

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
Stuart Blackburn, Ph.D.

KAMALA MARKANDAYA

Born 1924, Chimakurti, Mysore State, India
Died 2004, London

Biography

Kamala Markandaya was born in a small village not far from Mysore, in south India. In 1940, aged just 16, she enrolled to study history at the University of Madras and later worked as a journalist in Madras, where she also published her first pieces of fiction in literary magazines. In 1948, just after Indian independence, she married an English journalist, Bertrand Taylor, and went with him to London, where she spent the rest of her life and gave birth to a daughter, Kim Oliver. During her early years in London, she worked in a solicitor's office but later became a full-time writer, publishing a series of novels all set in India. Her husband died in 1986. Although Markandaya never again lived in India for any extended period of time, her novels are detailed and deft depictions of the lives of Indians of all social and economic classes. As with many creative writers, displacement from the country of her birth only seems to have stimulated her imagination and literary powers.

Achievements *Nectar in a Sieve* was the main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club in March, 1955. In 1967, Markandaya won the National Association of Independent Schools Award (US) and in 1974. She won the English-Speaking Union Award.

Works

Novels

Nectar in a Sieve (1954)
Some Inner Fury (1955)
A Silence of Desire (1960)
Possession (1963)
A Handful of Rice (1966)
The Cofferd Dams (1969)
The Nowhere Man (1972)
Two Virgins (1973)
The Golden Honey Comb (1977)
Pleasure City (1982)