

## Project Proposal

*Memoria: Chains Unbound* is a continuation and reimagining of our original senior project concept *Akemi Isles*, redesigned for gameplay and narrative clarity. While the original project focused on mythological islands and standalone stories, *Memoria* shifts toward a more cohesive emotional narrative centered on memory, loss, and acceptance. This change allows the project to focus on creating one unified island space for the player to explore while delivering a focused and meaningful story.

*This project* is a 2D narrative-driven exploration game in which the player helps a spirit known as the Shadow move forward after the loss of their loved ones. The Shadow is the spirit of a child who has passed away and remains bound to the island by unresolved grief, appearing as a shadowy figure unable to move on. Inspired by narrative exploration games such as *Poptropica*, the game emphasizes progression through exploration, interaction with the environment, and narrative discovery rather than combat. Gameplay includes environmental puzzles and traversal-based challenges that support the emotional narrative.

The central narrative revolves around the relationship between the player and the Shadow. The Shadow represents a manifestation of loss—a version of the self shaped by grief and memory. Throughout the game, the player and the Shadow journey together through different areas of the island, each reflecting a stage of the Hero's Journey. As the player progresses, they actively help the Shadow confront memories tied to what they have lost.

Rather than destroying memories, the player helps the Shadow reinterpret and accept them. Through solving environmental puzzles, revisiting symbolic locations, and going through the narrative, the player gradually loosens the imaginary chains holding the Shadow down. Over time, the Shadow becomes more independent, lighter, and more capable of moving forward—accepting what happened without being held

back by pain. By the end of the journey, the Shadow is no longer bound by grief and is able to exist with acceptance, carrying memories without being defined or restrained by them.

The core features of *Memoria* include 2D island exploration, narrative-driven gameplay, symbolic environments, and an inventory system for collecting memory-related items. The game will be developed using Unity 2D, with art assets created using tools such as Piskel and other digital art software as needed. Audio will not be included in the initial version, similar to early *Poptropica*, allowing development to focus on gameplay systems and narrative clarity. The game is designed to run on a standard laptop or PC without requiring high-end hardware.

The intended audience for *Memoria* includes players who enjoy narrative-focused indie games and reflective storytelling experiences. Maintenance of the project would primarily involve bug fixes and potential content expansions, such as additional areas of the island or narrative branches.

This project is appropriate for the course because it directly applies and demonstrates skills learned in previous classes, including object-oriented programming, software design, and user interface development. It also extends these skills into new areas such as narrative design, symbolic gameplay mechanics, and emotional pacing within interactive media.

The technical difficulty of the project is appropriate for a semester-long timeline. While the game includes multiple interconnected systems—exploration, narrative progression, puzzles, and inventory—each system is achievable with the current skill set developed through prior coursework. The project scope has been intentionally limited to prioritize functional gameplay systems and player interaction over high-detail art assets, ensuring feasibility within the semester.

The tools required to complete the project, including Unity, GitHub, BOX, and digital art software, are already available and familiar. This allows development time to be focused on refining gameplay and narrative rather than learning entirely new technologies.

*Memoria* is engaging both personally and academically. Its themes of memory, loss, and acceptance provide a meaningful narrative framework, while the Hero's Journey structure offers a clear foundation for gameplay progression. By combining technical implementation with emotional storytelling, the project is designed to be interesting to the developer, classmates, and instructor alike, resulting in a thoughtful and achievable senior project.