

# Georgia O'Keeffe

1887 – 1986

American Modernist Painter



Georgia O'Keeffe, Taos, New Mexico

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Written December 2023

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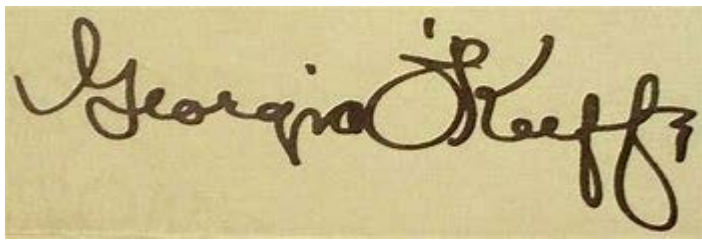
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A handwritten signature of Georgia O'Keeffe in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## Introduction

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Date of Birth - 15/11/1887

Date of Death - 06/03/1986

“I find that I have painted my life – things happening in my life – without knowing”.

Georgia O'Keeffe



Georgia O'Keeffe in her early thirties by Alfred Stieglitz.



O'Keeffe family photo c 1906

## Section A:

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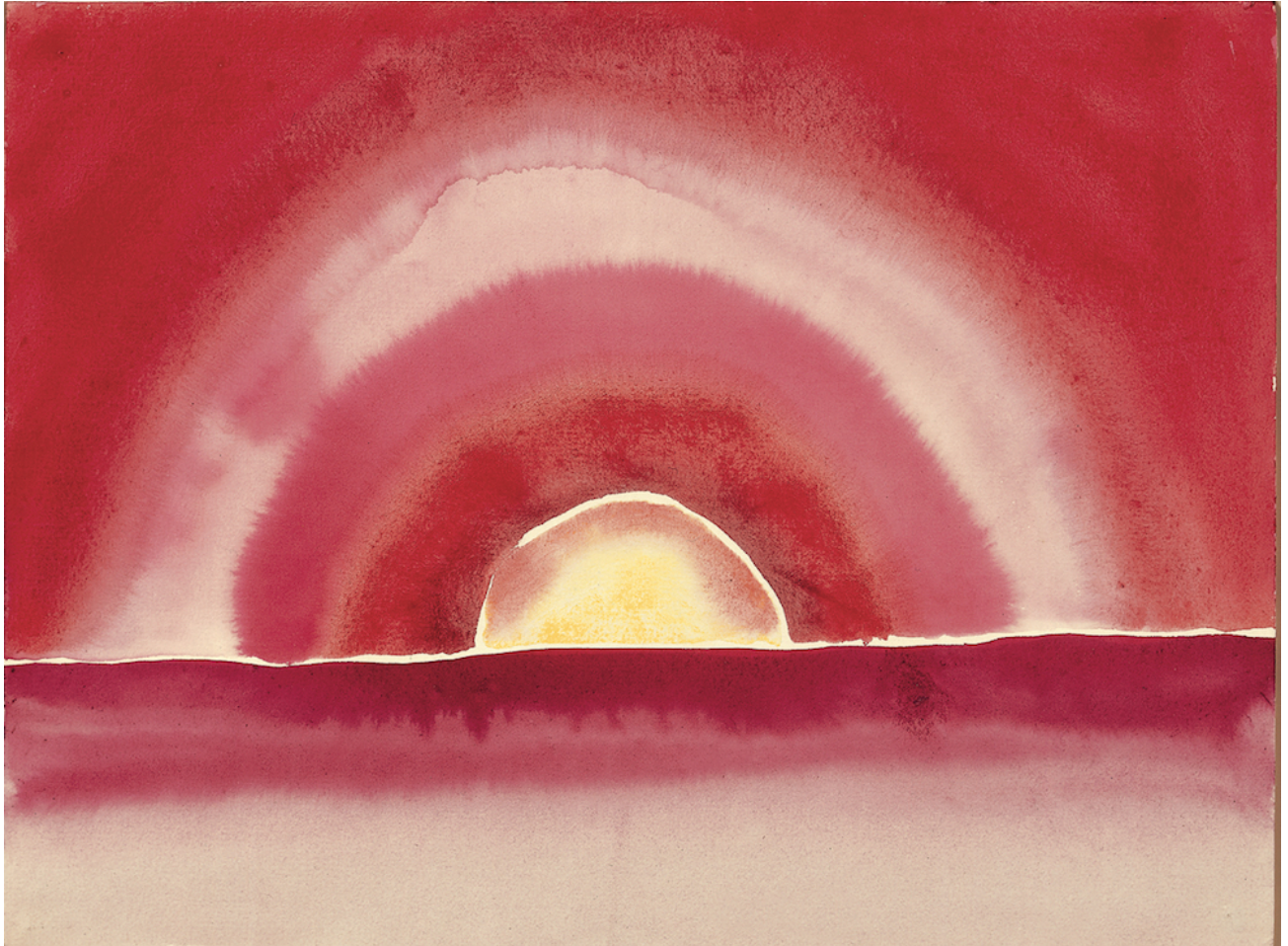
### Biographical Summary – Septennial summaries, analysis and overviews

“Where I was born and how I have lived is unimportant.

It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest.”

Georgia O'Keeffe

### First Septennial Moon: 0-7 years 1887-1893



Sunrise

Born Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, USA, 1887.

First daughter and second child of Francis Calyxtus O'Keeffe (Irish descent) and Ida Totto O'Keeffe (Hungarian/Dutch descent).

First memory at 9 months old.

Begins local school at 5 years old.

## Second Septennial Mercury: 7-14 years – 1894-1901



Yellow Sweet Peas

Grandmother O'Keeffe and Grandmother Totto die.

Goes to stay with Aunt in city of Milwaukee - Jupiter 0.5.

Father's brother suffering TB comes to be nursed in family home.

Declares that she will become an artist - Age 12 Rite of Passage.

Attends Sacred Heart Dominican School – Age 14.

## Third Septennial Venus: 15-21 years - 1901-1908



Dead Rabbit with a Copper Pot

O'Keeffe family moves to 'Wheatland's', Williamsburg, Virginia for change of climate due to family disposition to tuberculosis.

Attends Madison High School and Chatham Episcopal Institute as a boarder.

Begins formal art training at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Paints 'Dead Rabbit with Copper Pot – wins scholarship.

Becomes ill with Typhoid Fever – fears for her life.

## Fourth Septennial Sun 1: 22-28 years 1909 - 1914



Lake George

Attends Summer School at Lake George – Birth of 'I'.

Moves to Chicago to work as freelance artist.

Visits Gallery 291 and meets Alfred Stieglitz.

Moves to Columbia, South Carolina to teach at Columbia College.

Repulsion towards turpentine. Stops painting in oil colour - Crisis of Talents.

Produces Charcoal Abstractions – Artistic Rebirth.

Becomes ill with measles – Zero Point.

Begins a 30-year letter correspondence with Alfred Stieglitz.

## Fifth Septennial Sun 2: 29-35 years 1916 - 1921



Charcoal Abstraction

Stieglitz exhibits Charcoal Abstractions at Gallery 291 - one sells.

O'Keeffe moves to New York to paint full-time. Begins a romantic relationship with Stieglitz.

Stieglitz begins photographing O'Keeffe.

Both O'Keeffe's mother Ida (TB) and father Francis die.

Becomes romantically involved with Stieglitz.

Lives between New York City and Lake George with Stieglitz.

### Sixth Septennial Sun 3: 36-42 years



New York City Scape

O'Keeffe marries Stieglitz – Second Lunar node.

Moves to Shelton Hotel with Stieglitz.

Exhibition of 100 paintings by O'Keeffe.

Martial conflicts begin with arrival of Dorothy Norman benefactor of Gallery 291.

### Seventh Septennial Mars: 43-49 years 1930 - 1936



The Everywhereist

Travels to Taos, New Mexico to stay with Mabel Dodge – Second Spring.

Visits Ghost Ranch for the first time.

Accepts commission to paint powder room in Radio City Music Hall. Project fails – midlife crisis.

Suffers serious psychoneurotic breakdown and is hospitalised.

Moves with Stieglitz into penthouse apartment at the new Shelton Hotel, New York city.

## Eighth Septennial Jupiter: 50-56 years



Black Cross

Purchases acreage and a home at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico - Third Lunar Node.

Accept large commission from Elizabeth Arden.

Accepts commission from Dole Pineapple to travel to Hawaii to paint pineapples for advertising.

Stieglitz hosts a large exhibition of her work at his new gallery 'An American Place.'

O'Keeffe and Stieglitz move to a smaller apartment in New York due to his failing health.

Receives an honorary degree from William and Mary College.

## Ninth Septennial Saturn: 57-63 years 1943 – 1950 (Fire Trials)



Blackbird with snow covered hills

Alfred Stieglitz dies. Settles Stieglitz estate that takes 3 years.

Arthur Dow (significant art mentor) dies.

Purchases house in Abiquiu, with a garden relocating from New York to live permanently in New Mexico. Undertakes renovation.

Organises her own exhibition at 'An American Place' Gallery.

Edith Halpert becomes her sole agent.

O'Keeffe begins to live 6 months seasonally between Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu.



**Tenth Septennial Uranus: 64-70 years** (Fire Trials)

Winter Road

Extensive international travel.

Travels to Mexico to meet Frieda Kahlo and Diego Rivera.

Begins working on large canvas – mural size.

Gains new perspective flying in aeroplanes (expansion).

Paints series of rivers and roads.

**Eleventh Septennial Neptune: 71-77 years** (Water Trials)

Blue Flower

Sister Ida dies. Brother Francis dies.

Goes on a seven-day water rafting expedition.

Exhibits 'Forty Years of her Art' at Worcester Art Museum.

Travels extensively including to Mt Fuji – Years of Grace.

Paints sky and cloud paintings including cloudscapes - Fourth Lunar Node.

O'Keeffe exhibits 'Forty years of her Art' at Worcester Art Museum.

## Twelfth Septennial Pluto: 78-84 years (Air Trials)



Sky above Clouds

Paints largest cloud painting.

Attends two of her retrospectives.

Completes her last unassisted oil painting.

Loses central vision.

## After 84 years: 1972 - 1986



Clay Pot

Sister Anita dies.

Employs Juan Hamilton. Begins making ceramics.

Receives Medal of Freedom.

Moves to Santa Fe for medical attention.

Dies in Santa Fe hospital aged 98 years in 1986.

**Section B: Life Panorama Chart with life overview – submitted separately.****Section C: Further Biographical Analysis:**

*“With a thinking that (in the sense of the “Philosophy of Spiritual Activity”) – is brought to the greatest intensity and clarity, new, free imaginations must be achieved that will neither get lost in thinking nor extinguish it, which would lead only to intellectual abstractions or nebulous imaginations. Out of this work of art comes a fully new quality in which both poles (thinking and imagination) merge harmoniously with one another and continually blend...”*

From ‘An Outline of Occult Science and the Mystery of Golgotha’ Lecture in the Goetheanum by Sergei O Prokofieff on 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2008.



Train with smoke

**Biographical Analysis:**

Georgia Totto O’Keeffe was born on the family farm, Sun Prairie, 1887 in Wisconsin, United States of America. She was the first daughter of seven children.

According to Rudolf Steiner the time of her incarnation is known to be important for the spiritual evolution of the world, marking the dawning of the Michaelic Age in 1879 and ending of the age of Kali Yuga in 1899. The zeitgeist took its form in the event of modernism and with-it deepening materialism. During this time, individuals were incarnating who brought with them new ideas in every arena of society that would completely change the future progress of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Georgia’s biography captures these changes in the way that she lived her life and in an act of “individual anarchy” forged her own “individual spiritual perception” of nature that she made visible through her art.<sup>1</sup> Her heightened ‘seeing’ sense gave birth to her art, and the strong balance of her inner senses, particularly her life sense and ego sense, gave her character the strength needed to sustain her work. Georgia’s biography tells the story of her individuating process (Carl Jung) and the awakening of her consciousness soul (Rudolf Steiner): Her will was progressively awakened through how she lived her life; a will that she consciously refined resulting in her extraordinary artistic accomplishments. She lived her destiny, she suffered it, existentially tested it, transformed it and,

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Steiner.

importantly, loved it, qualities that made her deeply human. Known for the upright bearing she inherited from her mother and aristocratic Hungarian Grandfather, she was seen by her peers as a unique and unusual individual. Her oddities, noticeable particularly within the social context of her time, included the way she dressed in very plain handmade black dresses that she sewed herself, and men's flat lace up shoes she wore for comfort. This attire set her apart from others of her time who wore bonnets and frills. Her affinities included her love for nature, and notably, a minimalist style in her living environment. Even with all the challenges of the time in which she lived, to include two world wars as well as her being a woman in a predominantly male world, where women were not socially or culturally believed possible to become professional artists, she conquered all odds. Totally committed to being an American artist in the 'new world', she shunned the influences of European artists in her work, leaving behind a legacy to be known as the 'Mother of American Modern Art'.

Living at this seminal time in history, when such massive changes were taking place socially and culturally, her future husband Alfred Stieglitz, known as the father of modern photography, together with Georgia set out to capture the historical mood and changing tides in their art. There were a number of other significant individualities who were also incarnated at this time to include Rudolf Steiner, Carl G. Jung, and Georgia's friend the writer D.H Lawrence. From a Jungian perspective, Stieglitz can be seen to embody her animus projection – the older creative father-figure who becomes her guide and lover, while tending her emergence as an artist. In 1922 Georgia was reported to have said: "Nothing is less real than realism. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis that we get at the real meaning of things". Clearly, aware of the battle, of her, (and our) time, against incipient materialism, its face realism, fast creeping into society, she individually counteracted this by being a dedicated artist.

Georgia lived a contented childhood in her first seven-year Moon Septennial. It was as though awakened sun forces were already infused into her moony inheritance. This was evident in her consciously knowing she had something important to do with her incarnation. In her memoirs she relates a childhood memory around the age of two years old, where she was sitting on a coloured quilt in the garden with her mother, slightly older brother and aunt. Her mother and aunt were fussing over her 'favoured' brother and she remembers thinking that this was a good thing since she could remain invisible. This memory marked the beginning of self-consciousness, the onset of her defiance phase, since she calculated that by being invisible, she could get about what she wanted to do without too much opposition from her family. Her ectomorph frame gave her the quiet intensity and strength needed to roam Sun Prairie, where she would develop an imaginary world amongst nature and birth the freedom she yearned for even at this early stage in her life.

Being the second child and the first girl of seven children, she wakefully learnt to take control of her feeling life "sensing into inner and outer worlds." By the time she was four and half, she had four brothers and sister and so there was a lot of emotional competition amongst siblings. Assigned her own bedroom since she was the eldest daughter, she spent a lot of time in her room alone where she created her own make-believe world exploring dynamics of human relationships playing with her dolls house. She was seen as self-focussed and bossy by her sibling's, but kind, generous, and that she enthusiastically took on the role of the 'fun' pack leader caring for her brothers and sisters, as they progressively filled the household.

Georgia's father, Pierce O'Keeffe, was a working-class Irish Immigrant farmer. He married her mother Ida Totto Van Eyk in 1884. Ida's father was George Totto, a Hungarian Count from an aristocratic background who had to flee Hungary to America, due to his 'antisocial' political leanings. Georgia was named after him. Through ancestral karma she inherited both his aristocratic bearing and later in her 80s failing eyesight that afflicted her so dramatically that she could no longer paint unassisted. Ida's mother, Georgia's maternal grandmother, was of Dutch heritage. Ida was well-educated and insisted on an education for her O'Keeffe brood. Contrary to social working-class norms of the times, this included the girls. From her Irish immigrant farming father Georgia inherited her love of the land. He was physical and ego orientated while maintaining a sense of the poetic. From her aristocratic mother she inherited her love of art, her imaginative sense and also, her mystique. Georgia remembered her father as being warm, loving and earthy, whilst her aristocratic mother was distant and unaffectionate. Both the O'Keeffe and Totto families ended up owning extensive land adjacent to each other in Sun Prairie, enabling the O'Keeffe children to roam the two estates. This vast acreage and pioneering farming life, built up a physical strength in Georgia that sustained her throughout her long life. She walked miles each day, learnt to shoot, and generally participate in farm life. However, her highly attuned nervous system, inherited from her mother's Totto family, necessary for her creative work, became her nemesis later in life when she suffered a psychoneurotic breakdown in her mid-forties (Mars Septennial). Moreover, several of her O'Keeffe uncles sadly died of consumption, as well as her mother, who having nursed her brother-in-law through it, contracted it. Georgia was always concerned that this would also be her fate, since she inherited a rhythmic system that would continue to challenge her with ill health throughout the younger years of her life. Surprisingly, considering their class differences, the extended O'Keeffe and Totto families were supportive of one another, assisting with the household running as well as contributing to the children's upbringing, and so Georgia was contained by a busy household consisting of the Irish farming O'Keeffe's and the well-educated creative Totto families, who were interestingly, all seen in the broader community as unusual. Attending school at the village hall at five years old marks the beginning of her formal, albeit small-town education.

The Mercury septennial marks a time of change for Georgia. Mercurius stirs things up for the family and with it the undermining of her physical and etheric environment with the depletion of her rhythmic system and consequent illnesses. The family's idyllic farming life is threatened through the death of her two beloved grandmothers and declining prosperity of both families. At age nine, the time of her 0.5 Lunar Node she leaves home to stay with her extended Totto family in the city of Milwaukee. This is her first experience of city life and begins a trend of her living between the country and city. Awakened early to her life-mission, at the time of her 'rite of passage' age twelve, she declares to her friend Lena that for the rest of her life she will be an artist! Leaving her beloved Sun Prairie and contented family life, around thirteen and half years old, she begins attending several secondary boarding schools, determined by family funds available. Fortunately, her beloved Aunt Jenny Totto, who provided a secure loving attachment for the young Georgia, supports her emotionally through these trials. It is Georgia's perfectly accurate portrait of Aunt Jenny that wins her notice from her family, who arrange solo art lessons giving her better-quality tutelage. Up until then all the children were taught painting at home together.

Attending two boarding schools and displaced from her birth home, Georgia's character begins to emerge, and with it a fierce sense of independence. Significantly, at age

fourteen years old she attends the Sacred Heart boarding School where she is taught by Dominican nuns. Being in this environment seems to release something of a past life memory for Georgia, since from thereon she appears nun-like dressing in black and wearing black flat men's shoes as though she herself were an acolyte. She is reported to have enjoyed being taught by the nuns who were instrumental in imparting the social world views and values that she lived by for the rest of her life, albeit challenging the apparent contradictions she lived during her thirties.

During her Venus Septennial the O'Keeffe family move from Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, to Wheatlands in Virginia, in pursuit of dryer climate. However, they were never fully accepted by their new community, due to their very different ways and the fact that family members suffered tuberculosis. Georgia was still living away from home at her Dominican boarding school when the move took place. With her developing sense of independence, in keeping with her awakening ego 'I' awareness, ready to step outside into the larger world Georgia experiences a meeting with her karmic double in the form of serious illness when she contracts typhoid fever. This illness becomes a threshold experience as she negotiates the earthly and spiritual worlds, nearly dying from the disease that takes her one full year to recover from. The experience and recovery from her illness becomes a time of reflection and the spiritual realignment of her astral body that can be seen to reconnect her to pre-birth intentions when she chooses to begin a formal art training at the Art Institute of Chicago. Her realignment or remembering, can also be seen to inspire an artistic breakthrough that sets up her life-time career as a modernist painter in her first Sun Septennial. This occurs at the time of her first lunar node, a reflecting back to what she declared during her age twelve 'Rite of Passage' that she would be an artist. It is at the Art Institute, when she is 21 years old, that she paints her now famous 'Dead Rabbit with a Copper Pot', a still life oil painting that wins her a scholarship to study at Leagues Outdoor School at Lake George, New York, that unbeknown to her, will become the geographic region that she will make her summer home for many years to come.

With the birth of her 'I' during her first Sun Septennial, Georgia begins to make her own decisions as to how her life will unfold. Both her O'Keeffe and Totto families are now plunged into poverty and so she is on her own financially, and it is at this time during the birth of her I, she begins working as a commercial artist, thinking that she will make this her career, since she is both poor and a woman. Again, thwarted from making her own way in the world, she meets her karmic double again and has a threshold experience by falling ill with measles. Weak but in throes of recovery from her illness, she takes a post teaching at Columbia College, South Carolina. During this time, she focusses on her own education reading such books as Goethe's Faust, Ulysses by James Joyce, art and photographic journals. Grappling with ideas and emotions, this becomes a time for exploring how she appears in the world as she attends to the conscious development of her sentient soul through her learning process. Attending summer school in New York, she visits Gallery 291 with her classmates to see a controversial Rodin exhibition. There she meets the gallery owner older by twenty-five years, Alfred Stieglitz, for the first time. This deeply karmic meeting will in time affect the course of her personal and professional life. At age twenty-five years, Georgia experiences a 'crisis of talents'. Unable to stomach the smell of turpentine, possibly due to her weakened constitution from illness, she stops painting in oil colours. Frustrated with painting text book style still-life's and copying other artists styles which is what she is taught to do at art school, she decides to work solely with charcoal on paper. This exploration inspires an artistic rebirth and the way she experiences her 'zero point' at

age twenty-eight. It also coincides with her reading Wassily Kandinsky's *The Spiritual in Art* in 1914 that can be seen to have influenced her ability to transform what she *feels* about natural objects into abstract forms through a refined feeling life. Her introduction to his book also seemed to inspire her to move beyond physical elements of a subject into the etheric world. Kandinsky noted: "Form is the outward expression of...inner meaning" and "...colour directly influences the soul and can produce a correspondent spiritual vibration". Georgia must have taken this directive to heart, since from thereon, her art captures the spiritual vibration and soul of her natural subjects so that we 'see' life-force captured on canvas. At the time of her Saturn and Lunar 1.05 nodal returns around age twenty-eight years old, she begins studying painting with Arthur Dow, whose innovative spiritual practices in art, exert a profound influence on Georgia's technique.

Knowing the esteem Georgia held Stieglitz, her best friend Anita Pollitzer takes the charcoal drawings to him at his Gallery 291. Stieglitz is so deeply impressed by them that he exhibits them unbeknown to Georgia. Stieglitz declared to Anita that they were the "...purest, finest, sincerest things that had come into his gallery in a long time." Hearing of the exhibition, Georgia withdraws all her money from her bank account to travel to New York to order Stieglitz to take them down. Of course he doesn't. Instead, he offers to mentor her. This marks the beginning of Georgia's intimate relationship with Stieglitz and a thirty year-long letter correspondence, where they share thousands of letters between them – often writing three a day to each other.

Georgia's second Sun Septennial is dramatic since she is pulled between extremes and must find her equilibrium to survive them in order to continue her work. Both her parents die separated from one another, poor and sick. Her mother dies tragically in poverty in 1916 of tuberculosis. Georgia is unable to attend her funeral, but does return to her now diminished family home to spend time with her siblings, grieving for many months. Her father dies in 1918 a result of alcoholism and depression. Being a Catholic he is not allowed to be buried with Ida who is of the Episcopalian faith. In contrast to this double tragedy, the sale of one of Georgia's charcoal drawings heralds the beginning of her career as a professional artist. Selling the charcoal drawing at thirty years old affirms that she can now seriously consider a full-time career as an independent artist. Perhaps, it is at this time of her mother's death (Buddha's Four Sights) and her father's death during her 'Christ Years', that she recognises life's impermanence, reinforcing her destiny commitment to get on and be a professional artist. This creative way of life facilitates her spiritual development. At age thirty-one years old, she is baptized into the world of professional art when Stieglitz organises a solo exhibition for her at Gallery 291. Contracting the Spanish flu however, Georgia is again faced with a weakened constitution and another threshold experience where she must make a destiny decision – to stay teaching or to paint full-time. Stieglitz offers her accommodation and financial support for a year in New York, while she recovers from the illnesses that have weakened her, and where she can focus on her painting. She accepts, a decision that changes the course of her life.

Resigning her teaching post at West Texas State Normal College, to move full time to New York, her relationship with Stieglitz, having become romantic is consolidated into a committed partnership when he leaves his wife of twenty-eight years. Georgia begins to paint prolifically, her paintings reflecting her emotional and physical sense of well-being. At this time, Stieglitz begins photographing her, a process that continues for thirty years. From spring to late fall, Stieglitz and Georgia spend time at his family's

summer home at Lake George beginning the process of living between New York City and Lake George for the duration of their relationship. Stieglitz, insists that she take up oil painting again, citing watercolours as the medium used by amateur fashionable ladies, which she does. At age thirty-three, (Christ Crucifixion), Georgia's perspectives of herself are challenged due to Stieglitz exhibition of his intimate photographs of her – some very explicit nudes. In a bid to know more about who she is, her art critics see her through the lens of the photos and write about her work as an expression of her female sexuality. Finding the balance between what she thinks and what she feels (creating balance between head and heart – her intellectual soul development) becomes an existential quest and priority, as she strives to explore her own values, particularly to do with how she presents to herself to the world.

Renowned for her extraordinary art works, in her third Sun Septennial Georgia enjoys some success. However, she now feels tarnished by Stieglitz photographs. To redress this, she sets about forging her own relationship with the media (press) and art critics who continue to review her work from the perspective that she is a sensuous and sexual woman and that her paintings reflect this. This becomes an ongoing battle. The fact that she is not just seen as a painter like the men in Stieglitz inner circle, is something she finds frustrating and limiting. Stieglitz and O'Keeffe soon move into rooms at the new Shelton Hotel, New York, where she paints her now famous cityscapes. They live at the Shelton Hotel in a number of different apartments for ten years. Enjoying their rhythm of living six months in New York City and, six months at Lake George, Georgia begins settling down attending to gardening and painting flowers when in the country. In 1922, her painting titled 'My Shanty', a small hut she renovates on the Lake George estate as a studio, where she can concentrate on her painting, reveals her need for solitude from the hustle and bustle of the adjoining Stieglitz family summer home (Buddha Enlightenment). Effectively, her shanty becomes her place, her laboratory, where she can truly concentrate on developing her imaginative insights portraying them through her work. However, with this soul maturation and 'going-inward', her relationship with Stieglitz becomes strained. An introvert, she will not allow him into her workspace, where she can reflect and translate her feelings into her art. Overcoming this by being absolutely committed to each other, at the time of her second Lunar Node, Georgia and Stieglitz marry after his long drawn out six-year divorce proceeding. Partially, things soon change however, when the socialite Dorothy Norman becomes an integral part of Stieglitz life, visiting him at their home at Lake George where she becomes his new photographic muse. She also assists him with his gallery both financially and administratively. This brings about a crisis of meaning for Georgia, (another meeting with the Guardian) although she turns away from the experience, telling herself that he needs Norman's support particularly since she herself spends much of her time alone painting and does not have the time to support him emotionally and with his gallery. Eventually however, this unconscious disassociation takes its toll, leading to a long period of psychological ill health. The precursor to this, includes being hospitalised twice to have cysts removed from her breasts at age forty-one.

Georgia's Mars Septennial heralds a time of breakdown and renewal. It is a crossing point. Stieglitz increasingly intimate relationship with Dorothy Norman over several years finally catches up with Georgia and she suffers a psychoneurotic breakdown (Mars energy – nervous system is overwhelmed) and she is hospitalised. This constitutes a mid-life crisis. She does not paint for six months and refuses to see Stieglitz for many months during her illness. For some-time it is unclear whether she will keep painting. However, friends support her recovery by taking her to Taos, New Mexico, to



stay with the socialite Mabel Dodge whose home has become an artist's retreat. It is in Taos, that she is introduced in her own right, without Stieglitz, to now well-known artists, writers and philosophers, to include her friend D.H Lawrence with whom she conducts a long-term correspondence. Carl Jung also visited around this time but it is unclear whether they actually met. The time in Taos brings her sanctuary that will inspire her imagination to an even higher level. The painful distance she experiences from Stieglitz is also paradoxically liberating. This turning point marks the time where she is no longer just concerned with "bringing consciousness to life" but rather "bringing life to consciousness."<sup>2</sup>

Taos, becomes a new home where, having emotionally detached from Stieglitz, she can birth her own "spiritual eyes". This becomes evident in her desert paintings - how she captures the colours, shapes and forms of the land in a way never done by an artist before. The vastness and magic of the desert becomes both the outer and inner landscape where she is truly at home. Her 'second spring' adventure marks the beginning of this relationship with New Mexico, and the coterie of interesting people she meets. She recovers her health quickly and in her letters to friends she describes the sense of freedom she experiences being at Ghost Ranch, an adobe house she rents. At her 2.5 Lunar Node, age forty-seven Ghost Ranch becomes the place she calls home for the rest of her life once she purchases land and a house on the ranch. Inspired by the rugged magical desert landscape, Georgia begins the pattern of spending six months in Taos, New Mexico where she paints for her forthcoming annual exhibitions and, six months at Lake George and New York with Stieglitz. This shift highlights how her priorities have changed in how she lives her life, mostly in seclusion when she is painting. At other times she enjoys being very sociable but on her terms. She establishes a balance in her life that she has herself has determined.

This extract taken from one of her letters to Stieglitz reveals how she feels after two months in Taos (July 9<sup>th</sup> 1929):

*"There is much life in me — when it was always checked in moving toward you — I realized it would die if it could not move toward something ... I chose coming away because here at least I feel good — and it makes me feel I am growing very tall and straight inside — and very still — Maybe you will not love me for it — but for me it seems to be the best thing I can do for you — I hope this letter carries no hurt to you — It is the last thing I want to do in the world.*

*Today it rains —"*

The eighth Jupiter Septennial marks a time of rebuilding outwardly and inwardly. Having the opportunity to have purchased the adobe house with land at Ghost Ranch she establishes her forever home. The desert conditions and wild terrain satisfy her physical need to walk, ride horses and to be in pristine nature. At Ghost Ranch she becomes self-sufficient. Earning money from her yearly exhibitions in New York City, supports her life in New Mexico and also, supports Stieglitz life-style in New York. It also brings her closer to her public through the numerous annual exhibitions Stieglitz organises for her. Having moved into a penthouse apartment only a few years before, Stieglitz is now becoming increasingly infirm and so she moves them both into a smaller apartment in NYC where a nurse can take care of him when she is away painting in New Mexico. Travel to Hawaii beckons when she accepts a commission to paint an advertisement for Dole Pineapple - a trip that was not wholly successful due to both sides'

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<sup>2</sup> Holistic Biography course materials.

demands, although she did produce the now famous pineapple picture. At the time of her third Lunar Node around age fifty-six, a retrospective of her work is held at the Art Institute in Chicago. She is now known as a significant woman artist in America.

Georgia's Saturn Septennial is truly a time of fire trials when she is challenged to let go in order to go forward. It becomes cathartic when she loses her old support system while building a new one. Significantly, both of her mentors die: Her husband and mentor Alfred Stieglitz and, her painting mentor Arthur Dow. Because Stieglitz has passed and no longer available to organise her annual exhibition, she independently organises her own. Spending three years settling Stieglitz estate, she "burns away earthly attachments" and "clears away clutter"<sup>3</sup> bequeathing a lot of his work and art collection to various museums and institutions around America. Georgia must now take charge of organising her own professional life and must navigate the art world and its critics. Existential questions arise that she is forced to consider as to how she presents herself to the world as an independent woman artist, and importantly, how she will continue being relevant in the art world. Finally, after ten years of bargaining, around the time of Stieglitz death, she is offered the right to purchase a dilapidated adobe house and land with water rights belonging to the local church, at Abiquiu, a town with some amenities (unlike the remote Ghost Ranch) where she can build a vegetable garden to supply her own food. Immediately, with assistance she begins the renovation of the house. Once it is complete she commences her six-monthly seasonal rhythm of living between houses at Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu, as she did live between New York City and Lake George. Now she is no longer answerable to her own blood family, or to the Stieglitz clan, or his way of life, leaving her free to form her own attachments and importantly to paint on her own terms.

Moving full time to New Mexico is the beginning of a new life where she can truly live her calling. This becomes apparent in the way she furnishes her home (minimalism), what she eats (growing and preserving her food, eating her main meal at 5.00 pm sharp), how she dresses (in headscarves, wrap around Japanese style dresses), who she spends time with (she invites many friends to stay with her but they must abide to her daily rhythm). Her art also reflects this personal transformation, for example, she embarks on painting pictures of doors in her adobe house (portals to new understanding?) and birds circling in the brilliant desert skies (new found freedom). This is the most incarnate time of her individual life where she stands fully in herself. She has earned the right to become a leader (Mars Septennial), a consultant (Jupiter Septennial) and now in her Saturn Septennial an elder, who has become an example to thousands of people, not only in the way and what she paints, but how aesthetically and practically she lives her daily life.

With Uranus power for expansion urging her on, Georgia embarks upon international travel. And, there is no stopping her. She travels extensively all over the world. Although there are no notable outward fire trials at this time, Georgia's internal fires are activated by travel. Air travel brings about a notable change in her perspectives. She learns she can both occupy the sky whilst looking down on to the earth; she can be in two places at once. Her capacity for witness or observer consciousness becomes established and she can live consciously into the inherent duality of modern experience known as consciousness soul. This becomes evident when she paints on very large canvas's thereby capturing this expansive feeling and capability in her art.

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<sup>3</sup> Holistic Biography course materials.

In her Neptune Septennial (eleventh), Georgia experiences loss through the death of one of her sister's (fourth Lunar Node) and her older brother. It is an emotional time but she is clearly prepared to meet this water trial period consciously by embarking on a seven-day water rafting adventure with a group of younger people, insisting she carry her own equipment and paddling with her oar. Celebrating this time, she paints her aerial abstractions of the sky and clouds exploring water and ethereal elements and how they merge. She is content to let go of the ground under her feet and allow life to carry her.

For her Pluto Septennial (twelfth), Georgia internalises any imposition of outward air trials, by producing her largest painting on canvas titled 'Cloudscapes'. During this time, she attends two retrospectives of her life's work. Transforming potentially challenging Plutonic forces through her creativity, she lives contemplatively in her domestic world. Sadly, it is towards the end of this septennial that she loses her central vision, so that she is forced to employ people to assist her in her work mixing her paints, stretching canvas' and even putting paint onto the canvas.

Overview: What makes Georgia's biography so compelling is that it is possible to see her spiritual transformation through the evolution of her art. Interestingly, she was able to acknowledge and honour the revelation of the spirit in the sense world.<sup>4</sup> That she was able to express her inner world through her art in such a progressive and inspiring way speaks of her extraordinary capacity to stay the course as an artist all through her long life – to sustain her focus and to deepen it. This becomes particularly evident in her paintings called the 'abstractions'. In these drawings and paintings, it is as if she has moved beyond sense bound thinking into a sense free world. By her own account she related that 'she could see shapes in her head'. She confided to Stieglitz that she was compelled to make them visible on paper or canvas. Georgia's imaginative insights arose through her observations of nature. In this, she enacted a truly Goethean approach to metamorphic thinking, since we can observe transitions between forms in her work.

What she painted was mostly from nature and some of the places that she had visited. Her cityscapes reveal her awe of 'man's' accomplishments in creating structural forms. However, it was her relationship to nature that was profound in that she expanded her feelings into the environments where she lived or visited, to imbibe and know them. Through her own directed common-sense she worked with the seven life processes, breathing nature in, perceiving and observing it; warming and relating to it; digesting it; individualising it; crystallizing it - by making sense of it; grew with it so that she moved beyond it thereby transforming it, and then re-presented what she saw and experienced in her art. Her imaginative capacity was exemplary in that she became a seer of super-sensible revelations in nature.

Her intense observational capacities were depicted in her paintings of flowers, bones, trees, fruit, shells, clouds, crosses even buildings to include barns in the country side, adobe houses, a church in New Mexico, and cityscapes in New York. Her paintings through their colour, movement and composition, amplify her ability to see into the etheric and astral worlds. Importantly, she respected what she worked with. She saw beauty in the dead bodies and skeletons of animals she found in the desert whereas others didn't. Her 'nature' paintings reveal her incredible love for the delicacy and complexity of her subjects. Her cityscape paintings of New York City are extraordinary since

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<sup>4</sup> From Occult Science, Rudolf Steiner, p 289.

they take the viewer on a journey which at that time had not yet been explored. Viewing these paintings, we are introduced to different angles and ways of seeing – top down, side views, bottom too above. Light and dark contrasts. The paintings have a photographic quality to them, where essence is captured in time. The photographer and her friend, Paul Strand, one of Stieglitz mentees, is said to have influenced how she magnified her paintings particularly of flowers, since he himself was working in this way with his subjects photographically. In all, she invented a visual language to grasp and decipher “the great cosmic facts.”<sup>5</sup> “It was revealed to her that Spiritual Powers underlay the forces of Nature”.<sup>6</sup> In her life-time, Georgia entered the realms of imagination, inspiration and intuitive cognition – the three stages that Rudolf Steiner describes as entrances into the spiritual world. As Sergei O. Prokofieff tells us in the quote at the beginning of this analysis, that free imaginations come about where thinking and imagination merge harmoniously with one another. Georgia’s imaginative understanding came about through her ability to think through what to paint and how to present her subjects compositionally, in a totally unique way. Her refined feeling life was predominately her most developed organ of perception. She worked with her feelings so that she was able to transmute lower astral substance and reach into higher worlds to find the ‘truth or essence’ of her subjects. Her focussed will, in service to her art, made her an instrument for “higher powers.” She made [her] ... “one-self available for that which has to be done at that particular moment in cultural history.”<sup>7</sup>

All her paintings in various ways describe and reveal her feelings, not in a raw explosive way like a Jackson Pollock, but in this carefully considered, refined, uplifting and transformed way. She was an alchemist of her own thinking, feeling and willing. She brought her thinking into her willing by doing. Her willing she transformed into a depth of feeling that became seer-ship - into thinking through her heart. She transmuted nature in the way that she observed it, digested it, and revealed it. Hers was a lived alchemy since she lived in the colours, forms and shapes she portrayed. One of Georgia’s significant painting mentors, Alon Bement who trained and worked with Arthur Dow’s teaching indications, introduced her to Asian aesthetics of harmony and balance in art. This also had an effect on her work and life. Dow himself taught her about ‘notan’ that is, light and dark tonal contrasts and as Georgia suggested, “...how to fill a space in a beautiful way.” I think her training with Dow reawakened in her something of a past life, since she connected with these ideas so fully that her work and life itself became a study in aesthetics, as though she were a Noh actor, calligrapher or artist in ancient Asia. She even dressed in the costume of a Noh actor wearing wrap around dresses and black Chinese slippers. Her now famous charcoal drawings were a response to Dow’s philosophical approach to art capturing the play between light and dark. It was Dow who introduced her to Kandinsky’s notion of synaesthesia – art works that emerge out of another art work. For example, he taught her how listening (inspiration) to music could produce visual art – the artist painted what they saw inwardly. A number of her works for example, ‘Blue and Green’ were painted in this way.

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<sup>5</sup> Occult Science, Rudolf Steiner, p 289.

<sup>6</sup> Occult Science, Rudolf Steiner, p 215.

<sup>7</sup> Holistic Biography course materials – The Path of Anthroposophy – an excerpt from Chapter 7, Bernard Lievegoed, *Man on the Threshold*.

By her own account she practiced “courage and fearlessness in ordinary daily life as well as what is so aptly called *presence of mind*.”<sup>8</sup> Her trajectory to becoming such a successful artist was in overcoming fear – it took courage to constantly venture into the unknown. She had a courage that was fearless, even though she related to friends that she was always terrified, she embraced risks and fully lived what came towards her. She was known to have said: “I am always terrified but do it anyway” thereby meeting head on her threshold guardian. It was with this attitude that she integrated fear into a discerning capability.

Georgia’s life had its sacrifices – she experienced much grief at not being able to have a child or family of her own. Spending hours in solitude painting made her seem ‘anti-social’ and distant from loved ones, and when she became famous, she had to quickly develop a capacity to discern people who were genuine, and those who would take advantage of her, making her cautious in developing relationships.

Her marriage to Alfred Stieglitz held up a mirror of duality to her: She confided to a friend saying: “I am divided between my man and a life with him – and something of the outdoors...that is in my blood – that I know I will never get rid of – I have to get along with my divided self the best way I can.”<sup>9</sup> Hers was a destiny that was not greatly thwarted by her family inheritance, or if at times it was, she didn’t allow the tragedies to influence her work. Rather her family enhanced her sense of herself – they loved and supported her by recognising her greatness. Even at times of real poverty, she was resourceful and managed to find her way through difficulties with tenacity, humour and thoughtfulness.

Enthusiasm for her work was contagious. There is a story told by a school friend that when she was at secondary school in the art room painting, and by all accounts totally engrossed in what she was doing, she suddenly, without any prompting, got up from her work and rushed over to hug a friend expressing her unbridled joy at what she was doing. Georgia produced an enormous body of work in her life-time. Her early healthy physical development on the farm at Sun Prairie gave her a strong body that enabled her to sustain the energy required to paint particularly large canvases for hours on end and to paint in harsh desert conditions. Her legacy includes some 1000 paintings, the same number of drawings, watercolours and sculptures. Later in her life she even tried her hand at ceramics when Juan Hamilton the young ceramist came to work for her. At times she bravely burned works that she felt were not worthy. What set her apart from other modern artists is that she mastered her artistic technique in a disciplined and near religious way. Her art became a sacred practice – a quality that perhaps gives some insight into a past life (see the karmic exercises). What is unique about the way she created is that she never tired of working on a particular subject. Sometimes she would work with the pictorial potential of a subject between three to a dozen times, and this could go on for months or years. Furthermore, she was fastidious in the way she mixed her paints. She never mixed them up together on her palette, each colour had its own container or space on the palette, and for every painting she made up swatches of each colour that she worked with.

As I mentioned in my septennial analysis, for over thirty years, Stieglitz made photographic studies of her producing over 300 hundred photographs, to include erotic photographs that were shocking to society of that time. Stieglitz had an immense impact

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<sup>8</sup> Holistic Biography course materials – The Path of Anthroposophy – an excerpt from Chapter 7, Bernard Lievegoed, *Man on the Threshold*.

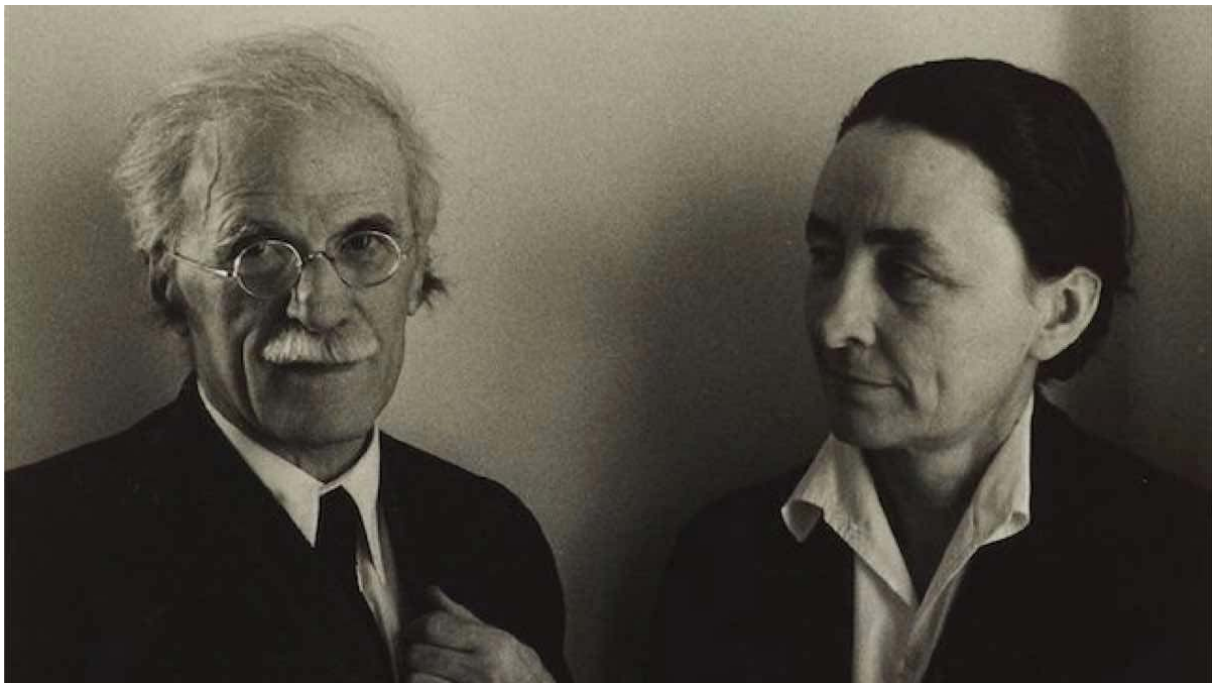
<sup>9</sup> From one of her letters to a friend. Lisa Mintz Messenger, p 99.

upon her and her work, as did her creativity impact his, particularly the works they called their abstractions. For Georgia the photos of her were also an expression of her physicality and beauty – all that made her a woman. When Stieglitz exhibited them, they spoke to women viewers, and still do, who, due to the time they were living, experienced more autonomy in their lives and with this sense of freedom, explored their sexuality and sensuality in more overt ways. What is truly admirable about Georgia is that she never seemed to compromise herself in the way she lived her life. She travelled vast distances throughout America and internationally so that travel became a form of self-education. She wasn't a scholar as such but very well read. She was also a musician, playing both the piano and violin to a high standard during the early years of her life. Train travel was her favoured mode of transport until she learnt to drive in Taos, New Mexico. Purchasing a Ford car, she drove long distances across America and even across the desert where there were no roads only dirt tracks, to get to sites where she could paint. Aware of her 'divided self', she satisfied this existential 'fissure' by constantly being on the move, living seasonally between the city and the county or, between her own houses, all her adult life.

Georgia's life was not without its challenges. In her long life-time, she experiences the death of all but one of her six siblings, her parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, several dying from tuberculosis, including her mother. Only her younger sister Claudia outlives her. She also loses her husband and her loved mentor Arthur Dow and many of her friends. At the end of her life, it is her much younger friend (perhaps surrogate son) and companion, Juan Hamilton who cares for her, and supports her legacy. She also experienced a deep wound and eventual psychoneurotic breakdown, through the infidelity of her husband who earlier in their relationship disproved of her having a child of her own. Her own affair with Stieglitz while he was married to his wife of twenty-eight years seemed to others to be her comeuppance. However, if she had not become involved with Stieglitz romantically, one wonders whether she would have had the success with her art since, it was the initial synergy between them, and his mentorship that secured her a place in the contemporary art world. Their relationship was one of those unique destiny experiences where art and life meet. Georgia and Stieglitz inspired and supported one another to greatness. The shadow of the relationship however, was that they also took one another to the brink of emotional despair. Her frequent early in life illnesses, mainly to do with her rhythmic and nervous system she inherited from her family. She suffered lung infections, influenza, breast cysts, and measles. Her psychoneurotic breakdown in her early forties where her world got completely turned upside down, becomes her deepest point of descent into physical existence. This illness can be seen to be the instrument karmic legacy of her aristocratic maternal grandfather and marks an important turning point in her individuation. She seems to have been unaware that the breakdown was about to happen, but quickly recognised the lesson in it and to take action, which was to distance herself emotionally from Stieglitz while maintaining her marriage and fidelity in a caring way. However, Georgia made each illness a time of restitution and recovery - In true chrysalis fashion, she emerged from these times, as a butterfly bringing renewed energy to her work and life. Effectively, illness where she met her karmic double, transformed her in this life-time since she consciously allowed the metamorphosis of her physical and astral bodies through her artistic work to take place thus, planting seeds for the evolution of her higher spiritual bodies - Spirit Self, Life Spirit and Spirit Man. As a consequence of the breakdown, her life can be seen to have been lived as two biographies - the first with

her birth family and Stieglitz and, the second, in Taos, New Mexico, after her breakdown and renewal as an individual.

Citing Coenraad van Houten's 'Awakening the Will' – Three Ways of Learning', I believe that Georgia chose her own 'Spiritual Schooling Path' where she was self-guided in her spiritual development and learnt primarily by "tuning in and resonating with the Spiritual World and the Evolutionary Spirits." How she accomplished this was through her relationship to nature, her art and living her life in an aesthetic way. Biographically it is evident that she was awake very early in her life to her destiny direction, displaying this through her representations of the natural world and the spiritual forces behind it. Importantly, she was curious about what she was seeing – she explored it. She was also acutely aware of the complexities of human nature, steering clear of having to address it in her work, which is possibly why she decided not to do any portraiture or human subjects during her career. Later in her life, she commented that her large complex abstractions came from her desire "to make the unknown known" to show the forces behind the objects that she painted. I propose that her ultimate legacy has been to show us how to 'see' the working of these forces through her art. Clearly, hers was no ordinary life. This is confirmed by the fact that she and her art, are now well known all over the world, and have been for over 100 years. At the end of her long life, O'Keeffe loved hearing her nurse read from Kakuz Okukuras 'Book of Tea'. She used to ask her nurse to turn to the page about flowers, telling the nurse: "You know, he says that a butterfly is a flower with wings." To my mind, O'Keeffe found her wings in this life time. She enfolded life and flew with it. She created with her Higher Self. Hers was a truly Michaelic destiny since she sought to bring the spiritual into the everyday.



Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz



Ghost Ranch, Taos, New Mexico



Georgia at her 'Shanty' studio, Lake George



## Section D:

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Further Analysis – Lunar Nodes, Planetary returns – Jupiter and Saturn, Soul Type, Temperament, Birth Signature, Rhythms, Patterns, Mirroring, Life Themes, Trials, Mission, Legacy, Destiny and Karma, Thresholds, Art works and life-phases, Hero's Journey.

### Lunar Nodes

Lunar Nodes (every 18 years approx.)

Rubicon 0.5 Lunar node – 07/03/1897 age 10 years (Moon)

Visits Milwaukee by train first big city to stay with Aunt

First Lunar Node - 24/06/1906 age 18years 7 month 9 days (Venus)

Begins formal art training at School of Art Institute Chicago

Second Lunar Node - 04/02/1925 age 37 years 2 months 20 days (Sun 1)

Expresses desire to “make unknown known”. “To clarify experience that is felt but not clearly understood.” Marries Stieglitz.

Third Lunar Node - 16/09/1943 age 55 years 10 months 1 day (Jupiter)

Moves to smaller apartment with Stieglitz who is ill (final New York address)

Fourth Lunar Node – 26/04/1962 age 74 years 5 months (Mars)

Sister Ida (close) dies. Begins painting ‘Cloudscapes’.

Fifth Lunar Node – Around 1980. Needs support to work. Newly arrived Juan Hamilton assists her. Can only see peripherally.

### Planetary Returns

#### Jupiter Returns

Jupiter returns (every 12 years)

The planet returns to the exact position zodiacal sign and degree when the person is born.

Jupiter 1 - Rite of Passage – 01/09/1899 age 12 years (Mercury)

O'Keeffe declares she will become an artist

Jupiter 2 - 18/06/1911 age 23.6 years (Sun 1)

Begins teaching art at various elementary and secondary schools

Jupiter 3 - Around 1923 age 36 years (approx.) (Sun 3)

Exhibits ‘100 paintings by Georgia O'Keeffe’

Jupiter 4 – 06/04/1935 age 47.4 years (Mars)

Discovers Ghost Ranch

Jupiter 5 – 03/03/1947 age 59.3 years (Saturn)

Mentor Arthur Dow dies; husband Alfred Stieglitz dies; settles Stieglitz estate

Jupiter 6 – 19/12/1958 age 71.1 years (Neptune)

Airplane travel influences painting looking down from sky to earth

Jupiter 7 – 25/11/1970 age 83.03 years (Pluto)

Loses central vision

Jupiter 8 – around 1982

Travels to Costa Rica with Juan Hamilton.

## Saturn Returns

Saturn Returns (every 28 years)

An astrological transit. Planet goes into the same ecliptic longitude that it occupied at a person's birth.

Saturn 0.5 - 27/07/1902- age 14.7 years (Mercury – Venus threshold)

First year at high school - paints first living subject Jack in Pulpit which leads later to a series of paintings. Family moves to Williamsburg, Virginia for a warmer climate.

First Saturn return – 30/04/1917 – age 29.4 years (Sun 2)

Mother Ida Totto O'Keeffe dies. Has first exhibition at Gallery 291 of charcoal drawings.

Saturn 1.05 – 20/12/1931 – age 44.1 years (Mars)

Stieglitz affair with Dorothy Norman leads to a psychoneurotic breakdown

Saturn 2 – 08/10/1946 – age 58.9 years (Saturn)

Stieglitz dies July 13th 1946. Purchases home in Abiquiu with a garden.

Saturn 2.5 – 20/12/1960 – age 73.1 years (Neptune)

Sister Ida dies; Paints 'Cloudscapes'

## Soul Type

### Sun and Saturn:

**Sun:** Serving and transforming. Finds radiant balance. Could be self-engrossed and consumed with her work. Leads others but could also control them with her powerful sense of self and direction.

**Saturn:** Spiritual investigator of colour, shape and form. Takes her work and life very seriously. Enjoyed vast desert landscapes – in Texas and Taos. Transformer of what she observes. Stands up for the less fortunate by supporting them. Could be critical and was seen by some as distant.

**Shadow Soul Type:** Venus.

Georgia can be seen to embody Venus's qualities. But they also can inhibit her – her destiny determined planet. She was the Venus to Stieglitz Mars. Without Stieglitz Mars, she may not have been able to lift herself out of the world of dream.<sup>10</sup> I think that Venus was the quality that she met in her karmic double when we suffered illness – she was forced to experience the pain of her existence (mars) and transmute it – which she did. The Earth became her lover and it is this that she needed to move beyond, transforming her dreams of the earth illuminating them.<sup>11</sup>

**Temperament:** Choleric Melancholic

**Birth Signature:** Born into colonised America to a migrant happy extended creative family that gave her a sense of home inwardly and outwardly.

**Rhythms:** 6 Monthly rhythms in her living arrangements – between Lake George and New York and Lake George, New York and New Mexico. Furthermore, her teaching appointments also had approximately 6 monthly rhythms.

**Patterns:** In times of great challenge, she takes initiative to change the situation. This becomes a pattern in her life. For example, struggling with poverty whilst having to look after her sister in Texas while teaching at the college, she decides to take the small amount of money that she has from the bank and travel to New York to see her charcoals being exhibited by Alfred Stieglitz. This leads to a new chapter in her life. Another instance is that even after her psychoneurotic breakdown she takes a risk by travelling to New Mexico to stay with Mabel Dodge thereby beginning a whole new era of her life and work. She meets her double head-on even when people find her 'anti-social' she attempts to redeem situations.

**Mirroring (also see chart in Appendix)*****Mirrors Septennials 1/6/9/10***

Moon 1 = Sun Prairie and Father exhibited warmth, Mother is distant

Sun 3 (6) = Darkness and Light

Saturn 9 = Death and Resurrection

Uranus = Travel and Expansion.

***Mirrors Septennials 2/5/8/11***

Mercury 2 = Family and painting lessons

Sun 2 (5) = Becoming a professional artist and falling in love

Jupiter 8 = Independence

Neptune 11 = Perceiving differently.

<sup>10</sup> Holistic Biography Course Materials Destiny Learning – 'Destiny Determining and Man Liberating Planets' Rudolf Steiner, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1923.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

**Mirrors Septennials 3/4/7/12 (This sequence of mirroring reveals her illnesses)**

Venus 3 = Gathering tools and illness

Sun 1 (4) = scholarship and illness

Mars 7 = psychoneurotic breakdown (illness) and success

Pluto 12 = Loses central eye vision (illness) and attends retrospectives of her work.

**Turning Points**

There are several identifiable turning points in O'Keeffe's biography.

1. Age 12 she declares that she will become an artist – this declaration determines how she commits to her future as a visual artist.
2. Winning the scholarship to study at the Arts Student League, Lake George, New York. In a strangely synchronous way, this marks the beginning of her relationship with Lake George. It also marks her training as a professional artist.
3. At age 29, while teaching at Columbia College South Carolina, frustrated she draws her charcoal pictures where she experiences an artistic rebirth and also initiates modern abstractionism. When Stieglitz receives them, he exhibits them. This marks the beginning of her life as a full-time artist with public acclaim.
4. Age 44 she has a psychoneurotic breakdown. This is a turning point in how she perceives Stieglitz. After this time, she emotionally distances herself from him. She continues to love him but he no longer has the emotional hold over her that he had.
5. Age 61, with the death of Stieglitz and her mentor Arthur Gow, in the same year, 3 years after settling Stieglitz estate, she moves permanently to Taos, New Mexico, for the rest of her long life. This marks an important turning point where she lives a 'new' biography – not only in the way she lives but in how she paints.
6. Age 64 she begins travelling internationally by aeroplane. This changes how she sees the world. O'Keeffe begins to paint differently where she chooses different subjects than previously, for example clouds. Her work explores new ways of seeing things - from top down and from the ground up.
7. Age 85 at the time that she loses her central vision, Juan Hamilton goes to her for work. He ends up companionship her for the rest of her life, documents her work and makes a film about her life so that her legacy is established.

**Life Themes**

Deaths of loved ones – release her from her ancestral family karmic obligations; Overcomes challenges including physical displacement and poverty; 6 monthly household domestic cycle – each year spends 6 months between Lake George and New York City with Stieglitz then 6 months in New York City with Stieglitz and/or Lake George and 6 months in Tao's New Mexico. From the age of 60 years spends 6 months in New Mexico at Ghost Ranch and 6 months in Abiquiu.

**Illnesses:**

Venus Septennial 3 - around first lunar node age 19 years contracts Typhoid fever becoming very ill near death. Takes a long time to recover.

Sun 1 Septennial 4 age 23 becomes ill with measles.

Sun 2 Septennial 5 age 31 becomes ill influenza (fear of possible TB) needs recuperation.

Sun 3 Septennial 5 age 41 has two breast operations for benign cysts removed.

Mars Septennial 7 age 44 suffers a serious psychoneurotic breakdown. Stops painting for 18 months.

Pluto Septennial 12 age 84 years begins losing central vision of eyesight.

**Trials*****Fire Trial Stage***

Involves burning away earthly attachments, clearing clutter, challenges to let go.

Uranus 10<sup>th</sup> Septennial 63 – 70 years old – 1950 to 1957. Expansion.

Leaves New York to live permanently in Taos, New Mexico a new phase after Stieglitz death. Must attend to Stieglitz estate clearing out and bequeathing his photographic works and art collection. Completing her life with him. Employs new agent to represent her. Organises her first art exhibition without Stieglitz assistance. Paints 'Blackbird' – image of death. Stieglitz death enforced a burning away of the foundations that they had built together.

***Water Trial Stage***

Challenges of losing ground under my feet and trusting the water will carry me. How to carry on with life?

Neptune 11<sup>th</sup> Septennial 71 to 77 years old – 1958 to 1964.

Travels extensively including Mexico where she visits the "murals the boys have been doing". Takes a seven-day rafting trip down Colorado River with a group.

Paints Cloudscapes. Sister Ida and Brother Francis die. Paints fourteen large canvas's depicting meandering rivers from above. Develops her Abstractions. Begins a new form of perception. Goes with flow.

***Air Trial Stage***

Living day to day becomes more unpredictable. Preparing seeds for the future.

Pluto 12 Septennial 78 to 84 years old – 1965 to 1971

More aeroplane travels. Attends two of her retrospectives. Painting from above ground. Cloudscapes – paints the largest canvas. Loses central vision. Retains peripheral vision. Possibly indicative of her deepening inner life and inner-seeing where she is "listening to the spirit."

**Other Trials during life:**

Georgia faced numerous trials during her life. From the age of fourteen years, she was consistently uprooted to attend different schools and live in a number of different places. Water trials pervaded her early years where she was forced to go with the flow and exercise self-control due to all the household changes that took place. A number of smaller fire trials gave her “a truer perception of the physical properties...of plants...” and as a candidate for initiation she learnt “...to recognise how natural things and living beings reveal themselves to our spiritual ears and eyes.”<sup>12</sup> The fire trial process of “spiritual burning away” was ongoing throughout her life, as she deepened her perceptions to becoming an artist. She also progressed through a number of air trials to find a fixed point within herself and consciously develop “absolute presence of mind.” This was evident in the way she learnt to deal with the press and with visitors to her ranches. Sometimes she was quite rude to people but she did this to protect her space.

She faced a serious fire trial when Stieglitz was unfaithful to her transferring his muse projection onto Dorothy Norman. Georgia suffered her breakdown where everything she held dear was burned away through harsh betrayal.

At times during her early life, in her late teens and twenties she suffered real poverty and had to learn to be resourceful in order to survive. On several occasions she had to take initiative to find her next steps (air trials) such that she did by accepting Stieglitz invitation to live in New York in her early 30s.<sup>13</sup>

**World View:** Dynamism – Artist: Looking for the “force or energy that is behind phenomena.”

**Mission:** declares that she will be an artist age 12. To show us how to see in a conscious way.

**Legacy:** Known as Mother of American Modern Art. Alchemist artist working with forms, shapes, colours and distilled images that she perceives in nature.

**Destiny and Karma****Three Step Karma Exercise**

Karmic disposition behind Georgia O'Keeffe's life – Will orientated

**Saturn (to include Mars and Jupiter)**

Affinity/resonance – Thinking (Mission/Direction Karma) (Karmic Fulfilment)

Georgia thought through her limbs, through her whole body which is probably why she was in constant movement. She consciously digested impressions even at a young age. This is evident in her early charcoal drawings called abstractions. She was disciplined in the way she went about her art. She often drew or painted numerous copies

<sup>12</sup> Holistic Biography Course Materials – Trials and Thresholds: ‘How to Know Higher Worlds – A Modern Path of Initiation’ Rudolf Steiner.

<sup>13</sup> Quotes cited in Trials are from Holistic Biography Course Materials – Trials and Thresholds: ‘How to Know Higher Worlds – A Modern Path of Initiation’ Rudolf Steiner.

of one subject using different colours or angles. Her work was seen to have a photographic quality – a studied presentation. She was a practical problem solver evident in the way she lived her domestic life. She was not a philosopher of words and indeed said that she didn't trust words. She engaged 'philosophically' in a lived way with her work and in encounters with others. She was an alchemist of colour, shape and form. This demanded that she surrender or sacrifice intellectual thinking to realise a living metamorphic thinking enabling her to imaginatively see colour and how forms and shapes take form in the object she was studying/observing. Georgia accomplished a lived or embodied relationship to wisdom. She read widely. She thought imaginatively and had a highly evolved moral sense, and sense of truth. She was a supporter of the suffragette movement and paid an annual subscription. She was exceedingly disciplined in how she conducted her life. She arose early with the sunrise. She sewed her own clothes and her husband's shirts, gardened, preserved food, cooked and looked after her Chow dogs. Later in life she travelled extensively. She could at times be melancholic in a thoughtful way whilst also having the choleric fire to do and accomplish what she did. She had direct access to this internal fire.

### ***Sun (to include Sun 1, 2, 3):***

Feeling – Air (Affinity Karma – Metamorphosis/Instrument Karma) Karmic Encounters)

Georgia developed her capacity to 'see' by feeling her way into nature's essence so as to portray it visually through her painting. Her feelings became refined, transformed, through studying her subjects in depth.

She became emotional in an almost lyrical way when landscapes, plants and flowers, even objects spoke to her. She repressed her emotions when it came to personal or human related issues sometimes leading to illnesses that debilitated her for many months, for example she remained silent when she witnesses her husband's affair. She had a disciplined sense of control over her sympathies and antipathies in most situations although did suffer outbursts of anger occasionally and was known to be antisocial.

O'Keeffe loved music and even painted her impressions of music. She played piano and violin to a high standard. She even painted music in colour that became her abstractions. Interestingly, she had a unique personal style dressing mostly in black, sometimes white eschewing colour for her paintings which were mostly vibrant. During her whole life she wore 'men's' lace up flat shoes. Later in life she wore black Chinese slippers. She was seen by others as mysterious and unusual due to her stepping back in social situations to observe others. She spent a lot of time alone and only revealed her true feelings to her closest friends. Mostly this was accomplished through her many letters that she wrote. It was as through letter writing that her thoughts and feelings were journalised and recorded.

### ***Moon (to include Mercury and Venus)***

Will Nature Karma (Karmic demands)

Born into a contented, creative busy farming family, Georgia spent much of her time, in fact all of her life, walking the landscapes in which she lived for miles, often on her own. This had the effect of her knowing and becoming part of the landscape. She was deeply connected with her will evidenced in how she physically managed to sustain

the astonishing amount of art work that she did in her life time – some of her canvases were huge and must have taken a lot of strength for her to complete. Her family supported her eccentricities thereby providing a place for her to nurture her self-will, for example, growing up in the family home she had her own bedroom where her brothers and sisters shared since she was seen as the ‘queen’ in the family she had rights over the others that gave her space to nurture her artistic character and enjoy privacy that was needed for this. She was constantly in movement either walking, moving house, teaching in various schools and colleges, living in different regions of United States of America or travelling the world. She walked or drove miles to get to an exact spot that she planned to paint due to its visual beauty and atmosphere. She cooked, cleaned, gardened and took on domestic responsibilities at Oak Lawn, the Stieglitz residence, Lake George, where she often took on the house keeper’s duties. Later she ran her own estates with support from the local indigenous community in New Mexico. She also looked after her sisters growing up and in particular, she took care of her younger sister Claudia when her mother died by moving her to Texas to share the rented room that she had while teaching at the school there. She was classically beautiful but did not groom herself to be ‘attractive’. Her beauty was visible in how she conducted and held herself. At school she was given an award for her deportment. She was photographed by Stieglitz for many years in varying ways to include his intimate nude photographs that proved a life-long contention for her – she was his muse.

She loved being creative artistically and in her domestic life. Once Stieglitz died and she lived her own life in Taos, New Mexico, she enjoyed good health until later in her life when she lost her central vision.

She wrote hundreds of letters to her husband and friends that reveal her thoughts and feelings.

### **Analysis**

In my imagination, having built up a picture of the qualities of the Moon, the imprint or gesture of Georgia that I am left having wiped those thoughts away, is a magnificent violet colour infused with golden light. This indicates to me that she is spiritually highly evolved. I get the sense, that she came to earth to actually ‘do’ and activate her will to be participant with nature and to reveal it so that it can be seen by human beings in its spiritual form. In this way, it is as though she were living out what Goethe indicated through his colour theories and in his notion of the metamorphosis of plants through her work.

Having built up a picture of the Sun and then wiping the thoughts away, I am left with an image of a man standing tall and strong. He is dressed in white shirt ruffles and black hose. There are ink or paint stains on his cuffs. He has wild dark but greying hair (is Stieglitz an image of herself in a past life?). He is in a studio. I wonder if he is alive during the Medici era in Italy. He is very much at home in the place he is in, and seems to command authority due to his expertise – he is a master of an art, loved and liked by those in his atelier.

Building up the picture of Saturn and then wiping those thoughts away I get the imprint or gesture of someone who at the cosmic midnight hour is consciously working with spiritual beings to design her incarnation as Georgia O’Keeffe. I also get the sense that she had had a number of incarnations as an artist. Not just any ordinary artist but one who employs spiritual forces. I don’t see a human form but rather a spiritual form who has around them a number of highly evolved human beings also in spiritual form who incarnate to serve humanity at the same time she did. Hers was an incarnation of service as an artist to unfold the meaning of the natural world.



## Four Step Karma Exercise

### Analysis:

I found this exercise difficult to accomplish largely because it was a challenge to sustain over the four days and nights due to interruptions during my day that took me away from the imaginative process. However, even with these challenges, a very strong image came toward me on the third day.

I was pondering the exercise on a walk with my doggie thinking that I was not really able to dive deeply enough to gather an image, when I saw a car number plate. It started with Eyk. I immediately thought of Georgia's mother's name, Ida ten Eyck. Her sister named after her mother also had the same name. This reminded me of Georgia's Dutch heritage through her mother's mother, Isabella. Once I had this thought another image came before me of Hans Holbein the German artist. I then came home to do some research that proved interesting:

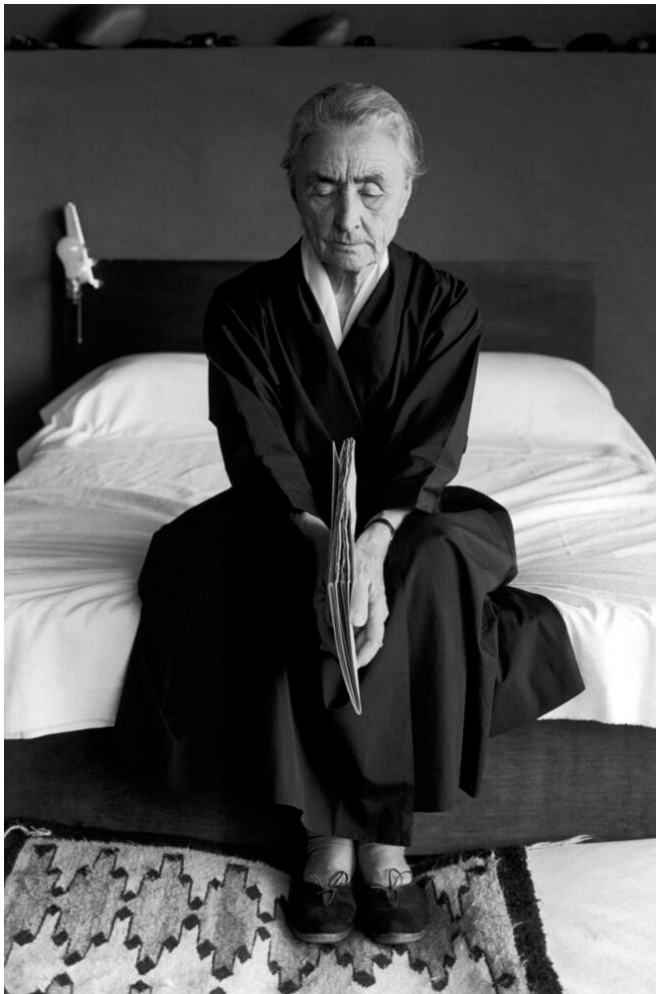
I discovered the Dutch artist Jan van Eyck 1390-1441 (approx.) famous for his portraits and religious studies to include altar pieces. He wore head dresses. O'Keeffe wore unusual head dresses most of her adult life. In this life she was not interested in painting portraits or the human form as though she had already exhausted these capacities. Interestingly, it was an early portrait of her Aunt Jenny, apparently a perfect rendition that persuaded her family to employ someone to give her art lessons at an early age. Van Eyck mastered light and shadow and spatial presence in his paintings and finally found artistic freedom with a long-term patron. He is said to have invented oil painting, something that O'Keeffe loved and mastered herself as though she already had some knowledge of it. She displayed the Dutch fortitude in how she went about her life and work. I would need to do some deeper work with this exercise in order to arrive at a surer imagination that I was on the right track. Perhaps, I need to have another chat with Georgia!

Another image came up very strongly on the fourth day. This was Georgia as a Noh actor or at least involved in a classical Japanese art discipline such as Noh acting. The picture of her in her bedroom (as below) in the way she sits, contemplates, the way she is dressed and her general approach to life seems to me to have come from such a life time. Her later paintings even reflected this in its crisp well-formed structure. She was so disciplined through her whole being. This is a quality that can only come about through such a training as Noh where the actor becomes the work of art. Not only was she a visual artist but she herself was a work of art in the way she dressed and presented herself as a human being very much in the style of minimalism and humility – all qualities that are prized in the tradition of Japanese Noh theatre. This photo below of her is my favourite since I think it really captures her essence as a contemplative, highly disciplined artist. Noh actors train for years to accomplish states of consciousness and spiritual prowess beyond the everyday human in order to be able to portray different archetypal states of being in performance. Georgia captures these states of consciousness through her art – the flowers, bones, landscapes, indeed all of her art is representative of the spiritual world as it is manifest on earth in a highly aesthetic way. This reminds me of her favourite book I mentioned previously - Kakuz Okukuras 'Book of Tea' when he says: "You know, he says that a butterfly is a flower with wings." Noh actors work with the discipline of the flower or Hana where a performance aspires to be as elegant and beautiful as an opening flower. Zeami (1363-1443) perfected the art of Noh – the flower, which is what O'Keeffe set out to do. A very strong after image

that left a deep impression on me once I had completed this exercise, was of the Ancient Egyptian Queen Nefertiti. I think Ancient Egypt, is where I met Georgia in a past life.



Georgia O'Keeffe, 1948



Georgia O'Keeffe in contemplation

**Art Works and Life Phases:**

O'Keeffe's art work can be seen to reveal the progress of her inner state of consciousness that was also manifest in her geophysical environment. As example, in her early work (1915-1916) when she is finding her own voice, she creates the charcoal drawings (abstractions) causing an artistic rebirth. She is also experiments with water colour abstractions at that time. During this period, she is living in landlocked areas (Texas) and working as a teacher and graphic designer. She finds her inspiration in the vastness of the landscape while being constrained by her teaching position at the school she is teaching at.

When she arrives to live in New York from 1918 through the 1920s she experiments with oil painting, pastels and continues with her explorations in water colour. She also experiments with synaesthesia creating her music abstractions. This is a time of inspiration. Her love affair with Alfred Stieglitz has a profound effect on her creativity and wellbeing.

Her arrival at Lake George with Stieglitz in the 1920s gives birth to explorations in painting buildings, fruit, flowers and trees also the lake and hills. She also begins to magnify her flower paintings; possibly an influence from his photography and particularly the photography of Paul Strand one of Stieglitz mentees who O'Keeffe befriends. The 1920s was the time when she painted the city-scape of New York from her apartment at the Shelton.

From the mid-1920s through the 1930s, a time of emotional turmoil, she discovered the Atlantic Ocean in 1922 having lived in landlocked rural areas previously. This gave her an experience of the power and vastness of the ocean depicted in her art works. She was awe-struck by the foam, the lighthouse the blackness of the waves and would run down the board walk to watch the waves come in. She began painting shells and stones from the beach. On her other travels she discovered barns, crucifixes. She found the flora of the places that she visited fascinating and painted them. She also painted her experience of going under anaesthesia when she had cysts removed from her breasts. This gave rise to her famous black and white abstraction in 1930.

Once she moved to New Mexico in the 1930s she explored and painted the desert landscapes, bones, skulls, clouds, mountains, trees churches, adobe buildings, doorways that fascinated her. Her love affair with Stieglitz was replaced with a new love affair for the desert environment and its colours that she now lived in – at least for 6 months of the year until she moved there permanently in the 1940s.

## Georgia's Hero's Journey (Monomyth)

*"...following a path of transformation to a higher stage of human development, the hero can integrate the previously hidden and unknown depths of self".<sup>14</sup>*

Tracing the twelve stages of a hero's journey where Georgia experienced emotional, psychological and physical events that lead to deep self-transformation impacting her art and the way she lived her life. Following her journey is a truly alchemical event.

### Act 1 = Separation

#### 1. Ordinary World:

Georgia O'Keeffe lives in a world where she feels compelled to paint and draw – to express herself artistically. She questions how she can become a successful artist as a very young woman of the age of twelve. She lives with the central dramatic question that disrupts her ordinary world which is: How can she express her own uniqueness through her painting?

#### 2. Call to Adventure:

This question calls her to adventure. She is frustrated painting like everyone else. She deliberates how can she possibly paint better than the masters? And, what is my take on what I see? This question comes to a head in her life as she enters her first Saturn return and experiences the zero point in her biography. When she is teaching in Texas, she decides to abandon colour and experiment drawing shapes and forms in charcoal.

#### 3. Refusal of the Call:

Unsure of how her charcoal drawings will be received, she sends them to her friend Anita Pollitzer for her feedback. Her friend, unbeknown to Georgia, takes them to photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz who decides to exhibit them in his gallery without Georgia's consent. Georgia had previously expressed to her friend that Stieglitz is the only person she would ever show her work to if she decided to. She finds out and asks him to take the exhibit down. She does not want them exposed to the public. She resists him wanting to promote her work.

#### 4. Meeting the Mentor:

Stieglitz who receives her charcoal drawings offers to support her work. She travels to NYC to challenge him when he exhibits the drawings. Eventually, she concedes to his mentorship. Crossing the Threshold: Entering the Special World.

This is also the beginning of her descent –

Poised at the edge of the abyss, meeting Stieglitz at his gallery, unknowingly she meets her future husband and agent. She forms a romantic relationship with him even though he is married. By doing this, she commits to the special world she has now entered.

#### 5. Tests, Allies, and Enemies:

Here she learns the rules of the special world and begins to see how art critics can construct or deconstruct her image – how she will be perceived by the public. She is introduced to Stieglitz coterie and their criticisms of her work particularly in light of her being a woman and an artist. She begins creating a public persona.

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<sup>14</sup> David Hartman and Diane Zimberoff p 6 *The Hero's Journey of Self-transformation: Models of Higher Development from Mythology*.

**Act II – A Descent**

## 6. Approach to the Inmost Cave:

Becoming ill with a bad case of influenza needs long term recuperation. Her family is now dissipated and so she has no real home and is in near financial poverty. Stieglitz offers to pay her way for a year in New York to paint if she will commit to doing so. At the same time, she can recover her health. She agrees and resigns her position at the college where she is teaching. From here on Stieglitz organises annual exhibits of her work. She is 31 years old.

## 7. The Ordeal:

Moving into the small studio apartment in New York (also Stieglitz photographic dark-room) Georgia progressively recovers from her illness when it is touch and go whether she will survive. Stieglitz becomes her lover leaving his wife and daughter (“...the physical act of love is a type of “death” or surrender.” From *Except from Myth and the Movies*, Stuart Voytilla by Christopher Vogler p. 4). This causes a crisis of the heart since he is married and there are ‘moral’ questions that they are confronted with societally.

**Act II – B Initiation** (Still in the special world)

## 8. Reward:

Georgia has survived ‘death’ and slain the dragon of her fears that she will never be a professional painter. She has been ‘saved’ from poverty and possible death. She has accepted her new status as Stieglitz companion and now begins to paint in an entirely new way. This is not without its shadow element however, since they still must consider his ex-wife, criticism from the media and general society.

## 9. The Road Back: (threshold between the special world and the ordinary world.)

Georgia tells us in her letters that she never wants her time with Stieglitz in the small studio apartment to ever end. Stieglitz begins photographing her. The Central Dramatic Question that initially led Georgia on her hero’s adventure confronts her again – Will she have a personal life and a journey of the heart, or will her higher cause take precedence? Her higher cause to paint, eventually takes priority. The demands of exhibiting annually, chases Georgia out of her own special world.

**Act III – Return to the Ordinary World**

## 10. The Resurrection:

Having left her old life behind, Georgia transformed by her adventure, must now face the realities of the mundane world and its demands. She has accepted the “magic elixir of love” from Stieglitz. However, she now feels like she is public property particularly since Stieglitz exhibits intimate photographs of her. From here-on-in she existentially struggles with her image as a “woman artist”. She commits to a new mysterious persona that enables her to navigate this (“delivers the blow that will destroy the death star”) world – she does not give interviews, or rarely comments about her work.

## 11. Return with the Elixir:

Georgia returns to the Ordinary World transformed. Even with continued existential questions to do with how she fits into the visual art world, her uniqueness nevertheless provides her with an honoured place. She is now in a position to share the elixir with

the world – which she does with absolute earnestness. Partnering and marrying Stieglitz, she embarks on a new life. Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz relationship proves essential to American Modern Art. The best part of the elixir or essence is that she offers us a way 'to see' spiritually into the natural world and by extension life.



Road

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**Section F: Bibliography/References (Selected)**

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Movie: Georgia O'Keeffe starring Joan Allen and Jeremy Irons – Lifetime movie. Sony pictures 2009.

You tube videos:

'Georgia O'Keeffe: A collection of 294 paintings. From the Learning Masters series.

This is a magnificent some never before seen compilation of her work. There is such variety in her paintings and subjects and colour usage. Watching it was a religious experience.

*Georgia O'Keeffe by Myself* by Allen Charlton

A film about O'Keeffe in Taos New Mexico including photos of her past. She is so beautifully spoken.

*Georgia O'Keeffe Biography* Peter Jones Production

A film about her childhood.

*Georgia: A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe* by Dawn Tripp

Published Random House New York 2017

*Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of Georgia O'Keeffe* by Laurie Lisle

Published Washington Square Press - Pocket Books 1981

*Georgia O'Keeffe World of Art* by Lisa Mintz Messinger

Published Thames and Hudson UK & USA 2001

*A Life of Georgia O'Keeffe*

By Roxanna Robinson Published by Bloomsbury Publishing 1989

*Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz* by Peter-Cornell Richter

Published by Prestel 2001

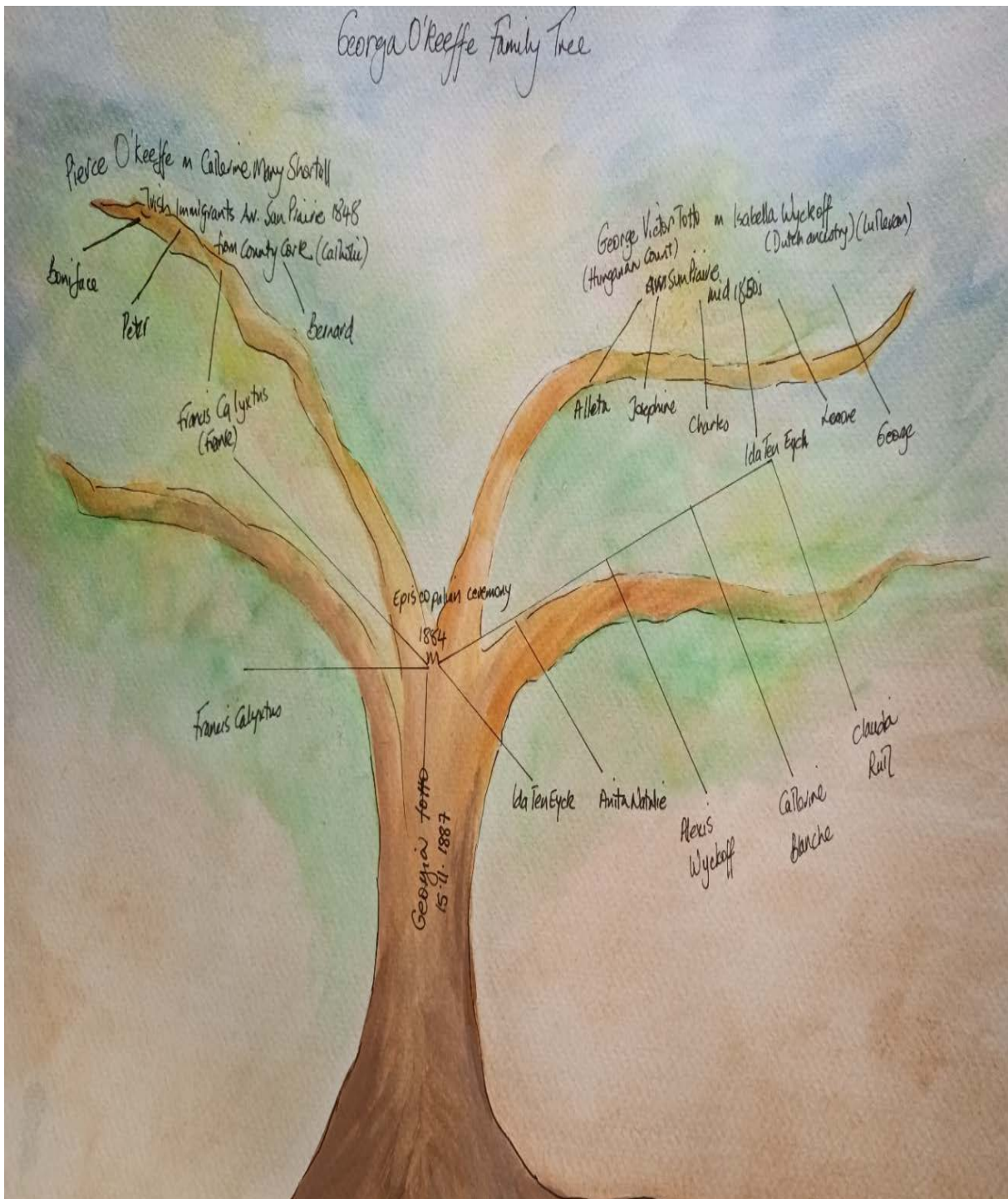
*Georgia O'Keeffe At Home* by Alicia Inez Guzmán

Published by Frances Lincoln 2017

Holistic Biographical Consultancy Course Materials written and compiled by Karl-Heinz Finke and Laura Summerfield

Section G: Appendices

Georgia O'Keeffe Family Tree (Immediate family):





**Transitions between Planetary Septennials:**

This was a process that I became curious about. That is, the experiences people might have between transitioning from one planetary septennial to another. I wanted to observe if there was a marked change when crossing between them for example between the Moon and Mercury. For Georgia there always seemed to be a marked change in her circumstances.

Moon – arrival from spiritual world into Sun Prairie and family community.

Moon to Mercury: Receives art lessons at home that set up her life path

Mercury to Venus: Attends Sacred Heart Academy, Madison, Wisconsin taught by Dominican Nuns. First year high school. This impacts how she will dress for the rest of her life story – in black and white, severe and nun-like.

Venus to Sun 1: Paints 'Dead Rabbit with Copper Pot' wins esteemed scholarship to attend summer school at Lake George. This is the early beginning of her relationship with Lake George.

Sun 1 to Sun 2: Attends Summer School. Beginning of her becoming a professional painter.

Sun 2 to Sun 3: Enrols at Teachers College, South Carolina and studies under Arthur Dow, who painting philosophy has a lasting impact on O'Keeffe. Has an artistic rebirth.

Sun 3 to Mars: First trip to New Mexico that establishes a new rhythm in her life of 6 months in New York with Stieglitz and 6 months in Taos New Mexico.

Mars to Jupiter: Moves from Shelton to Penthouse apartment; discovers Ghost Ranch.

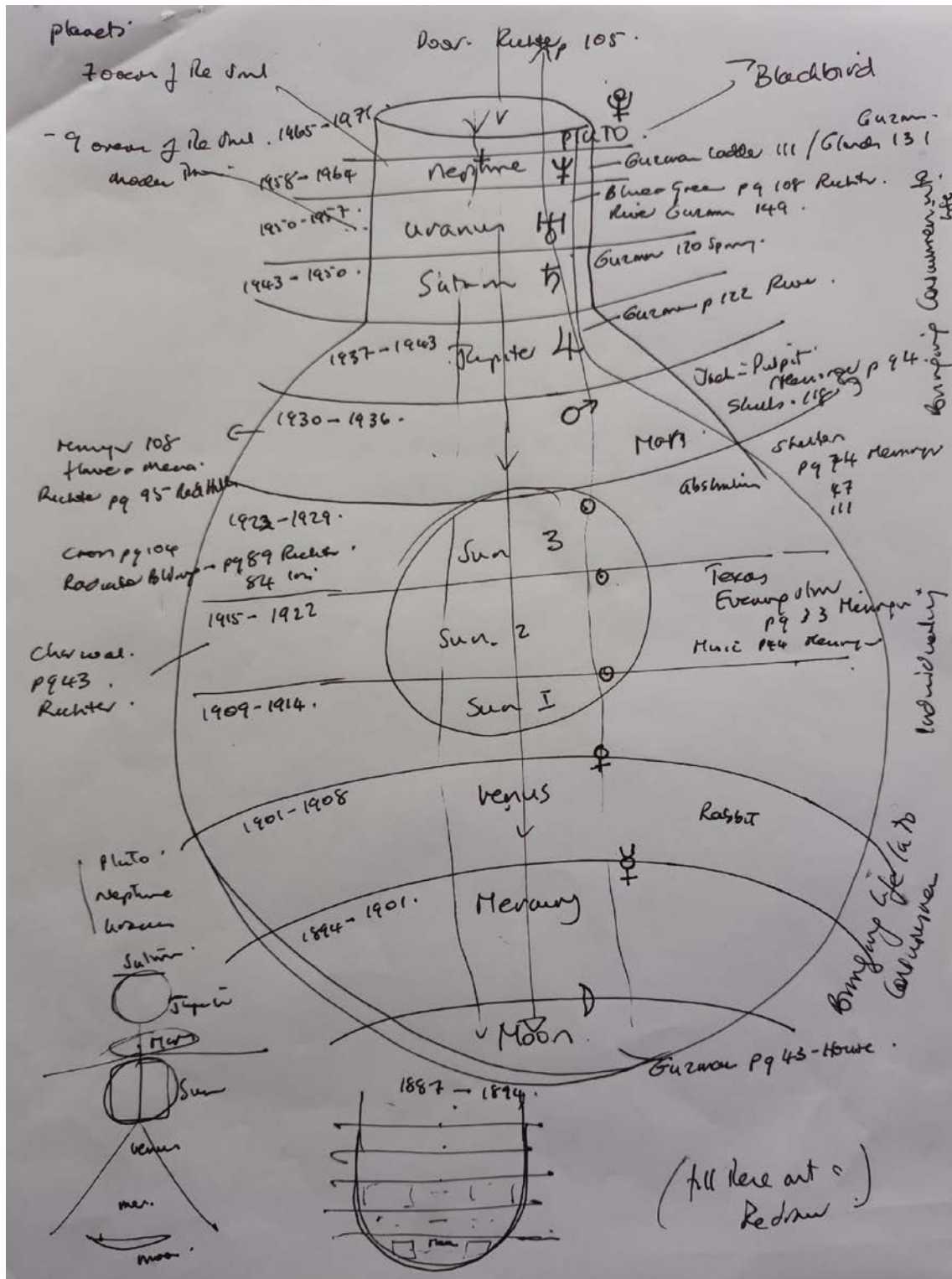
Jupiter to Saturn: O'Keeffe leaves New York to live permanently in New Mexico

Saturn to Uranus: Paints on large canvas's; travels

Uranus to Neptune: Begins extensive global travel

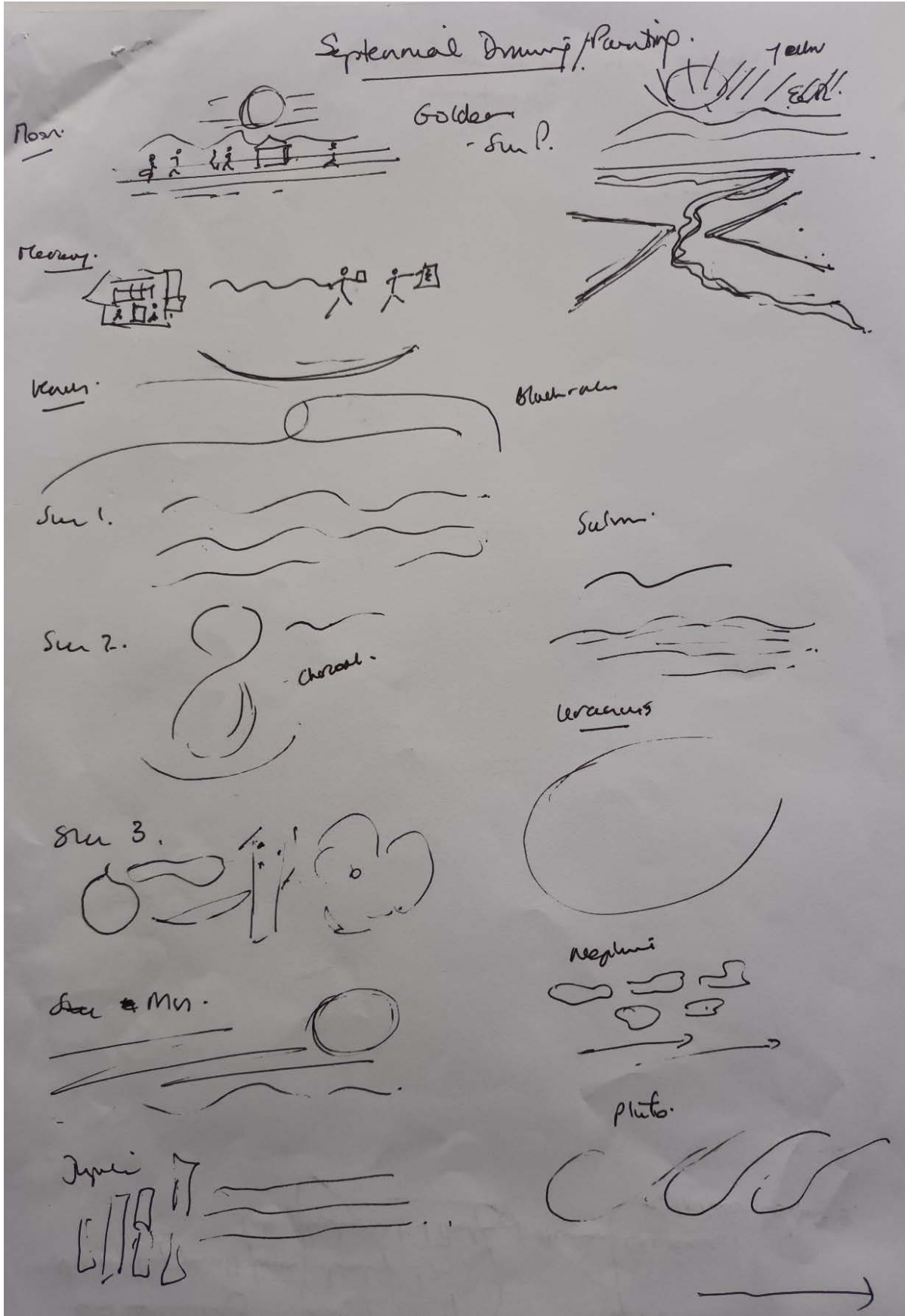
Neptune to Pluto: Loses eyesight.

### Alchemical Notion of the 7 Planets



Interested in the ancient alchemical notion of the 7 planets (before the discovery of the outer planets) as 7 'soul ovens or septennials, this chart explores the themes and style of painting Georgia worked with at each stage. If I had the IT skills, I would have re-drawn the chart and inserted paintings representative of these 12 septennials to visually observe the progression of her work through emotional/spiritual development, e.g. during the Pluto septennial she painted the blackbird soaring in clear blue sky observing the world in contrast to earth bound flora in earlier Septennials.

Quick sketches depicting gestures of each of her septennials.



Mirroring of Illnesses

Life Panorama Chart - 12-Septennials

Georgia O'Keeffe Mirroring of Illnesses

Holistic Biography Work ... bringing spirit to life

Life Panorama Chart - 12-Septennials

Jane Gilmer

1 <sup>st</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> Life Year:		22 <sup>nd</sup> - 42 <sup>nd</sup> Life Year:		43 <sup>rd</sup> - 63 <sup>rd</sup> Life Year:		64 <sup>th</sup> - 84 <sup>th</sup> Life Year:	
♃	♁	♂	♁	♁	♁	♁	♁
♃	♁	♂	♁	♁	♁	♁	♁
1		42		63		1	
2		41	Breast cysts / Lymphoma	62		64	
3		40		61		65	
4		39	COM	60		66	
5		38	LN2	59		67	
6		37	37.2	58		68	
7		36		57		69	
8		35		56		70	
9		34		55		71	
10		33		54		72	
11		32	Contract Spanish flu	53		73	
12		31		52		74	
13		30		51		75	
14		29		50		76	
15		28		49		77	
16		27		48		78	
17		26	COT	47		79	
18		25		46		80	
19	Contract Typhoid fever	24		45		81	
20		23	Contract Measles	44	Psychoneurotic breakdown	82	
21		22		43	MLC	83	
						84	loses Central vision (Eyes)

**Georgia O'Keeffe – 'Hamlet' moment?**

Perhaps, this image depicts her existential fascination with death and the spiritual world or world beyond? She never speaks about her spiritual life directly through her art or in her letters (that I know of). What she does however, is paint crosses, churches, and participates in her local Taos, New Mexico indigenous Christian festivals.

**Winter Road – River of Life?**



Georgia O'Keeffe: Winter Road

This image seems to capture what could be seen as her river of life or road of life.

# Life Panorama Chart



Please enter your name and date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy) above the dotted lines below.

Georgia O'Keeffe

15/11/1887

Use this **Life Panorama Chart** as a tool to summarise and examine a Life Journey.

This personalised edition of the **Panorama Chart** is a resource developed by accredited Biography Consultant and Trainer *Karl-Heinz Finke* with the support of *Laura Summerfield* and *Ashish Malhotra*. It is made available freely thanks to a generous donation from a graduate of our **Holistic Biography Work** Training Program. Use it for yourself; share it with family, friends, students, clients, and so on. It is licensed under the *Creative Commons* (see details below).


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This **Panorama Chart** is used effectively by students in our courses world-wide. We are aware that there are other archetypes available to examine a life journey, but we have found this one to be the most accurate and helpful.

Alongside self-reflective work, this **Panorama Chart** helps to summarise discoveries and reflections on the developing capacities in body, soul and spirit. The biographical laws in relation to a life story become more visible.

You can **download** further free copies of the **Life Panorama Chart** [here](#).

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**P-1 Birth to 21 years Body – Focus on Physical Development**

LY	▼▼▼▼	Incidents, Facts: What happened?	Experiences: What was the experience related to the incident?
	<b>☾ Moon</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title: X Sun in the Moon</b>
1 15/11/1887 to 14/11/1888		X Born Georgia Totto O'Keeffe X Sun Prairie Wisconsin, USA X	X Second child, first daughter to Ida and Frank O'Keeffe. Mixed blood line of Irish Hungarian X and Dutch. Grandfather Count George is Hungarian aristocracy political refugee. X Georgia is named after him. Brother Francis Jr older brother.
2 15/11/1888 to 14/11/1889		X Before second birthday sister Ida born X First memory before 2 year old. X	X X Sitting on quilt with older brother, Aunt and Mother. X
3 15/11/1889 to 14/11/1890	<b>Defiance Phase</b>	X X Sister Anita born X	X Understands her position in the family and utilizes it. X Withdraws to background and live in own world. Saw elder brother as 'golden child'. X
4 15/11/1890 to 14/11/1891	<b>Early Memory</b>	X Second brother Alexis born X X	X Aunt Jenny (Jane Varney) comes to live with family and lovingly support child rearing. X X
5 15/11/1891 to 14/11/1892		X Begins school X X	X Mixed grade single room school in Town Hall. Stayed until 13 years old. X Known as an inquisitive child. X
6 15/11/1892 to 14/11/1893		X Dolls House X X	X Visits Grandmother Totto on Edge Lake Monona. First trip away. X Develops imaginary world with Dolls House. X
7 15/11/1893 to 14/11/1894		X Art lessons at home with family X X	X School teacher spends weekends with family and teaches them art. X X
	<b>♀ Mercury</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title: X Awakenings and Changes</b>
8 15/11/1894 to 14/11/1895		X Attends village school X X	X Idyllic farm life and school. Happy time. X X
9 15/11/1895 to 14/11/1896		X Attends village school X X	X Idyllic farm life and school. Happy time. X X
10 15/11/1896 to 14/11/1897	<b>Rubicon LUN 0.5</b> 07/03/1897	X Visits Milwaukee X X	X First of many train journeys to stay with Aunt Lola. Leaves childhood behind. X X
11 15/11/1897 to 14/11/1898		X Grandmother O'Keeffe dies. X X	X Father's brother Uncle Bernard dying of TB lives with Georgia and family. X X
12 15/11/1898 to 14/11/1899	<b>Rite of Passage JUP 1.0</b> 01/09/1899	X Fifth sister Claudia is born X X	X Has private art lessons after drawing an accurate portrait of Aunt Jenny. Father inherits X more land from dying brother. X Declares that she is going to be an artist to her friend Lena.
13 15/11/1899 to 14/11/1900		X Grandmother Totto dies X X	X Beginning of family dispersal. X X
14 15/11/1900 to 14/11/1901		X Leaves Sun Prairie to attend Sacred Heart School X X	X School taught by Dominican nuns. X Seen as good student. Tolerates rules and regulations - influences how she conducts herself X throughout her life.
	<b>♀ Venus</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title: X Loving Art and Illness</b>
15 15/11/1901 to 14/11/1902	<b>SAT 0.5</b> 14.7y 27/07/1902	X Leaves Sacred Heart Academy X Attends Madison High School X Paints Jack in Pulpit as first living subject	X Family moves to Virginia X Lives temporarily with Aunt Lola in Madison. First time living in a city. X
16 15/11/1902 to 14/11/1903		X Parents purchase 'Wheatlands' Wisconsin X Attends Chatham Episcopal Institute X	X X Boarding school. Learns piano. Plays poker. Studies art. Sews own clothes. Called Georgie. X Graduates.
17 15/11/1903 to 14/11/1904		X Attends School of Art Institute Chicago X X	X Begins formal art training under John Vanderpoel. Refuses to attend still-life classes. X X
18 15/11/1904 to 14/11/1905		X Attends School of Art Institute Chicago X X	X X X
19 15/11/1905 to 14/11/1906	<b>LUN 1</b> 18y7m9d 24/06/1906	X Paints 'Dead Rabbit with Copper Pot' X X	X Awarded still life scholarship for painting at Art Students League. X X
20 15/11/1906 to 14/11/1907		X Contracts Typhoid fever X	X Has to rest and recover at home. Loses hair. Very weak. Takes months to recover. X
21 15/11/1907 to 14/11/1908		X Attends Art Students League Summer School, Lake George	X In NYC attends exhibitions at Alfred Stieglitz Gallery 291 Rodin, Matisse. X X

Self-realisation – Turning point: from Education to Self-education



P-2		22 to 42 years	Soul – Focus on Soul Development
LY	▲▲▲▲	Incidents, Facts: What happened?	Experiences: What was the experience related to the incident?
☉	Sun	6 <sup>th</sup> Septennial	Title: X Art and Life Converge
42 15/11/1928 to 14/11/1929		X Stieglitz has first severe angina attack. X	X Beginning of GOK nursing Stieglitz. X X
41 15/11/1927 to 14/11/1928		X Sale of Calla lily paintings for \$25K X X	X Dorothy Norman begins visiting Stieglitz at 'Intimate Gallery'. X Martial conflicts change choice of painting subjects - black iris. X
40 15/11/1926 to 14/11/1927	Muhammad Enlighten	X First retrospective exhibit X X	X Produces 8 panoramic paintings of NY East River. X
39 15/11/1925 to 14/11/1926	Crisis of Meaning	X Exhibition incl NYC architecture and X large format flower paintings X	X Moves to Shelton Hotel stay in several apartments for 10 years X Rave reviews for exhibition. X
38 15/11/1924 to 14/11/1925	LUN 2 37y2m20d 04/02/1925	X Marries Stieglitz X X	X Begins magnifying flower paintings. X Paints abstracted compositions.
37 15/11/1923 to 14/11/1924		X Stieglitz divorced finalised X G OK exhibition X	X Significant exhibition of G OK work X Works to make the 'unknown known'. X
36 15/11/1922 to 14/11/1923	Buddha Enlighten	X Starts focused painting of fruits, leaves to X 1929 X	X Now settling in at Stieglitz family summer home, Lake George. X X
☉	Sun	5 <sup>th</sup> Septennial	Title: X Artistic Rebirth/Testing Time
35 15/11/1921 to 14/11/1922		X Contracts Spanish Flu X X	X Battle with media attention continues. X X
34 15/11/1920 to 14/11/1921		X Begins painting NYC X Exhibition of Stieglitz photos incl 45 of X Georgia	X Architectural cycle of paintings against opposition due to being a woman painter. X X
33 15/11/1919 to 14/11/1920	Christ Crucifixion	X Critics challenge Stieglitz photos X	X Question how her work is 'seen' due to increased media attention of intimate photos. X Works with pastels at Lake George - nature painting, barns. X
32 15/11/1918 to 14/11/1919		X Moves to NYC X Beginning of Stieglitz photos X	X Photographed for next 20 years. Paints for one year with Stieglitz support. X Becomes romantically involved with Stieglitz. Beginning of next 31 years living in NYC X Begins working in oil color again.
31 15/11/1917 to 14/11/1918	Christ Baptism	X First solo exhibition at Gallery 291 X Becomes ill X	X Sells one charcoal drawing. X Severe headaches. X
30 15/11/1916 to 14/11/1917	Buddha 4 Sights SAT1 29.4y 30/04/1917	X First exhibition in group show at X Gallery 291 X First plaster cast in Bronze	X Teaches at West Texas State Normal College Canyon Texas. Integrates Dow's technique. X Begins long letter correspondence with Stieglitz. X
29 15/11/1915 to 14/11/1916		X Mother dies tragically of TB X Teaches at Columbia College, X South Carolina	X Artistic Rebirth - Charcoal drawings. Beginning of her personal style and X development of modern abstractionism. X Drawings sent to Stieglitz via friend Anita Pollitzer.
☉	Sun	4 <sup>th</sup> Septennial	Title: X Gathering Tools/Ilness
28 15/11/1914 to 14/11/1915	Zero Point	X Studies under Arthur Dow at teachers X College X	X Returns to NYC for further study and visits exhibits. Intro to technique synesthesia X this marks beginning of her abstractions. X
27 15/11/1913 to 14/11/1914		X Is given copy of Kandinsky's treatise X 'The Spiritual in Art' X	X This work opens her imagination to new ways of perceiving. X X
26 15/11/1912 to 14/11/1913		X Attends in drawing class Uni Virginia X Charlottesville X	X Formal art classes with with Alon Bement who greatly impacts her technique. X X
25 15/11/1911 to 14/11/1912	Crisis of Talents	X Gives up painting in oils X X	X Develops intolerance for smell of turpentine. X X
24 15/11/1910 to 14/11/1911	JUP 2 23.6 18/06/1911	X Begins teaching Elementary and X Secondary school art X	X Teaches in various schools. X X
23 15/11/1909 to 14/11/1910		Works as freelance Commercial artist X Chicago X	X Needs to make her own way financially as family finances are limited. X X
22 15/11/1908 to 14/11/1909	Birth of "I"	X Becomes ill with measles. X	X Takes months to recover. X X
	▲▲▲▲	From Soul Development to Spirit-Self Realisation	



P-3		43 to 63 years		Spirit – Spiritual Development	
LY	▲▲▲▲	Incidents, Facts: What happened?	Experiences: What was the experience related to the incident?		
	<b>♄ Saturn</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>X Self-Realisation/Freedom</b>	
63 15/11/1949 to 14/11/1950	Fire Trial Phase	X Exhibits GOK paintings 1946-1950 X Employs new agent X	X Exhibits 'An American Place.' X Agent Edith Halpert owner of 'The Downtown Gallery.' X		
62 15/11/1948 to 14/11/1949		X In NYC attending estate matters X Permanently leaves NYC for New Mexico	X Habitually spends 6 months Ghost Ranch summer and fall and 6 months Abiquiu winter and spring.		
61 15/11/1947 to 14/11/1948	<b>Muhammad Dies</b>	X NYC settling Stieglitz estate X Arthur Dow dies X	X Distributes Stieglitz art collection and attends to legal matters. X Teacher and Mentor who deeply impacted her work spiritually. X Paints Doors and Blackbird.		
60 15/11/1946 to 14/11/1947	<b>JUP 5 59.3 03/03/1947</b>	X Exhibits G OK X Stays in NYC settles Stieglitz estate. X Travels to New Mexico	X Exhibits 'An American Place.' Begins organizing retrospective for The Museum of Modern Art. X Begins renovating Abiquiu house.		
59 15/11/1945 to 14/11/1946	<b>SAT 2 58.9 08/10/1946</b>	X Purchases property Abiquiu, New Mexico X Stieglitz dies July 13 1946 X	X Abiquiu home with garden due to water rights. X Paintings of Black Place. V shape compositions symmetry and balance. X Stays with Stieglitz through his death experience.		
58 15/11/1944 to 14/11/1945		X Exhibits G OK Paintings - 1944 X Travels to New Mexico X	X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X X		
57 15/11/1943 to 14/11/1944		X Exhibits G OK Paintings - 1943 X Travels to New Mexico X	X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X X		
	<b>♃ Jupiter</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>X Highly Productive/Purchases own Home</b>	
56 15/11/1942 to 14/11/1943	<b>LUN 3 55y10m1d 16/09/1943</b>	X Retrospective G OK Art Institute Chicago X Exhibits X Travels to New Mexico	X X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X		
55 15/11/1941 to 14/11/1942		X Moves house with Stieglitz X Exhibition of recent paintings X Travels to New Mexico	X Last NYC address into small apartment that Stieglitz can manage. X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X		
54 15/11/1940 to 14/11/1941		X Exhibition X Purchases Rancho de los Burros at X Ghost Ranch, New Mexico	X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X Establishes her own home. X		
53 15/11/1939 to 14/11/1940		X Travels to Hawaii for Dole Pineapple X Exhibition of 'An American Place.' X	X Insists on staying on Pineapple farm in Hawaii. Tension with Dole. X X		
52 15/11/1938 to 14/11/1939		X Receives honorary degree X Exhibition of Oils and Pastels X Receives commission from Dole Pineapple	X College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. X Exhibits An 'American Place.'		
51 15/11/1937 to 14/11/1938		X 14th annual exhibition of paintings with X letters X	X Moves to another apartment with Stieglitz. X X		
50 15/11/1936 to 14/11/1937		X Exhibition of new paintings X X	X Exhibits at 'An American Place' inspired by Taos, New Mexico. X Travels to New Mexico - for several months. X		
	<b>♂ Mars</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>X Independence at a Cost</b>	
49 15/11/1935 to 14/11/1936		X Exhibition of recent paintings X Commission from Elizabeth Arden X	X Exhibits at 'An American Place.' X Creates large painting for exercise salon for \$10,000.00 - beginning of considerable earning. X		
48 15/11/1934 to 14/11/1935	<b>JUP 4 47.4 06/04/1935</b>	X First visit to Ghost Ranch, Taos, X New Mexico. X	X Renewed inspiration. Developing independence from Stieglitz. X X		
47 15/11/1933 to 14/11/1934		X Recovers in sisters apartment X Recuperates in Bermuda X	X Stays away from Stieglitz. X Spends time with friends in recovery. X		
46 15/11/1932 to 14/11/1933		X Psycho neurotic breakdown X X	X Stieglitz affair with Dorothy Norman leads to breakdown. X Abandons Radio City Music Hall commission - friction with Stieglitz over commission. X		
45 15/11/1931 to 14/11/1932	<b>SAT 1.5 44.1 20/12/1931</b>	X Exhibition paintings with bones X X	X Accepts commission to paint mural for powder room in Radio City Music Hall. X Travels to Canada. X		
44 15/11/1930 to 14/11/1931	<b>Mid-life Crisis</b>	X Taos. Questions relationship with Stieglitz X	X Begins painting New Mexico crosses and buildings. X		
43 15/11/1929 to 14/11/1930	<b>Second Spring</b>	X Visits Taos New Mexico X X	X Beginning of G OK long term relationship with New Mexico and finding forever home. X From here spends 6 months in Taos and 6 months in NYC and Lake George. X		
	▲▲▲▲	<i>Spirit-Self-realisation – Leading into Spiritual Development</i>			

P-4		64 to 84 years		Spirit – Transpersonal Development	
LY	▼▼▼▼	Incidents, Facts: What happened?	Experiences: What was the experience related to the incident?		
	♃	<b>Uranus</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	X International Travel/Expansion
64 15/11/1950 to 14/11/1951	Fire Trial Phase	X Travels to Mexico X X			X First trip abroad. Meets Diego Rivera and Frieda Kahl. X X
65 15/11/1951 to 14/11/1952		X Travel X X			X X X
66 15/11/1952 to 14/11/1953		X Travels to France and Spain X X			X X X
67 15/11/1953 to 14/11/1954		X Travels to Europe X X			X First European trip. X X
68 15/11/1954 to 14/11/1955		X Travel X X			X X X
69 15/11/1955 to 14/11/1956		X Visits Peru X X			X Visits many other countries. X X
70 15/11/1956 to 14/11/1957		X Continues Travel X X			X Change of perception due to areoplane travel. X
	♆	<b>Neptune</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	X Travel/Water
71 15/11/1957 to 14/11/1958	Water Trial Phase	X Travel and at home. X X			X X X
72 15/11/1958 to 14/11/1959	JUP 6 71.1y 19/12/1958	X Brother Francis dies X Travels America, SE Asia, Far East, India X Middle East, Italy			X Visits Mt Fuji. Paints aerial abstractions of rivers - 14 large canvas's. X X
73 15/11/1959 to 14/11/1960	▼▼▼▼ Years of Grace	X Second trip to SE Asia X Exhibits GOK: Forty Years of Her Art X			X X Retrospective Worcester (Mass) Art Museum. Assists organising. X
74 15/11/1960 to 14/11/1961	SAT 2.5 73.1 20/12/1960	X Sister Ida dies. X Exhibits GOK: Recent Paintings and X Drawings			X X Installs last exhibit at 'The Downtown Gallery.' X
75 15/11/1961 to 14/11/1962	LUN4 74y5m7d 26/04/1962	X 7 day river rafting Colorado River X X			X Paints sky and cloud paintings. Spiritual themes looking down on earth. X X
76 15/11/1962 to 14/11/1963		X Revisits Mexico X Travel Greece and Egypt. X			X To see what the mural artists are doing. X Elected to American Academy of Arts and Letters. X
77 15/11/1963 to 14/11/1964		X Doris Bly becomes sole agent X X			X Handover to Bly. X X
	♇	<b>Pluto</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Septennial</b>	<b>Title:</b>	X Inner seeing at Home
78 15/11/1964 to 14/11/1965	Air Trial Phase	X Paints cloud series X X			X Large canvases at Ghost Ranch. Chow dogs. X X
79 15/11/1965 to 14/11/1966		X Attends own Retrospective X X			X GOK: An Exhibition of the Work of the Artist from 1915 to 1966 Fort Worth. X X
80 15/11/1966 to 14/11/1967		X Series of Cloud paintings. X X			X Enjoys domestic life. X X
81 15/11/1967 to 14/11/1968		X Painting X X			X Enjoys domestic life. X X
82 15/11/1968 to 14/11/1969		X Painting X X			X Enjoys domestic life. X X
83 15/11/1969 to 14/11/1970		X Installs own retrospective X X			X GOK at the Whitney Museum of American Art. X X
84 15/11/1970 to 14/11/1971	JUP 7 83.03 25/11/1970	X Loses central vision X X			X Retains only peripheral vision - can no longer paint unassisted. X X
	▼▼▼▼	From Spiritual to Transpersonal Development – Preparing for the final transition			

