**Anton Chekov**

**About love**

**In “About love.” Alyohin’s first-person narrative of his relationship with Anna forms the core of the story. But his story is enclosed by an account of the occasion and of the setting in which his narrative occurs. This “farming technique” affects our understanding of Alyohin and his story.**

**For breakfast next day delicious little patties, crayfish and mutton croquettes were served, and while we were eating Nikanor the cook came up to ask what the guests would like for dinner. He was a man of medium height, with a puffy face and small eyes; he was clean-shaven, and it looked as though his mustache had not been shaven off but plucked out.**

**According to Alyohin, the beautiful Pelageya was in love with his cook. As he drank and had a violent temper, she did not want to marry him, but was willing to live with him just so. But he was devout, and his religious convictions did not allow him, and didn’t want it otherwise, and when he was drunk, he used to swear at her and even beat her. Whenever he was drunk, she would hide upstairs and sob, and on such occasions alyohin and servants stayed in the house defend her if necessary.**

**The conversation turned to love.**

**“He loves is born”, said Alyohin, “why Pelageya hasn’t fallen in love with somebody more like herself both inwardly and outwardly, and why she falls in love with Nikanor, that mug- we all call him the Mug-to what extent personal happiness counts in love-all that is uncertain; and one argue about it as one pleases. So far only one incontestable truth has been stated about love: ‘This is a great mystery’; everything else that has been written or said about love is not a solution, but only a statement of questions that have remained unanswered. The explanation that would fit thing, to my mind. Would be to explain every case separately.”**

**“Perfectly true”, Burkin is assented.**

**“We Russians who are cultivated have a weakness for these questions that remain unanswered. Love is usually poeticized, embellished with roses, nightingales; but we Russians embellish our loves with these fatal questions, and choose the least interesting of them, at that. In Moscow, when I was a student, there was a girl with whom I lived, a charming creature, and every time I held her in my arms she was thinking about the price of beef. Similarly, when we are in love, we never stop asking ourselves whether it is honorable or dishonorable, sensible or stupid, what this love know, but that it is a hindrance and a source of dissatisfaction and irritation, of that I am certain”.**

**It looked as though he wanted to tell a story. People who lead a lonely existence always have something on their minds that they talk about.**