Natalie Beecher

I had to read “Human, all too Inhuman” for my presentation, so I’m not sure if writing a pre-class writing on it counts, but here we go. I think that when I was reading this (and taking notes), one line stuck out to me the most—along with the context it came with, of course: “Information has become the new character.” This is actually something that bothered me a little about *White Teeth*. All her allusions and information that she packed into the story seemed to almost take away from what was going on. James wood even mentioned that “characterization is the management of caricature,” and that it works when the character’s lives are still able to evoke emotion from the reader even when the story is a little absurd. But honestly, when I was reading *White Teeth,* I felt nothing along those terms. There were lines and situations that were amusing, sure, but there was nothing about how their stories were written that made me feel any sort of sympathy for the characters. And actually, a lot of the time, the narrator seemed to be mocking them, too.

I thought I pretty much agreed with Wood on everything, but the point that you (Dr. H) brought up in class made me think—what’s the difference between a caricature and an eccentric character? It’s not that many/any of the characters were so unbelievable that they weren’t relatable at all. I’m sure there are plenty of people in the world who could relate to Millat and Irie, for example. My only issue with the way that the characters were written was that I didn’t really feel emotionally connected with any of them. I know that Zadie Smith wasn’t trying to do that—that the novel was supposed to be focused on themes etc., but I couldn’t really enjoy it as much as other novels I’ve read for this reason. Are so called “contemporary novels” usually like this?—I mean, focused more on “how the world works”? If so, I see the value and I was entertained while reading *White Teeth*, but I don’t think that style is for me, enjoyment-wise. I could study them though. I do find *White Teeth* interesting. Personally, though, I love it when books are able to make me cry—or even when they have a section that I just have to stop and admire the writing (some lines are just so pretty). In conclusion (refocus after my little tangent there), I liked *White Teeth,* but only to a point. There was something about it the ending that felt dissatisfactory for me.