



Song Analysis

In *The Angler* we want to represent the four sections of the English department, and we have chosen to do this by means of approaching a songtext in different ways: from the different points of view of the various subjects.

You will find here an introductory essay on Lily Allen for Language Acquisition; information on Lily Allen's accent for Linguistics; an interpretation of the lyrics for Literature; and the etymologies of some selected keywords of the song for Philology plus our own little experiment with ECCO.

On Lily Allen

Where did that girl come from?

The 21 year old London singer was a troublesome girl. She went to thirteen different schools before age 14 and then went of to boarding school from which she ran away. "It was obvious I didn't like authority", she writes on her official website.

Lily Allen left school, aged 15, knowing that she wanted to get into music. Because of all the moving around she felt lonely and "[m]usic became a lifeline" to her. Her parent's record collection containing punk, ska and reggae were her main influence.

These influences include Blondie, Kate Bush, Prince, Eminem, but she also has a liking for more obscure names. "[M]ost of the music I listen to is by outsider figures, which is where I feel happiest."

She was signed to Parlophone in December 2005 and her star rose to great heights, mainly on the internet. What makes her different from other artists in the charts today are her lyrics. She says: "A lot of artists [...] are boring singers who don't say anything. [But] [w]ith the kind of music I do you have to be direct and quite literal." Her lyrics are most important to her, because she does not play an instrument. So, she focuses on vocal melodies and lyrical flow.

The thing she dreads about the music industry, though, is to be put in a scene. "I don't want to be part of a scene... the whole idea of that makes me feel sick..."

For more information check: <http://www.lilyallenmusic.com/>
or <http://www.myspace.com/lilymusic>.

By Maaïke van de Sande

Lily Allen - LDN

Riding through the city on my bike all day
Cause the filth took away my license
It doesn't get me down and I feel ok
Cause the sights that I'm seeing are priceless

Everything seems to look as it should
But I wonder what goes on behind doors
A fella looking dapper, but he's sittin with a slapper
Then I see it's a pimp and his crack whore

You might laugh you might frown
Walkin' round London town

Chorus

Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else

When you look with your eyes
Everything seems nice
But if you look twice
you can see it's all lies

There was a little old lady, who was walkin
down the road
She was struggling with bags from Tesco
There were people from the city havin lunch in
the park
I believe that it's called al fresco
Then a kid came along to offer a hand

But before she had time to accept it
hits her over the head, doesn't care if she's
dead
Cause he's got all her jewellery and wallet

You might laugh you might frown
walkin round London town

Chorus

Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else

When you look with your eyes
Everything seems nice
But if you look twice
you can see it's all lies

Life, that's city life, yeah that's city life, that's
city life (repeat)

Close Examination

The striking title first of all - 'LDN' - is text language for 'London'. So clearly, this song has something to do with London, capital city of England. To be precise, there are two points that Lily Allen wants to make clear, of which the first can be formulated as follows: it is not all gold that glitters. The second one is closely related to the first, namely 'that's (city) life'.

Lily Allen makes these points by picking out some scenes that you might see when "walking around in London town". For instance in the first couplet, she is 'riding through the city' on her bike, because she lost her driving license to the cops ("the filth"). However, she feels okay ("it doesn't get me down and I feel OK"), because she sees "priceless" normal ("everything seems to look as it should") scenes when she looks around. Still, she wonders "what goes on behind doors". She sees a portly ("dapper") looking man ("fella"), who is sitting with a prostitute ("slapper"). When she takes a closer look, she sees it is actually a procurer ("pimp") with a "crack whore", a less rosy sight. But she is not shocked, and reacts laconically with 'that's life'; "you might laugh, you might frown" when walking around in the streets London.

In the second couplet, we see another side of London. A little old lady walks "down the road", struggling with her groceries. In the park the old lady crosses, people were picnicking ("having lunch" "al fresco"). "Then a kid came along", who supposedly wanted to help the old lady carrying her bags. "But before she had time to accept it" he robbed her, leaving her behind dead or alive. Why should he care? He has got "all her jewellery and wallet", and that is more important. Now, that's true city life.

The chorus's most important point is that it is not all gold that glitters. The "sun is in the sky" and why would you want to "be anywhere else". Everything seems nice at first glance, but when you take a better look ("look twice"), you can see it is all a lie, it is all a façade. But that does not matter much, because once again she repeats "that's city life".

By Tessa Obbens

Etymologies

Dapper. Definition: "of persons: neat, trim, smart, spruce in dress or appearance (Formerly appreciative; now more or less depreciative, with associations of littleness or pettiness)."

Etymology: not present in OE or ME; apparently adopted from a Low German (probably Flemish) language.

Crack whore. Definition: "(also *crack ho*) slang (orig. in African-American usage), a prostitute addicted to crack cocaine."

Etymology: this meaning is relatively new (mentioned in the draft addition of 2004). The complete etymology is too elaborate to repeat here.

Pimp. Definition: "Originally: a person who arranges opportunities for (illicit) sexual intercourse; a procurer. Now: a man who takes a proportion of the earnings of a prostitute, usually in return for arranging clients, providing protection, etc."

Etymology: Unknown, Pimpnel and the German "Pimf" have been suggested, but both present semantic problems.

We searched the ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online) site for "pimp," and one of our results was the nineteenth century edition of Allen Ramsay's *The tea-table miscellany: a collection of choice song. Scots and English.* By Allan Ramsay. (Dublin, 1794.):

"The Pimp and Politician Parallels"

IN pimps and politicians

The genius is the same:

Both raise their own conditions

On others guilt and shame:

With a tongue well tipt with lies

Each the want of pa[r]ts supplies

And with the heart that's all disguise

Keeps his schemes unknown.

Seducing as the devil,

They play the tempter's part,

And have, when most they're civil,

Most mischief in their heart.

Each a secret commerce drives,

First corrupts and then connives,

And by his neighbour's vices thrives,

For they are all his own.

By Merel Mookhoek,
with help of the OED and ECCO.