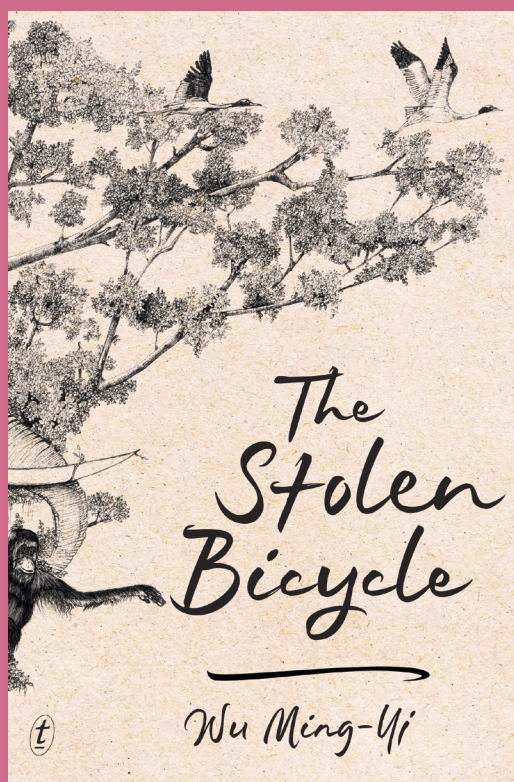




# Reader's Guide



Other novels by Wu Ming-Yi  
*The Man with the Compound Eyes* (2014)

## The Stolen Bicycle Wu Ming-Yi

Translated by Darryl Sterk

Text Publishing

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### About the author

Wu Ming-Yi was born in Taipei, Taiwan, in June 1971. He is one of Taiwan's most innovative young novelists, who has won the China Times Open Book Award six times. He is also an associate professor at National Dong Hwa University in Hualien, Taiwan and an expert of the history of Taiwanese environmental literature. He was first recognized for two book-length works of literary essays about butterflies, *Butterfly Way* (2000) and *Beguiled by Butterflies* (2003), before publishing his first novel, *Routes of Slumber*, in 2007. In 2013, *The Man with the Compound Eyes*, a metafictional ecological disaster novel, was translated into English by Darryl Sterk and published by Harvill Secker to widespread acclaim. It was the first novel from Taiwan to be published by a major English-language publisher and has been translated into nine languages.

### About the translator

Darryl Sterk was born in Edmonton, Canada, in March 1973. He is an academic based in Hong Kong, with an interest in translation to and from Taiwan's indigenous languages. A Chinese-English literary translator for a decade, he had contributed to *The Taipei Chinese Pen*, *Pathlight*, and other journals. He has translated two novels by Wu Ming-Yi, *The Man With the Compound Eyes* (Harvill Secker, 2013) and *The Stolen Bicycle* (The Text, 2017).

### About the book

Cheng, a novelist, once wrote a book based on his father's disappearance 20 years ago. One day he receives a reader's email asking whether his father's bicycle disappeared as well. Perplexed and amused, Cheng decides to track down the bicycle, which was stolen years ago. The search takes him on an epic quest, deep into the secret world of antique bicycle collectors via a scavenger's treasure trove and the mountain home of an aboriginal photographer. He also finds himself caught up in the strangely intertwined stories of Lin Wang, the oldest elephant who ever lived, the soldiers who fought in the jungles of South-East Asia during the World War II and the secret worlds of the butterfly handicraft makers... *The Stolen Bicycle* is both a historical novel about bicycles, elephants and war, and a startlingly intimate meditation on memory, family and home.

### Discussion points

Wu is considered one of the most influential writers in Taiwan. What do you think it is about his writing that makes this the case?

The book also contains Wu's intricate illustrations – what did you feel these added to the narrative?

Wu immerses the reader in the history of Taiwan and the Japanese occupation – what did you learn by reading the book?

Discuss the two passions of Wu – bicycles and butterflies.

### Themed reading

Kris D'Agostino *The Antiques: A Novel*

Hsien-Yung Pai *Taipei People*

Shawna Yang Ryan *Green Island*

Hsiao Li-hung *A Thousand Moons on a Thousand Rivers*

### Useful links

<http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/books/article/2110838/stolen-bicycle-wu-ming-yi-expertly-weaves-narrative>

<https://medium.com/@yahsinhuangtw/of-bicycles-and-war-a-review-of-wu-ming-yis-the-stolen-bicycle-245f47940b52>

<http://mychinesebooks.com/taiwanese-novelist-wu-mingyi-father-stolen-bicycles/?lang=en>

<http://lindsaymagazine.co/capturing-taiwan-translating-it/>