**Questions** for **“Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner” by Roddy Doyle**

**Directions**: Choose **TWO** of the questions below and answer in some depth. This will be **due** **Friday** instead of the questions on *The Boxer* that I was going to have you write originally.

**Please print** out your answers and bring them to class to turn in. Think about the other questions, too, though, so you will be able to say insightful things about them in class.

1. In the recent Irish film *The Guard,* an Irish cop, when challenged by a black American FBI agent for saying something racist, says (with wide-eyed innocence), “But I’m Irish: racism is part of my culture!” In “Guess Who’s Coming for the Dinner,” Roddy Doyle seems to be exploring whether that generalization is valid. What do you think of Larry’s racial attitudes? Is it enough that he can recognize merit (or lack of merit) in people regardless of their race (as he claims in the long catalog of white and black musicians, politicians, athletes, etc.), or does he have reason to feel guilty about his racism? Consider what he says and does as well as what he thinks. Is there anyone else in the story you’d say is racist?
2. Besides race, what else about Ben might be affecting Larry’s response to Ben? Consider Ben’s nationality, profession, social class (and how is that determined?) How might the family’s attitude toward Ben be different if he were an African-American, or a Jamaican, or a Frenchman? I’m not asking you to speculate: use evidence from the story.
3. What are the steps in this story that lead Larry and Ben from fear, suspicion, hostility, and anger to mutual respect, empathy, and trust? Did the process seem plausible in this case? Are there any suggestions in the story for how this process could happen at the society-wide level? Again, use evidence from the story.
4. Why might the women in the story be more open to liking Ben than the Larrys (father and son) are? Why might Mona (the mom/wife) feel a particular connection with Ben?
5. If you know the film *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, how is this story related to it? How is it different? (If you’re curious, the whole film is on You Tube.)
6. “New Boy”: a short film made from another of Roddy Doyle’s *Deportees* short story collection. (It’s 11:33 minutes) I’m going to try to show this short film in class, but if you want to watch it on your own, you can write about it for this question. <https://www.google.com/search?q=new+Boy+you+tube&oq=new+boy&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j0j69i57j0l3.2151j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

How does this film add to our understanding of the situation back home in Nigeria that Ben (in this other story) left? What point does it seem to be making about assimilation, that is, about how young Joseph might eventually come to see Ireland as home, and be accepted as an Irish citizen by the natives?