# Michael Donkor on his chosen books

Michael Donkor: Transformative books. Gosh? OK, look at my bookshelves. Well, OK, we'll start with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. So I think *Half of A Yellow Sun,* which is a fantastic novel, and I think sometimes it gets eclipsed by *Americanah* 'cause I guess *Americanah* is a bit kind of poppy and a bit more kind of zeitgeisty. But *Half of a Yellow Sun* is an extraordinary novel. Formally, stylistically in terms of what it's doing with history and the idea of a kind of community’s history, I think it's brilliant. A really, really powerful piece of storytelling, and I think often the African novel is kind of celebrated for its connection to unreality and those sorts of ideas, and for its exploration of tradition versus modernity. And that's all fine, and that's all very true, but what's less considered is formal innovation in the African novel, and actually because it's kind of a multi-perspective thing going on, and because of the historical nature of it, it's actually quite formally interesting. So I think that is something that makes it a really special novel.

And then, Virginia Woolf is always going to be important to me and I think *The Waves* again is another book that people sort of have mixed feelings about. I think because it's tricky, and it's quite trippy actually, and it's slippery, but I think it's really beautiful and brave and very true about the shifting nature of friendship. And when I read it—actually I read it in my first year—it sort of transformed my thinking about what novels could do and what they can be like. And excited me in terms of thinking about what sorts of novels I might want to create in the future.

So those two books are particularly special to me.