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Permutations in Octavio Paz's 'Piedra de sol'. In: Carpenter, Victoria
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World in Words, A Life in Texts: Revisiting Latin American Cultural
Heritage. Peter Lang, pp. 137-160

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and continues moving in a line ('camino por las calles') (305).⁵¹ His return does not complete a circle, since there is a change in his behaviour – he no longer walks 'a tientas',⁵² nor does he feel his way through the space around him; so his movement is spiral. However, there is no indication in this timeplane that he will return once again to where he started; thus the timeplane ends with linear characteristics. Timeplane 18, initially considered spiral, is now treated as linear; in fact, its temporality is reversed, and the action here moves from present to past. The narrator's movement is halted in the present at the start of the timeplane – 'quiero seguir, ir más allá, y no puedo';⁵³ then he moves to the past, and the narration changes from present to preterite – 'dormí sueños de piedra', 'oí cantar mi sangre';⁵⁴ and later to imperfect. The last six lines of the timeplane are in imperfect, yet timeplane 19 following the line 'y su magia de espejos revivía'⁵⁵ is written in present – 'se curva, / avanza, retrocede, da un rodeo / y llega siempre' (310).⁵⁶

This reclassification is reflected in a new division of the poem into textbranes, which is informed by a new theoretical foundation of the analysis. While the original division of the poem into timeplanes is valid within the previously used theoretical framework, the application of string theory and M-theory to the examination of the interaction of timeplanes leads to a clearer, more organized pattern. As seen in Table 2, timeplanes are now grouped into textbranes, with timeplane 20 being treated as the bulk; the division is based primarily on the similarities of form and content between timeplanes.

- 51 'I follow my delirium', 'I walk ... through corridors', 'I return to where I started', 'I walk down the streets.'
 52 'feeling his way.'
 53 'I try to go on, go further and I cannot.'
 54 'I dreamt dreams of stone', 'I heard my blood sing.'
 55 'And its magic of mirrors was revealing.'
 56 'It curves, advances, recedes, turns and goes on forever.'

Table 2. Relationship between timeplanes, textbranes and the bulk

Original timeplane(s)	Textbrane	Temporal progression	Bulk
TP ₁ TP ₁₉	TB ₁	T T	
TP ₂ TP ₃ TP ₄ TP ₆ TP ₁₀ TP ₁₂ TP ₁₃ TP _{14a} TP _{17a}	TB ₂	C L C P C C C P C	
TP ₅ TP ₇ TP ₁₄	TB ₃	L P (p) L	
TP ₈ TP ₉ TP ₁₅	TB ₄	P L L P	
TP ₁₁ TP ₁₆ TP ₁₇ TP ₁₈	TB ₅	L T T L	
TP ₂₀			Bulk

While there are many words and phrases repeated throughout the poem, I have followed ten: eight images of the second circle of the Aztec solar calendar, and two references to the passing (or non-passing) of time. The relationship between the two types of repeated words is clear: both reflect the non-linear nature of time, which is the key theme of 'Piedra de sol'. The interconnection of these images points to a unifying force holding the textbrane structure together. The analysis of the repetitions of Sun Stone words in textbranes yields a different distribution pattern from that in the examination of these repetitions across timeplanes. If we compare the distribution of repetitions in Table 3 and Table 4, the pattern in the latter is much more identifiable. There is a larger textbrane (textbrane 2), to which all other branes are connected through the strings of repeated words. We can also note that there are four distinct cross-brane strings: 'muerte', 'sol', 'instante' and (with one exception) 'no pasa nada'.⁵⁷ Most of these words refer to temporal phenomena, once again emphasizing the key theme of the poem – the passing of time.

- 57 'death', 'sun', 'instance', 'nothing goes on.'