**Sinead O'Connor's letter to Miley Cyrus, October 3 2013**

Dear Miley,

I wasn't going to write this letter, but today i've been dodging phone calls from various newspapers who wished me to remark upon your having said in Rolling Stone your "Wrecking Ball" video was designed to be similar to the one for "Nothing Compares" ... So this is what I need to say ... And it is said in the spirit of motherliness and with love.

I am extremely concerned for you that those around you have led you to believe, or encouraged you in your own belief, that it is in any way "cool" to be naked and licking sledgehammers in your videos. It is in fact the case that you will obscure your talent by allowing yourself to be pimped, whether it's the music business or yourself doing the pimping.

Nothing but harm will come in the long run, from allowing yourself to be exploited, and it is absolutely NOT in ANY way an empowerment of yourself or any other young women, for you to send across the message that you are to be valued (even by you) more for your sexual appeal than your obvious talent.

I am happy to hear I am somewhat of a role model for you and I hope that because of that you will pay close attention to what I am telling you.
The music business doesn't give a sh- about you, or any of us. They will prostitute you for all you are worth, and cleverly make you think its what YOU wanted.. and when you end up in rehab as a result of being prostituted, "they" will be sunning themselves on their yachts in Antigua, which they bought by selling your body and you will find yourself very alone.

None of the men oggling you give a sh- about you either, do not be fooled. Many's the woman mistook lust for love. If they want you sexually that doesn't mean they give a f-- about you. All the more true when you unwittingly give the impression you don't give much of a f-- about yourself. And when you employ people who give the impression they don't give much of a f-- about you either. No one who cares about you could support your being pimped.. and that includes you yourself.

Yes, I'm suggesting you don't care for yourself. That has to change. You ought be protected as a precious young lady by anyone in your employ and anyone around you, including you. This is a dangerous world. We don't encourage our daughters to walk around naked in it because it makes them prey for animals and less than animals, a distressing majority of whom work in the music industry and its associated media.

You are worth more than your body or your sexual appeal. The world of showbiz doesn't see things that way, they like things to be seen the other way, whether they are magazines who want you on their cover, or whatever.. Don't be under any illusions.. ALL of them want you because they're making money off your youth and your beauty.. which they could not do except for the fact your youth makes you blind to the evils of show business. If you have an innocent heart you can't recognise those who do not.

I repeat, you have enough talent that you don't need to let the music business make a prostitute of you. You shouldn't let them make a fool of you either. Don't think for a moment that any of them give a flying f-- about you. They're there for the money.. we're there for the music. It has always been that way and it will always be that way. The sooner a young lady gets to know that, the sooner she can be REALLY in control.

You also said in Rolling Stone that your look is based on mine. The look I chose, I chose on purpose at a time when my record company were encouraging me to do what you have done. I felt I would rather be judged on my talent and not my looks. I am happy that I made that choice, not least because I do not find myself on the proverbial rag heap now that I am almost 47 yrs of age.. which unfortunately many female artists who have based their image around their sexuality, end up on when they reach middle age.

Real empowerment of yourself as a woman would be to in future refuse to exploit your body or your sexuality in order for men to make money from you. I needn't even ask the question.. I've been in the business long enough to know that men are making more money than you are from you getting naked. It's really not at all cool. And it's sending dangerous signals to other young women. Please in future say no when you are asked to prostitute yourself. Your body is for you and your boyfriend. It isn't for every spunk-spewing dirtbag on the net, or every greedy record company executive to buy his mistresses diamonds with.

As for the shedding of the Hannah Montana image.. whoever is telling you getting naked is the way to do that does absolutely NOT respect your talent, or you as a young lady. Your records are good enough for you not to need any shedding of Hannah Montana. She's waaaaaaay gone by now.. Not because you got naked but because you make great records.

Whether we like it or not, us females in the industry are role models and as such we have to be extremely careful what messages we send to other women. The message you keep sending is that it's somehow cool to be prostituted.. it's so not cool Miley.. it's dangerous. Women are to be valued for so much more than their sexuality. we aren't merely objects of desire. I would be encouraging you to send healthier messages to your peers.. that they and you are worth more than what is currently going on in your career. Kindly fire any motherf--er who hasn't expressed alarm, because they don't care about you.

**Vragen bij de brief van Sinead O’Connor**

1. Wat vindt Sinead O'Connor ervan dat Miley Cyrus haar clip als voorbeeld heeft genomen?
2. a) Wat is haar kritiek op Miley Cyrus en de muziekindustrie?

b) Ben je het met haar eens? Waarom (niet)?

1. Wat verstaat Sinead O'Connor onder empowerment van vrouwen, denk je?
2. Wat vind je van de manier waarop Sinead Miley aanspreekt?
3. Vertel hoe de feministen Simone de Beauvoir én Luce Irigaray op de brief van O’Connor zouden reageren.Laat in je antwoord zien dat je het verschil tussen De Beauvoir en Irigaray begrijpt.

AMANDA PALMER’S LETTER TO SINEAD O’CONNOR
(ingekort)

Dear Sinéad,

I love you. I grew up worshipping your music and your bold attitude and, especially, your refusal to sign up to the bullshit beauty standard. You were one of the few women rockstars that was clearly doing things her own way, and you inspired me to no end. I want to thank you for doing that. I listened to your stunning voice and your true, deep lyrics endlessly on my walkman, flipping the tape again, and again, then again, then again...and I know those ingredients still live and breathe inside me every time I write a song of my own. You shaped me.

I read your letter to Miley Cyrus this morning and I wanted to write back to you. I'm writing this on my cell phone in a plane on the way to Dallas, TX to play a benefit tonight for a group called Girls Rock Dallas...a local group that empowers young girls to become brave musicians. The timing is pretty wonderful and I want to talk to them all tonight about Miley and your letter.

(…)

Here's where I think you're off target. Miley is, from what I can gather, in charge of her own show. She's writing the plot and signing the checks, and although I think it's tempting to imagine her in the board room of label assholes and management, I don't think any of them masterminded her current plan to be a raging, naked, twerking sexpot. I think that's All Miley All The Way. Now, would these men ARGUE with her when she comes into the room and throws down her treatment to hop up naked on the proverbial (and literal) wrecking ball? Of course not. Sex sells. We all know it. Miley knows it better than anyone: swinging naked on a big metal ball simply gets you more hits than swinging on a big metal ball wearing clothes. We're mammals. LOOK BOOBS! And even more tantalizing: LOOK HANNAH MONTANA BOOBS! But none of this means that Miley is following anyone else's script. In fact, what I see is Miley desperately trying to write her own script; truly trying to be taken seriously (even if it’s in a nakedly playful way) by the standards of her own peers.

(…)

Do I want a whole generation of teenagers looking at Miley Cyrus to determine that the only way to get hits and hawk your music is to rip your clothes off and wiggle around as violently and loudly as possible? (And while we're at it - while weighing close to nothing and looking perfectly manicured without a single eyelash or molecule of mascara out of place even when a tear rolls down your face?)

Fuck no. But I don't want to tell them it's wrong, either, because like I said: the field has to encompass EVERYTHING. There's no way Miley is going to read your letter and turn around saying "holy shit, they've been taking advantage of me this whole time!" She's been taking advantage of herself, of her youth, her fame and her sexuality...and she knows it. We females all do this, to some extent, and we just want to feel like it's our hand on the joystick. Telling her that her team is to blame is telling her that she's not steering her own career and decisions, and I think she'll just feel patronized.

When I was about 15 (not inconsequentially, right around the time I was listening to your albums non-stop on my long walks to high school every morning), I started having fights with my mother every time I left for school. I'd decided to dress like an oversexed punk and my attire often consisted of sheer lingerie worn over ripped tights and Doc Martens. You remember. This was 1991. My mother would say: "Amanda Palmer, get back in the house and put some real clothes on. You look like a prostitute. I won't have my daughter walking around town like a harlot." (I swear to god, my mother actually used the word harlot. Bless.)

I would say: "It's my life fuck you I didn't ask to be born etc etc", grumble back into the house, and throw a flannel dress over my entire ensemble...which I would, of course, remove and stuff back into my bag the minute I got to school.

I know my mother was trying to protect me. She loved me. She didn't want me to fall into dangerous situations, she didn't want me to be ridiculed, she didn't want people to think badly of me. And often they did - the jocks all called me Freak and Lesbo in the halls. But I took it as almost a marker of success - I didn't want to belong to their club. I took the rolling eyeballs and raised eyebrows of my peers, teachers and parents as a sign that I was on the right track. It was my artist's uniform, and I was learning how to wear it with pride; I was figuring myself out.

(…)

I want to live in a world where the internal dialogue of a woman's brain has evolved to the point where a female performer can wear a sex-pot outfit and, instead of the all-too-common head-chatter chorus of "UNFAIR! MANIPULATED! WEAK! MANIPULATIVE! EVIL!", she dons her sexy costume and hears internal voices screaming "FAIR! POWERFUL! PLAYFUL! BRAVE! SEXY!" You know...you go girl. But not "you go girl and be manipulated by the man, or manipulate the men in your wake". just..."you go girl and wear whatever the fuck you want. And play smart."

I want to live in a world where WE as women determine what we wear and look like and play the game as our fancy leads us, army pants one minute and killer gown the next, where WE decide whether or not we're going to play games with the male gaze and the starry-eyed hard-ons that can make men so easy to manipulate. But seriously, let's all play the game together, with a wink and a nudge...so we don't hurt each other. If men and women don't have a constantly open dialogue about how we do and don't (or should and shouldn't) manipulate and play with each other, we all lose. We are all fragile humans with little time on this beautiful, sexually-charged, ecstatic planet. Let's share it to the fullest extent that we can and make the playing field for all of us the size of the whole earth.

In other words, let's give our young women the right weapons to fight with as they charge naked into battle, instead of ordering them to get back in the house and put some goddamn clothes on.

With immense respect,

Amanda Palmer

(…)

**Vragen bij de brief van Amanda Palmer**

1. Waarom bewondert Amanda Palmer Sinead O'Connor?
2. Op welke punten is Palmer het met O'Connor eens?
3. Wat vindt Palmer van de manier waarop Cyrus zichzelf laat zien in de media?
4. Wat verstaat Amanda Palmer onder empowerment van vrouwen?
5. Wat vind je van de manier waarop Palmer O'Connor aanspreekt?
6. Palmer schrijft:

“what I see is Miley desperately trying to write her own script,” en “Who says Miley can't flip the script anytime she wants?” En: “While it may be true that the live-fast-die-young sex-pot female pop stars are washed up and thrown on the "rag heap", like you say, wouldn't it be better if we changed the entire plot instead of dealing with it as it's been handed to us?”

Wat vind je van het idee dat je zelf schrijver bent van je eigen script? Waarom is dat belangrijk?

1. Wat bedoelt Palmer denk je met 'het hele plot veranderen, in plaats van ermee omgaan zoals het is'?

1. Leg aan de hand van de brief van Palmer het verschil uit tussen het differentiedenken van Irigaray en het feminisme van De Beauvoir.
2. Beargumenteer wie van de filosofes uit de vorige vraag het beste past bij de houding van Palmer?