

A close-up portrait of Miley Cyrus with a wide, enthusiastic smile, showing her teeth. She has short blonde hair and is wearing a large, elaborate ice cream cone on her head. The cone is topped with a swirl of white vanilla ice cream and is heavily decorated with various colorful toppings, including pink and blue candies, a large pink sequined bow, and a small chocolate bunny. The background is a bright yellow starburst shape.

IS MILEY CYRUS OUT OF CONTROL?

Or is her outrageous behavior nothing more than an attempt to sell more albums?

Two authors face off on the debate. You decide who wins!





The transition from child star to adult celeb is often rocky.

Miley Cyrus has everything a girl could want. She has millions of dollars. Her last album debuted at No. 1. She leads a glamorous life filled with parties, photo shoots, and expensive clothes. And everywhere she goes, hordes of adoring fans follow. So why would someone who has **so much** act so . . . *awfully*? The fact is, Miley Cyrus is totally out of control.

Once famous as Disney's Hannah Montana, Miley was a beloved role model for kids, especially girls, across America. Now she seems to enjoy being the exact opposite. She brags about doing drugs and makes raunchy gestures on national TV. In 2011, her father, country star Billy Ray Cyrus, said her behavior bothered him so much that he wished he'd never let her play Hannah Montana at all.

Miley's dad isn't the only one who is upset. Many fans and their parents felt betrayed by the R-rated nature of

her recent tour. The backlash was so bad that, according to rumor, some **venues** on her tour considered canceling her show. Then there were the Video Music Awards last August, where she had a homeless teen accept her award. She claimed to be spreading awareness of homelessness, but the stunt came off as bizarre and offensive: Many thought that Miley was **exploiting** the teen for the sake of some tweets.

Miley's crazy behavior is not surprising. Stars face pressures few of us can understand. Everything they do—shopping, eating out, taking a walk—is photographed, blogged about, and tweeted. Their heartbreak is splashed across gossip sites like TMZ and Just Jared as entertainment. ("Liam Hemsworth Disses Miley Cyrus: 'I'm Much Happier Without Her'" read one cruel tabloid headline after the pair broke off their engagement.)

All that attention is enough to make anyone crack, but it's especially hard on child stars as they begin to

grow up. Look at Lindsay Lohan, a once-promising young actress who now struggles with substance abuse and can hardly get work. Then there's Justin Bieber, who lately is as famous for acting out as he is for his music.

Some say that Miley is different, that everything she does is part of a plan to sell her music. There is a saying that "there is no such thing as bad publicity." This appears to be Miley's strategy: She stays in the news by being more and more shocking. But just because her scandalous behavior might be intentional doesn't mean she is in control. She's set herself up to constantly outdo herself—to be more wild, more over the top.

Besides, how can anyone who parades around in ridiculous outfits, who is willing to make a fool of herself by sticking out her tongue and being gross, be in control of anything?

Another question: Where will it stop?

The answer is too frightening to consider. ●

YES!
And we're worried about her.

BY EMMA HENDERSON



Miley, Lady Gaga, (left) and Madonna (right) carefully manage their public images.

was doing drugs.) Her last touring show was so over the top that her record label was flooded with demands to cancel it. ("You can't say I didn't warn you," Miley tweeted unapologetically.) And then there is the tongue thing. She sticks it out. *All the time*. And yes, it's gross.

But being shocking is not the same as being out of control. In fact, Miley's outrageousness is the exact opposite of being out of control. It's a brilliantly orchestrated plan that she's carrying out to perfection.

Miley was the child star we all knew as Hannah Montana, the cute kid on the Disney Channel. As she got older, she faced a problem: She didn't want to end up like so many other teen celebrities whose stars faded as they aged. To be **relevant** as an adult entertainer, she needed the world to see her in an entirely new light.

That is why she reinvented herself as a carefree boundary-pushing superstar. In that role, she is very convincing. Rather than becoming the next Justin Bieber or Amanda Bynes, who have never seemed at ease in their grown-up selves, Miley never seems like she's trying too hard. Whether wagging her tongue or

prancing around in a sparkly outfit, she always looks like she's having tons of fun.

Miley's genius is in how she uses controversy. Controversy might seem like a bad thing, but in Miley's case, it's the point. The more headlines she gets for her **antics**, the bigger her "brand" and the more times her songs are downloaded. After all, her goal is not to be a role model. It's to be a wealthy, popular entertainer. By that standard, she is a smashing success.

Miley's goal isn't just to sell records, though. As Hannah Montana, Miley was hugely influential. Fans copied her fashions, decorated their rooms with Miley **swag**, and knew all Miley's songs. Now, as an adult, Miley wants to be influential again; she wants to be a cultural **phenomenon**.

The fact is, Miley is never going to become a dental **hygienist** or a lawyer. Nor is she talented

enough to become a movie star. She's an international brand. The continued success of that brand requires her to continue to shock her fans. Who cares if 706 million people watched her video only because it's so ridiculous? She earns money because it's being watched, not because it's great. Sometimes her power to shock is even used for good: She stole the show at the VMAs earlier this year when she brought a homeless teen as her date. She was attempting to shine a light on the problem of homelessness in America.

So go ahead. Complain all you want about Miley. It's exactly what she wants you to do. ●

NO!
She's a total genius.

BY MATT MURPHY

Miley Cyrus has done a lot of outrageous things lately. She jumped out of a plane (with a parachute) during a *Rolling Stone* interview. She was photographed doing what seemed to be drugs. (She later denied that she

JESSE GRANT/WIREIMAGE (YOUNG MILEY); ERIK PENDZICH/DEMOTIX/CORBIS (ADULT MILEY); NEIL NICKFORD/FILMMAGIC (LADY GAGA); SUNSET BOULEVARD/CORBIS (MADONNA)

SCAVENGER HUNT

Directions: Hunt through each article to find the following elements.

1. Underline the **central idea**, or **central claim**.
2. Put a star next to two pieces of **supporting evidence**.
3. Circle the **counterargument**.
4. Put a double star next to the writer's **rebuttal**.

Now YOU decide. Who made the stronger argument?