



Indian Summer

Adalbert Stifter , Wendell W. Frye (Translator)

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This is one of Stifter's great epic works, a most sensitive account of the formative years in the life of Heinrich, a student of natural sciences, born into a bourgeois environment, but influenced and gently guided by a nobleman, the old Baron von Risach. It is in fact the baron's own reminiscences which give the book its title. Comparable in some ways to Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich* this novel, nevertheless, reflects Stifter's own moral values, his ethical thinking and his deep reverence for nature.

Indian Summer Details

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From Reader Review Indian Summer for online ebook

Manybooks says

Although Adalbert Stifter's 1857 novel Der Nachsommer (Indian Summer) is considered by many readers (and also by many critics) as one of the great German language novels of development of the 19th century (a Bildungsroman per excellence), I have personally often questioned exactly how much and how deeply the main protagonist Heinrich in actual fact ever matures, develops and truly changes (especially since unlike with so many other such novels of development, maturation and change, there is really never all that much conflict, there are no adventuresome episodes presented, and also no real and possibly painful choices that the main character, that Heinrich must make, that his education and development are pleasurable and featured as pretty much painless for him). For while Heinrich's life situation does indeed somewhat alter throughout the course of Der Nachsommer, he (at least in my humble opinion) never really does all that much seem to become his "own man" so to speak, simply and very easily moving from his merchant father's highly regimented household to the Rosenhaus, whose owner (the Freiherr von Risach) then with body and soul, totally and utterly becomes Heinrich's new mentor, his new father figure (and as such a teacher who while definitely more philosophically inclined, more idealistic and classically educated than Heinrich's father is nevertheless and still similarly staunchly regimented and structured, and von Risach's philosophies and teachings are also generally accepted by Heinrich as his eager pupil without too much debate, criticism and questioning).

Now part of this sense of textual remoteness, of feeling that there is really no or at least precious little actual and palpable experienceable development and transformation with regard to Der Nachsommer, with regard to the main protagonist in particular (and of us as readers being more on the outside looking in, of being simply observers, of being told but not really experiencing) might well and indeed be due to Adalbert Stifter's general writing style, in so far that Heinrich's first person narration is not only very much retrospective but also understated and generally quite massively emotionless (thus not only reading as very much distancing, but also somewhat implying that the Freiherr von Risach is esoterically above and beyond and can seemingly do no wrong, can seemingly speak and teach not wrong, is thus depicted and described through Heinrich's own words, through his account as being close to perfection, as being almost God-like, with the a bit potentially off-putting result that Der Nachsommer often does seem to move along like somewhat of an exultation of von Risach, like almost a religious sermon praising him).

The Freiherr von Risach's Rosenhaus is therefore in many ways almost shown by the author, is depicted by Adalbert Stifter (through his raconteur, through Heinrich) as a domicile akin and alike to a fairy tale castle of philosophical, literary and artistic delights, but I for one have always tended to find Heinrich's extended and minutely depicted and detailed (recited) extended sojourn at the Rosenhaus a rather tedious and dragging reading experience, and at least for me on a personal level generally devoid of much if not of most of what makes a novel, but what especially makes a Bildungsroman, a novel of development and maturation (of personal change) readable and enjoyable. Yes, Heinrich does indeed mature and develop as a person to a point, as he becomes increasingly educated and philosophically inclined through the long hours, days, weeks, months he spends at the Rosenhaus under von Risach's tutelage (and I guess he also therefore expands his intellectual horizons somewhat). However, Der Nachsommer really is pretty much and majorly one-sided in scope and presented attitudes, and I personally have also never really believed that the main narrator (the main character), that Heinrich has to strive or in any way fight and work all that hard and much for his education, for his development, his Bildung (no, he seems to permanently and continuously just exist in the Rosenhaus, simply absorbing von Risach's teachings, musings, philosophies like a sponge and once this sponge has been sufficiently saturated, Heinrich and Natalie marry).

And while I do realise that there are many who seemingly love and much appreciate Adalbert Stifter's descriptiveness and the general (peaceful, caressing, conflict empty) ambience of Der Nachsommer, I personally have always tended to view this novel as basically being formulaic to the extreme, as being the following. Heinrich arrives at the Rosenhaus and meets and falls in love with Natalie. And then, after hundreds of pages of lengthy descriptions of von Risach's and Heinrich's conversations, of Heinrich's education by von Risach in literature, philosophy and art, Heinrich and Natalie marry (nothing much else ever really happens, and while this kind of an almost totally descriptive and ambience-heavy story might work for me as a novella or even a short novel of less than two hundred pages, over six hundred pages of this is not really my idea of pleasure reading, and thus, although I do appreciate Adalbert Stifter's Der Nachsommer as an important work of 19th century Austrian, of German language literature, I can and will only consider it as a two star read, as I was and remain just too continuously bored to award more than two stars).

PinkAnemone says

Auf seinen naturkundlichen Wanderungen begegnet der Ich-Erzähler Heinrich Drendorf seinem späteren väterlichen Freund, dem Freiherrn von Risach, auf dessen Landgut. Dort lernt er nicht nur eine neue Form der Lebens- und Wirklichkeitsbewältigung kennen, sondern auch seine spätere Frau Natalie und deren Mutter Mathilde Tarona, die auf geheimnisvolle Weise mit Risach verbunden ist.

»Der Nachsommer« ist der Bildungsroman schlechthin, ein rührend-unheimlich deutsches Buch aus Österreich, welches dem Leser das Menschlichwerden zeigen will.« Walther Killy....(Klappentext)

Die Rezension betrifft die Neuauflage mit der ISBN: 978-3423146241

"Mein Vater war ein Kaufmann. Er bewohnte einen Teil des ersten Stockwerkes eines mäßig großen Hauses in der Stadt in welchem er zur Miete war.." (S. 7 - Anfang)

Wie soll man einem Literaturklassiker gerecht werden, wenn man sich einen Monat lang durchgequält hat? Diese Frage stellte ich mir bereits nach den ersten Seiten dieses Buches.

Ich liebe Klassiker, angefangen bei Shakespeare, über Lessing bis hin zu Tolstoi. Dabei schätze ich vor allem die Sprachgewalt, die Poesie und den bildhaften Erzählstil, inklusive der Detailverliebtheit. Doch gerade diese langatmigen Beschreibungen und die ständigen Abschweifungen ins Detail, machten mir das Lesen von "Der Nachsommer" mehr als schwer.

Die Handlung schreitet nur mit überaus kleinen Schritten voran, nahezu stockend und humpelnd und zwar aufgrund diverser minutiöser Beschreibungen von Gemälden, Pflanzen und selbst von Steinen.

"Ich war schon als Knabe ein großer Freund der Wirklichkeit der Dinge gewesen, wie sie sich so in der Schöpfung oder in dem geregelten Gange des menschlichen Lebens darstellte..." (S. 24)

"Der Vater pflege zu sagen, ich müßte einmal ein Beschreiber der Dinge werden,..." (S. 25)

Genau, und schlussendlich war er das auch.

Aber so sehr Stifter auch auf die Darstellung von Natur und Kunst eingeht, die Charaktere bleiben auf den 730 Seiten blass und vor allem langweilig.

Hier fällt kein böses Wort und Missverständnisse gibt es hier ebenso wenig. Selbst als Risachs Geheimnis gelüftet wird, herrscht hier Verständnis und Einigkeit.

Immerzu herrscht hier Harmonie und höchste Idylle, dass es kaum auszuhalten ist. Hinzu kommen die ständigen Wiederholungen der alltäglichen Rituale - die Neurotik des Biedermeier lässt grüßen.

Diese Art des Schreibens ist von Adalbert Stifter jedoch so beabsichtigt. Die Industrialisierung machte zu dieser Zeit auch vor Österreich nicht Halt. Aber wie Franz I. und Metternich, so war auch Stifter gegen diese Modernisierung und versuchte sie, zumindest in diesem Werk, aufzuhalten - den Fortschritt entschleunigen.

Bei mir rief es auch eine Entschleunigung hervor und zwar die des Lesens.

"Der Nachsommer" ist also keineswegs ein Klassiker den man mal schnell zwischendurch lesen kann und auch nicht sollte.

Man muss sich dafür Zeit nehmen, darin eintauchen und diesen wirken lassen. In der heutigen schnelllebigen Zeit mit Sicherheit ungewohnt, aber durchaus nicht verkehrt und eben auch genau das was von Stifter beabsichtigt war. Für mich persönlich war das nichts.

Das Werk enthält aber auch gleichzeitig wunderschöne Zitate, welche zum Nachdenken anregen:

"...der Mensch sei nicht zuerst der menschlichen Gesellschaft wegen da, sondern seiner selbst willen. Und wenn jeder seiner selbst willen auf die beste Art da sei, so sei er es auch für die menschliche Gesellschaft." (S. 15)

Trotzdem werden Herr Stifter und ich wohl keine Freunde. Sein Schreib- und Erzählstil sind sehr speziell und nicht für jeden geeignet. Man muss diesen Stil schon mögen - ich tue es nur bedingt.

Die vorliegende Neuauflage aus dem dtv-Verlag ist jedoch mehr als nur gelungen. Hier wurde nämlich die Urfassung beibehalten, inklusive der etwas ungewöhnlichen Interpunktions Stifters. Ja, selbst hier hatte Adalbert Stifter seine Eigenheiten. Diese spezielle Art Kommas zu setzen, sollte seinen Stil intensivieren. Nun ja, diese Tatsache machte das Lesen nicht unbedingt leichter.

Es wurden aber auch die Laut- und Wortformen, sowie die alten österreichischen Bezeichnungen beibehalten.

Die meisten Verlage scheuen sich davor, solche Eigenheiten beizubehalten und modernisieren Texte, Passagen und ganze Werke. Nicht so beim dtv-Verlag, der aufgrund dessen für mich die erste Adresse bei Neuauflagen von Klassikern ist.

Wie gewohnt erhält man im Nachwort Informationen über das Werk und dessen Entstehung und es beinhaltet eine kleine, aber durchaus ausführliche Biographie des Autors mittel Zeittafel. Ich muss gestehen, diese Anhänge lasen sich spannender als "Der Nachsommer" selbst.

Fazit:

Der Schreib- und Erzählstil von Adalbert Stifter ist sehr speziell (anstrengend trifft es wohl besser). Dies muss man mögen, um das vorliegende Werk vollends genießen zu können. Ich konnte es leider nicht. Diese Abschweifungen und detailreichen Beschreibungen...meine Güte, diese Beschreibungen und Schilderungen!...waren so gar nicht meines.

Ein Lob gebührt jedoch dieser Neuauflage aus dem dtv-Verlag, welche die Urfassung, sowie viele interessante Informationen im Anhang enthält.

Für Adalbert Stifter-Fans, Studenten der Germanistik und Literaturwissenschaft absolut zu empfehlen.

© Pink Anemone

Julia says

I recall a literary paper on adalbert stifter which is called "fascination and boredom in stifter's writing" and - without reading it or remembering the author - my relation with this book - my first written by this author coming from exactly the same city like me and thus especially interesting for me - couldn't be described in a better way.....so far the all-too-wise main character has indulged into long unwinding descriptions of his father's house, of his intense studies ranging from mathematics to geology to his ramblings through the mountains and plains of his region. the story starts getting into a kind of plot when the scholarly hero seeks refuge from a storm he's expecting in the house of a mysterious and even wiser old man where he stays for two nights to be instructed in virtually everything from how to preserve trees from being damaged by insects to the conservation of precious gothic altars.

sometimes the utterly long descriptions of scientific instruments, valuable furniture, plants, birds, rooms and the like bore the heck out of me, but still i can't keep myself from turning pages. it's quite a challenge to read a book like this in a fast-paced time as ours, but Stifter's beautiful concise language makes up for the lack of action and the book also gives an intersting insight into the nineteenth century's attitude towards the surrounding world: the author is clearly influenced by the Age of Enlightenment: the joy of observing nature, the necessity of structure and classification, the obsession with education shine through each and every chapter. the typically german genre of the "bildungsroman" fits the author's strive for conveying his message.

all this may sound terribly dry, but when the protagonist left the house of his benevolent host i felt quite nostalgic for the beauty of this well-kept, friendly house with its marble halls, its libraries full of old books kept in a clean and quiet atmosphere, its singing birds and of course the blossoming roses covering the white wall of the house impregnating everything with their scent and voluptuous beauty.

in the second volume, finally the love story which has been so carefully prepared for over 400 pages, comes to bloom. it might be stifter had a kind of malicious joy in describing everything else with the most excruciating details, and leave only scarce words for the emotional development of the characters and their relationships to each other. but probably that's part of the charm of the book which really starts to grow on me....

Collin Rogowski says

Ein großer deutschsprachiger Klassiker, der mich viel zum Nachdenken gebracht hat. An der Oberfläche ist schonmal interessant, dass das Buch eigentlich keine Handlung im herkömmlichen Sinne hat: es gibt auf 800 Seiten keinen einzigen Konflikt! Alle kommen immer wunderbar miteinander aus und tun alles in ihrer Macht stehende, um den anderen Gutes zu tun. Das Ganze wird dadurch spannend, dass es in einer schönen, schwelgenden Sprache geschrieben ist und das es durchaus interessante philosophische Betrachtungen zur Ästhetik gibt. Nach der Lektüre hatte ich das Gefühl viel über die bürgerliche Oberschicht (vermögende Kaufleute) in der Romantik gelernt zu haben.

Anne says

I think I have never before read a book of almost 800 pages describing everything to the smallest detail...while telling actually nothing at all. Not one page of the book was as interesting to me as it would have given me a reason to go on or motivate me. Boring, sorry.

Darlene says

Etwas langatmig die Detailbeschreibungen, obwohl sie super geschrieben sind. Schreiben kann Stifter! Gestört hat mich die Unhöflichkeit und Aufdringlichkeit des Erzählers, als junger Gast nennt er nicht seinen Namen und nistet sich über Wochen ein. Knigge gab es damals schon.

Markus says

Der Nachsommer
by Adalbert Stifter (1805-1868)

Adalbert Stifter was an Austrian writer, poet, painter, and pedagogue.

"Der Nachsommer" must be considered a 'Bildungsroman,' an educational novel. In this work, the author being a pedagogue by profession establishes his ideas of the perfect education for a young man of his time.

The story appears to be situated in Vienna Austria in the nineteenth century at the time of the Habsburg Reign. No names are mentioned throughout the book, several aristocrats are part of the narrative but none by name.

A young man, son of a wealthy businessman, is telling his life and education in the first person, starting after primary school at about his 18th birthday, his name never appears. His friends call him "dear friend."

All the persons, father, mother, sister, friends and acquaintances are of alien-like character. Perfectly intelligent, highly educated, reasonable and cold to the extreme.

Lacking all emotions and effusions, anger, disputes, etc. neither any excessive motion of affection and passion.

There is some Christian religious background, but not much.

The author creates just enough events, like short two day excursions by horse carriage, Mountain and forest hiking, to create situations needing educational explanations and positive argumentation.

Our young friend is provided with sufficient financial means to allow him the higher scientific education of his own choice. He studies geology and natural history, drawing and painting.

Without any tutor or professor, he wanders in mountains and forests collecting samples of granite stones and plant life.

It is evident that efforts and progress are only part of this work to study the way to becoming the perfect human being.

It is a strange kind of a book, one of a variety of style and content. Not easy to read.

In modern times an unimaginable pedagogy.

It can be compared to Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre" but of course in Goethe's perfect style.

Bruna says

Lungo, lentissimo, singolare romanzo di formazione. Nel corso di diverse estati trascorse presso la dimora di campagna di un ricco, illuminato possidente, il giovane Einrich imparerà tutto sulla vita e troverà la sua strada. Libro insolito anche per l'assoluta mancanza di conflitto che lo caratterizza, riesce persino a commuovere con il suo utopistico ideale di operosa armonia familiare e sociale. Curiosamente profetico in relazione a diversi argomenti tipici della nostra epoca - dall'agricoltura biologica al rapporto tra tecnologia e società, dall'intuizione dei frattali alla metodologia del restauro - il romanzo mantiene un inconsueto fascino, nonostante non possa certo dirsi avvincente.

Jonathan says

Have you ever wondered what a novel would be like devoid of strife, war, tension, sex, violence, unreliable narrators, internal turmoil, wickedness, redemption, car-chases, gun-fights, zombies etc. Well, Adalbert Stifter's *Indian Summer* is such a novel. 'So what on Earth can it be about then?' I hear you ask. The short reply is that it is a idyllic, nineteenth-century, middle-class *bildungsroman*. In fact, it is so idyllic that I don't believe at any point in the novel do any of the characters say, or think, badly of any other character and I can only recall one point near the end of the novel, where one elderly character is recounting the story of a love affair from his past, when there was a degree of tension between characters. For those of us who have grown up with Dickens or Dostoyevsky this type of novel can be a bit of a surprise and even though I was familiar with a few of Stifter's other works I wasn't really prepared for this work.

The book was originally published in 1857 as *Der Nachsommer*. The English translation was by Wendell Frye and was published in 1999 by 'Peter Lang Publishers'. It is quite a long book at 478 pages, especially as the book is larger than the usual novel size; it is more like a 700-800 page novel - so be warned! I'm not trying to put anyone off reading this book, because I really enjoyed reading it, but I think that a large portion of people will really dislike it. Indeed, in his introduction, Wendell Frye says that *'Der Nachsommer* had a mixed reception from the beginning; Hebbel offered the crown of Poland to whomever could read it through while Nietzsche pronounced it and Keller's *Der Grüne Heinrich* the two greatest novels of the Nineteenth

Century.' And I believe that the gap between those that will like it and those that won't will have increased enormously since then.

So the story largely concerns Heinrich and his intellectual development as he becomes a man. Although the blurb on the back of the book named the narrator he's not actually given a name until the end of the book. The narrator is also vague about the name of another main character, Baron von Risach, throughout most of the book. It's as if the narrator, and therefore the author also, would like to do away with such egotistical and individualistic things such as names. The novel starts by describing the ordered family life of Heinrich; his father works long hours but spends his spare time collecting and admiring art, furniture, coins etc., whilst his mother is enthusiastic about housekeeping. He also has a younger sister, Klotilde. When Heinrich turns eighteen he is allowed to draw money from his inheritance from a deceased uncle. Heinrich decides to pursue his interests in science and mathematics and soon settles on geology as his main interest especially as he likes to go hiking in the mountains. To give you a taste of the narrative style, here is a quote from the early part of the novel.

Even as a boy I had had a great liking for the reality of things as they actually exist in all Creation and in the orderly course of human life. This was often a source of bother for the people around me. I was constantly asking the names of things, where they came from, what they were used for, and couldn't be content with an answer that just put me off. I couldn't stand it either if someone made an object into something other than what it really was. This was particularly true when I felt that the object had become worse for the change. I was sad when they chopped down an old tree in the yard and cut it into firewood. The pieces were no longer a tree and since they were rotten couldn't be made into a chair or a table or a cross-bar or a saw horse.

One day whilst hiking in the Alps Heinrich notices an approaching thunderstorm and seeks shelter in a nearby house on a hill. Heinrich notices, and describes in great detail, that one side of the house is covered in roses of all types and colours. He rings the bell on the gate and an old white-haired man comes out to see him. I'll quote the encounter and their initial conversation as it is, I feel, a good taste of what will appear to the modern reader as quite a stilted conversational style.

At the sound of the bell a man came out from behind the bushes in the yard and walked toward me. When he was standing in front of me on the inside of the grill fence, I saw that he was bareheaded and had snow white hair. Otherwise, there was nothing remarkable about him, and he had a type of house jacket on, or whatever you might call it, which fitted snugly and extended down almost to his knees. After he had come up, he gazed at me for a moment and then asked, "What would you like, my dear young man?"

"There's a thunderstorm coming up", I answered, "and it will start shortly. As you can see by my knapsack, I am a hiker and am asking that you give me shelter in this house until the rain, or at least the worst part of it is over."

"The thunderstorm won't come", said the man.

"It won't be an hour before it starts", I replied, "I am very familiar with these hills and also know something about clouds and thunderstorms."

"However, in all probability I have been acquainted much longer with the place where we are now standing than you have with any hills since I am much older than you", he answered, "I too am familiar with its clouds and thunderstorms and know that today no rain will fall on this house, this yard, or this whole area."

"Let's not argue any longer about whether or not a thunderstorm is going to soak this house today", I said, "if you refuse to open this gate, at least be so kind as to call the master of the house."

"I am the master of the house."

Heinrich is invited in and they further discuss whether there will be a thunderstorm or not. It turns out that the house on the hill does escape the storm even though it rages in the surrounding area. The white-haired man turns out to be the Baron von Risach and the house is called the 'Asperhof'. Risach shows Heinrich around his house and, as the novel develops, becomes a mentor to Heinrich. For the rest of the novel Heinrich shuttles between his parents' home, the Asperhof and the house of some friends of Risach, the 'Sternenhof'; he has many discussions with Risach on geology, art, illustrating, furniture restoring, statues, marble-flooring, roses, church restorations, nature and many other material things; I believe only once does the conversation turn to more spiritual matters. There is also quite a lot of zither-playing!

By the end of Part Two (of Three) Heinrich has become romantically involved with Natalie, the daughter of the owner of the Sternenhof and the novel concentrates on their future life together. Near the beginning of Part Three, not long after Heinrich and Natalie have declared their love for each other, there is a beautiful description of the wonder of the night sky:

How strange it was, I thought, that when the tiny though thousandfold beauties of the Earth disappeared and the immeasurable beauty of outer space rose in the distant quiet splendor of light, man and the greatest number of other creatures were supposed to be asleep! Was it because we were only permitted to catch a fleeting glimpse of those great bodies and then only in the mysterious time of a dream world, those great bodies about which man had only the slightest knowledge but perhaps one day would be permitted to examine more closely? Or was it permitted for the great majority of people to gaze at the starry firmament only in brief, sleepless moments so that the splendor wouldn't become mundane, so that the greatness wouldn't be diminished?

The novel ends with further revelations, especially from Risach, who reveals much about his early life, which helps us understand the title of the novel.

The book is in three parts and I ended up reading each part with a significant break inbetween. Although I really enjoyed the book I think I would find it difficult reading it in one go as it can get a bit suffocating. I must admit when I reached the end I couldn't help cynically saying to myself 'And they all lived happily ever after.' I think this says much about myself and the cynical age we live in. I believe that to enjoy the book one needs to suspend as much of this cynicism as is possible - which I managed to do for most of the book. If you're unsure about reading this and have not encountered any of Stifter's work then I would thoroughly recommend *Rock Crystal*, which has to be one of my favourite books.

This was read as part of German Literature Month in November 2014 (a.k.a. GLM4).

Sabrina says

Es ist sehr schwierig diesen Roman zu bewerten. Die literarischen Qualitäten verdienen auf jeden Fall 5 Sterne. Wenn ich ausschließlich den Plot bewerten sollte sind -1001 Sterne nicht genug. Auf 800 Seiten gibt es so gut wie keine Handlung. Die hyperrealistische Erzählweise, wie beispielsweise eine seitenfüllende Beschreibung eines Schreibtisches, kann doch sehr ermüdend sein. Allerdings beschreibt der Text nicht einfach eine Idylle, sondern das Erzählverfahren reflektiert eben mit der Fokussierung auf das Detail, welche Bereinigungstechniken angewandt werden müssen, damit eine auf Harmonie und Versöhnung basierende Ordnung erst entstehen kann.

Cathie says

This strange and extremely slow moving novel by the 19th century Austrian writer Adalbert Stifter is one of my favorite novels of all time.

Davina says

Ein anstrengendes Unterfangen.

Für meinen Geschmack zu viele, ausschweifende Naturbeschreibungen. Die Diskussionen über Kunst waren interessant, aber auch zu detailreich, um angenehm zu sein. Jemand, der sich für die jeweilige Materie interessiert, mag es spannend gefunden haben, ich fand die Langwierigkeit von Beschreibungen der Mamor- und Edelsteinarten, der Restaurierungen und Gartenhaltung mühsam.

Die eigentliche Handlung, die wahrscheinlich nicht einmal ein Drittel des Werkes einnimmt, war allerdings ganz nett.

Ann says

Am only about 1/4 done but can't resist recording my impression up to this point: If you read mainly for plot and action, you will find this story painfully slow-moving. But if you can appreciate an author's eye for detail and mastery of descriptive language, can savor the music and flow of classic German even in its syntactic complexity, and can suspend your incredulity over the utter perfection of everything he describes, you might enjoy this book. I cannot comment on translated versions but only hope that they do the original justice. I will report back when I finish the book.

OK, I'm back, having finished. What I said above still stands, but I probably would have given it at most 2 stars, had I not been enamored of Stifter's language. It was too long and was composed of long instructive monologues on every subject imaginable, obviously directed at readers and not the other characters. This is a quintessential *Bildungsroman* from a time long gone.

I would also add that I read not the edition shown above but the Project Gutenberg Ebook, #2 in its series by Adalbert Stifter. I was surprised at many errors that slipped through. In most PG books I've found no errors at all. At the end of this one, the publisher invites readers to report errors even years after its publication. If only this had been in the front of the book, I would have highlighted them as I went along. There's no way I could go back and find them all now. But PG books are free, so I owe the organization my thanks and some volunteer time.

Benjamin Garely says

"Der Nachsommer" von Adalbert Stifter ist weder ein Buch voller dramatischer Handlung, die einen fesselt, noch zeichnet sie eine ausgedehnte Skizze der Gesellschaft seiner handelnden Zeit. Es geht hier einzig darum anhand eines beschriebenen fiktiven Werdegangs eines jungen Mannes zu zeigen, wie, nach Stifter, die

perfekte Erziehung und Heranreifung eines ebensolchen vonstatten gehen könne. In diesem Leben des Protagonisten Heinrich ist alles perfekt: perfekte Familienverhältnisse, perfekte Freunde, perfekte Umstände und ein jeder handelt nur nach der respektvollsten und freundschaftlichsten Maxime, die möglich ist. So wird das synthetisch perfekte Heranreifen dargestellt. Einen großen Rahmen bilden die Betrachtungen von Natur und Kunst, insbesondere des Gebirges, des Gartens und im künstlerischen Bereiche der Antike. Hier findet man dann auch einige kunsttheoretische Betrachtungen, vor allem seitens des "Gastfreundes", eines Mannes, bei dem unser Protagonist eines Tages Unterschlupf findet und der ihm über die Jahre als eine Art Erzieher und später als älterlicher Freund und zweiter Vater heranwächst.

Aufgrund der Tatsache, dass eben nichts tatsächlich gravierendes an Handlung geschieht kann es allen Lesern, die sich nun nicht heißblütig mit Rosenzucht, Marmoren oder Geologie beschäftigen, recht langwierig werden. Es vermittelt aber auch ein sehr beruhigendes Gefühl, da man irgendwann auch keine Tragödien oder Schicksalsschläge mehr erwartet und somit ruhigen Gewissens und ohne Aufregung in diesem Buch lesen kann und mitverfolgen wie sich im Leben Heinrichs alles nach und nach wie automatisch fügt.

Schön zu sehen war, dass hier keine entseelte Form der Erziehung gepredigt wird, in der Bildung über alles gestellt wird, im Gegenteil: Familie und letztendlich die Liebe nehmen den Fokus im späteren Teil des Buches ein und sind die Elemente, die Heinrich den letzten und wichtigsten Schliff zur Vervollkommnung als perfekt erzogener Mensch fehlten. Auch verschiedene kleinere Dinge, die man während des Buches als nebensächlich angesehen hat, fügen sich im abschließenden Kapitel der Vermählung und runden das gesamte Buch auf schöne Art und Weise ab. Ein Buch, das mich in keiner Weise nachhaltig prägen oder verändern wird, an das ich wohl aber dennoch noch lange Zeit gerne zurückdenken werde.

Monty Milne says

Thomas Mann liked this, and I like Thomas Mann, so I was favourably disposed. But I found it hard going. I tried to think of it as like a calming symphony or a beautiful poem, but although it was quite good for lowering the blood pressure, I had to read it in small chunks because I kept falling asleep over the pages. I don't think it is really possible to write a successful novel with such an absence of plot, dramatic tension, or conflict. The pace does pick up a little in the final chapters when one of the central figures reveals the unhappy love affair in his past. There is a sense of sorrow for what might have been, and a pleasing sense of hidden connections being made manifest as mysteries are brought into the light and resolved. But it takes 400 pages of narcolepsy to get to this point...

There are some things which struck me as interesting and true. One is the marble statue which the hero barely notices at first, but then gradually comes to observe with a deep appreciative pleasure. We have all had the experience of seeing familiar surroundings become transformed as some of the objects in them take on a deeper significance than they had at first sight. This is not just because we change, but because the surroundings themselves interact with us in a such a way as to cause a change of perception. Also, there is no doubt that if you are in the right sort of mood - the sort of mood where you just want to relax in a comfortable chair set out in the garden, listen to the birds, and watch the interplay of light and shade on the trees...then you might find the prose calming and beautiful. For these reasons, I give it 3 stars. It's a valiant effort. But, in the end, the effort of reading several hundred pages where virtually nothing happens was almost too much.

Many people will find this completely unreadable. A small minority will love it. If I was a Zen Master, I

might have enjoyed it a lot more. My failure to engage with it fully may therefore be a result of my failure as a reader rather than Stifter's failure as a novelist.
