



POETIC REFLECTIONS OF ANNE TYLER'S NOVELS ON POSTMODERN LIFE

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Abstract

One focus of Anne Tyler's novels is the debate between destiny and freedom. Her novels imply the dialectical relationship between destiny and freedom, tend to learn to accept change and uncertainty as the natural forces of life, look for a new and complex life full of various possibilities and challenges, which is a postmodern alternative. Effective communication, the participation of non-human beings and the integration of music as a universal language are Tyler's reflections and responses to the community without poetry. Her novels inspire people with the message that personal inner harmony can promote family harmony, community harmony, and vice versa. The realization of the state requires poetic imagination and creative construction on the basis of subjective identification, as well as individual insight into the surrounding relations and constant adjustment to dynamically adapt to the environment.

1 Introduction

The classic opening of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* highly summarizes the many social contradictions caused by the rapid development of capitalist economy in the 1850s, vividly showing the different views from different positions and perspectives. Although the world has changed, that heavy sigh resonates strongly in the postmodern era. With the changing times, the arrival of post-industrial society, and the intervention of consumerism, traditional values have collapsed, family cohesion and social centripetal forces have gradually weakened, and the emotional bond between people has become increasingly blurred. In the era without poetry, when people enjoy the great

wealth brought by material goods, they also truly feel the soul that has nowhere to be placed, they 'wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born' (Arnold, 1965:288). In other words, the transformation and qualitative changes of society and the emptiness and impoverishment of the spiritual world urgently require people to stop and reflect on the meaning of life and explore ways to survive.

The contemporary American novelist Anne Tyler (1941-) is a writer of the third generation after the "Southern Renaissance". Her representative works include *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (1982), *The Accidental Tourist* (1985) and *Breathing Lessons* (1982). The three mid-period novels

established her status in the American literary world, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Literature, the National Book Critics' Fiction Award, the Kafka Prize, the Faulkner Prize and many other literary awards. Tyler's works not only pay attention to the loneliness and loss of contemporary American individuals, the indifference and alienation within the family, the existence of family entities in name, the fracture, fragmentation, and superficial characteristics of postmodern life, but also show the dynamic integration of gender temperament, the interleaving of family power, the symbiosis of multi-culture, and a series of positive influences brought about by the prevalence of consumerism and mass culture. More importantly, through careful taste, we can perceive the profound meaning of her literature, searching for poetic life in the changing times.

2 Communicate Effectively and Learn to Change

'The community serves in turn as an enlarged version of the family' (Eckard, 1990:34). In other words, everyone in the community can show the same contradictions and struggles, hopes and dreams as their original family. In *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*, Baker, the father, 'had uprooted the family continually, tearing them away as soon as they were settled and plunking them someplace new' (DHR, 65). The whole family doesn't even have a chance to breathe, let alone integrate into the community and have a sense of belonging. Mother Pearl was unable to attend the wedding and funeral of her own relatives in person, gradually lost the message and cut off communication. Even though she worked in a grocery store, Pearl never made friends with anyone, and she forbade her children to have 'outside' friends. This is essentially avoiding contact and communication with the outside world, living in their own 'safe' home. The loss of triple support from loved ones, loved ones, and friends has left Pearl hovering on the brink of collapse, causing psychological distortion and even resorting to violence against her children. Ironically, at Pearl's funeral, the pastor who had never met her described her as a 'devoted wife and a loving pillar of the community. She had lived a long, full life and died in the bosom of her family, who grieved for her but took comfort in knowing that she'd gone to a far finer place' (DHR, 327). But the truth is:

She hadn't been anyone's wife for over a third of a century; that she'd been a frantic, angry, sometimes terrifying mother; and that she'd never shown the faintest interest in her community but dwelt in it like a visitor from a superior neighborhood, always wearing her hat when out walking, keeping her doors tightly shut when at home. That her life had been very long indeed but never full; stunted was more like it. Or crabbed. (DHR, 327)

To be sure, Pearl's family woes were one of the root causes of her inability to integrate into the community, since 'the family is the middleman' institution between our psychological fears and our public life' (Robertson, 1985: 203). However, the tragedy of the Pearl family was like an intertwined chain reaction, and family problems forced Pearl to almost cut off all communication with the outside world; Conversely, detachment from the community exacerbates her personal isolation and the misfortune of the families.

To be sure, a lack of effective communication with others and refusal to change do not run through Tyler's novels. There are many comforting scenes in *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*. In Pearl's final dream, Tyler paints a harmonious picture for us: "three small children ran toward her, laughing, across the sunlit sand" (DHR, 37). Although it is just a dream, the beauty in the dream is not only Pearl's lifelong desire, but also contains Tyler's poetic imagination of the future. In addition, Tyler projects more practice and yearning for community communication and harmony in the other protagonist of the novel, Ezra. When Ezra's thirst for home was not satisfied, he devoted his life to running the Homesick Restaurant. He made a warm menu, dishes, waiters and decoration, and sincerely treated every customer who came in to eat, so that they could get physical and mental nourishment. Ezra, too, won praise and recognition from her neighbors. Mrs. Payson once expressed her heartfelt gratitude to Ezra: 'Why, he has been like a son to me, always in and out of the house ...I'll never forget, back when Josiah's daddy died, Ezra came and sat with us, and fixed us meals, and made us cocoa' (DHR, 82). Ezra treated the people around him like a family member. He was not disconnected from

the community but generously dedicated himself.. It can be said that Ezra carries Tyler's beautiful vision of mutual connection and dependence among families and individuals in the community, sharing feelings and care, reflecting her unique skills in communication.

Coincidentally, at the end of *The Accidental Tourist*, Tyler describes it in an almost celebratory tone: 'A sudden flash of sunlight hit the windshield, and spangles flew across the glass. The spangles were old water spots, or maybe the markings of leaves, but for a moment Macon thought they were something else. They were so bright and festive, for a moment he thought they were confetti' (AT, 353). At that point, Macon had an Epiphany, and he chose Muriel. Macon actively chose the future, rather than letting the future fall on him, and his repentance and awakening are real and touching. Macon finally came out of the shadow of losing his son and learned to accept the change and uncertainty as the natural force of life, which means that he stepped out of her comfort zone and began to search for a new, complex life full of possibilities and challenges, a postmodern alternative.

As the review on the back cover of *Clock Dance* (2018) puts it, 'Without Anne Tyler, American novel would be a desolate place... Tyler's novels make us believe that there is still a profound connection between people, but the busy world gets in the way of their connection. The novel is full of inspiration for the reshaping of the relationship between people and ourselves'. In the novel, after Willa and her second husband, Peter, moved to a suburban golf community, where Peter played with her friends a few hours a day and their son lived far away, Willa flew from the West Coast of the United States to the East Coast to take care of a strange woman, her daughter and her dog. What appears to be impulsive behavior is a lonely and desperate need for change and hope. In Baltimore, 'Willa should have felt pity for the meagerness of it all, but in fact her main emotion was envy' (CD, 127). When Willa wished for a daughter, the response is 'I'll be your daughter any old time!' (CD, 219), which is probably going to move her and leave her with a lifelong aftertaste. Before she left, neighbors rushed

to see Willa off, even though she had to leave at 4:45 a.m. This is completely different from her husband who refused to come to the airport to pick Willa up: 'Tomorrow I'm tied up. I do have a life, after all, whether or not you're aware of it. So you know what, Willa? You'll just have to find your own way home' (CD, 246). The fact that unrelated people can get along better than family underscores Tyler's desire to create a new kind of community. The approach is unique and focuses on communication and companionship, raising the focus on family communication issues to the level of community and society. In fact, many dark lines in the novel emit similar signals, that is, as long as there is more care and truth between people, the outcome may be very different. When Willa returned to the city, her husband's indifference made her choose to start a new life:

In her new life, she will rent a room somewhere. Or she will live in Mrs. Minton's house, or find herself an apartment with a swimming pool Cheryl can visit. She will teach English to Ben's refugees, or Spanish to Cheryl's classmates. Or she might try something new that she hasn't even imagined yet. There is no limit to the possibilities. (CD, 250)

Postmodern society itself means that other things are also possible, and any change in any part of the individual, family, or society will have an impact on the other two. The indifference of Willa's husband pushed Willa outward again and again, prompting her to seek warmth in the community, which is the brilliance of life and the charm of the open ending in Tyler's novels.

3 Diverse Participation of Non-human Organisms

The harmony of the community cannot be separated from the joint efforts of families and individuals, and also from the diverse participation of non-human creatures. With the rapid development of technology and industry, as well as the improvement of transformation ability and level, human understanding of nature has undergone significant changes. In order to meet their material needs, human beings unscrupulously demand resources, hunt animals and destroy the

environment, resulting in various ecological problems, which in turn threaten the survival of the whole human being. The root cause of the contradiction is the self-centered egoism of human beings, who take it for granted that they are superior to everything else. The consequences of being guided by this value have prompted humans to deeply reflect on their relationship with nature, animals and plants. So far, the depiction of animals in Tyler's novels has been a blind spot in the academic research, and no attention has been paid to the depth of her intentions and thoughts on the harmonious whole formed by the equal level of animals and human beings. In my opinion, Tyler's seemingly everyday and even playful scenes call for the harmonious coexistence of living beings, containing a strong poetic sentiment.

The dog 'airplane' in *Clock Dance* appears 156 times throughout the novel. It becomes Willa's go-between when she arrives in a new environment. The word 'dog' appears 124 times in *The Accidental Tourist*, and the dog 'Edward' appears 327 times, nearly a third as many times as the main character Macon (1,459). Edward is Macon's son Ethan's beloved little dog during his lifetime. After Ethan's accident, Edward also went crazy and bit people, causing Macon to break his leg. His limping legs were a symbol of being unable to move forward. In fact, Macon does not know much about dogs, but prefers the cat Helen, who can keep secrets confidential. Unable to escape the shadow of his son's sudden death, Macon could only stay with Edward and Helen after separating from his wife to alleviate the pain of lovesickness. Tyler's portrayal of Edward is detailed:

Once upon a time Ethan had brushed him, bathed him, wrestled on the floor with him; and when Edward stopped to paw at one ear Ethan would ask, with the soberest courtesy, "Oh, may I scratch that for you?" The two of them watched daily at the window for the afternoon paper, and the instant it arrived Ethan sent Edward bounding out to fetch it—hind legs meeting front legs, heels kicking up joyfully. Edward would pause after he got the paper in his mouth and look around him, as if hoping to

be noticed, and then he'd swagger back all bustling and self-important and pause again at the front hall mirror to admire the figure he cut. "Conceited," Ethan would say fondly. Ethan picked up a tennis ball to throw and Edward grew so excited that he wagged his whole hind end. Ethan took Edward outside with a soccer ball and when Edward got carried away—tearing about and shouldering the ball into a hedge and growling ferociously—Ethan's laugh rang out so high and clear, such a buoyant sound floating through the air on a summer evening. (AT, 92)

It is not difficult to see that Edward and Ethan play together as brothers and accompany each other, adding comic effect to the whole novel. First of all, actions such as 'brushing' 'bathing' and 'tickling' reflect the intimacy of their relationship, and Tyler's meticulous choice of verbs reflects the empathy between living beings and humans. Secondly, the depiction of Edward's joyful behavior while picking up newspapers every day is like a babbling toddler who forgets and appears energetic after completing the tasks given by his parents, imbued with Tyler's concept of respecting life and the coexistence of all things. Especially when Ethan affectionately refers to Edward as a 'narcissist', Tyler has fully crossed the divide between humans and other creatures, projecting her poetic vision of a harmonious community. Finally, the carefree picture of Ethan and Edward playing football together contains the simple, pure and unburdened love in the world, which can be described as Tyler's finishing touch. It is through these real-life scenes of daily interaction that readers feel a harmonious coexistence and a great love of brotherhood.

Edward's spirit changed after Ethan's death, and he began to act recklessly, bark and bite, and be stubborn and disobedient. When Macon had to take him to a pet clinic for a business trip, Edward 'gave Macon a sudden suspicious look. Edward was standing upright now and clinging to Macon's knees, like a toddler scared of nursery school...He'd curled his upper lip and snarled' (AT, 23-25). Such a rebellious dog promoted Macon and Muriel to meet and fall in love. In desperation, Macon had to ask

Muriel, the dog trainer, for help. In more than 20 pages, Tyler details Muriel's dog training and how Macon practiced it at her command. But eventually Macon called off the training because Muriel's methods were too violent, cruel, coercive and high-pressure, causing Edward's hair to stand straight behind his neck, 'with a bellow, Edward sprang straight at her face. Every tooth was bare and gleaming. His lips were drawn back in a horrible grimace and flecks of white foam flew from his mouth' (AT, 120-121). Edward, who was eventually tamed and rolled his eyes, made Macon extremely distressed, 'Please don't come again...I'd rather a barking dog than a damaged, timid dog' (AT, 120-121). Macon, who had always been cold, developed a heart of compassion for Edward, and the dog became Macon's emotional support for his deceased son, externalizing his inner thoughts and changes. The transcendent feeling made him move from a narrow personal center to a broader scope, opening up a new space for understanding Tyler's imagination of the equality of all beings and the coexistence of all things. More importantly, affirming the intrinsic value of life of other creatures and calling for people to respect and revere life is in line with Tyler's cultural and gender views. She does not beautify the white mainstream society and sing its praises, but exposes, criticizes or even silently condemns the hegemonistic behavior of the dominator controlling everything.

As Macon and Muriel grew closer, Edward gradually entered the lives of Muriel and her son Alexander, and the relationship between them was not tame and being tamed, but equal and loving. When Macon took Edward to live in Muriel's house, 'a schoolboy with a crush on his teacher' finally arrived at the teacher's side as expected (AT, 277). Once, when Macon took Edward for a walk, he happened to meet Alexander, who was mocked and taunted by his classmates. Edward ran over and barked at the three elder children, scaring them away. When peace was restored, Macon, Alexander, and Edward walked home together, Alexander 'slipped his hand into Macon's'. (AT, 255). The warm scene contains the coexistence of many different things: different classes, different families, different ages and the integration of human and animal unity.

When Macon held Alexander's cold little hand, he felt 'a pleasant kind of sorrow sweeping through him' (AT, 255-256). To some extent, Alexander replaced Ethan, healed Macon's pain and warmed the years, of which Edward's credit can not be underestimated, and it guided the novel to the peak of love. Ferdinand Tönnies, a German sociologist and philosopher, once said that 'community means a real and lasting common life' (Tennis, 2001:19), which requires a bond throughout, and Edward is that bond in the novel. It is believed that this bond will continue to play a role in promoting communication and interaction in the future, filled with various coexistence of homogeneity and heterogeneity, and jointly playing the strong symphony of life in the era.

Since the birth of human beings, the relationship between humans and nature, as well as between humans and other living beings, has undergone a process of awe, obedience, conquest, and transformation, and the individual and the whole have interlinked and influenced each other. Nowadays, when various problems are gradually exposed, human beings need to calmly reflect on their ways of life, production and thinking, and explore the road to harmonious coexistence. In *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fiction*, Fredric Jameson refers to science fiction's supernatural wisdom and knowledge possessed by dragons, as well as their symbiotic relationship with humans. They can solve problems that cannot be solved in real life through the superpowers in the virtual world (Jameson, 2014:89). Here, animals become a medium to express desires beyond the reach of human abilities, and the yearning for poetic balance has long been embedded in Tyler's novels, providing references for post-modern people who are trapped in the anxiety and reflection of the problems of The Times.

4 Appeal and Shaping Power of Music

According to Jean-Francois Lyotard's statement in *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*, postmodernism is a decadent thing that exists in 'modernity', including alienation, paralysis, abandonment, decadence, mediocrity, etc. Only art and traditional culture, as a sacred existence, can

change the decadent spiritual status quo of post-modern society. In other words, art and culture can enable the deep integration of communities, creating opportunities for meeting and connecting islands in the 'wasteland', so that islands are no longer lonely. Gabrielle Zevin's book *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* says that 'no one is an island, every book is a world', which proves that people need some kind of connection. In the post-modern world, there are many ways to communicate and connect, and music is one of them.

Music is the common language of humanity, regardless of national boundaries, age, region, and race. Tyler loves music and has been fascinated by the rhythms of Bolton's books since she was a child. Her works are also filled with music and people: a folk song from the Appalachian mountains in *If Morning Ever Comes*; Ezra always carries a mahogany recorder and a wooden whistle in *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*; Delia plays radio pop songs on the beach in *Ladder of Years*; Ira loves to whistle in *Breathing Lessons*; Sarah listens to her students' music to get to know them in *the Accidental Tourist...* Music has become a language that can express desires that are not easily expressed in symbolic structures. Although music typically contains lyrics with symbolic structures, which can be ideological and patriarchal, even if emotions are cultivated through symbolic structures, music may have the function of subverting symbolism and transcending symbolism. (Gainey, 1990:115)

First of all, Tyler's works convey the mood of the characters through music, making up for the feebleness of language in some occasions. When Cody took Ezra's fiancée and listened to her list of her shortcomings on the train, Cody suddenly realized that Ruth, whom he had effortlessly obtained, did not understand Ezra, and the woman beside him did not love cars, 'I intend to ride trains forever; it's so much better than the bus' (DHR, 187). Along the way, Ruth's hand is in Cody's, but is she really suitable to spend her life with him? As Cody sank into agonizing despair, 'The train rounded a curve with a high, thin, whistling sound that took him by surprise. He honestly believed, for an instant, that what he'd heard was music—a tune piped, a burble

of notes, a little scrap of melody floating by on the wind and breaking his heart' (DHR, 187). Tyler does not elaborate on Cody's mixed feelings here, but 'the high, thin, whistling sound' abruptly disturbed her mixed feelings, and the heartbreaking melody has already exhausted Cody's sadness. He doesn't say a word, but the music is worth a thousand words in this scene. This is consistent with the heartache that Ezra felt when he was taking care of Lady Scarlatti, who was critically ill, when she heard music coming from around her. In the hospital, a man lost himself in reciting a poem: 'O dead one, why did you die in the springtime? You haven't yet tasted the squash, or the cucumber salad' (DHR, 137). The lyrics not only include Ezra's most familiar food, but also the tearful feeling of birth, death, and parting between the lines, which is extremely heartbreaking. This place has become a small community, where everyone understands and sympathizes with each other.

Music expresses emotions more diverse, flexible, and powerful than language, and Tyler's music vividly portrays the personality traits of her characters. On the plane, when Macon's seatmate took off her headphones and ordered a 'Bloody Mary', a 'A tinny, intricate, Middle Eastern melody' comes out of them (AT, 28). Unable to bear the noise, Macon thought of buying a mini tape recorder, not to listen to music, but to isolate himself from the world, 'there was far too much noise in the world already—but for insinuation. He could plug himself into it and no one would disturb him. He could play a blank tape: thirty full minutes of silence'(AT, 30). In Macon's eyes, silence is better than music, and when the music stops, he will say, 'Listen! They're playing my song' (AT, 202). Muriel, by contrast, is too 'noisy' and 'chatty' and sings her favorite country music loudly while doing housework, feeling different situations, 'long, complaining ballads about the rocky road of life, the cold gray walls of prison, the sleazy, greasy heart of a two-faced man' (AT, 202). One lives in a safe little world, the other is unrestrained and bold, experiencing life from music. Through different understandings of music, the implicit meaning behind the differences in the personality of this combination is self-evident. Similarly, Michael and

her wife in *The Amateur Marriage* also have very different feelings about music. Michael likes a clean and peaceful singer style, and he believes that such music does not deliberately express sadness, but this style has become rare in postmodernism. In the words of his wife Pauline, he 'prefers dead quiet. If I have the radio on when he comes home—just something lively, you know, to brighten up the atmosphere—he right away clicks it off. Sometimes that's my first inkling that Michael's in the house: this sudden silence' (AM, 86). In contrast, Pauline enjoys music and is immersed in it, which is a reflection of her energy and enthusiasm, 'I'd be trying to cram as much as I could into the time I had left. I'd be dancing till dawn! I'd be greedy for people! (AM, 268) It can be seen that Pauline enjoys dancing and communication, but Michael is introverted and unsociable. The word 'amateur' in the novel's title *Amateur Marriage*, comes from the Latin *amare*, meaning love. So even amateurs do things out of love, but love alone is not enough. Taylor bluntly reveals from the title that the two did not become experts in marriage throughout their lives. They never truly settled down in the marriage, nor did they find lasting compatibility. This incompatibility only deepens over time and constantly produces aftershocks, as can be seen from their different attitudes towards music.

In addition to the delicate display of emotions and personality, music also plays a role in setting off themes in Tyler's novels. The song 'Love Is a Many Splendored Thing' in *Breathing Lessons* was sung in different ways at Serena's wedding and her husband's funeral. After decades, music has fused history with reality. At the wedding, Ira and Maggie sang together, and Ira put her hand on Maggie's back to ease her stage fright, 'When it was time for them to sing, they had begun at the same split second, on exactly the same note, as if they were meant for each other' (BL, 71-72). At the funeral, however, Ira sat impassive, letting Maggie sing alone, and even if she could not sing, he only watched coldly, as if she had nothing to do with him. In the end, Durward came to Maggie's rescue and sang the entire song with her. Although Maggie and Ella had problems on the way to the funeral, which may have contributed to Ira's reluctance to sing

together, 'As usual, he'd be right. As usual, he'd be forcing Maggie to do the giving in' (BL, 74). Little did they know that even if a couple wins right or wrong, they ultimately lose their relationship. The daily life after marriage wears away Ira's patience, and her loneliness, coldness, and stubbornness are also highlighted. Each of his quirks tears away the bitterness and struggle inside, highlighting the spiritual wilderness of the postmodern generation. In fact, after attending the funeral, they had already made up before they arrived home, and readers also learned about it through music. On their way home, they stopped at the supermarket, where 'Tonight You Belong to Me' plays over the loudspeaker, and Ira starts humming:

'Way down', he rumbled absently, 'by the stream...' 'So then Maggie couldn't resist chiming in on that airy little soprano part: 'How sweet, it will seem it started as a spoof, but it developed into a real production.' 'Once more, just to dream, in the moonlight!' 'Their voices braided together on the chorus and then sailed apart, only to reunite and twine around each other once again...' (BL, 295)

Singing becomes an important metaphor in the novel, implying the ability to coordinate and maintain a unique individual voice. There are forks and confluences in the song, indicating the daily quarrels, compromises, and reconciliation between the couple. The final intertwining and interweaving of the song indicates that after decades of marriage, Ira and Maggie have had a look, movement, and expression that are already emotionally connected, and mutual understanding no longer requires language. In the end, the intersection of songs is like a circle, a ring, symbolizing the eternal theme of Tyler's life cycle. Life repeats like a breath, but each inhalation is a new experience. It is similar to *Ladder of Years*, in which Delia listens to the same music 'Underr-the Boardwalk' on the same beach a year before and after she runs away. Like a dream a year ago and a year later, Delia embarked on a journey to find herself, making herself valuable to others, making them know and value her, meeting crises with new fashion and sanity, and becoming a force that held the whole family together. But in the

process of transformation, Delia unknowingly involved in new family entanglements: her landlady, her friends, the father and son as housekeepers... Delia never seemed able to escape her family. She suddenly had not zero family, not one family, but two, three expanding, growing families. It can be seen that people spend their life's strength to break free and go out, only to find that everything is the end and also the starting point. In other words, life is not a straight line, but more of a zigzag or a spiral or a circle... Sometimes, when you reach the end, you find that it is a new beginning. Tyler took the opportunity to express the poetic pursuit of life, that is, not to fight for a moment, take the initiative to create a suitable state. In this state, there is often hidden tolerance and compromise, identification and cooperation, and blindly avoiding, retreating, or even fleeing is not the solution to the problem. When an individual positions their own values and identity, lives harmoniously with family members, and gets along harmoniously with the community, the entire society and world can exist for generations and bloom with different meanings and vitality.

In addition to setting off the themes of the novel, music also gives people hope and care. As every time Ian attended a prayer meeting, he would remember the first time he came to the church, 'He remembered how he had felt welcomed by the loving voices of the singers; he remembered the sensation of prayers flowing heavenward' (SM, 211). Hymns were deeply rooted in Ian's heart, and when he was struggling alone and in despair, it was the music that gave him energy and lifted him up. Tyler embraced music as a creative concern, bringing together the ordinary and the extraordinary. The distinction between public and private is overcome, and the whole world is formed into a caring network that transcends the boundaries of the sacred and the profane (Lynn, 1990:197).

Tyler's music conveys the inexpressible emotions, reveals the inner mood of the characters in detail, and reflects the character of the protagonist. It can be said that 'music knows no borders', and it not only promotes the communication between people, enhances the contact of family members, stimulates the vitality of

the community, more importantly, music breaks the silent silence, reconciles the rigid relationship, resolves the awkward atmosphere, heals the wounded heart, transmits the dream, and endows people with love and positive energy.

5 Conclusion

Fredric Jameson once said, the purpose of utopia is to fail; its epistemological value lies in making us feel the barriers that surround our thoughts, in making us discover unseen limits through pure induction, in making our imagination trapped in the mode of production itself (Jameson, 2018:302). It can be seen that Jameson's utopian thought includes two aspects: the criticism of reality and the prospect of the future, and the former is its primary function. Tyler's works continue to follow the concept, showing the plight of postmodern life in an all-round way, aiming to wake up people who are addicted to it, rescue them from the illusion, and trigger their reflection and interrogation of the current situation. The process can stimulate the imagination of the public about the future society, urge people to move towards their ideal, and draw the power to change and move forward. The poetic imagination presented in Tyler's works is her response to the problems she can see. The ideal state should be to constantly discover and think about problems, which is also an endless loop.

Each person is an independent individual, but lives in a group, is connected and dependent on each other, and becomes a non-independent individual. Everyone has his own small home - family, but also a big family - society. Small family and society are the soil on which individuals rely for survival. In a narrow sense, individuals need to learn to communicate and change effectively, to live out the best state, that is, to seek the balance point between individuals, families and society. The coordination of a relationship requires empathy, and the upgrading of this mindset can enable individuals to better handle various relationships, live freely and comfortably, roam the world with ease, and the surroundings will become more harmonious. In a broad sense, non-human beings and music also participate in the construction of individual and group relations, and seek consensus and cohesion for the harmony of the

whole society. Although no detailed standard answers have been provided, after careful reading and consideration, the direction of future efforts has already been integrated into Tyler's works.

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