**Concept**

For my video game, I am going create the next installment in the *Silent Hill* franchise. *Silent Hill* is a series consisting of 9 main game installments, 6 spin-off games, 2 films and a comic book series. The game has a dense and complex background combining themes of psychological horror and the supernatural. Because of this complexity, I have included a document giving an oversight of the main story in Silent Hill and the themes throughout that I will draw on for my game.

My game will be entitled ‘*Silent Hill: Ascension* ’ and be part of the main series; the spin-off series are not as detailed and expansive as the game I wish to write. Because each game follows an independent storyline and is set often at different points in time (the first game set in 1983 and the latest being set in the present day) I am going to set my story in 2015.

The central protagonist of the game will be Elaine Cavanaugh and this will be the first game since the 3rd installment and the 2nd game overall to feature a playable female main character. I am making the protagonist a woman because it not only will it be different to the other games but it will add a fresh feel to the series, although it does feature strong and influential female characters throughout. The definitive storyline is not finalized until the very end but they all stem from an event that occurred when she was 14 years old. After her plane crashes on Toluca Lake, Elaine travels into the town to find help but instead discovers that she is in a hellish alternate reality and there might be no way out.

Beside the main story line, which will be an ‘objective’ based story i.e. Go to the Church, Find the Key for the Graveyard or Find a Flashlight, the world will feature other side stories and NPC (non-playable characters) which will give the player more insight into the game world but also allow the player to collect diary entries spanning 3 years which will give backstory on a character named ‘Lilly'. The side quests fill in the backstory of Elaine’s character, who was Lilly before she was adopted and had her name changed. The diary pages feature stories of her abuse and the decision to ‘save’ her siblings from what’s to come when they grow up.

Despite all the games being set in *Silent Hill* (*SH: Homecoming* being set in the neighboring town Shepard’s Glenn for most of the game) some of the games add new locations, areas to the map, explore different regions of the town and expand in/around the small town. My game will feature location seen in some of the previous games like the lighthouse and the church and it will also feature newer locations like an underground sacrificial chamber and a deeper exploration of the woods surrounding Toluca Lake. This will be the first game allowing the player to travel around the entire town, whereas previous installments will have you restricted to particular region of the town.

Each game has a tragic event that occurs some time before their respective game begins. This is what causes the darkness inside them, for which the town calls out for them. These events feature strong emotional aspects which often tackle dark and controversial issues such as pedophilia (*Downpour),* disease and murder (*Silent Hill 2)* and ritualistic sacrifices (*Silent Hill, 1+3 Origins* and *Homecoming)* For my game, I am going to focus on childhood abuse, trauma and split personality disorder. Although child abuse is touched on in *Silent Hill 4: The Room* when reading memos on the town’s orphanage, it is never a central plot point or driving force behind the characters motivations.

The game itself will be a fully 3D, over-the-shoulder perspective and part open world survival horror. The player will be able to move Elaine throughout all the regions of *Silent Hill* including Toluca Lake and the surrounding woods. Unlike the previous games where the roads would abruptly end whenever the player went the ‘wrong way’ (the towns way of controlling the narrative), this game will be a fully open map, allowing the player to travel across all the districts of Silent Hill. Most places will be low-lit and dark, forcing players to use a flashlight to navigate safely and find batteries along the way but the flashlight can attract unwanted attention from monsters.

The player can decide to either complete the story in a linear manor or bypass all the side-stories completely. Or they can weave in and out of the two. By doing side-missions along side the main story, the player can pick up supplies like weapons, ammo, batteries, documents or health items. However, like all previous *Silent Hill* games, the player cannot level up. The idea of keeping the characters both weak and inexperienced it adds to the scare-factor because they cannot fight back with the knowledge they will win. In this case, the enemies will remain the same level of toughness (varying levels depending on the enemy) and the character will rely on having enough ammo or strong enough weapon to defeat them. The ammo in the game will be very limited and the melee weapons will break after a certain amount of uses.

Like most survival horror games, the game will feature a puzzle element to it. Like all entries in the *Silent Hill* franchise, the puzzles are not for show or for the sake of challenging the player but in fact advance the plot by opening up the next section of game play for the player. The puzzles involved will not be as 'obvious' a puzzle as they have appeared in previous installments but are more integrated into the games surroundings and environment.

The enemies featured throughout the game will feature entirely new monsters, which are all born out of Elaine’s psyche. For example, the weakest and most common enemies are ‘Criers’. Small but fast and strong creatures that resemble children, they constantly cry and usually hideaway and jump out when Elaine walks past them. These monsters are representative of her as a child, afraid, angry and often lashing out at other people.

One of the biggest and newer game-play and story devices that this game will include will be a 'psychology-complex'. This mechanic will examine certain decisions the character makes: number of kills and if they choose evasive or non-evasive combat actions during bogeyman confrontations. Throughout the game the decisions made will effect the ending and which storyline the game will follow (a possible of 3 distinctive storylines are available and a 4th secret ending).

The main 'bogeyman' in this game is a physical manifestation of her twin siblings. Because the twins were so young when they were killed, they did not understand what was happening to them. So when they are reincarnated in Silent Hill, they still do not know and so they believe that Elaine murdered them out of selfishness. They take on the form of a two headed, grey coloured humanoid monster that when it screams, it is muffled by the sound of water, giving the illusion of drowning.

The Otherworld in this game will resemble Elaine’s time in an abusive household. There will be a lot of darkness, which symbolizes her darker days, encouraging the character to use their flashlight often. The walls and floors will be dark purples and blues, featuring flesh like slash-marks and which represent the physical abuse she suffered. Finally, the sound of crying children will be faintly heard in the background.

The Fog world will be like the first *Silent Hill* game, just a dense fog that falls over the town. There won’t be many monsters in the Fog world as the idea of the fog is to symbolize the confusion surrounding the character but there will occasionally be sequences where the player must confront or evade the bogeyman.

At the end of the game, depending on how the psychology-complex examines the character and then it will determine which storyline the game will follow. Throughout the game diary entries will be collected telling the story of a little girl who is suffering abuse from her parents (Lilly's diary) and depending on which ending is chosen, these diary entries will either be real or faked by her psychopathic side.

**Ending 1 -** Providing the player kills no enemies and approaches the game with a passive attitude (choosing a evasive options 90% of the time) the complex will show the bogeyman twins that she didn't make up the abuse story and was in fact killing them to save them from her parents. This ending will determine that this character does not have a personality disorder and it was a result of her childhood abuse. They will forgive her and she is able to leave the town. It is revealed the Cavanaugh family adopted her at 14 and that she lived a good life, getting a good education and becoming a photographic journalist.

**Ending 2 -** If the player kills more than 100 enemies and plays with an aggressive attitude (choosing non-evasive options 90% of the time) the complex will show the bogeyman twins that her evil persona has taken over her and that she made up the 'abuse' story as part of her psychopathy. The twins then kill her and it is revealed that the Cavanaugh family adopted her at 14 and 6 years latter murdered them and fled, traveling around for a number of years often killing random people to get money.

**Ending 3 -** If the player kills between 50-100 enemies but chooses evasive options 90% of the time, the complex will determine that Elaine is suffering a split personality disorder which was brought on at a young age by her parents abuse. The murder of the twins was enjoyed by one part of her identity and the other did it to save them. This ending combines the two above in a way that allows the player to confront her parents as an added final boss. By killing this boss, she eventually gains closure over her parents past and gains the forgiveness of the twins. She is able to leave but must battle her newly found identity disorder.

**Ending 4 -** This secret ending is achieved only after obtaining all three of the other endings. In this ending, it does not matter how many enemies you kill or if you confront or evade the bogeyman during encounter because at the end, instead of confronting the twins you find out that you were involved in an Alien experiment (referencing the UFO endings from previous installments).