

Shanti Arts Publishing Hanging Punctuation

This is a question I hear a lot: “Why are the quotation marks sticking out into the margin?”

The answer: “They should be.”

This practice of extending punctuation into the margin if text edges are set to flush is called [hanging punctuation](#) or [optical margin alignment](#). Prior to digital typography, this was a common practice applied by experienced typographers whose sole job was to set type. In the digital age, this practice became quite difficult to apply in word processing, desktop typesetting, or webpage development. So people aren’t used to seeing it any more. In many cases, it is still difficult to apply. Book design software, however, has developed ways to apply hanging punctuation automatically.

The advantage of hanging punctuation is that **text** lines up correctly. For example . . .

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to overhear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to press his friend to join it.

“Come, Darcy,” said he, “I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.”

“I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room, whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.”

“I would not be so fastidious as you are,” cried Bingley, “for a kingdom! Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life, as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty.”

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For visual quality, we use hanging punctuation in our publications.