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**THE ORIGINS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, OR
THE FREIRIZATION OF PAOLO**

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A judge was asked by two people to settle a dispute between them. The first one presented her argument, and the judge said: "You are right!" The judge's assistant whispered that justice required that the other side be heard. The second person presented his argument, and the judge said: "You are right!"

The assistant was astounded: "How can both of them be right?!"

The judge replied: "You are right!"

This folktale comes in many forms: Sometimes the judge is Nasruddin, sometimes a Hassidic rabbi, sometimes a tribal chief. But the truth is (if there is a "truth") that the situation described originated with the mother of the renowned philosopher/educator, Paolo Freire.

Paolo's mother was a wise woman to whom people in the community turned for advice and mediation. One day two people in dispute presented their arguments to her, and to both of them she replied: "You are right!"

"Mama," cried Paolo, "how can both of them be right?" This was her reply:

"My son, I'm no *expert* with *pre-fabricated* correct-ic
My job is to promote a *dialectic*
Through listening most *empathetic*.

"The *discourse* must be *dialogic*
Never *hegemonic*
Or even *pedagogic*.

“The issues we must *problematize*
And always, always *contextualize*.
We must not ever *dichotomize*
And never, never *demonize*.
For then we would be *fragmentized*
And, God forbid, *marginalized*.

“This will give rise to *exploitation*
And the evils of *globalization*
With its attendant *structural oppression*
To be countered with an *activist coalition*.

“The key is in the *narrative*
Which always must be *generative*,
Providing *multiple perspectives*
Upon which we can be deeply *reflective*.

“So *never judge*, never say “Wrong!”
Let our *shared vision empower* us to be strong
As we search for our *commonality*
In a world of *subjective reality*.

“‘Hope springs eternal in the human breast.’
We must be *vigilant*, never allow ourselves to rest.

“Now go and do your homework
And remember what I say:
Don’t dare to bring home a report card
With less than an ‘A’.”
upon which we can be deeply *reflective*.