

Preserving Ethical Order via Panopticism in *Four Dreamers and Emily*

Liu Fuli

School of Humanities, Zhejiang University

866 Yuhangtang Rd., Xihu District, Hangzhou, 310058, China

School of Foreign Languages, Taizhou University

605 Dongfang Rd. Linhai, 317000, Zhejiang, China

Email: liufuli_tzc@163.com

Abstract Stevie Davies's 1996 novel, *Four Dreamers and Emily*, is about the daily life of four ordinary people, Marianne, Eileen, Sharon and Timothy. Timothy is a widower whose initiatives to survive are the visitant of Emily Bronte's ghost and his romantic correspondence with Marianne, a university lecturer. When they meet each other physically, the only intimate contact is a kiss which is overseen by Timothy's deceased wife Jojo from afar on the hill. Such Panopticism in Foucault's concept is also made by Eileen, a 63 years old spinster, who on the way to Top Withens accidentally observed the athletic sex between fellow-delegates on the moor, and reproached the "blind brutality" for violating the ethical principles of civilized human beings. With the ethical principles to abide by, both Timothy and Marianne repressed the "blind brutality" and regulated the relationship from sexual attraction to kindred affinity. At the end of the novel, Timothy gives his house to Marianne who has divorced with three kids to support. In the novel, the metaphorical Panopticism made by the ghost of Jojo and the spinster Eileen is in fact the ethical disciplines which may guarantee the harmonious interpersonal relationships in a civilized society.

Keywords *Four Dreamers and Emily*; Ethical Literary Criticism; ethical principles; Panopticism; Foucault

Author **Liu Fuli** is a PhD student of world literature and comparative literature at the School of Humanities, Zhejiang University (Hangzhou, 310058, China); She is also Professor of English studies in Taizhou University. Her research areas are English literature and literary translation.

Introduction

Stevie Davies, novelist, historian, literary critic and biographer, was born in

Wales. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and Fellow of the Welsh Academy, and Professor of Creative Writing at Swansea University. Her 1996 novel, *Four Dreamers and Emily*, is about the daily lives of four ordinary people, Marianne, Eileen, Sharon and Timothy. Timothy is a widower, getting gaunt after his beloved wife Jojo dead of breast cancer. The initiatives that encourage Timothy to survive are the visitant of Emily Bronte's ghost and his romantic correspondence with Marianne, a 30ish scholar and frazzled homemaker who is threatened with losing her teaching post. Timothy keeps imagining her beauty and scholastic temperament in the light of her dignified and flowing handwriting, consequently the Haworth conference run by Marianne becomes an opportunity for Timothy to go on a pilgrimage to Emily and Marianne with his collapsing physical condition. At the conference, the only intimate contact between them is a kiss which is overseen by the ghost of Jojo from afar on the hill. Such panopticism in Foucault concept is also made by Eileen, a 63 years old spinster, who cares for her ageing mother while indulging a passion for Emily. On the ascending way to Top Withens, she accidentally observed the copulation of two conferees on the moor, and reproached the "blind brutality" for violating the ethical disciplines of civilized human beings. Apparently, the Haworth conference is configured as "a specific historical situation for a unique expression of ethics and morality" according to Ethical Literary Criticism approach put forward by Prof. Nie Zhenzhao ("Ethical Literary Criticism: A Basic Theory" 189). Though for Timothy, the pursuit of a love and sex object is not for sensual pleasure, but rather a manifestation of vitality, the ambiguous relationship between him and Marianne pushes him into an ethical predicament as well. With the ethical disciplines to abide by, both Timothy and Marianne regulated the relationship from sexual attraction to kindred affinity. At the end of the novel, Timothy gives his house to Marianne who has divorced to "offer her this chance of a new life" (Davies 242).

Marianne's Ethical Identities and Predicament

One's identity is the signal of his or her existence in a society. Everyone needs to take the responsibility of his or her identity. "As for the origin of identity, it is the result of ethical selection. Natural selection solves the identity issue in the aspect of form, which means it separates human beings from animals formally, and thereby to acquire the identity of human beings" (Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 263). In contrast, "ethical selection solves the identity issue in the perspective of ethics, which not only separates human beings from animals in essence, but also gets the identity confirmed with duty, morality and responsibility"

(Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 263). Literature solves the identity issue through the description of how people make the self-selection. In the literary texts, almost all ethical questions are related to the ethical identity. “Meanwhile, ethical identity is the precondition of moral conduct and moral conviction. Also, it can restrain the subject of moral conduct. Sometimes the restriction is mandatory, which is made by ethical taboos” (Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 263-264).

What is more, ethical identity is the premise of evaluation of moral conduct. In reality, ethics requires the identity to be consistent with moral conduct. Once ethical identity goes against ethical conviction, ethical conflicts will come out. In literature, all descriptions of identity provide moral caution and moral teaching for people’s ethical selection. In *Four Dreamers and Emily*, all these characters have different identities. Only when all identities are put in deep and sharp analysis, can we really understand the ethical predicament the characters have met and the ethical selections they have made.

As a junior university lecturer, Marianne is thought dull by her students, called “dead wood” by her colleagues and regarded as an unnecessary role at work by her husband. Because of her passion towards Emily Brontë, she is appointed to hold the Haworth conference, which is about Emily’s book *Wuthering Heights*. “The conference is called ‘The Most Wuthering Heights Day Ever’, an occasion held annually at locations across the globe” (Callaghan 2). Since 1928, the Brontë sisters’ house has been turned into a museum, which is owned and managed by the Brontë Society. It was redecorated in order to achieve a more authentic 1850s look. In the house, there are many items on display that belonged to the Brontës and the rooms are all furnished with pieces from the Victorian Era. This venue plays the role of an important historical scene in Marianne’s life and the conference becomes a turning point of Marianne’s career. After this conference, her life totally changes.

As a lecturer threatened of losing her post, the most important event for Marianne is to hold the Haworth conference successfully. In fact, before the Haworth conference, she is thought to be a dull lecturer who gets little more than 50 percent attendance. Meanwhile, Marianne is suffering from gender discrimination at work. After she gives births to her children, her colleagues keep asking her questions about babies. She is called “dead wood” by others at work, for her bad public relations. She is always thought to be a poor old woman because of so many family issues. Also, she is thought to lag behind the modern world. Actually, Marianne is just not so utilitarian. She wants to have time to read: not to teach, or examine, or write learned articles—but just to read for its own sake, read and think.

When Sharon tells Marianne how deeply she has been filled in, taken up, included and embraced by *Jane Eyre*, Marianne is so moved that she cannot hide her pleasure. As long as just one person is touched, she feels she has done something right. What she cares is not the reputation or the public relations but the feeling that reading brings to people.

Despite the principles of equal opportunities, women are still not preferred at work. "In most employers' eyes, once women are employed, they have babies and then exercise the right to leave. Then they have child-care problems and became unreliable, refusing to take on evening classes. At last they become bolshy bra-burners, entering into covens with their fellow feminists to demand creches and courses devoted to the study of the interminable history of their sex's wrongs" (Davies 230). Generally speaking, this may describe an objective fact. Nevertheless, Marianne is the last person to act like that. According to the book, Marianne has tried every means to do her job well. During the Haworth conference, her lecture is admired by almost every audience. But after she resigns, she is still discussed and labeled as a poor old woman by her former colleagues. On the one hand, she is never thoroughly understood by her colleagues. They chase different goals from Marianne. On the other hand, Marianne's lecture moves and changes Sharon, which is a huge comfort to Marianne as a lecturer.

As a wife, Marianne does not obtain real equality from her husband Thomas. Thomas seems like a husband who respects Marianne's career, but actually he thinks Marianne should stay at home and take care of the kids in his deep mind. Whenever there are collisions between their work and family, he will ask Marianne to give in.

As a wife, she seems to be equal with her husband Thomas. But in Thomas's inner heart, Marianne is not as necessary and significant as him at work. He deeply aspires that Marianne is willing to stay at home with kids, whereas he knows in this day and age, asking such a sacrifice of a woman is universally criticized, for this notoriously indicates Thomas's selfishness and sexual discrimination. Nevertheless, whenever there are some collisions between the couple, Thomas always takes Marianne's compromise for granted. To some degree, he is a sexist, who thinks the mother should be the one to take more responsibilities in a family composed of two parents. Actually, in Thomas' eyes, man has gender privileges from biological design and immemorial customs. Thomas's "phallic criticism" upon women in general and his wife in particular is a historically general phenomenon which is described by Mary Ellmann in her *Thinking about Women*, "The evidence in women of what is considered any masculine propensity is felt to be unpleasant, prompted by envy (Freud again) or excessive ambition"(21), so Marianne's "unpleasant ambition" of

feeling s sense of equality with Thomas in working out as a professional irritated the arrogant man, who must bear the stereotype on women, “On one level of diction such women are called pushy or driving, on another phallic. And of course this last term is, in these contexts, always reproachful” (21), for this, Ellmann further explains, “men may congratulate themselves upon the productivity of their own mental wombs, but they are displeased to come upon women with mental penises” (21). Such dissed attitudes to women are also listed by Eva Figs(1932-2012), such as “Female intellectuals.....bear masculine temperament mostly” (95). Even Rousseau has been holding the belief that a female intellectual “is always thinking of turning herself into a man” (qtd. in Russ 050).

As a mother, Marianne never gives up any kid. Whenever she stays with kids, she will think in kids’ way. No matter she is with or off the kids’ father, she is a brave, tough and independent mother. As a mother, Marianne respects and tries to understand the kids’ thoughts. When one of her children Charlie said he saw a lady in the garden, Marianne did not ignore or tell the child that it was just the shadow of the tree as most adults would usually do. Marianne did not deny Charlie’s thought but said good night to the “lady” together with Charlie. Accordingly, she is a mother who has great empathy with kids. While for another, taking good care of kids nearly occupies all her daily life. She has been filled with dreams, but the kids trample her personal desires to pulp. Due to the “difference between father and mother in a family” put forward by Thomas, Marianne is always the selected one to give up her work and stay at home to take care of those kids.

When she was working outside, Marianne also had to take care of her three kids: one baby, one toddler and a school boy. The kids were so naughty, the job was so tiring and the payment was not so high that no nurse was willing to take care of those kids. Meanwhile, she was not understood by others in public. All the frosty old men looked up in disgust at the invasion. Even the waitress Sharon did not really think it is right for her to go to work when she has such a young family. She could hardly find someone to understand her. When her big day came, she begged Thomas to take care of the kids just for one day. But Thomas broke his promise. He brought all kids to the conference, which is disastrous. Marianne could trust him no more. After learning the truth that Thomas was an irresponsible father and callous husband, Marianne decided to leave him and just stay with kids as an independent mother instead of a wife.

The Quasi-romance and the Potential Ethical Dilemma

The “dead wood” Marianne has a pen pal, Timothy, who is often called “wreck”

because of his poor health. Timothy is a responsible friend and devoted husband, with the former profile depicted with his coincidental one-night staying with the spinster Eileen in the Bronte parsonage, and the latter identity with his remembrance of his deceased wife Jojo.

Timothy and Eileen are strangers at first, but the Haworth conference draws them together. Accidentally locked within the Bronte parsonage together, they have to spend the night under the same roof. The 63 years old spinster Eileen realizes Timothy is the gentle man who she falls in love with and cares much about. But Timothy treats Eileen as a friend all the time. When Timothy perceives that Eileen has a crush on him, he refuses her in his mild way. Undoubtedly, confronted with such relationships, Timothy is responsible and restrained, who favors settling matters indirectly and tactfully. Timothy's benevolence can be demonstrated when he returns Eileen's letters as a friend after the ethical predicament in Haworth.

As a husband and widower, Timothy loves his wife Jojo all the time from the bottom of his heart. When Jojo died, he had lost his voice because of the extreme sorrows. He did not regret all the efforts he had put into caring for Jojo after breast cancer was inflicted upon her. Timothy was not a very social person, but to the many friends Jojo had attracted while alive, he called "our friends." Yet with Jojo's death the mutual friends all melted away. Whenever he saw beautiful things around him, he longed to show it to Jojo. He often talked to Jojo in his mind when something fresh and fancy happened to him. The moment he saw Emily's ghost, he was not afraid of it but to ask Emily "Have you seen Joanna?" Though Jojo was dead, her darling name lived in Timothy vividly. In Timothy's heart, there is always a pure place which only belongs to Jojo. When he is about to leave the world, he feels content because he will stay with Jojo forever.

The devoted husband and widower Timothy's new identity as Eileen's friend makes him ethically confused at first, but the confusion ends after the conference.

As for Marianne, Timothy is a comforting communicator via correspondence at the beginning, for his affection towards Emily Brontë finds resonance in the professional university teacher, who equates the correspondence between them with a warm harbour where she can get rid of those tiresome trifles temporarily. Timothy wants to leave a wonderful impression upon Marianne. Therefore, he primps himself to look handsome before their prospective meeting at Haworth, where the ethical predicament is waiting for them.

Ethical predicament is the knotty conflict which is caused by ethical confusion and brought to characters in literary texts. Ethical predicament is usually resulted from ethical paradox. There are many forms of ethical predicament, among which

ethical dilemma is one. "Ethical dilemma is composed of two moral propositions. If characters make moral judgement to each of them respectively, they will find each choice is right and in conformity with moral principles. But once they choose one between the two, the other will be found against the ethics. The prerequisite of ethical dilemma is to make a selection between two right options" (Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 262-263). In *Four Dreamers and Emily*, more than one character is facing the ethical dilemma, among whom Marianne and Timothy are centered.

Marianne leads a really buzzing life. She is always in a hurry. She is hurrying for the lecture, conference and kids. She has a husband Thomas who regards kids and chores as mother's duty. Whenever there needs one of them to give in daily work to family, he thinks that one should be Marianne and takes her compromise for granted. At such a moment, Marianne will turn to her pen pal Timothy who appreciates and admires her career extremely. Timothy is a refuge for Marianne to go to while running away from the smothering life. His letter gives Marianne some comfort to get through every tough day. The day when the most significant conference to Marianne is held breaks the reluctantly maintained balance. Thomas upsets Marianne again and loses all her trust by taking the kids to the conference venue. In the most embarrassing situation, Timothy gives Marianne strong support she needs most. What happens at the conference makes Marianne aware of her being unwilling to live the same life as before any more. Hence, she is confronting a dilemma which may totally subvert her present life.

In Marianne's imagination, Timothy is a giant of a man who is rugged, powerful and just a little beyond his prime of life; a special man who lives in poetry and solitude. Timothy's existence is a huge comfort and an exit to flee from the tiresome reality. "His being there, sending the beautiful messages gliding through the door week by week, had helped her through the rowing, the nappies, the babies' squalling, the sleepless nights" (Davies 99). Finishing daily work, she will read Timothy's letter as a reward. She regards Timothy as someone who cares for her out there. Through him, she has kept in contact with an estimable image of herself: an independent, open-minded, thoughtful and charming woman who has her own career. After they meet each other in the flesh, they break the illusion about each other's attractive appearance but become real soul mates later. Timothy comes to the conference and feels the same way as Marianne. When Marianne is nervous and drops the speech, he feels worried. When Marianne finishes her speech very successfully and is admired much by others, he feels proud, glad and gratified sincerely.

In Marianne's eyes, Timothy never burdens her and his letter brings her glow while Thomas is occupied in throwing up all over her or slamming the door in her face and calling her "Woman". In Thomas' eyes, he is always superior to Marianne at work. Hence, every time when one of them needs to give in, compromise or sacrifice, that one must be Marianne. Thomas is irreplaceable while Marianne is not. Thomas talks about equality in a family but never acts like that. The two men represent different attitudes towards women with a career in a family. Timothy stands for the man who supports his wife's career, looks forward to her better achievement and feels glad and proud for her career. Whereas Thomas symbolizes the man who wants his wife to put family before her own career, which means that his wife should stay at home to take care of kids and chores so he can concentrate on his own career. The reason why they have totally different attitudes may be up to their identities and relationship with Marianne. Timothy is not Marianne's husband but friend. What he needs to care about is only Marianne herself. He has no responsibility of Marianne's kids. So he need not worry about the kids. He can think of all issues entirely from the perspective of Marianne. On the contrary, Thomas cannot get rid of those duties. He is Marianne's husband, the man to take full responsibility of the kids, the wife and the family. The existence of three naughty kids is undeniable. Also, there is no appropriate nurse. Hence, at least one of them has to give in. In Thomas' eyes, that place in family is much more proper for women than men. He thinks he does better than Marianne in work, so it is easy to decide Marianne is the one to compromise.

Behind these two options, it is a universal problem that every family with kids has to confront: career or family. In fact, this is an issue that all members in a family should consider. Nevertheless, in most cases, the family which contains a man and a woman always pushes the woman to make this hard choice. Marianne did not know how to handle this issue which happened every day. She was wondering maybe she should retreat from the working world and be with the children. She could not cope with both work and family. "I was two people in one body: two people who did not get on. I was not in a bad marriage. I was a bad marriage" (Davies 201).

Timothy had a happy life when his wife was alive. After his wife's death, fortunately, his pen pal Marianne's letters gave him comfort to continue his life. Life moved on smoothly. However, a latest letter from Marianne broke Timothy's peaceful life. Marianne was going to hold a conference which was about Emily Brontë. So Marianne invited Timothy to this conference. Timothy was wondering whether he should go or not. If he decided to go to the conference, he could see his beacon Marianne in the flesh. Meanwhile he should take the risk of losing her for

possible dissatisfaction towards each other. If he made the decision that he would not come to the conference, he might keep the cheerful friendship with Marianne as before. But they would not be much closer. Also, he would suffer from the pity that he missed the chance to see Marianne in person. Accordingly, Timothy was confronting the dilemma that meant a lot to him.

The Visibility of Ethical Principles via Panopticism

After Jojo's death, Marianne's letters had kept Timothy alive. He was struggling to life, struggling and failing. The virtual contact between him and Marianne gave him more than a boost: it gave him something to live for. Marianne is a suavely eminent academic in his imagination, to whom he had a horror of presenting himself as a common crank. Before they met each other in the flesh, he imaged that Marianne was an attractive, intense, eloquent and deep woman from her writing. Meanwhile he represented himself in a poetical way: someone ardent and committed. Timothy dreamed that when they read the same text, the poems would be the space where their spirits met and mingled. Occasionally he dreamed they became soul mates, and the friend Marianne became the lover Marianne. But Timothy was sensible enough to constrain all these to the sphere of occasional fantasy with reason, with the development of which "mankind became an advanced species with ethical consciousness"(Nie, "Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism" 89). According to Nie, the reason possessed by Timothy "can be regarded as the key property that distinguishes man from other animals, and the most fundamental part of reason is ethical consciousness" (89).

Repressed by the ethical consciousness, Timothy could not decide whether he should go to the Haworth conference or not. On the one hand, if he decided to go there, he had to face a lot of problems. First, he physically has the difficulty in travelling; second, he was afraid what a fool he might sound at a conference when he had lost his voice; thirdly, he could not talk intellectually; fourthly, he was not confident in his physical appearance. On the other hand, if he decided not to go there, he also had to confront some tangles. First, he was too eager to see Marianne, so he did not want to miss the chance; second, Marianne was looking forward to his visit, and he never wanted to disappoint her.

Actually, the ethical predicament is involved with the probable ethical selections in Marianne and Timothy's situations, which suggests a potent, realistic but risky relationship, for they cannot predicate how things will go after their meeting. If they find they really fit each other, they will have a closer relationship in the real life instead of contacting each other via letters. The ethical selection

confronted by Timothy “contains two parts. On the one hand, ethical selection is moral selection made by human beings, leading to moral maturity and perfection; on the other hand, ethical selection is to choose between two or more moral options. Different selections conduce to different results and ethical values” (Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 266-267).

Similar to Timothy, Marianne is also confronted frequently with the question that is not an ethical one at first, but finally turns into such a one with some catalyst: “So what do you want me to do? Me give in my notice, is that it? Stay at home and mind your children and lose my independence” (Davies 56). The questions that Marianne put forward towards her husband Thomas when they were arguing about the person to take care of kids display the conflicts between the couple explicitly. Certainly, Thomas had an answer in his mind, but he could not say. In the present society, nobody can ask a woman to do such sacrifice. Marianne understood Thomas’ thought inside, but at that moment the most significant thing for her was to hold the conference and finish her speech. She strongly urged Thomas to take care of the kids for one day. However, Thomas failed. He brought kids to the conference that night. Consequently, the naughty kids screwed up the conference. Marianne felt humiliated at her career, disappointed at Thomas and doubtful of herself. The whole thing was the last straw that broke Marianne’s back. She made her decision to leave Thomas, with her reputation and career abandoned. Having three kids to support, no shelter to live in, Marianne fell into despair. Timothy knew it would be hard for Marianne to settle down for a period of time, he then invited Marianne to his hometown and left the house to her after he passed away. Under such a situation, Marianne’s non-ethical question turns into an ethical one, which is “reflects ethical conflicts and always has some connection with ethical knot” (Nie, *Introduction to Ethical Literary Criticism* 266). But, with the self-discipline and the ethical principle to regulate both parties, the subtle feelings between them transcend the sexual attractions and a sense of kinship led to the final harmonious warmth in their life.

When the Hawthorne conference was approaching, Timothy was very nervous and hesitating to go or not, as analyzed previously. Before he set off, he wrote a letter to Marianne to remind her that they knew better than to judge by material appearances, which actually seems like a kind “warning”: if my appearance upsets you, it is not my fault, for I have warned you in advance. Eventually he arrived there. When Sharon called Marianne Mrs. Pendlebury, he corrected Sharon that Marianne was “Doctor Pendlebury” instead of “Mrs Pendlebury.” At that moment, though Timothy was a little upset about Marianne’s plain appearance, his first

concern was still to preserve Marianne's dignity as an academic. When Marianne was going to talk, she was nervous. Meanwhile some audience seemed to give up listening to her lecture. Nevertheless, Timothy kept confidence in her. He firmly believed that the glow and power of what she had to say would probably transfigure her ordinariness when she got up to talk. He also had the faith that the light which he had come all this way to find would beacon out. It's explicitly demonstrated that Timothy went to the Haworth conference and tried his best to protect Marianne's dignity, career and life.

In the process of the conference, the conferees made an expedition to Top Withens. Though Marianne felt "dubious about Timothy's insistence on coming" (Davies 111), he still followed the party in "the strangest of outfits" (Davies 111) to impress Marianne. On the way, Timothy's body could not afford him to move any further, so he stopped to have a rest. When Marianne ceased to accompany Timothy, he told her to keep going. When Marianne showed her worries and concerns about Timothy's physical weakness, his response is "If I died here, what better place?" (Davies 115) The implication of Timothy's utterance is self-evident: he has fulfilled his expectation to meet Marianne physically and thereby heartily contented, which deserves the price of death. Marianne must have understood the underlying implication completely, for her consequent action surprised Timothy: "She reached over and with a little shy swoop kissed him on the cheek before she left" (Davies 115). This kiss is the only intimate contact between them, and Timothy "felt the kiss lingering there and fading slowly for a while after she had disappeared" (Davies 115). Since "Nobody had kissed him since Jojo. Nobody.....Now there was a new beginning, a fresh pulse of life" (Davies 115). Due to the revival of his life energy merged with his physical frailty, Timothy "was in time to see a final figure, detached from the main group but proceeding at a cracking pace, come up round the bend with her dog" (Davies 127), when another ascending party passed him. Having been immersed in Emily's poetry and her visitant at almost every night, Timothy "recognized her of course, almost at once" (Davies 127). The incarnation of Emily Bronte in his vision at this moment led him to the decision that "This time, yes," he "would dare to satisfy his desire" (Davies 128). Timothy's desire is to "reach out and touch.....," and "His arm shimmered with the electricity of the contact" (Davies 128). Accompanied by her dog Keeper, the womanly Emily's electrifying reappearance to the devotee Timothy on the moors is quite different from the previous waif-like girl who visits his bedside at night. This ghost of Emily's bears the resemblance to the popular manifestations, as "The Emily ghost who haunts the afterlife of her novel *Wuthering Heights* cannot be extricated from the moor and all

its inhabitants, human and nonhuman” (Pyke 163), and the devotee Timothy, lying on the moors, is one of the haunted. In a state of trance, Timothy may have some difficulty in telling between the incarnation of the womanly Emily Bronte and the caring Marianne whose kiss is lingering on his cheek.

What is ethically significant is, at both romantic moments described above, Timothy can see (the ghost of) his deceased wife Jojo overlooking him. When Marianne kissed him, he felt “on the far side of the hills, Jojo tenderly applauded” (Davies 115); when (the ghost of) “Emily looked down,..... and Timothy looked up,” Timothy saw in his vision “Somewhere beyond her along the same curving plane stood Jojo” (Davies 128). Obviously, the appearance of the ghost of Jojo functions as the ethical principles that regulate the behaviors of Timothy, and the position Jojo stands in is an imitation of Bentham’s “Panopticon,” which is “to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 201). In social life, this power may get the ethical principles involved.

Such Panopticism is also made by Eileen, a 63 years old spinster, who on the way to Top Withens accidentally observed the athletic sex between two fellow-delegates on the Haworth moor, and reproached the “blind brutality” for violating the ethical principles of civilized human beings. The “blind brutality,” or “man’s basic desires and instincts” in Prof. Nie’s theory (“Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism” 90), needs self-control, otherwise, “they will receive due punishment” (“Towards an Ethical Literary Criticism” 90). In the romances witnessed by Jojo and Eileen respectively, the two overseers are virtually agents of ethical principles. Under the surveillance of ethical principles, combined with self-control, both Timothy and Marianne repressed the “blind brutality” and regulated the relationship from sexual attraction to kindred affinity. The ending of the novel is immersed in interpersonal harmony and humane warmth.

Conclusion

From the perspective of Ethical Literary Criticism, critics are required to enter the historical scene and then feel the ethical dilemma the characters confront. Critics are even requested to become an agent of the character and act as his or her counsel, so as to understand this character thoroughly. From the analysis of the ethical predicament and the ethical selection of the two protagonists in *Four Dreamers and Emily*, we may conclude the most important thing, for an individual in the civilized society, under the gazing of the deceased Jojo from afar and the spinster Eileen to Top Withens who are in fact agents of the ethical principles, is to be conscious

of and accept the universality of moral disciplines which “established an ‘infra-penalty’; they partitioned an area that the law had left empty; they defined and repressed a mass of behavior that the relative indifference of the great systems of punishment had allowed to escape” (Foucault 178). The behaviors and selections of the individuals are overseen everywhere, seemingly by some specific person, but virtually by the ethical principles, or disciplines in Foucault’s concept, which “has the function of reducing gaps,” and “must therefore be essentially corrective” (Foucault 179) with the aim “to strengthen the social forces—to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply” (Foucault 208). And thereby, the ethically righteous behaviors which perform the robust function of keeping the ethical order and lubricating the interpersonal relationships in a civilized society may be instructive as well as productive.

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