Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973) has never been a favourite with the critics. The nobel-laurate writer is a non-entity as far as critical attention is concerned. This dissertation deals with the need of revaluation and re-interpretation of Pearl S. Buck. The study aims at examining the probable causes of her neglected status as a writer and argues that Pearl S. Buck deserves a better deal.

In this dissertation a study of the women characters in Pearl Buck's ten selected novels is presented. Strangely enough, no author has written exclusively on her women and we do not find any in-depth study of the subject. So, an exploration of this aspect which may be called the main strength of Pearl Buck seems most relevant. The aim behind the presentation of this study is to throw some light on this neglected woman-writer and also to bring to focus the array of unforgettable women characters created by her. The first chapter deals with a brief survey of Pearl Buck's literary theories together with the causes of her neglected status as a writer. The second chapter deals with Pearl Buck's concern for the woman question. The third chapter examines the status of women in her novels and the fourth chapter tries to analyse the forces that shape Pearl Buck's women and the conclusion attempts a resume of the proceeding chapters.
The non-availability of materials on Pearl Buck has continually been a problem in bringing this work to completion. To the best of my knowledge except for the book-length study of Pearl S. Buck by Paul A. Doyle no critical works on Pearl Buck have been published so far. Most of her books are out of print. I have had to rely completely on the postal service of A.S.R.C. (Hyderabad). I would like to mention here that it would not have been possible to carry out the project without the kind help of A.S.R.C. I am thankful to A.S.R.C. for the eight-week teacher-grant. During my stay at A.S.R.C., I had access to its most valuable collection of journals and periodicals, which has been of immense help to me.

I am thankful to my supervisor Prof. Hirendra Nath Dutta for his untiring help and guidance. I am highly grateful to Prof. P.C. Kar of M.S. University, Baroda, for his help during my stay in A.S.R.C. To Prof. H.N. Gohain I am sincerely grateful for his valuable suggestions and encouragement. I have of course learnt a lot from the feminist critics, much more than I have acknowledged in my footnotes.

I am fully aware of the fact that there are flaws and shortcomings in my attempt. However I shall consider myself fortunate if I have been found able to contribute
The years spent with Pearl Buck have been a pure joy and a rewarding experience for me. Pearl Buck demands to be studied and examined more intensely for her sensitive portrayal of the female reality. Her works demand attention, particularly, let us say, from the gynocritics, for the compassionate handling of the woman's world fenced into a small place in a masculine universe.

Arupa Kalita
(ARUPA KALITA)