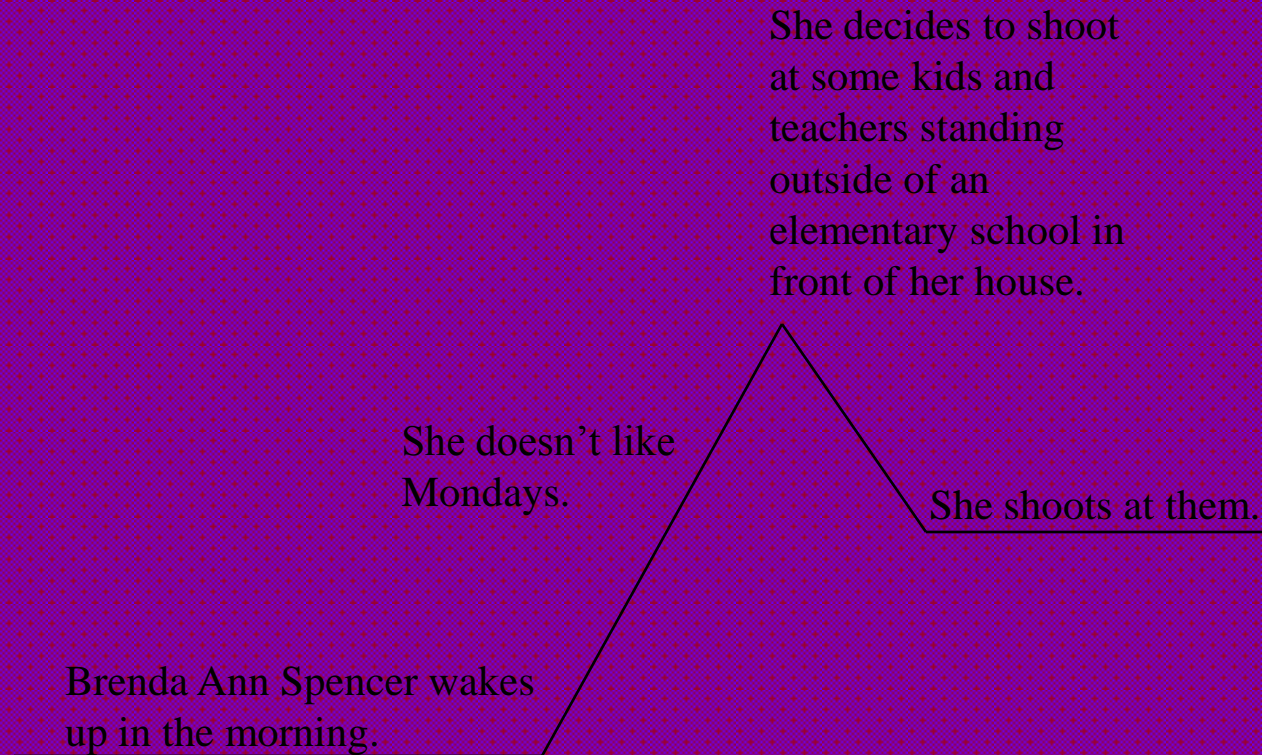




Poetry Approaches

I Don't Like Mondays-Bob Geldof
Cicely Babb

The Novelistic/Dramatic Approach



Contd.

- Speaker: Bob Geldof
- Setting: Cleveland Elementary School, in San Diego and in Atlanta where Geldof was being interviewed when he heard the news
- Protagonist: Brenda Ann Spencer
- Antagonist: Mondays
- Events: Brenda shoots at an elementary school
- Goal: Liven up Brenda's Monday
- Final outcome: She is arrested for murder

The Realistic Approach

Bob Geldof wrote this poem telling the story of the first high profile school shooting in the US, the '79 Cleveland Elementary School shooting. This relates to my life in that I go to school every day. No one likes Mondays, but hopefully no one at my school will try anything like that. Since 1979 there have been more school shootings, each as terrible. It is upsetting for anyone to hear about, and I hope I am never faced with anything like it.

The Thematic Approach

Bob Geldof, in writing “I Don’t Like Mondays”, is making a statement. In talking about an incident in which a troubled teenager shot several people, he is saying that it is wrong to kill. “What reason do you need to die?” is the question raised. “I don’t like Mondays” is the answer.

The Allusion Approach

I could not find any allusion in this poem.

The Musical Approach

The sound produces a completely different feel than the meaning of the song does. The tune sounds almost happy, which is why it is such a big hit. Bob Geldof used a more peppy tune in his poem “I Don’t Like Mondays” to illustrate how light hearted Brenda Ann Spencer was when she told police and reporters exactly why she decided to open fire on an elementary school. The song has a serious meaning, but the tune makes it more versatile.

The English Teacher Approach

The silicon chip inside her head
Gets switched to overload
And nobody's gonna go to school today
She's going to make them stay at home
And daddy doesn't understand it
He always said she was good as gold
And he can see no reason
'Cause there are no reasons
What reason do you need to be shown?

Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
I want to shoot
The whole day down

The telex machine is kept so clean
As it types to a w w
And mother feels so shocked
Father's world is rocked
And their to
Their own little girl
Sweet 16 ain't that peachy keen
No, it ain't so neat to admit defeat
They can see no reasons
'Cause there are no reasons
What reason do you need?
Oh

Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
I want to shoot
The whole day down
All the playing's stopped in the playground
now
She wants to play with her toys a while
And school's out early and soon we'll be
learning
And the lesson today is how to die
And then the bullhorn crackles
And the captain gackles
With the problems and the how's and why's
And he can see no reasons
'cause there are no reasons
What reason do you need to die

The silicon chip ...

Tell me why
I don't like Mondays
I want to shoot
The whole day down

Key

Underlined: All figurative language

Pink: Alliteration

Purple: Onomatopoeia

Periwinkle: Personification

Salmon: Simile

Teal: Metaphor

Maroon: Idiom

The Significant Event Approach

This poem was written when author Bob Geldof was in the US for an interview in 1979. He heard from the telex machine that 16 year old Brenda Ann Spencer had opened fire on an elementary school in San Diego. She killed the principal and head custodian and wounded eight children and one police officer. For hours police negotiated with her until she surrendered. When authorities asked her why she did it she replied, “I don’t like Mondays, this livens up the day.” Geldof, hearing this, was shocked. That day, within hours, he wrote the song “I Don’t Like Mondays”.



The Art History Approach

Images: Technological, family, newsroom, schoolyard

Symbolism: The technological image is symbolic, comparing a 16 year old girl to a machine. The schoolyard symbolizes innocence.

Effects: The image of technology affects the main character in the poem, making her seem machine-like, and creepy. The family scene shows a different side of her, referring to “daddy”. This makes her seem more human. The newsroom image just shows the reader how Geldof came to hear of this incident. The schoolyard is a very important image. The reader pictures children laughing and playing, only to be shot at.

The Structural Approach

There is a shift from the end of each verse going into the chorus; each “tell me why” is almost shouted. It sounds demanding, and the reply, “I don’t like Mondays... I want to shoot the whole day down” is sung more like the rest of the song. The purpose of doing this is to show the question posed to Spencer, to which she replied, “I don’t like Mondays.” The tone of this section in the song helps tell the story, and shows how preposterous the idea of killing someone simply because “[you] don’t like Mondays” really is.

There is another shift in the last verse. It is softer, and the words “how to die” are said more dramatically. This emphasizes the fact that people died in this tragedy, and creates a tone of urgency.

Also, there is a little bit of a shift in each verse with “and he can see no reasons”. Every “no reasons” is said like “tell me why” emphasizing the fact that there really are no reasons. For the “what reasons do you need”, “...need to be shown”, and “...do you need to die” there is a shift showing sadness. The last word leads in to the “tell me why” creating a more tragic tone, although the melody doesn’t sound as sad throughout.