Question 1: In O’Connor’s works, all of her characters are flawed in some way—and most are spiritually and morally corrupt. How do, in “GCP,” bodily handicaps symbolize the greater handicap of the intellect, the heart, and the soul? Why does O’Connor present these flawed characters to her readers? For what purpose?

Question 2: In “GCP,” Joy-Hulga is described to the readers as having a weak heart. We can assume, then, that this weak heart signifies something else, perhaps her emotional detachment. How do we see this? Why does O’Connor present Joy-Hulga to us as a person who is seemingly unable to love anyone or anything?

Question 3: Think about Joy-Hulga’s eyeglasses and whether or not they signify and reflect something other than her intelligence. Remember, Manley Pointer takes Joy-Hulga’s glasses off at the end of the story. Does this removal of her glasses perhaps signify the fact that she is blind to reality, having knowledge of books and abstract ideas, rather than of people and concrete objects? If so, how does O’Connor portray this in Joy-Hulga’s character? How do her actions/words demonstrate this signification?

Question 4: Of all the flaws that O’Connor’s characters posses, she seems most concerned with spiritual defects. Think about this in terms of Joy-Hulga’s false leg. To what does she equate this false leg? Does it somehow relate to false religion? If so, how? If this is the case, what comment is O’Connor making about philosophy? Does she see philosophy as an empty and soulless expression of human spirituality? If so, how? Also, did the loss of Joy-Hulga’s leg cause the loss of her religion? Did Joy-Hulga lose her religion because she had no choice?