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dientes se aflojan', 298; 'con tos y mala vista', 300),[59] and to time slowing down and stopping. The self-contradicting nature of time is best reflected in timeplane 5, in the juxtaposition of the repetition of 'instante' and the indications of time passing nonetheless, evident in the repeated use of 'mientras' and verbs denoting development and growth ('echa raíces', 'madura', 'crece', 298).[60] The temporal pattern of this textbrane is L-P-P-L – another full circle.

Textbrane 4 epitomizes linear or historical past. The three timeplanes included in it (8, 9 and 15) contain references to historical events – the Spanish Civil War, the Latin American Wars of Independence, the murder of Leo Trotsky, and the execution of Francisco Madero, to name but a few. The temporal pattern of P-L-L-P once again represents a full circle, corresponding to the pattern of the fold in textbrane 2. Finally, textbrane 5, comprised of timeplanes 11, 16, 17 and 18, represents time coming to a standstill, with all events occurring simultaneously or in reverse order from present to past, as in timeplane 18. Time is seen as an unstoppable destructive force united with life – 'su muerte ya es la estatua de su vida' (308);[61] life is beyond reach – 'la vida es otra, siempre allá, más lejos' (ibid.),[62] and linear existence is no longer relevant as time reverses its course. This textbrane exhibits what is now a recurrent temporal pattern of a circle – L-T-T-L.

All five textbranes have temporal patterns that come full circle, and this points us to the circular image of the Sun Stone. The cyclic nature of time was recognized by the Aztecs; this worldview became the foundation of ancient cosmologies, which 'envisioned the unfolding of the world as a cyclic process.'[63] Later, this perspective, coupled with the theory of general relativity, led to the rise of a cyclic view of the universe. In the 1930s, Richard Tolman proposed that the universe did not develop in a linear fashion – from the Big Bang to extinction; instead, its development followed a cyclic pattern – from the Big Bang to expansion, contraction and

59 'My teeth get loose', 'with a cough and bad eyesight'.
60 'plants its roots', 'matures', 'grows'.
61 'Their death is now the statue of their life.'
62 'Life is another, always out there, far away.'
63 Greene, 405.

another Big Bang, repeating this cycle over and over again. However, this design cannot run forever because rising entropy would prevent perpetual motion. In other words, even a cyclic universe has to have a beginning and an end. Tolman's proposal was eventually rejected because it was based upon the notion of a spherical universe that has been refuted by observations. Instead, a flat universe model was introduced, and the application of M-theory to the problem of cyclic development of the universe led to the conclusion by Steinhardt and Turok that 'we are living within a three-brane that violently collides every few trillion years with another nearby, parallel three-brane. And the "bang" from the collision initiates each new cosmological cycle.'[64] The branes collide, bounce off each other, cool down and coalesce, and then start getting closer and reach the collision point once again. But, as is the case with the initial cyclic model, there had to be the first collision – and at the moment scientists are still unsure as to what exactly happened to start the cycle.

If we focus on the pattern of creation/destruction/re-creation of time and reality in textbranes of 'Piedra de sol', we can see that it mirrors the cyclic existence of the three-brane universe. In each textbrane, current reality is created out of previously existing realities or out of surrounding matter (for example, a woman is created out of flora and fauna). This reality is then subjected to a variety of mutations: for example, the woman mutates into a dangerous force of nature (297, 299), the world around the narrator becomes too surreal for comprehension (303), the narrator loses his senses (305), and finally the Sun tears up the narrator's reality (310). The collision of realities and temporalities causes the destruction of current reality in each textbrane, be it the narrator's vision of the woman, the history of humanity, or linear time itself. I would propose that some textbranes collide with others, while others remain static. This would explain the long debated fragment 'Madrid 1937' (302), and the surreal nature of a segment on page 303 ('las leyes comidas de ratones' – 'de inglés y democracia').[65]

64 Greene, 406.
65 'Laws eaten by rats' – 'of English and democracy'.