

Invisible Cities Imitation

Now I shall tell of the city of Papillion. Just a little short of ten miles northeast of Omaha, Papillion lays in its own little secret suburbia. Here lies Papio creek, Sump Memorial library, Shadow Lake Towne Center, Kajoma's, Brownies, nostalgia. Riddled with fresh families seeking new beginnings, Papillion radiates comfort and content. The streets stuffed with ranch style houses, paint eroding off the woodwork, old furnaces buzzing, roofs seeping, door hinges screeching, but still home to many, the bliss of childhood. Men of the house pick weeds from their yards, yearning for perfection, as they meticulously compete with their fellow male neighbors for the most manicured lawn. Women chase their barefoot toddlers down the driveways, each step quickening with each sight of the child's blackened sole. Children's playsets melodize together while the rusted metal chains of the swings desperately grip the wooden bar above and carry their child higher. The children squeal as they each battle one another to see who can launch themselves the closest to heaven. On late summer nights the teenagers of Papillion tip toe around their squeaky floorboards and swallow the syrupy humid air into a mystery world of indulgence and delinquency. There they drink, dance, and disobey. Splitting Papillion right down the middle is Papio creek and with it, it declares the decades long high school rivalry between Papillion's older seasoned north side, and newer inexperienced south side. In addition to severing the city in half, the creek carries the history of the city in its currents. So no member of the community forgets what built this city.

Invisible Cities Annotation

Syntax in *Invisible Cities*

One thing I have struggled with when writing fiction in the past, is changing up the syntax within each of my sentences. I tend to worry that my sentences are not grammatically correct and are either incomplete or run-ons. This wariness forces a lot of my sentences to have the same kind of structure and eventually make my paragraphs start to sound monotonous. In Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* however, he goes against the grain and steers clear from normal syntax. Instead, he weaves sentences together with many commas and lists out item after item within the cities to help romanticize what he is describing.

Not only does the lengthy syntax in this book help the author successfully develop a charming cadence, but it also allows him to paint an accurate picture of the city he is describing in a very natural way. Calvino writes, "at certain hours, in certain places along the street, you see opening before you the hint of something mistakable, rare, perhaps magnificent..." (Calvino, 68). By using these sort of long run-on sentences it is like we are hearing Marco's thoughts at the same time he is thinking of them himself. By doing this it not only builds repertoire between the reader and Marco, it also makes it easier for the reader to picture themselves as Marco exploring each of these cities for the first time too.

Reading Calvino has helped me understand that sometimes lengthy sentences are okay to use, that is if they have been done so artfully. His descriptive syntax in *Invisible Cities* helps him describe these cities in a fairy-tale, yet seemingly accurate way. The level of descriptiveness he uses within each sentence allows readers to see a particular city in a very idyllic way, but the speed at which each sentence is read also helps readers to feel like they are seeing everything right there for themselves too. Since reading this, I hope to be able to use this same kind of drawn-out syntax in my own work, in order to achieve this same kind of literary accomplishment.