянно переключается между рассказчиками 1-го и 3-го лица, проникает в несовместимые уровни сознания персонажей и использует меняющуюся модальность при обсуждении мыслей, мотивов и действий персонажей. Ранее учёные анализировали эти несоответствия и противоречия, однако, они так и не смогли определить личность рассказчика, которая в достаточной степени смогла бы их объяснить. Эта работа восполняет данный пробел и показывает связь между рассказчиком и дьяволом, каким он представляется Ивану. Я предлагаю считать дьявола и рассказчика основными персонажами романа, которые выступают в качестве дополнительных представителей центральной дихотомии романа: мирской разум против духовной праведности.*

*The narration in *The Brothers Karamazov* is frustratingly inconsistent. It switches between first and third person positions, permeates inconsistent levels of characters' consciousnesses, and uses fluctuating modality when discussing characters' thoughts, motivations, and actions. Previous scholars have analyzed these inconsistencies, yet have not assigned the narrator an identity that resolves them. The following analysis fills this gap by drawing connections between the narrator and the novel's Devil, as he appears to Ivan. I ultimately present the Devil and the narrator as fundamental characters of the novel, functioning as additional representatives of the novel's central dichotomy: worldly reason versus spiritual righteousness.*

### **Introduction**

The peculiarities and inconsistencies of Dostoevsky's narrator in *The Brothers Karamazov* deserve considerable scholarly attention. In the prologue and first several chapters, a first-person narrator establishes intimacy between himself, his readers, and the characters of the novel. They all experience, interact with, and relate to the same fictional reality. However, this intimate first-person narrative quickly fades into a neutral third-person narrative that demonstrates inconsistent levels of omniscience. Throughout the rest of the novel, the narration fluctuates between these two positions, seemingly at

random and often occupying a “gray space,” where the typical characteristics of a first and third person narrator are melded.

At first glance, this narrative structure seems fundamentally flawed. The narrator’s level of omniscience at certain moments in the text contradicts his early claim to intimacy with the characters. No member of a community, writing thirteen years in the future, could be privy to such detailed knowledge as how, on one specific afternoon, Fyodor Pavlovich was in a “particularly good-humored and expansive mood,” or how Smerdyakov smiled with “a sarcastic grin” during a private meeting with Ivan [5: p. 114, 519]. While transitions in narrative position are common in fiction, an author must find a way to clearly define and excuse them through a number of techniques. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the transitions are not clearly defined and no excuses for them are readily apparent.

However, we cannot dismiss these peculiarities of the novel’s narration as an authorial blunder. We owe Dostoevsky, as an artist, more respect. Indeed, as several scholars have already demonstrated, the narration of *The Brothers Karamazov* was carefully planned, having deep roots in historical tradition. While these scholars have offered detailed and rich analyses of the novel’s narrative structure, they have stopped short of drawing any conclusion in regard to the narrator’s identity. In the following paper, I propose a new theory of the narrator’s identity that helps satisfy the narrative contradictions and open the text up to fresh analysis. I propose the narrator, as a consistent and integral character, operates on a spiritual level, akin and in contrast to that of the devil encountered by Ivan.

## **Literature Review**

Belknap, in his work *The Structure of “The Brothers Karamazov,”* directly confronts the peculiarities and inconsistencies of the novel’s narration. He first asserts the undeniably intimate and intertwined relationship between the narrator and the reality of the novel, as the narrator «существует в этом созданном мире, а этот мир, такой, как мы его знаем, существует в сознании повествователя» [2; с. 93]. He then draws

attention to the curiously clear hints of the narrator's corporeal presence, particularly to his presence at the trial and his reactions to its events [2; с. 95].

Soon after, he confronts the frustrating incompatibility of the narrator's vaguely expressed identity (that of a "biographer") and his insistent omniscience:

Если автор, выступающий в роли биографа, говорит: "Он ничего не знает", говорящий и объект речи различны; тогда возникает эпистемологический вопрос о природе и источниках знаний биографа: "Откуда вы знаете, что он ничего не знает?" [2; с. 97]

Even this omniscience, as Belknap points out, is inconsistent, represented by the narrator's widely varying modality:

Модальность осведомлённости повествователя и достоверность того, что он говорит, также связаны с его природой и местом, которое он занимает в романе, и могут варьировать от полной уверенности до сомнения и отрицания: "Он это сделал"; "Я уверен, что он это сделал"; "Я думаю, что он это сделал"; "Говорят, что он это сделал"; "Он мог это сделать, но не сделал" и т.д.; с таким количеством вариантов модальности, какое только можно вообразить [2; с. 97].

Continuing in this regard, Belknap marks the inconsistent levels of a character's consciousness, into which the narrator's awareness permeates:

Границы осведомлённости повествователя могут варьировать от совершенного проникновения в духовную суть персонажа или знания только его нравственного мира, только его психологии и, наконец, чисто внешнего описания в манере бихевиоризма [2; с. 97].

To excuse these inconsistencies, Belknap offers two possibilities. First, he suggests considering them as simply «риторическая выразительность, без каких-либо сознательных хронологических соображений» (97); second, he suggests considering the narrator's occasional limitations as a tool, which «позволяет уменьшить напряжение безусловного доверия читателя ко всему повествованию» [2; с. 97].

However, neither of these solutions reconcile the narrative inconsistencies with the narrator's identity. They are simply place holders or pacifiers, helping the reader come to terms with the novel's puzzling narration.

Belknap also draws attention to an important passage in the text that further develops the narrator's relationship to the novel's characters and events:

“Единственная действительно интересная деталь, относящаяся к хронологическому соотношению между жизнью повествователя и описанными им событиями, появляется в конце главы, содержащей комическую сцену между госпожой Хохлаковой и Перхотиным. Внезапно повествователь обращается к читателю и говорит: "Я бы, впрочем, и не стал распространяться о таких мелких и эпизодных подробностях, если б эта сейчас лишь описанная мною эксцентрическая встреча молодого чиновника с вовсе не старою еще вдовицей не послужила впоследствии основанием всей жизненной карьеры этого точного и аккуратного молодого человека, о чем с изумлением вспоминают до сих пор в нашем городке и о чем, может быть, и мы скажем особое словечко, когда заключим наш длинный рассказ о братьях Карамазовых" (Т. 14. С. 406). Этот отрывок особенно интересен ... потому, что он содержит заявление о роли повествователя в определении границ романа. Такие полномочия повествователя предоставляют автору разнообразные возможности воздействия на читателя» [2; с. 95].

Importantly, this moment reveals that the narrator has a specific goal in writing, alerting the reader that the text is curated by an admittedly impressionable censor.

In the midst of his discussion of the narration's inconsistencies, Belknap entertains a possible identity for the narrator, although ultimately stops short of making any conclusion. To do so, he turns to the moment when the narrator states that Alyosha came «to us» at the monastery, suggesting that the narrator is a monk, “[который] находится в положении древнего летописца или эпического поэта” [2; с. 94]. However, this identity still does not reconcile with the narrative inconsistencies and contradictions.

Perhaps Belknap's most important observation comes a little later, when he comments on the narrator's contradictory textual placement, seemingly both inside and outside the novel's physical world:

“Еще более интересные последствия манипулирование осведомлённостью повествователя имеет для понимания читателем других персонажей. Когда разум и страсть, сомнения и раскаяние персонажа связывают его с окружающим миром, он становится по-человечески мотивированным, психологически объяснимым, а не просто хорошим или дурным или каким-нибудь еще. Но когда персонаж виден только с внешней стороны, особенно когда его поступки непонятны, или понимание их усложнено, он запоминается читателю не как личность, а как символ некой силы, действующей в мире, какого-нибудь качества за пределами его человеческой сущности» [2; с. 103].

Following this analysis, he suggests an intriguing title for the narrator:

С точки зрения времени и места он представляет собой неопределенную часть того мира, о котором говорит. С точки зрения причинно-следственных связей он из него полностью изъят, тогда как с когнитивной точки зрения он не существует в том мире, который существует в его памяти; он — ненаблюдаемый наблюдатель.

This proposed status of the narrator as an “unobserved observer” that at times inhabits the novel's world and at others detaches himself from it, provides a foundation for further investigation into a possible identity for the narrator. However, here, Belknap ends his analysis. Ultimately, according to Belknap, regardless of any hints towards the narrator's concrete identity, he “остаётся смутной, неопределенной личностью; чья точка зрения на события могла бы быть важна, но редко обнаруживается” [2; с. 105].

Vetlovskaya, in her work *Поэтика романа «Братья Карамазовы»*, also confronts the peculiarities of the novel's narration, discussing the same inconsistencies and contradictions. She also points out the same evidence that led Belknap to identify

the narrator as a летописец. However, in this regard, Vetlovskaya goes further to name the narrator instead an агиограф, citing that «агиографическое повествование, в отличие от летописного (несмотря на всю их близость), не может быть бесстрастным» [3; с. 27]. Furthermore, according to Vetlovskaya, hagiography включает религиозно-философские рассуждения, моралистические сентенции и тирады», all of which belong to the narrator of *The Brothers Karamazov* [3; с. 27]. This claim draws attention to an important aspect of the narration that Belknap overlooks. Not only does the narrator have an expressed intention in his writing, but he also expresses strong emotions, preferences, and opinions in response to the novel's characters and events.

Vetlovskaya further claims the novel's hagiographic style serves as an attempt to revive an old style of Church Slavonic writing. In doing so, she says, new and modern characteristics are introduced to the narrative persona. In her words, «в характер житийного повествователя «Братьев Карамазовых» привнесены черты современного автору интеллигентного обывателя и резонера, хорошо осведомленного в вопросах «текущей действительности» [3; с. 28]. It is within these modernized characteristics of the narrative voice that I believe clues to the identity of the narrator lie. However, Vetlovskaya does not carry her analysis any further.

### **The Concept of the “Narrator” in Literature**

Before continuing with my own theory, it is necessary to visit briefly the foundational concept of the “narrator” as a literary subject. According to The Living Handbook of Narratology,

“the term “narrator” designates the inner-textual (textually encoded) highest-level speech position from which the current narrative discourse as a whole originates and from which references to the entities, actions and events that this discourse is about are being made. Through a dual process of metonymic transfer and anthropomorphization, the term narrator is then employed to designate a presumed textually projected occupant of this position, the hypothesized producer of the current discourse”

When engaging with a literary text, the discussion of the narrator evolves.

“A literary narrative is consequently a text capable of creating in the reader’s mind the representational illusion of observing an ongoing process of narrative communication in which a more or less personalized narrator plays a key role. Identifying and characterizing such a narrator is an optional naturalization or meaning creation strategy open to the reader and building upon two kinds of input: textual signals and storytelling scenarios (frames, schemes) the reader already possesses from his real-life experience and which are activated once a certain number of narrator indicators have been identified in the text” (The Living Handbook of Narratology).

Here, our present task is laid out. Upon determining the “highest level speech position” and decoding, at least in part, the “representational illusion” it weaves, we can then seek to identify and characterize the personalized occupant of this position using “textual signals and storytelling scenarios.” This step is, as stated, optional. Indeed, thus far, scholars have declined to attempt it. However, by declining to engage with this “meaning creation strategy” when analyzing *The Brothers Karamazov*, we limit our interpretation of the novel.

The text itself encourages the reader to take this step. The “greater the number of signs of the narration compared to those of the narrated, the more marked the narrator and his activity become” [4]. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, the frustrating persistence of the narrator to interject his thoughts and emotions demand reconciliation with his identity.

To do so, we must first determine whether it is possible to distinguish “one general, primary or global textual narrating voice, such that (a) the text as a whole can be seen as a macro speech act or utterance emanating from that voice, and (b) all textually occurring utterances originating with other speakers are embedded within this macro speech act [4]. That is, we must ask whether the whole text of *The Brothers Karamazov* is unified by a singular narrative voice, and whether that global narrating

voice is indeed the first-person biographer discussed thus far. I argue, in both instances, “yes, it is.”

From that point, we turn our attention to the identity of this global narrator, using “textual signals and the storytelling scenarios” to characterize and place him as a fundamental character within the novel’s framework. Important among these signals and scenarios are the “claims occurring in [the narrator’s] discourse that go beyond the strict reporting of individual facts. These include summaries, analyses, comments, and generalizations of various kinds, all concerning the narrated domain” [4]. Equally important is

“the narrator’s attitude towards the told, as manifested in the way characters and events are represented. An open-ended list of qualifiers would include neutral vs. judgmental, sympathetic vs. detached, involved vs. distanced, cynical, sentimental, emotionally charged, curious, amused, bewildered, and so on. The relation between the tone or manner of telling and its subject matter can itself serve as the basis for second-order characterization of the speaker” [4].

Vetlovskaya draws particular attention to such attitudinal and emotional clues in the narration of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this area, we will pick up the threads of her analysis and weave them into a newly constructed identity.

According to the Living Handbook, “the last key aspect of the narrator’s image is his/her textually projected role.” The narrator’s textually projected role in *The Brothers Karamazov* is made clear in the novel’s opening, as the first person narrative voice immediately identifies himself as a biographer of the novel’s hero, Aleksey Fyodorovich, a role which Belknap and Vetlovskaya interpret respectively as a летописец and агиограф. This projected role will remain central to our analysis.

Also central to our analysis will be the inconsistent first and third person narrative positions and their fluctuating degrees of omniscience. The Living Handbook provides an illuminating summary of the problem this aspect of the narration creates:



“whenever a text using a first-person plural pronoun seeks to depict the thoughts of other(s) beyond the speaker, it necessarily straddles the line between first- and third-person narration: a character discloses that which can only be known by an external, impersonal intelligence, that is, an omniscient narrative voice. Such narratives are thus simultaneously first- and third-person discourses, transcending this basic narratological divide” [4].

We must determine how this transcendence in *The Brothers Karamazov* impacts the identification of a personalized, global narrator. In this regard, the Living Handbook reminds us of some restrictions as well as a loophole:

“As soon as the narrator becomes personalized, knowledge claims begin to be restricted in scope and kind to the humanly possible (unless the speaker is a supernatural entity) and are open to modalization (“it seems,” “probably,” “as far as can be known”).”

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, we have both the modalization of a restricted human narrator and the omniscience attributed to an impersonal narrator *or*, as the Handbook allows, a *supernatural entity*. As we will discuss, this loophole may be key to characterizing and reconciling the novel’s narration.

As a final note, we must keep in mind David Lewis’ principle of minimal departure for fictional worlds, which states that a fictional world should be assumed to be as similar as possible to the actual one unless explicitly specified otherwise.

### **The Identity of the Narrator**

At this point, we turn our attention directly to the question of the narrator’s identity in *The Brothers Karamazov*. To begin, we ask, amidst the fluctuating narrative positions, whether or not a singular, unifying, “highest level speech position” can be determined.

The authorial note that prefaces Book One of the novel presents the foundational evidence for the argument of a singular, global narrator. By the time that Dostoevsky writes *The Brothers Karamazov*, he is no stranger to the use of prefatory notes. Works

such as “A Gentle Creature” and *Notes from the Underground* include their own versions of prefatory notes that help frame their respective texts. In “A Gentle Creature,” the note addresses the narrative’s “fantastical” nature, discussing both its intent and implementation. In *Notes from the Underground*, the footnote under the first chapter confirms the fictitiousness of the text and its narrator, as well as explains their intended relevance to society of its time. The nature of the note in *The Brothers Karamazov*, however, differs crucially from these examples. While the note itself (titled “From the Author”) continues the pattern of authorial explanation of the text, this time, the author identifies himself as the narrator, placing himself and his text into the novel’s fictional reality.

The text the author-narrator – henceforth referred to as the biographer –discusses is the first installment of a two-part biographical work on Alexey Fyodorovich, which encompasses “only one moment in [his] early youth” [5, p. 7]. At this point, it is crucial to ask whether this fictionalized first installment of the biography is indeed the same text as the one we critics hold in our hands. That is, if the fictional first-installment is indeed *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Evidence supports this. Following the authorial note, *The Brothers Karamazov* lines up perfectly with the description of this first installment, as it encompasses one principle moment in its hero’s life that happened “exactly thirteen years ago” [5, p. 11]. Furthermore, in the sporadic moments when the biographer’s unique first-person narrative voice definitively reappears, the biographer prefaces his re-entry with phrases such as “I feel the moment has come,” “Here I must observe,” and others like them [5, p. 533, 247]. These phrases imply, first, that the biographer is aware that he is disrupting a narrative flow, and second, that he is aware of the physical location in the text, at which he is disrupting. In this way, we can accept 1) *The Brothers Karamazov* as the same text of the first installment of Alexey’s biography that exists in the novel’s world, and 2) the biographer as the text’s unifying, global narrative voice.

Upon accepting these parameters, the problem of this biographer's inconsistent modality and fluctuating omniscience must be addressed. While at times the biographer demonstrates full knowledge of the thoughts, words, and actions of the characters, at other times, his modality shifts, as he "cannot determine" some detail or another, or must simply "venture to hazard [a] suggestion" [5, p. 247, 533]. Let stand, these inconsistencies shatter the realist illusion and weaken the text's artistic credibility.

There are several ways to try to excuse the inconsistencies and maintain the realist illusion. For example, a case can be made against the biographer's sanity. Or, considering the biographer's admitted self-censorship in pursuit of expressed authorial intent, his inconsistent omniscience and fluctuating modality can be discarded as authorial embellishment. However, in this paper, I will not give these theories any more attention. Similar to Belknap's offers to consider these same inconsistencies as 'rhetorical expression' or 'a tool to remove any pressure to believe the whole novel literally,' I consider them shaky solutions at best, equivalents of duct taping a cracked window pane. They are temporary fixes, utilized when no other options are available. Instead, to resolve the puzzling inconsistencies of the narration and offer the biographer a valid identity, I suggest redefining the novel's realist illusion.

To do this, we turn first to the Devil's visit to Ivan – the moment in the text, aside from the narrative inconsistencies, that most directly attacks a more traditional realist illusion. Over the course of this unique scene, the evidence of whether or not the Devil is real or simply Ivan's fever induced hallucination remains in constant flux, never arriving at a definitive conclusion. Still, the evidence in favor of the Devil's existence in the novel's reality is consistent and strong enough to support such a reading. Accepting the Devil as a real character, we expand the novel's limits of what is *real* to include both the physical and spiritual plains. Under this expanded realist illusion, I argue that the devil is not the sole character to operate between both the material and spiritual; the biographer does as well.

The numerous similarities between the biographer and devil support this claim. First, the devil, despite his spiritual essence, reveals an invested interest in characters of the corporeal world. Not only does he frequently visit Ivan, but he was also by the side of an “unhappy young man” in his last moments before he shoots himself, and present at the confession of an “unsophisticated beauty” who unwittingly tempts her priest to sin [5, p. 544]. In both these instances, the devil is an observer, physically present, emotionally impressionable, and who yet refrains from getting directly involved. His presence at these moments mirrors the way the biographer describes his own presence at Mitya’s trial. At the trial, the biographer is physically present, emotionally impressionable, but never gives any clue to his direct involvement with the crowd, jury, or defendant. In this way, both can be described, in Belknap’s words, as “unobserved observers.”

The devil also appears as emotionally invested in a certain class of people, namely the intellectuals of the world, who he refers to as his “ardent young friends” and admits to loving their dreams [5, p. 546]. More importantly, he appears to have an invested interest in Ivan, appearing frequently to taunt, tease, and provoke him, even referring to him endearingly as “my young thinker” [5, p. 546]. This same type of emotional investment in a character can be seen in the biographer, who repeatedly and unabashedly relates his love and respect for Alyosha. It is to these emotional traits of the biographer that Vetlovskaya draws particular attention, without noting their parallels in the Devil.

The devil also demonstrates inconsistent levels of omniscience regarding the thoughts and actions of characters. He recounts exactly what happened between Ivan and Alyosha under the lamppost, and reminds Ivan that he “went to Smerdyakov’s to find out about Katerina Ivanovna,” but left “without finding out anything about her,” demonstrating full knowledge of both Ivan’s actions and his motivations. However, then the devil adds that it so happened because Ivan “probably forgot,” demonstrating the same fluctuating modality that characterizes the biographer’s narration [5, p. 548].

Another minor, yet no less striking, similarity: in his speech, the devil refers to “our modern Russia,” [5, p. 540] evoking the same rhetoric of the biographer, who repeatedly refers to “our society,” “our town,” and “our Russia.” Speaking thus, both the devil and biographer insinuate an intimate connection between themselves and the corporeal world.

We can draw one last key similarity between the biographer and the Devil. They are both proud authors of impassioned and opinionated works. First, the Devil admits to having written “to the papers,” seeking to publish a thank you note to the man who provided him relief from a corporeal illness. Later, he claims to have written “the column of criticism,” mentions he “write[s] vaudevilles of all sorts,” and pokes fun at his own “literary style” of speech [5, p. 539, 545]. Such remarks parallel the biographer’s discussion of his “one biography,” yet “two novels,” that he has so passionately penned with the hope to win over his readers [5, p. 3].

Amidst the abundant similarities between the biographer and the Devil, the two characters critically differ in one way: their expressed relationship to Alyosha. The devil pays him little attention and admits to having “treated him badly” [5, p. 536], while the biographer repeatedly and unabashedly expresses his admiration for him and has committed volumes of his work to try and explain the man’s greatness. This opposing nature of their relationships with Alyosha offers a critical piece to the puzzle of the biographer’s identity. The devil describes in length the need for a balance of forces in the universe. He expresses the need for “a column of criticism,” or else the world would be “nothing but one ‘hosannah;’” he praises the “irrational,” for without it, the world “would be transformed into an endless church service... holy, but tedious.” [5, p. 539-540] In short, the Devil discusses the novel’s central dichotomy: worldly reason versus divine righteousness. Ivan and Alyosha have long been understood as representations of these dichotomous ideals. If we accept the Devil as a real character, he becomes an additional representative of worldly reason. More accurately, he becomes the spiritual

foil to Ivan. In this scheme, it would make sense for Alyosha to have his own spiritual foil. The “biographer” can be read as exactly that.

This reading advances the work of Belknap and Vetlovskaya, offering a fully developed identity for their respective летописец or агиограф. Both authors come near such a conclusion. Vetlovskaya notes that the narrator of the novel, «при всей его близости к главным героям романа, на всем его протяжении от них отделен. Он не допускается до непосредственного общения с ними» [3, с. 27]. The argument that the narrator cannot “descend” fully to an intimate level with the characters is foundational to the theory, as is Belknap’s characterization of the narrator as an “unobserved observer” and a “символ некой силы, действующей в мире, какого-нибудь качества за пределами его человеческой сущности» [2, с. 103]. However, neither drew the connection between these traits and the Devil.

In drawing these and other connections between the narrator and the Devil, we have landed upon a theory that helps reconcile the narrative inconsistencies. What seems frustratingly impossible and contradictory when attributed to a corporeal narrator can become more acceptable when attributed to a “supernatural entity;” that is, if we raise the biographer to the spiritual plain. The abundant similarities between the devil and the biographer suggest we as critics do just that. In order to do so, we reshape the text’s realist illusion. In this way, the theory better satisfies David Lewis’ principle of minimal departure for fictional worlds. Ultimately, this theory opens up the novel to fresh analysis by including two new fundamental characters in the novel’s framework: Ivan’s Devil and his spiritual counterpart – the narrator, the biographer, or, in other words, Alyosha’s Angel.

## **Conclusion**

The inconsistent and seemingly contradictory narration of *The Brothers Karamazov* has been a constant puzzle for critics and scholars. Much analysis has been done in regard to its unique aspects and historical echoes. However, such analyses have consistently stopped short of identifying and characterizing the narrator beyond the

vague titles of “летописец» and “агиограф». Determining a personalized identity for the narrator is an important meaning creation strategy that must not be overlooked. This is particularly true in *The Brothers Karamazov*, as the novel’s intimate, first-person narrative voice frequently appears, forcing the reader to reconcile with both its identity and its inconsistencies.

Parallels to the inconsistencies of the narrative voice can be found in another indistinct character of the novel: The Devil. Both the narrator and the Devil demonstrate an invested and emotional interest in specific corporeal characters, both exclusively interact with these characters through the unique position of a “unobserved observer,” and both demonstrate through fluctuating modality an inconsistent permeation of these characters’ thoughts, emotions, and motivations. Additionally, both draw an intimate connection between themselves and the physical world by rhetorically attaching the possessive pronoun “our” to nouns such as “town,” “society,” and “Russia.” Lastly, both are authors, choosing to express their emotional, opinionated views in writing. Amidst these similarities, an important contrast appears between the biographer and the Devil. The Devil loves the sinners of the world, choosing to appear to the embodiment of secular reason, Ivan Karamazov, and admits to ignoring Alyosha, the embodiment of Godly righteousness. The biographer, on the other hand, has chosen Alyosha as his hero, dedicating himself to chronicle the young monk’s life. These associations establish these two figures on opposing sides of the novel’s central dichotomy: worldly reason versus spiritual righteousness.

Accepting both these figures as fundamental characters in the novel’s framework consequently expands the novel’s realist illusion to include both the physical and spiritual plains. In this way, we resolve both the narrative inconsistencies and the Devil’s indistinct appearance by linking and weaving them together into the fabric of the story. Most important of all, this theory is not a conclusion, but rather a beginning. Identifying the narrator as “Alyosha’s Angel” opens the novel up to new interpretation and fresh analysis.

## *Литература*

1. Бахтин М.М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского. 1963.
2. Бэлнеп, Р. Структура «Братьев Карамазовых». Баевский, В.С., Горелик, Л.Л., Павлова, Л.В., Рогацкина, М.Л., Романова, И.В. перевод, 1997.
3. Ветловская, В. Е. Роман Ф. М. Достоевского «Братья Карамазовы». 2007
4. The Living Handbook of Narratology. "Narrator". [Электронный ресурс] URL: <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/narrator> (дата обращения 10.05.2019).
5. Dostoevsky, F. M. The Brothers Karamazov Pevear, R., Volokhonsky, L. translation, 2002.