**Conflict between the Individual and Society Surrounding Mental Health Issues**

Student name

Name of institution

Course Title

Professor Name

Date

**Question 1.**

In the story *The Yellow Wall-Paper,* the antagonist is John, who has been identified as the narrator’s husband. The narrator, John’s wife, is the main protagonist. In her role as the protagonist, she is highlighted as the main focus of the story as the plot builds around her and her mental struggles. Contrary, John has been identified as the main antagonist. In his role as an antagonist, John plays a critical role in advancing the story by creating conflict between the interests of the narrator and what he believes is right as a qualified physician. In the story *The Black Cat,* the narrator is the protagonist of the story as the plot builds around his mental struggles of obsession with pets while the his wife plays the role of an antagonist since her lack of interest and appreciation of the gravity of her husband’s mental condition further advances the story.

The protagonists in this story represent people suffering from mental illnesses and who’s psychological wellbeing is worsened by lack of enough interest from those around them. As they are ignored and left alone to battle their problems, they mental conditions become worse. The antagonists represent people surrounding individuals suffering from mental illnesses and the role they play in worsening or healing of these conditions. In both stories, the protagonists are illustrated as depressed, mentally disturbed and are obsessed by what they believe in. As for the antagonists, they are illustrated as being ignorant, self-centered and rigid in their decisions and worldview.

**Question 2.**

The narration in both stories, *The Black cat* and *The Yellow Wall-Paper,* have largely focused on the inner workings of a single character. Other characters have been used in the advancement of the single character’s inner workings. For example, in the story *The Black Cat,* the narration focuses on the inner workings of the narrator as he explains his struggles with his obsession and torments regarding Pluto and other pets. At one point, the narrator admits that “This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow” (Poe 3). Despite there being several actions such as the injuring of the pet, the main plot revolves around his thoughts. In the story *The Yellow Wall-Paper,* the story revolves around the mental inner workings of the narrator as she struggles with her mental issues around people who do not seem to understand her. At one point, she indicates that “Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able…” (Gilman 647). This is an indication that she is going through a lot of inner struggle and her every move is guided by psychological forces rather than physical ones.

**Question 3.**

In the story *The Black Cat,* the narration utilizes Pluto the cat as a symbol to indicate that when mental issues are ignored long enough, they can turn into violent actions even for the significant others of the affected individuals. Pluto symbolizes the innocent people or parties that often fall victim of the actions of mentally ill persons. In the story *The Yellow Wall-Paper,* the yellow wall-paper has been used as the main symbol in the story. The tearing of the wallpaper represents the frustrations experienced by mentally ill persons who keep being ignored by those around them. It represents their need to be heard and their ideas taken into consideration despite their shortcomings. Consequently, both symbols represent the struggles experienced by people suffering from mental illness and their extremes if not handled in the right way.

**Question 4.**

**The Selected Research Question.**

**How do the stories use their narrators/narration? How are their narrators used to represent the conflict between the individual and society surrounding mental health issues?**

**Quoted passages from *The Yellow Wall-Paper* story that help to answer this research question.**

1. “John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious. I am glad my case is not serious! But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing, John does not how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him.”

**Explanation.**

In this quote, the narrator illustrates how despite her troubled mind, John continues with his daily routines without taking special interest on how her wife is recovering. This is an indication that the society surrounding the mentally ill persons assumes that everything is okay despite the situation being otherwise. This may help to illustrates why there is continuous conflict between the individual and society regarding mental health issues.

1. “It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.”

**Explanation.**

John, who symbolizes the general society surrounding people living with mental illnesses, believes that mental illnesses can only be solved by secluding the affected individuals, preventing them from interacting with other people. However, the narrator believes that the presence of other people will help motivate her through companionship and advice. These beliefs highlight the conflicting perspectives individuals living with mental illnesses and the society surrounding them.

**Quoted passages from *The Black Cat* story that help to answer this research question.**

1. “Goaded by the interference into a rage more than demoniacal, I withdrew my arm from her grasp and buried the axe in her brain. She fell dead upon the spot without a groan.”

**Explanation.**

This quote highlights the extremes of the conflict between mentally ill persons and society surrounding them. When the mentally ill persons are obstructed or stopped from pursuing their wishes and targets, they result to committing tragedies.

1. “I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged by my parents with a great variety of pets. With these I spent most of my time…”

**Explanation.**

This quote illustrates how the society surrounding the mentally ill persons contribute to their condition consciously and unconsciously. For example, in this quote, as the narrator’s parents introduced him to pets, they did not think it would grow into an obsession that would finally lead to a murder. The conflict arises where the society encourages one thing and at some point, they are unable to control the mentally ill person’s actions as is the case with the narrator and his wife.

**Question 5.**

One of the interesting things about both stories is their ability to offer primary perspectives through the eyes of people suffering from mental illnesses. Most studies and stories explain the struggles of mentally ill persons through the lenses of experts and third parties. The originality of these stories enable the reader to view the word through the eyes of a mentally ill persons hence understanding them better. However, reading through the narrations, it is hard to believe that those around the narrators, in this case John and Jennifer in *The Yellow Wall-Paper* and the narrator’s wife in *The Black Cat,* are unable to realize the deteriorating conditions of the affected persons.

**Question 6.**

**The Chosen Research Question.**

How do the stories use their narrators/narration? How are their narrators used to represent the conflict between the individual and society surrounding mental health issues?

**Explanation.**

After an in-depth analysis of the stories provided for this assignment, I realized that their underlying themes highlight the conflicts experienced by mentally ill persons regarding their relationships with people surrounding them. The narrators have been effectively used to represent the extremes of frustrations experienced by mentally ill persons when they feel that people around them are not paying enough attention or are not reacting properly to their demands and wishes. The conflict arises where both narrators do something that they believe is deservedly right but is wrong in the eyes of the society surrounding them.

**Question 7.**

**Works Cited.**

Brophy, Lisa M., et al. “Consumers and Their Supporters’ Perspectives on Poor Practice and the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Mental Health Settings: Results from Australian Focus Groups.” *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2016. *Crossref*, doi:10.1186/s13033-016-0038-x.

**A Quote from the Source.**

“As noted in a recent review, consumer experiences of physical restraint and seclusion are reported as overwhelmingly negative, associated with immediate escalation of distress, and intense feelings such as despair, shame, terror and rage… This paper confirms that the lived experience of consumers and supporters can make an important contribution to deepening the understanding of what is happening in mental health practice and what needs to change and why” (Brophy et al.).

**Question 8.**

This source highlights the negative effects of seclusion as a form of intervention for mentally ill persons. In this context, seclusion can be defined as the act of deliberately confining an individual in an area or a room where they cannot leave freely or are barred from interacting with other people (Brophy et al.). Seclusion often intensifies the distress of the victims as they are separated from reality even if for a moment. This is the case experienced by the narrator in the story *The Yellow Wall-Paper.* Her husband believes that time away from the general populace and other family members will assist her in stabilizing mentally. However, she feels that being around other people especially her workmates will help lift her moods and morale. These opposing perspectives represent the existing conflict between mentally ill persons and the society surrounding them.

**Question 10.**

**The who does What Technique?**

**Original Paragraph.**

In “The Black Cat”, the persona’s source of trouble could be his obsession with pets, but clearly, his character took a terrible turn when he started drinking alcohol. He confesses of being very much insensitive when intoxicated, a fact that destabilizes his mental state. “… for what disease is like Alcohol! …even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper,” (Poe 5). He would unleash war on Pluto to an extent of injuring one another and at one instance the cat bit him, leaving his body swallowed with venom. Since then, he lost himself, he observes.

**Revised Paragraph.**

In “The Black Cat”, the persona’s source of trouble could be his obsession with pets. However, his character took a terrible turn when he started drinking alcohol. He confesses of being very much insensitive when intoxicated, a fact that destabilizes his mental state. “… For what disease is like Alcohol! …even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper,” (Poe 5). He would unleash war on Pluto to an extent of both parties getting injured. At one instance, the cat bit him and left his body swallowed with venom. Ever since the narrator was bitten by Pluto, he admits that he lost himself.

**Question 11.**

**The Paramedic Technique.**

**Original Sentences.**

1. He would unleash war on Pluto to an extent of injuring one another and at one instance the cat bit him, leaving his body swallowed with venom.
2. Unlike other illnesses that ordinarily confine patients and lower their abilities, people with a mental health condition are wild, unreasonable, and seem to find satisfaction in weird actions.

**Revised Sentences.**

1. He would violently attack Pluto and in one instance, the cat retaliated and bit him, leaving his body swallowed with venom.
2. People suffering from mental health conditions are often wild, unreasonable and are satisfied by atypical actions hence differentiating them from people suffering from other illnesses that necessitate confinement.

**Question 12.**

**Underline the Transitions Revision Technique.**

**Original Paragraphs.**

Nonetheless, the concept of having a wife to manage him did not work, his temperament altered for the worst; he became moodier, irritable and less concerned with the feeling of others (Poe 4). Despite referring to Pluto as a beast, he became the beast himself and nowhere in the text are we told of any effort of the wife to manage his deteriorating mental state.

From the two narrations, it is evident that often the society does not understand the internal problems of others. The problems will always reoccur and be ignored but become tragic in the fullness of time. The two readings help understand that mentally ill people are always misunderstood, and it is always a struggle for both the patients and their immediate surroundings. By the unnamed female narrator in “The Yellow Wall-paper” telling her experience, in a world where her husband could not ensure her emotional needs, and Poe recounting how his childhood and adulthood grew for the worst, the reader should be able to understand how mental illness often manifest itself. That the condition develops out of small experiences that people tend to ignore.

**Revised Paragraphs.**

Nonetheless, the concept of having a wife to manage him did not work, his temperament altered for the worst; he became moodier, irritable and less concerned with the feeling of others (Poe 4). Despite referring to Pluto as a beast, he became the beast himself and nowhere in the text are we told of any effort of the wife to manage his deteriorating mental state.

From the two narrations, it is evident that often the society does not understand the internal problems of others. The problems will always reoccur and be ignored but become tragic in the fullness of time. Moreover, the two readings help understand that mentally ill people are always misunderstood, and it is always a struggle for both the patients and their immediate surroundings. Consequently, by the unnamed female narrator in “The Yellow Wall-paper” telling her experience, in a world where her husband could not ensure her emotional needs, and Poe recounting how his childhood and adulthood grew for the worst, the reader should be able to understand how mental illness often manifest itself. Evidently, these conditions develop out of small experiences that people tend to ignore.

**Question 13.**

**Thesis Statement.**

In the analyses, the paper will dissect various forms of narration and the character of the narrator. Further, it will seek to explain the conflict that the narrators find themselves in because of their ill mental state.

**Topic Sentences.**

**Paragraph 1.**

The first person narrative is used in “The Yellow Wall-paper” and “The Black Cat.”

**Paragraph 2.**

In “The Black Cat”, Poe narrates how he is in love with peculiar things, especially his big black cat named Pluto.

**Paragraph 3.**

In the Yellow Wall-Paper, the narrator indicates that her mental illness has its roots in her relationship with her husband John.

**Paragraph 4.**

In “The Black Cat”, the persona’s source of trouble can be traced to his obsession with pets, and it worsened once he started drinking alcohol.

**Paragraph 5.**

From the two readings, alcohol, insensitivity towards a partner’s emotional needs in a marriage is the apparent source of the persona’s mental instability.

**Paragraph 6.**

Poe confesses to having married too early perhaps to help him cope with his obsession with pets and reduce his mental instabilities.

**Paragraph 7.**

Nonetheless, the concept of having a wife to manage him did not work, his temperament altered for the worst; he became moodier, irritable and less concerned with the feeling of others (Poe 4).

**Paragraph 8.**

Assumptions about mental health from both “The Yellow Wall-paper” and “The Black Cat”, subtly worsens the mental unwellness of the narrators.

**Paragraph 9.**

On his part, too, Poe subtly agrees that he is not mentally stable and depicts an individual who has truly lost his mental stability.

**Paragraph 10.**

Both the Yellow Wall-Paper and The Black Cat highlight that mental illnesses, once ignored, usually end in tragic ways.

**Question 14.**

**Introduction.**

**Thought-provoking question.**

1. How well can you describe the mental wellness of the person next to you and are you positively or negatively influencing them psychologically?

**Startling facts.**

1. Despite the common belief that mental illness is a rare disease, one out of every four persons suffer from mental illness at some point in their lives.

**Conclusion.**

**Thought-provoking question.**

1. In conclusion, how well are you aware of the mental condition of those around you?

**Expert Opinion.**

1. Much focus and awareness requires to be raised on mental health issues at the basic family unit to evade future tragedies that could have been avoided through necessary interventions.

**Question 15.**

**Paragraph 1.**

From the two readings, alcohol, insensitivity towards a partner’s emotional needs in a marriage is the apparent source of the persona’s mental instability. The wife or husband is highlighted as a source of emotional comfort. “John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage,” (Gilman 647). The narrator also observes that, despite her deteriorating condition, John, a physician, is still obsessed with his work and even spends nights away, often dismissing her to be only nervous. For the nights when John is around, he thinks that the wife is sleeping but she is often lost in thought; because of the ghost of the Wall-paper.

“John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious. John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no reason to suffer, and that satisfies him. Of course it is only nervousness.” (Gilman 649).

The lady notes that she loves John and had wanted to be a source of rest and comfort, but she has turned out to be a burden.

**Paragraph 2.**

Mental health as a tragedy. Both the Yellow Wall-Paper and The Black Cat end tragically. In the former, when John was away on his professional commitments, the wife locked himself inside their room and was relentlessly peeling off the wall. This continued until the return of John, whom she strangely refuses to open the door for. It takes a struggle and exchange of bitter words before the door flings open. Then, the horror meets John: The Yellow Wall-Paper is all peeled off yet the wife believes it is an achievement. The disbelief throws him down. “Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!” (Gilman 656). In “The Black Cat”, Poe ends up killing his dearest wife out of fury because she had resisted him from killing the new black cat they had brought to their house. He goes on to hide evidence by ceiling his deceased wife inside a chimney, only to be betrayed by the ghost of the poor cat who wails when the police come searching.

**Explanation.**

The highlighted text represents facts from the story presented as direct quotes or paraphrased phrases. They are specific details tied in with the topic sentence and the paper’s thesis statement. They seek to support the claims made in the topic sentences. However, in the first selected paragraph, I would add statistics on how alcohol and insensitivity towards a partner’s emotional needs in a marriage have been linked to deteriorating mental wellness. In the second selected paragraph, I would seek to add quotes from experts indicating how mental conditions, if not treated correctly, often lead to tragedies. This will also include facts on why mental illness deteriorates due to lack of sufficient and efficient care and treatment.