

Worksheet C: Multiple Identities

1. Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)
--Walt Whitman, *Poet*

Questions:

- What does it mean to “contain multitudes”? What is the writer trying to say about his identity?
- What makes up the multitudes in you?
- Do you ever contradict yourself? How?

2. Rabbi Zusha used to say: “When I die and come before the heavenly court, if they ask me, ‘Zusha, why were you not Abraham?’ I’ll say that I didn’t have Abraham’s intellectual abilities. If they say, ‘Why were you not Moses?’ I’ll say I didn’t have Moses’ leadership abilities. For every such question, I’ll have an answer. But if they say, ‘Zusha, why were you not Zusha?’ for that, I’ll have no answer.
--Hasidic tale

Questions:

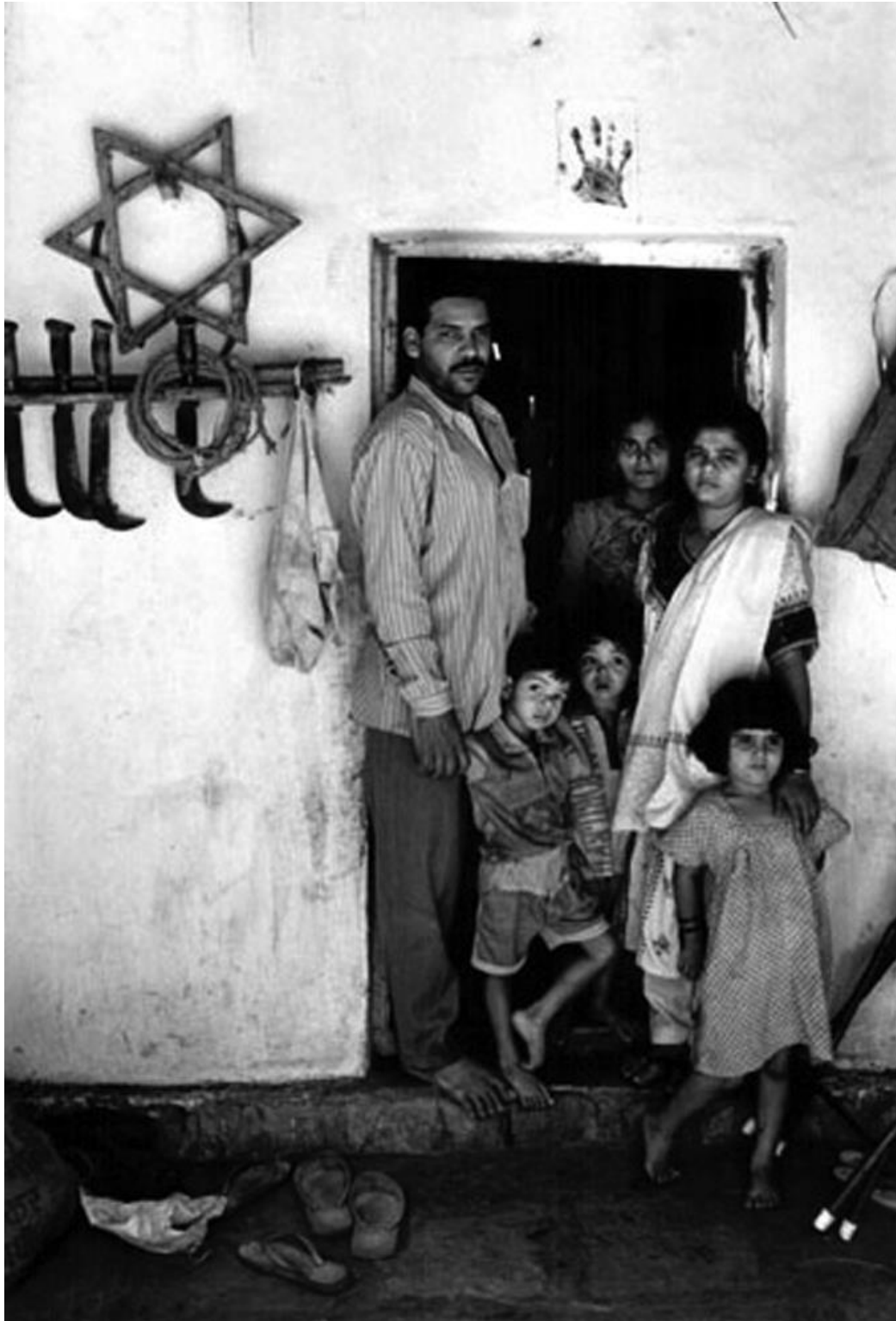
- How do you understand this text? Have you ever felt like you weren’t being you? When? Why?
- How does this text relate to the first one? How can you balance the different aspects of your identity while staying true to who you are?

3. When I was four years old
They tried to test my IQ,
They showed me this picture of three oranges and a pear.
They asked me which one is different
And does not belong,
They taught me different was wrong...

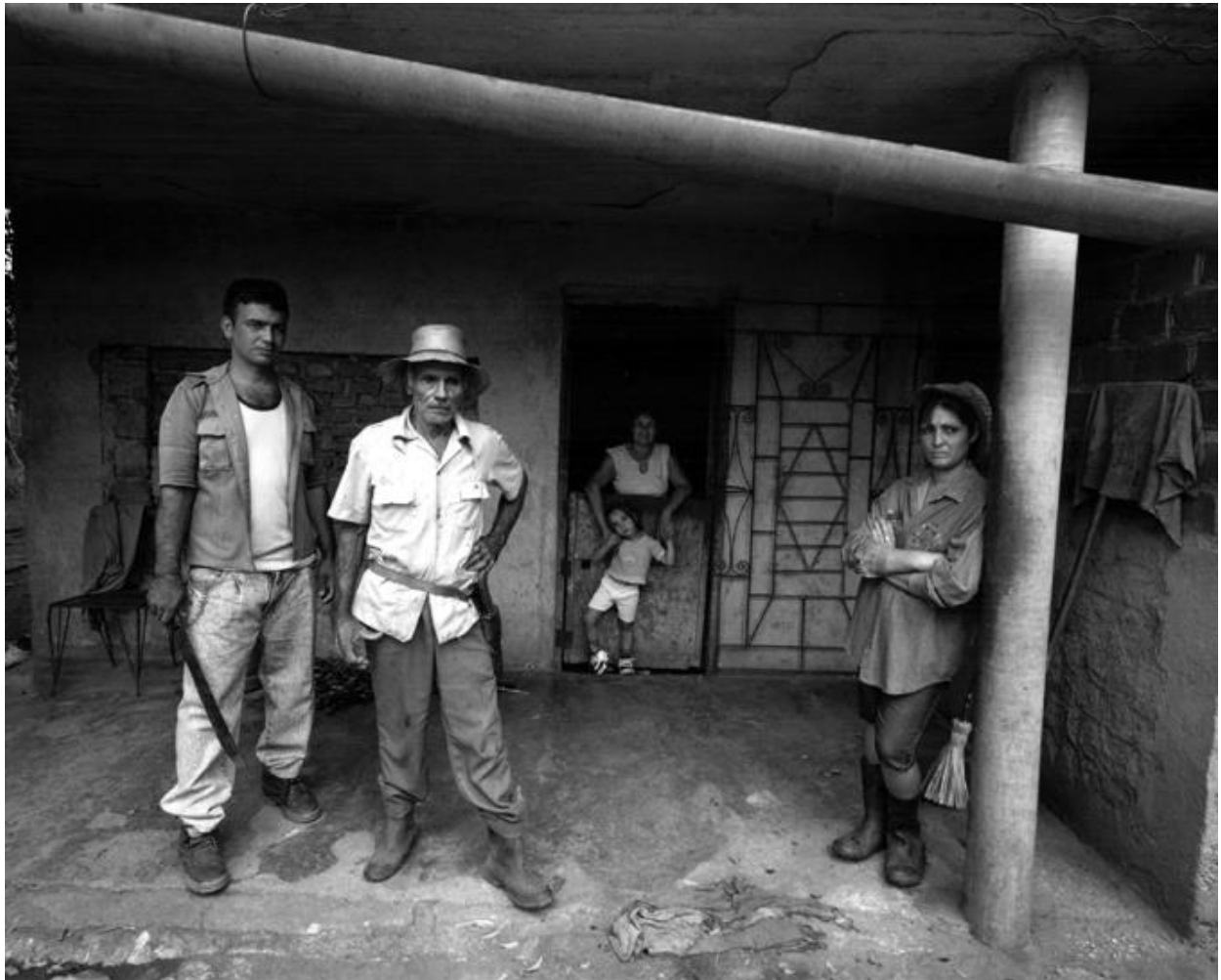
For every lie I unlearn
I learn something new
I sing sometimes for the war that I fight
'Cause every tool is a weapon –
If you hold it right.
--Ani DiFranco, *Singer*

Questions:

- Have you ever felt different? When?
- Do you think our society teaches that being different is wrong?
- What do you think the author means when she says “every tool is a weapon”?



Oil Pressers, Alibag, India, 2001



Floricultores, Camaguey, Cuba, 2003

This family is posed outside their home in the small Cuban village of Camaguey. They are known as “floricultores” because they grow flowers for a living, which they sell in the market.



Bet-Levi, Peru, 2003

This family lives in the Amazonian jungle of Peru. You can see the reflection of the rainforest just outside their house. You can also see symbols of their religious identity on their door.