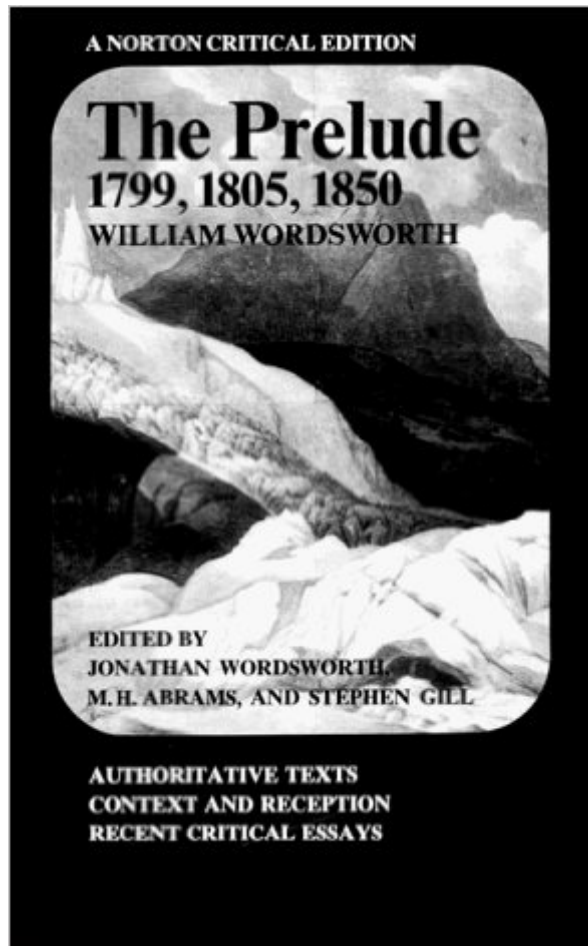


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The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850 (Norton Critical Editions)



Synopsis

This volume is the first to present Wordsworth's great poem in all three of its forms. It reprints, on facing pages, the version of *The Prelude* that was completed in 1805, together with the much-revised work published after the poet's death in 1850. In addition, the editors include the two-part version of the poem, composed in 1798-99. Each of these poems possesses distinctive qualities and values; to read them together provides an incomparable chance to observe a great poet composing and re-composing, throughout a long life, his major work. There are no fewer than seventeen manuscripts of *The Prelude* in the Wordsworth library at Grasmere. Working with these materials, the editors have prepared an accurate reading version of 1799 and have newly edited from manuscripts the texts of 1805 and 1850—thus freeing the latter poem from the unwarranted alterations made by Wordsworth's literary executors. The editors also provide a text of MS. JJ (Wordsworth's earliest drafts for parts of *The Prelude*) as well as transcriptions of other important passages in manuscript which Wordsworth failed to include in any fair copy of his poem. The texts are fully annotated, and the notes for all three versions of *The Prelude* are arranged so that each version may be read independently. The editors provide a concise history of the texts and describe the principles by which each has been transcribed from the manuscripts. There are many other aids for a thorough study of *The Prelude* and its background. A chronological table enables the reader to contextualize the biographical and historical allusions in the texts and footnotes. "References to *The Prelude* in Process" presents the relevant allusions to the poem, by Wordsworth and by members of his circle, from 1799 to 1850. Another section, "Early Reception," reprints significant comments on the published version of 1850 by readers and reviewers. Finally, there are seven critical essays by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, Geoffrey H. Hartman, Richard J. Onorato, William Empson, Herbert Lindenberger, and W. B. Gallie.

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Customer Reviews

The Norton edition is technically three drafts of the same long poem, so you have the delight of seeing Wordsworth's self-retrospective reflection on his creative development--develop--and evolve over a period of years. As always, the criticism and reception at the back of the Norton edition is a useful, wonderful way to introduce yourself to the ambient of the text and its subsequent reception, and the snippets out of Wordsworth's private letters should prove to be very illuminating for those interested in the author's ideas on the work he was writing. And yet with all of that said, I have to go on to say that I was really disappointed with the product I received. After waiting something like two and a half weeks, you can imagine how happy I was to see my copy finally arrive in the mail. And, until I pinched open and whisked off the shrink wrap and started leafing through the physical book, I was very pleased. But the soft cover that I got in the mail didn't seem to be the WW Norton edition that was posted on the website; and though the front and back covers and the spine of the book were the same, and the type face in the book was the same, something was missing... the covers were flimsy and thin; the pages were like paper out a Xerox machine, almost see-through in quality, wrinkling and creasing easily from even normal, day-to-day use. When I look back online I can see from WW Norton's website that the book itself goes back to an edition originally done in 1979. The book that I have here does not have a printing date, or a location for that matter, which is really sketchy. I do note, on the other hand, that on the lower spine and on the bottom of the back cover, where the company logo would usually be, there's an insignia: the book was printed by Viva Books Private Limited.

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