



## Song Analysis: Maximo Park - Books for Boxes

*Night falls and towns become circuit boards  
We can beat the sun as long as we keep moving  
From the air, stadium lights stand out like flares  
And all I know is that you're sat here right next to me*

*We rarely see warning signs in the air we breathe  
Right now I feel each and every fragment*

*This paper trail leads right back to you  
You say you need me to step outside  
You spent the evening unpacking books from boxes  
You passed me up so as not to break a promise  
Scattered polaroids and sprinkled words around your collar in the long run  
Said you knew that this would happen*

*Well this is something new but it turns out it was borrowed too  
Why does every let down have to be so thin?  
Rain explodes at the moment that the cab door closed  
I feel the weight upon your kiss ambiguous*

*You have to leave, I appreciate that  
But I hate when conversation slips out of our grasp*

*Chorus:  
You spent the evening unpacking books from boxes  
You passed me up so as not to break a promise  
Scattered polaroids and sprinkled words around your collar in the long run  
Said you knew that this would happen*

*Two bodies in motion  
This is a matter of fact  
It wasn't built to last*

*Two bodies in motion  
This is a matter of fact  
It wasn't built to last*

*You spent the evening unpacking books from boxes  
You passed me up so as not to break a promise  
Scattered polaroids and sprinkled words around your collar in the long run  
Said you knew that this would happen*

*The pounding rain continued it's bleak fall  
And we decided just to write after all, after all*

### Paul Smith's Accent

Is he a Manc? A Liverpudlian? A Geordie, then? No! He's from Billingham, according to Wikipedia. Billingham lies in the Teesside area close to Newcastle. It explains the uncertainty. The Teesside accent has features from both the Liverpudlian accent as well as the Geordie accent. It is confusing, because Liverpool lies in the North West of England and Teesside and Newcastle in the North East.

On first hearing Paul Smith singing, it is by no means easy to figure out where he's from. He is definitely Northern. In words like <back> and <that> the PALM vowel is replaced by the TRAP vowel. This TRAP vowel itself differs in pronunciation from RP. The vowel is shorter and has moved in the direction of both [a:] and [e]. It is interesting to note the effect it has where a [t] follows this vowel sound in the song. The [t] is somewhere between pre-glottalisation and pre-aspiration.

The vowel sound in both <does> and <but> differs as well. Instead of the STRUT vowel, he uses a stressed SCHWA sound [ɪ]. It isn't a NURSE vowel but not a SCHWA either. These vowels are a feature in both the Mancunian accent as well as the Liverpudlian accent.

His pronunciation of words like <paper>, <rain> and <break> are closer to the Geordie accent. The diphthong in <paper>, <rain> and <break> is the same as in RP, both use [eɪ]. However the realisation of the diphthongs differs from RP. In the Geordie and Teesside accents, they are what linguists call 'heavily diphthongised'. In this case, both [e] and [ɪ] and the glide in between are each almost fully realised. Another feature that is common to both Teesside and Geordie is the pronunciation of <ng>. In both these accents this is realised as [ŋ]; whereas in the Liverpudlian accent this is realised as [ŋɪ]. One other typical northern feature is the merging of the FOOT and GOOSE vowel into [ʊ].

If you listen carefully, you'll hear a difference in pronunciation between the slow and the fast parts of the song. This might be Paul Smith trying to clean up his accent; which can be difficult in the faster parts. Whether or not this is a conscious choice on the part of Paul Smith we will never know for certain. By all means this is a great song for lovers of northern accents.

*By Allan Riepsaame*

<http://www.une.edu.au/langnet/definitions/geordie.html>  
<http://howgoodisthis.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/this-guy-is-brilliant>



## On Maximo Park

Debuting in early 2005 in the music industry, Maximo Park became an immediate success in the UK. Their first album, *A Certain Trigger*, produced four top 20 singles on the British charts and granted them a spot on play lists all around the world. Now, it is time for this group of five to take over our tiny little country.

The band, formed in Newcastle in 2001, started off without the current lead singer, Paul Smith. Smith was brought in on a recommendation of a friend, when bass player Archis Tiku decided to not be the frontman. Smith did not have any real vocal training, nor had he ever properly sung, but after one rehearsal the other members new this was the right man for the job.

Their second cd, *Our Earthly Pleasures*, was released earlier this year and on this cd the band tried to do things different than on the first one. According to lead singer Smith, the new album sounds "like [the] Smashing Pumpkins crossed with the Smiths." To create this sound the band teamed up with producer Gil Norton, who previously cut albums with the Foo Fighters and the Pixies.

With Smith's strong vocals, Lukas Woolers' melodically apt piano playing, Tom English' and Tiku's adventurous rhythms on the drums and bass and Duncan Lloyd's sharp guitar riffs, the band stands out amidst the numerous Brit Pop bands of our day. They emphasize individuality in the appearance of front man Smith and are musically not constricted by limitations. Using a subtle melancholy in many of their songs, Maximo Park is a band which is not easily forgotten or to be ignored.

Want more Maximo Park?? Check out their official website on:

[www.maximopark.com](http://www.maximopark.com)

Or check out their official myspace:

<http://www.myspace.com/maximopark>

## Fresh melancholy

With its crisp melody and yet rather melancholic lyrics, the clear topic of *Books From Boxes* is that of a break up between two people. Obviously, the split is fresh. This becomes evident through the "unpacking books from boxes", which could refer to moving boxes. "To pass someone up" means to reject someone. In the song, the relationship has come to an end, and the singer's lover has decided to move out.

Just as a relationship has a beginning and a possible definite ending, the song moves chronologically from intro to bridge, ended by the fading synthesizer loops. The guitar chords double the sense of ups and downs in a relationship, as this is exactly what they do in the melody of the song.

To enhance the bitterness of the song, the opening words "night falls" refer to darkness. The image of a "circuit board" is used as a metaphor for the state of the relationship: it may become mechanic and without spontaneity. After a while, the circuit board 'dies' out. It may also refer to the image of a city from the sky when viewed from the sky by night. All of the tiny spots of light resemble a circuit board.

"Stadium lights" obviously hints to the "warning signs in the air we breathe," as the sense of warning signs lies in the objects themselves.

The "scattered polaroids" in the lyrics indicate "this paper trail" which "leads right back to you". The "sprinkled words around your collar" then are a reminiscence of the speaker's relationship.

"You have to leave, I appreciate that/But I hate when conversation slips out of our grasp": to 'let something slip out of (your) grasp' means that you let yourself get carried away with your emotions or behaviour. The speaker's lover says she has to leave and he obviously refuses to accept this, putting it into words in such a way that is un-

acceptable for her. Perhaps the couple split over a fight?

The final two sentences – "The pounding rain continued it's bleak fall/And we decided just to write after all" – complement the dreary finale of the speaker's relationship: no more face to face contact.



By Judith Laanen



## Philological Song Analysis

For those of you who love studying English, and discussing your newest nerdy findings (I know many students who seem perfectly normal, sociable people, until you start a conversation on their favourite topic, and their eyes just light up... If you are one of them: basically it means you choose the right studies). Anyway, these pieces of info on some of the words in the song are the result of my newest nerdy findings, some of the obsolete meanings of words from the song. I guess knowing about obsolete meanings makes me feel I have a better understanding of (the logic of) the language.

First of all there is 'nightfall.' You all know this means "the onset of night," but did you know that the obsolete 'night-falls' indicates fruit that have fallen off a tree at night, similar to wind-falls, which have fallen due to the wind?

Interesting as well, is that our current meaning of 'town' was preceded by the now obsolete meaning(s) of "field, garden, yard, court," which seems illogical as a village has always been considered larger than that, and is now assumed smaller than a town. However, this is not the only difference between the two: according to the OED it is possible to have a village larger

than a town, as long as its organisation and administration are simpler. Compounds involving the OE version of 'town' which is OE 'tún,' seem to reveal a connection to the Dutch 'tuin:' "*tún-cressa* garden cress, *tún-melde*, *Atriplex hortensis*; *æppel-tún* apple orchard, *cyric-tún* churchyard, *déor-tún* deer-park, *gærs-tún* meadow, *lic-tún* graveyard, *wyrt-tún* vegetable garden."

'Stadium' has an interesting original meaning as well: it is "an ancient Greek and Roman measure of length, varying according to time and place, but most commonly equal to 600 Greek or Roman feet, or one-eighth of a Roman mile. (In the English bible rendered by *furlong*.)" Another obsolete meaning I liked was for the verb 'to sprinkle.' In present day English it means "to strew thinly or lightly," but it used to have the meanings "to sparkle" and "to wriggle; to dart quickly." If pronounced in a Dutch manner, 'sprinkle' seems to be a combination of the Dutch words 'springen' and 'hinkelen,' but suggesting this has anything to do with sprinkle's obsolete meaning would be practicing folk philology...

By Merel Mookhoek

All concrete information on the obsolete meanings comes from the Online Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, direct quotes included.

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