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Context Breaks

Context breaks denote a break in the continuity of the narrative. It represents a shift in thought, time, location, or similar in a work of fiction or non-fiction. These changes are typically represented by a large blank space between paragraphs, which sometimes including asterisms and other decorations (traditionally when the shift occurs immediately at the bottom of a print page where it might not be apparent).

Often images are used to represent context breaks. Images are a suboptimal way to indicate a context change because they carry no semantic information. Alt Text could be used to indicate context change, but it doesn't provide for a uniform reading experience.

Although not ideal, our solution is to replace context breaks with three asterisks *** (using Normal style, i.e., no need to centre-align) in the e-text document. The asterism is a traditional way to indicate minor breaks in text. (In HTML5, the <hr> tag is used to indicate a thematic paragraph-level break in text)

Sometimes decorative breaks come right before or after a new section (heading). In these cases, we do not need to replace it, rather we can just remove it entirely since the headings imply thematic changes themselves.

Example of a context break before a heading

Example of a context break

Types of context breaks

Q & A

Q: I'm wondering about alignment and spacing. The poet in the book I'm editing (Silvija) makes use of left and right justification at some points in the book. Should I align the text as the poet did or stick to right justification only? Also, the book contains a lot of white space (poems are on separate pages). Should I add page breaks in this case? Finally, I just want to verify that the slash ('/') that is used in poetry should remain as written or changed somehow for conversion into DAISY? Thanks!

A: Poetry is a controversial area of ebook production :) NNELS takes the approach of using left justification for all our documents. For some people, text justification may present readability issues. Extended spaces between words and sometimes letters within words can create spaces of white that can visually dominate the text. If you use screen magnification then magnifying these spaces of white, in particular the space in between words, can increase the need for scrolling beyond what would be required if text was aligned to one side.

You can delete all empty pages as we don't have to worry about retaining the original page numbers in this work. We can still put each poem on a separate page.

And yes, do use all the original punctuation. TTS is good at reading punctuation. If you're curious how TTS can read text, you can enable the built-in dictation software on your iOS (VoiceOver) or Windows. Keep in mind that TTS software tend to differ Screenreaders.

Q: If a book uses 2 different types of breaks, what should our approach be?

A: NNELS replaces all breaks with 3 asterisks.

Q: Truth & Honour is using extra spaces between paragraphs in place of decorative breaks. Should I still treat it as a normal decorative break?

A: Yes.

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Last update: **2018/08/17 05:06**