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#MeToo and Little Red Riding Hood: Rape, Victim Blaming, and Recovery in Nineteenth Century Versions of Little Red Riding Hood

As critics such as Jack Zipes have explored, Little Red Riding Hood tales are embedded in rape culture. While some critics point to Charles Perrault as the initiator of this subtext, I argue that the subtext of sexual assault is inherent in all versions of the Little Red Riding Hood tale. Instead, the most significant change made in Perrault's version and the fairy tale chapbooks that emulate his work is the removal of hope for recovery and retribution after the violence and the violation occur.

In my presentation, I will examine versions of the Little Red Riding Hood tale printed by William Weeks in 1834, and the McLoughlin Brothers in 1853. Unlike the Perrault version, the Weeks edition focuses more on Little Red Riding Hood's death, and the ending becomes a revenge fantasy for those left behind in the wake of the child's death. The McLoughlin Brothers edition of the tale deviates from earlier versions of the tale by changing Little Red Riding Hood's fate. The characteristics she was condemned for in earlier versions become her salvation. While these texts might seem to show a linear progression of America's handling of rape and rape culture, I instead argue that while they show us how far we have come, they also show how far we still have to go.