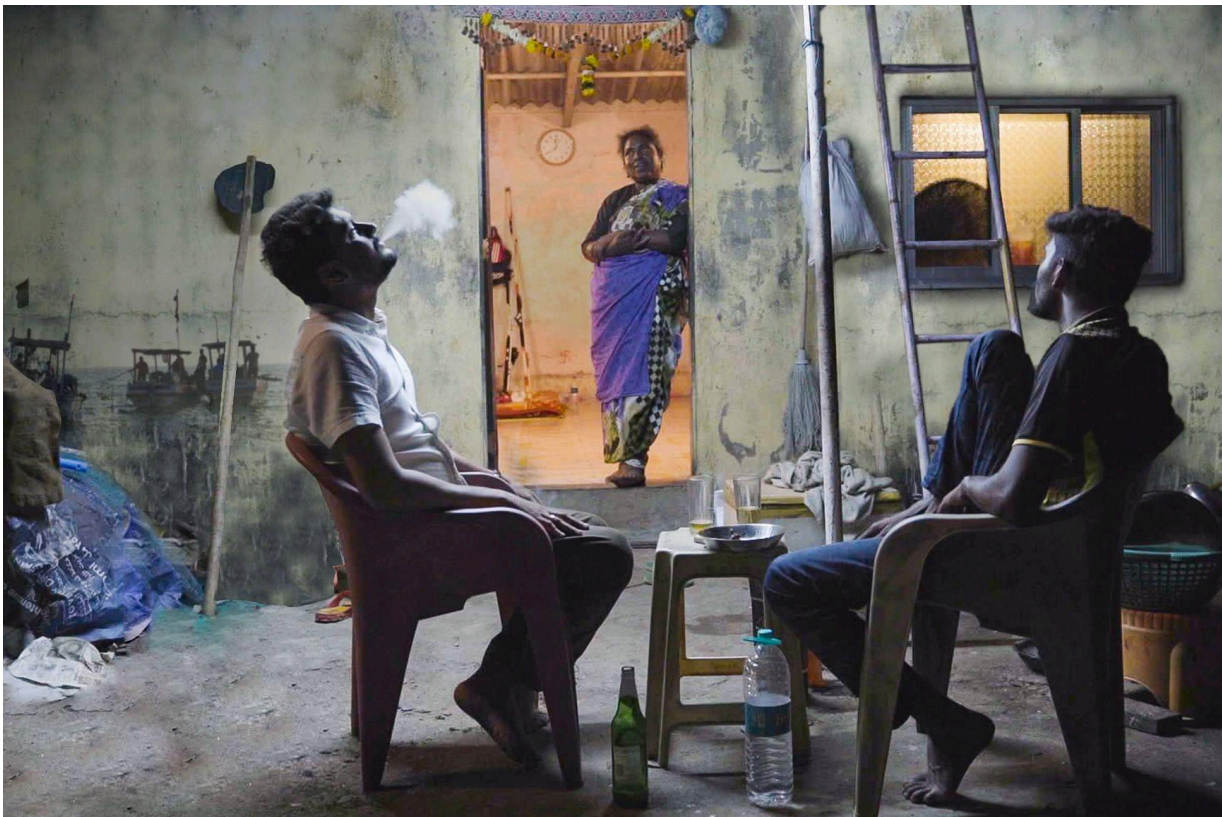




Against the Tide

DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon and Kim Dorman, of Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Against the Tide*.

Mumbai fishermen Rakesh and Ganesh are inheritors of the great Koli knowledge system—a way to harvest the sea by following the moon and the tides. Rakesh has kept faith in traditional methods while Ganesh has embraced technology. *Against the Tide* is a tale of deep friendship and rising resentment between two men against the backdrop of an adoring sea, now turning hostile through climate change.

Contributors



Susan Conlon

Susan Conlon is the former Head of Youth Services at the Princeton Public Library.



Kim Dorman

Kim Dorman serves as the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Princeton Public Library.

ADULT NON-FICTION

Finley, Carmel. *All the Fish in the Sea: Maximum Sustainable Yield and the Failure of Fisheries Management*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Between 1949 and 1955, the State Department pushed for an international fisheries policy grounded in maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The concept is based on a confidence that scientists can predict, theoretically, the largest catch that can be taken from a species' stock over an indefinite period. And while it was modified in 1996 with the passage of the Sustained Fisheries Act, MSY is still at the heart of modern American fisheries management. As fish populations continue to crash, however, it is clear that MSY is itself not sustainable. Indeed, the concept has been widely criticized by scientists for ignoring several key factors in fisheries management and has led to the devastating collapse of many fisheries.

Carmel Finley reveals that the fallibility of MSY lies at its very inception—as a tool of government rather than science. The foundational doctrine of MSY emerged at a time when the US government was using science to promote and transfer Western knowledge and technology, and to ensure that American ships and planes would have free passage through the world's seas and skies. Finley charts the history of US fisheries science using MSY as her focus and in particular its application to halibut, tuna, and salmon fisheries. Fish populations the world over are threatened, and *All the Fish in the Sea* helps to sound warnings of the effect of any management policies divested from science itself.

Longo, Stefano B. *The Tragedy of the Commodity: Oceans, Fisheries, and Aquaculture (Nature, Society, and Culture)*. Rutgers University Press, 2015.

In a critique of the classic theory “the tragedy of the commons” by ecologist Garrett Hardin, the authors move beyond simplistic explanations—such as unrestrained self-interest or population growth—to argue that it is the commodification of aquatic resources that leads to the depletion of fisheries and the development of environmentally suspect means of aquaculture. To illustrate this argument, the book features two fascinating case studies—the thousand-year history of the bluefin tuna fishery in the Mediterranean and the massive Pacific salmon fishery. Longo, Clausen, and Clark describe how new fishing technologies, transformations in ships and storage capacities, and the expansion of seafood markets combined to alter radically and permanently these crucial ecosystems. In doing so, the authors underscore how the particular organization of social production contributes to ecological degradation and an increase in the pressures placed upon the ocean. The authors highlight the historical, political, economic, and cultural forces that shape how we interact with the larger biophysical world. A path-breaking analysis of overfishing, *The Tragedy of the Commodity* yields insight into issues such as deforestation, biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change.

Nair, Gayatri. *Set Adrift: Capitalist Transformations and Community Politics Along Mumbai's Shores*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India, 2021.

The Koli community in Mumbai—which has been practicing fishing for centuries—has experienced rapid changes over the last few decades, in the forms of increased mechanization, the export of fish to global markets, and the pressure of urbanization on their living and work spaces. The capitalist transformation in fishing has altered what was once a caste-based practice to one that brought to it investors from outside the community, migrant workers, and ecological degradation. The resultant loss of revenue, jobs, and catch for artisanal fishers has led to movements demanding fishing rights to be granted to traditional fisher communities alone and for a return to older fishing practices. This call found resonance with populist politics in the city: Koli women organized themselves to stridently resist the entry of migrant men into the sector and Koli men—particularly the young—became inclined to move out of the practice of fishing. Through an examination of the lives and struggles of fishers in one of India's wealthiest cities, this book looks at how contestations around livelihoods map out in the shadow of significant encounters between capitalism and ecology.

Sanjeev, Sanyal. *The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History*. Penguin Random House, 2016.

Much of human history has played itself out along the rim of the Indian Ocean. Sanyal tells the history of this significant region, which stretches across East Africa, the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent to South East Asia and Australia narrating a tale about the earliest human migrations out of Africa and the great cities of Angkor and Vijayanagar; medieval Arab empires and Chinese treasure fleets; the rivalries of European colonial powers and a new dawn. The Ocean of Churn takes the reader on a journey through medieval geopolitics and eyewitness accounts of long-lost cities to the latest genetic discoveries about human origins, bringing alive a region that has defined civilization from the very beginning.

Shah, Ghanshyam. *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*. Anthem Press, 2004.

The Indian Constitution seeks to prevent the perpetuation of caste and build a casteless social system. But in over half a century since Indian independence, this has not been achieved and does not seem likely in the near future. Therefore, no understanding of Indian politics is possible without a thorough understanding of the complexities of the caste system. The aim of this four-part book is to bring about such an understanding.

Subramanian, Samranth. *Following Fish*. Atlantic Books, 2014.

In a coastline as long and diverse as India's, fish inhabit the heart of many worlds—food of course, but also culture, commerce, sport, history, and society. Journeying along the edges of the peninsula, this book delivers a kaleidoscope of extraordinary stories. It conducts investigations of, among others, the use of fish to treat asthmatics in Hyderabad, the preparation and the process of eating West Bengal's prized hilsa, the ancient art of building fishing boats in Gujarat, the fiery cuisine and singular spirit of Kerala's toddy shops, the food and lives of Mumbai's first peoples, the history of an old Catholic fishing community in Tamil Nadu, and the hunt for the world's fastest fish near Goa. Pulsating with pleasure,

adventure, and discovery, and tempered by nostalgia and loss, this chronicle reveals a series of unknown Indias in a book as revealing of the subcontinent as any three times its length.

Sullivan, Nicholas. *The End of the Line: How Overfishing is Changing the World and What We Eat*. The New Press, 2006

Gourmands and health-conscious consumers alike have fallen for fish; last year per capita consumption in the United States hit an all-time high. Packed with nutrients and naturally low in fat, fish is the last animal we can still eat in good conscience. Or can we? In this book, environmental journalist Charles Clover argues that our passion for fish is unsustainable. Seventy-five percent of the world's fish stocks are now fully exploited or overfished; the most popular varieties risk extinction within the next few decades. Clover trawls the globe for answers, from Tokyo's sumptuous fish market to the heart of New England's fishing industry. He joins hardy sailors on high-tech boats, interviews top chefs whose menu selections can influence the fate of entire species, and examines the ineffective organizations charged with regulating the world's fisheries. Along the way, he argues that governments as well as consumers can take steps to reverse this disturbing trend before it's too late. The price of a mouthwatering filet of Chilean sea bass may seem outrageous, but *The End of the Line* shows its real cost to the ecosystem is far greater.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origin of Our Discontents*. Random House, 2020.

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using stories about people—including Martin Luther King, Jr., baseball's Satchel Paige, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others—she shows the ways that the undertow of caste is experienced every day. She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their outcasting of the Jews; she discusses why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against; she writes about the surprising health costs of caste, in depression and life expectancy, and the effects of this hierarchy on our culture and politics. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions and toward hope in our common humanity. Original and revealing, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* is an eye-opening story of people and history and a reexamination of what lies under the surface of ordinary lives and of American life today.

Wright, Deborah Rowan. *Future Sea: How to Rescue and Protect the World's Oceans*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

The world's oceans face multiple threats: the effects of climate change, pollution, overfishing, plastic waste, and more. In *Future Sea*, ocean advocate and marine policy researcher Deborah Rowan Wright provides the tools for that shift. Questioning the underlying philosophy of established ocean conservation approaches, Rowan Wright lays out a radical alternative: a bold and far-reaching strategy of 100 percent ocean protection that would put an end to destructive industrial activities, better

safeguard marine biodiversity, and enable ocean wildlife to return and thrive along coasts and in seas around the globe.

ADULT FICTION

Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Free Press, 2008.

Adiga upset many middle-class Indians when *The White Tiger* hit their bookshelves like a sledgehammer, winning him the Booker Prize. Written from the perspective of Balram, the son of a rickshaw puller, the book is a series of letters that he writes feverishly, but never sends, to the soon-to-be-visiting Chinese premier, documenting his wily ascent from tea boy to wealthy entrepreneur. Through his sharp-eyed, witty and frenzied descriptions, Adiga doesn't just highlight the brutal injustices and corruption of Indian society but slaps them across the paper in broad, bushy strokes.

Banerjee, Sarnath. *All Quiet in Vikaspuri*. Harper Collins India, 2016.

A Homeric tale of a man's journey to the center of the earth in search of the mythical river Saraswati, this graphic novel is set against the fictitious yet ever-so-real Water Wars of Delhi. It is a dystopian landscape where neighborhoods fight brutal battles against each other and even victory must end in defeat.

Doshi, Tishani. *Small Days and Nights*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.

Escaping her failing marriage in the United States, Grace Marisola has returned to Pondicherry to cremate her mother. Once there, she receives an unexpected inheritance—a house on the beaches of Madras—and discovers an older sister she never knew she had: Lucia, who has spent her life in a residential facility. Grace's attempts to leave her old self behind prove first a struggle, then a strain, as she discovers the chaos, tenderness, fury, and bewilderment of life with Lucia.

Mistry, Rohinton. *A Fine Balance*. Vintage, 1997.

The time is 1975. The place is an unnamed city by the sea. The government has just declared a State of Emergency, in whose upheavals four strangers—a spirited widow, a young student uprooted from his idyllic hill station, and two tailors who have fled the caste violence of their native village—will be thrust together, forced to share one cramped apartment and an uncertain future. As the characters move from distrust to friendship and from friendship to love, *A Fine Balance* creates a panorama of the human spirit in an inhuman state.

Mukherjee, Neel. *The Lives of Others*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2014.

The aging patriarch and matriarch of the Ghosh family preside over their large household, consisting of their five adult children and their respective families, unaware that beneath the barely ruffled surface of their lives, the sands are shifting. Each set of family members occupies a floor of the home in accordance with their standing within the family. Poisonous rivalries between sisters-in-law, destructive secrets, and the implosion of the family business threaten to unravel bonds of kinship as social unrest brews in greater Indian society. This is a moment of turbulence and inevitable,

unstoppable change: the chasm between the generations, and between those who have and those who have not, has never been wider. The eldest grandchild, Supratik, compelled by his idealism, becomes dangerously involved in extremist political activism—an action that further catalyzes the decay of the Ghosh home. *The Lives of Others* epitomizes the soul of a nation as it unfolds a family history, at the same time as it questions the nature of political action and the limits of empathy.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. Random House, 1997.

Compared favorably to the works of Faulkner and Dickens, Arundhati Roy's modern classic is equal parts powerful family saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama. The seven-year-old twins, Estha and Rahel, see their world shaken irrevocably by the arrival of their beautiful young cousin, Sophie. It is an event that will lead to an illicit liaison and tragedies accidental and intentional, exposing "big things [that] lurk unsaid" in a country drifting dangerously toward unrest.

Thayil, Jeet. *Narcopolis*. Penguin Books, 2012.

Jeet Thayil's debut novel charts the evolution of a great and broken metropolis across three decades. A rich, hallucinatory dream that captures Bombay in all its compelling squalor, *Narcopolis* completely subverts and challenges the literary traditions for which the Indian novel is celebrated. It is a book about drugs, sex, death, perversion, addiction, love, and God and has more in common in its subject matter with the work of William S. Burroughs or Baudelaire than with that of the subcontinent's familiar literary lights.

Vijay, Madhuri. *The Far Field*. Grove Press, 2019.

Not many novels are set in Bangalore, the more subdued sibling of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. However, here we find Shalini, a 24-year-old numbed by the banality of her privileged life in the Garden City. Since her mother's death three years earlier, she has lived in limbo, unable to commit to anything and plagued by a memory from her childhood of a Kashmiri man appearing twice at their garden gate. In a feverish moment, she decides to leave home to find him, swapping her weekend trips to Bali and beer-sticky house parties for the blue-grey mountains of Kashmir, where the air is tinged with the "medicinal sharpness of pine sap" and waterfalls churn to a "filigreed white froth".

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Kurlansky, Mark. *World Without Fish*. Workman Pub, 2011.

World Without Fish connects all the dots—biology, economics, evolution, politics, climate, history, culture, food, and nutrition—in a way that kids can really understand. It describes the back-and-forth dynamic between fishermen, who are the original environmentalists, and scientists, who not that long ago considered fish an endless resource. It explains why fish farming is not the answer—and why sustainable fishing is, and how to help return the oceans to their natural ecological balance.

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Hirandandani, Veera. *Amil and the After*. Kakila, 2024.

In 1948, 12-year-old Amil, who is both Muslim and Hindu, struggles to find his place in Bombay, India, until his twin sister suggests he tell his story through drawings meant for their late mother as he tries to find hope and a sense of belonging in a chaotic world.

Kelkar, Supriya. *Ahimsa*. Tu Books, an imprint of LEE & LOW Books Inc., 2017.

In 1942, when Mahatma Gandhi asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement, ten-year-old Anjali is devastated at the thought of her father risking his life for the freedom struggle. But it turns out he isn't the one joining; Anjali's mother is. With this change come many more adjustments designed to improve their country and use "ahimsa"—non-violent resistance—to stand up to the British government. When her mother is jailed for being one of Gandhi's freedom fighters, ten-year-old Anjali overcomes her own prejudices and continues her mother's social reform work, befriending Untouchable children and working to integrate her school.

Master, Irfan. *A Beautiful Lie*. Albert Whitman, 2011.

In India in 1947, the country is coming apart, and so is thirteen-year-old Bilal's life. He is determined to protect his dying father from the news of Partition, which he knows will break his father's heart. With spirit and determination, and with the help of his good friends, Bilal builds an elaborate deception, even printing false pages in the local newspaper to hide the signs of national unrest. All Bilal wants is for his father to die in peace. But that means Bilal has a very complicated relationship with the truth. This debut novel brings to life a key moment in history and touches on the importance of tolerance, love and family.

Senzai, N.H. *Ticket to India*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2015.

When twelve-year-old Maya and her older sister Zara set off on their own from Delhi to their grandmother's home in Aminpur, a small town in Northern India, they become separated. Maya decides to continue their quest to find a chest of family treasures that their grandmother's family left behind when they fled from India to Pakistan during the Great Partition.

Venkatraman, Padma. *Climbing the Stairs*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2008.

In 1941, 15-year-old Vidya's life in Bombay stands in direct contrast to that of her relatives in Madras for whom the traditional path of an arranged marriage, babies, and a life of serving a husband is not only expected but is also considered a girl's only proper option. In India, in 1941, when her father becomes brain-damaged in a non-violent protest march, fifteen-year-old Vidya and her family are forced to move in with her father's extended family and become accustomed to a totally different way of life.

Whelan, Gloria. *Homeless Bird*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2000.

The story of a young woman who dares to defy fate. Like many girls her age in India, thirteen-year-old Koly faces her arranged marriage with hope and courage. However, Koly's story takes a terrible turn when, in the wake of the ceremony, she discovers she's been horribly misled: her life has been sold for a dowry. Cast out into a brutal current of time-worn tradition, Koly sets out to forge her own future.

BOOKS FOR YOUNGER LEARNERS AND CHILDREN

Berne, Jennifer. *How the Sea Came To Be*. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2023.

The rhyming text follows the evolution of the ocean, from the fiery time of its birth to the biodiverse present. It includes notes from the author and illustrator, spotlights on past and present marine life forms, a timeline of evolutionary eras, a glossary of key terms, and recommended further reading.

Davies, Monika. *India*. Bellwether Media, 2023.

From its historic landmarks to its diverse landscapes, India dazzles visitors and residents alike. This title introduces readers to the landscapes, wildlife, demographics, and culture of this South Asian country.

Hume, Sam. *An Anthology of Aquatic Life*. DK Publishing, 2022.

Dive into the wondrous world of water and discover the stories of more than 100 aquatic life forms. From the deepest, widest ocean to the tiniest puddles, this compendium takes young readers on a journey through the aquatic world, featuring photography and illustrations, complemented by storybook descriptions about each lifeform, allowing children to uncover hundreds of facts as they read.

Hirandandani, Veera. *Amil and the After*. Kakila, 2024.

In 1948, twelve-year-old Amil, who is both Muslim and Hindu, struggles to find his place in Bombay, India, until his twin sister suggests he tell his story through drawings meant for their late mother as he tries to find hope and a sense of belonging in a chaotic world.

LaRocca, Rahani. *Where Three Oceans Meet: A Picture Book*. Henry R. Abrams, 2021.

Sejal goes on a family trek with her mother and grandmother across India to Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India, where three oceans meet.

Lendler, Ian. *Little Sid: The Tiny Prince Who Became Buddha*. First Second, 2018.

This picture book offers an account of the childhood of the Buddha. A spoiled young prince, Siddhartha, got everything he ever asked for until he asked for what couldn't be given—happiness. The prose and artwork weave traditional Buddhist fables into a new tale of mindfulness, the meaning of life, and awakening.

Milner, Charlotte. *The Sea Book*. DK Publishing, 2019.

Introduces the sea, describes the different zones and marine animals that can be found there, and offers suggestions for what people can do to protect them.

Trinick, Loveday. *Oceanarium*. Big Picture Press, an imprint of Candlewick Press, 2022.

The author, a marine biologist, guides your readers on an exploration of the world's oceans, from the frozen Arctic seas to coral reefs, to learn why it is so important to protect oceans.