**Bringing Tony Home**

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**0.1 Introduction**

‘Bringing Tony Home’ is an intimate Sri Lankan novel. One of the first things that you might notice about this novel is its visually charged nature. Like a movie, the moments in the novel evoke powerful visuals – images of a bygone era, images of nature and images of colourful people. This might not be a surprise to you, considering the fact that the author is a well-known film director in Sri Lanka.

The novel is structured in three parts. As if to suggest the three different time periods of the narrator’s life: his adult life as a film-maker, his teenage years as a restless stubborn and adventurous kid, and finally his life as a young adult. The fragmentation of the novel acts as a brilliant foil to the changes that take place in the beautiful environment of the narrator.

**0.2 Themes**

The central concern in the novel is the sincere affection between the narrator and his faithful dog Tony. This gentle peaceful relationship between the boy and his dog suffers a shocking spilt due to the adverse economic situation in the family. Neither the boy nor the dog knows how to endtheir seven-year strong relationship as the family leaves their home and moves into a much more moderate and restricted surroundings. This inability of both parties to come to terms with that separation triggers off the story.

Amidst this conflict of love between a human and animal the novel gives us a visually-charged insight into the gentle peaceful past era of Sri Lanka when people’s lives were unsophisticated and slow paced: Salaka Poth or the Hal Poth were equivalent to the national identity cards; buses were not crowded and did not run in a hurry; suburban Sri Lanka was alive with awe inspiring trees and waterways; people welcomed strangers to their houses.

The novel also explores relationship between children and parents. The mother is empathetic kind and sensitive. The father is distant and at times insensitive. The narrator knows that he needs to learn to live amidst such opposite tendencies. The dog Tony too seemed aware of the differences in human personalities and seemed to have created his own way of living amidst such differences. The final running away of the dog might sound sad and ungrateful – but Tony,we could assume from the novel, knew what he was doing. The novel also explores the deep nostalgia we human beings have for our own past. It suggests that possibly we might never have given up our past. Like an image from an old movie, or a passage from a novel or a verse form an old poem, the past is embedded deep in our psyche and all it takes is one visual, thought or a sound to unleash those memories. The novel also makes us realize that as human beings we are still unable to deal with partings.

The narrator in the novel avoids parting as much as possible. When the family gets into the bus to go to their new house, he avoids eye contact with Tony who is eager to get in to the bus himself. When he meets another dog like Tony many years later, he runs away after feeding the dog. Even Tony does not know how to part – he runs away from home when his best friend isfast asleep. The novel thus brings all of us into equal grounds – both animal and human.