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**Abstract**

Multimodal fiction, as recently studied by Hallet (2009), Gibbons (2012), and Maziarczyk (2011; 2012), among others, is the phenomenon shared by those novels which combine various semiotic modes in the development of the narrative. The purpose of the present work is to account for the most salient semiotic resources used in the multimodal novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (2004). In view of the work which still needs to be done in the field, and the increasing profusion and diversity of multimodal literary forms in recent years, this study aims at throwing new light upon the diverse and significant ways in which the strategic inclusion of various semiotic resources operates in fiction. **Keywords:** Multimodal Fiction; Semiotic Resources; Graphic Surface; Navigational Function; Metadiscursive Devices, Performative Function.

The present work will focus on the study of the multimodal novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (*TCI* henceforward) by Mark Haddon (2004), which features a first-person teenage narrator, Christopher, who suffers from Asperger’s.¹ With his exceptional skill as a writer, Haddon enables readers to enter the intricate mind of his character by

¹ Asperger’s Syndrome is “a developmental disorder that affects a child’s ability to socialize and communicate effectively with others” (Anderson, 2008), and it did not become standardized as a diagnosis until the early 1990s. It was popularized by Raymond, Dustin Hoffman’s famous character in the film *Rainman*, who suffered from a similar condition.
means of a text of a highly multimodal nature, deploying typographical experiments, footnotes, appendices, lists, maps, graphs, drawings, pictures, photos, diagrams, mathematical equations, and the facsimile representation of handwriting, posters and signs.

**Multimodality** in fiction as recently studied by Hallet (2009), Gibbons (2012), and Maziarczyk (2011; 2012) among others is the phenomenon shared by those novels which “feature a multitude of semiotic modes in the communication and progression of their narratives” (Gibbons, 2012: 420). Multimodal stories—also called *visual texts*—are those fictional texts which purposefully subvert graphic and typographical conventions by means of the introduction of various *semiotic resources* which are devices belonging to the verbal, non-verbal, or combinations of verbal and non-verbal modes. This work will aim at accounting for the diverse and significant ways in which the strategic inclusion of various semiotic resources operates in Haddon’s novel.

Doing away with the dichotomy word/image in order to approach the graphic surface—“the layout of the page of a text” (White, 2005: 6)—in *TCI* enables readers to think of the novel as working in a similar fashion graphic novels do: rendering the construction of meaning from the imbrications of verbal and non-verbal means. Hirsch speaks of the comic book *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) as having words functioning as images and images asking to be read as much as seen, borrowing Phelan’s concept of *biocularity* [sic] to assert that comics are biocular texts par excellence, as they ask “to read back and forth between images and words,” revealing “the visuality and thus the materiality of words and the discursivity and narrativity of images” (Hirsch, 2004: 1213). Similarly, Haddon recurrently reminds readers of the visual nature of printed words by his use of bold type and different fonts and his nonconventional use of the space available on the page while shifting from text to image to text again, resorting to a combination of the verbal and the non-verbal to unfold his narrative. The exploitation of letter writing and chapter labeling as well as the introduction of footnotes, pictorial devices, and scientific and academic discourses in *TCI* are some of those semiotic resources which visually contribute to the narrative and to character development in unique and vital ways.

In the combination of semiotic resources, Haddon achieves an internal logic that intermittently plays with the foregrounding of the materiality of the text and with the creation of suspension of disbelief, where conventions which are challenged are naturalized in order to be broken again, in a game readers take part in, and where the mimetic (White, 2005) and the self-reflexive (McHale, 1987) go hand in hand, sometimes functioning in the same device. In this respect, the presentation of Mrs. Boone’s letters sent to her son Christopher is a case in point. On the one hand, they display certain graphic features which differentiate them from the rest of the text: they appear entirely in bold and italics, and they are plagued with spelling...