

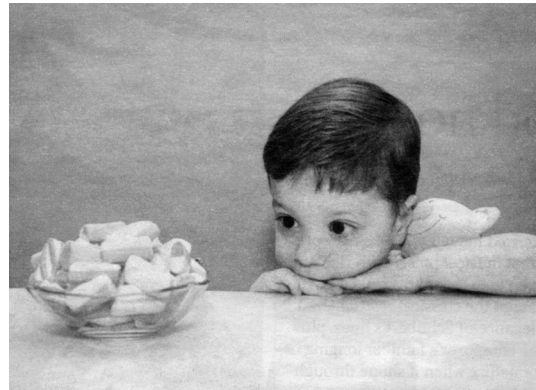
Resistance is futile

THE MARSHMALLOW TEST:

Understanding Self-Control and How to Master It / WALTER MISCHEL

Bantam Press, 326pp, £17.50

1 **A**nyone who has seen the commercials for Haribo featuring preschool children doing their best to resist touching a sweet will recognise the marshmallow test. The advertisements 8 psychologist Walter Mischel's experiments in the late Sixties. He gave children two choices: eat the sweets, or hold off and win a double-sized treat when he returned. It was an investigation into the roots of self-control and Mischel was fascinated by the strategies the children adopted. Some sat on their hands, others licked the sweets. One budding criminal took a cookie apart, ate the cream filling and carefully stuck the halves back together.



2 Mischel is now 84 years old. Ten years ago he became an overnight sensation when he did a follow-up study into the lives of the original children. The new study revealed a correlation between the Sixties' test results and the success enjoyed by the grown-up volunteers, now in their early 40s. Mischel's experiment was suddenly everywhere. To a generation of parents growing anxious about their children's fate in a more competitive world, this was big news. Mischel's work lies at the point where clinical psychology and self-improvement overlap. He has always had a strong humanitarian streak. As a student in the Fifties, he volunteered at a youth centre on New York's tough East Side. He grew up among a generation that looked to Freudian analysis for life lessons, but Mischel believed that cognitive psychology, an emerging science that focused on brain processes, offered a more realistic route to happiness.

3 In his new book, he points out that Freudian theory regards the ruses we use to handle anxiety with suspicion, because they seem to aim at suppressing pain. In contrast, psychologists embrace them as natural defence mechanisms. Why live with pain, when evolution appears to have furnished us with techniques to evade and forget it? Mischel cites experiments that show taking over-the-counter headache tablets is the most effective cure for a broken heart, beating both placebos and quiet suffering. The lovelorn should forget agony aunts and reach for the aspirin.

4 Yet for all his suspicion of Freud, the marshmallow test intersects with a key Freudian insight into the way children learn to defer gratification for future benefits. For Freud, this occurs when a child can think in abstract terms, and so is able to weigh a real thing against a future possibility. Mischel reaches the same conclusion: the children who win the marshmallow test are those best able to make the leap into abstract symbolic thinking 12.

5 As passions are hot and symbols are cool, Mischel talks about this in terms of hot and cold thinking. He theorises that there are two competing systems within the brain, the limbic system promoting our unconscious urges, and the executive function, which guides us towards better choices. It might strike the reader that a degree of bias informs Mischel's model, and the decision as to what is "hot" or "cold" is determined by pre-existing notions of hot-headedness and cool rationality. One might even wonder if passion is quite the villain he makes it; is it always the best strategy to think cool thoughts, in the act of love, say, or in artistic creation? Yet Mischel's insights are fascinating and rewarding. And if everything goes wrong, Mischel at least offers the helpful suggestion that we should take an aspirin.

based on a review by **Nicholas Blincoe**

Sunday Telegraph, 2014

Tekst 4 Resistance is futile

- 1p 8 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 1?
- A contradict the findings of
 - B explain the logic behind
 - C have gone beyond
 - D were inspired by
 - E will drown out
- “the marshmallow test” (alinea 1)
- 1p 9 In welke zin later in de tekst wordt gesteld dat het gedrag van kinderen tijdens deze test voorspellende waarde kan hebben? Citeer de eerste twee woorden van deze zin.
- 1p 10 What becomes clear about Walter Mischel from paragraphs 2 and 3?
- A He has written about the origin and history of many forms of psychotherapy.
 - B He is interested in finding practical solutions to help people get a better grip on their lives.
 - C He prefers the controlled conditions of the science laboratory to mingling with patients.
 - D He rejects existing ideas and instead supports new and controversial research projects.
- 1p 11 How can Mischel’s approach best be characterised, according to paragraph 3?
- A listen to your heart and follow your emotions
 - B misery is part of the human condition
 - C relieve the grief and just carry on
 - D what does not kill you makes you stronger

- 1p 12 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 4?
- A and can actually picture the rewards in their minds
 - B because they have been taught to resist temptations
 - C but accept that they have no real influence on the outcome
 - D provided the promised treat is also of an abstract nature
 - E since they fail to realise what they are getting themselves into
- 1p 13 What is Nicholas Blincoe's final verdict, judging from paragraph 5?
- A He advises Mischel to revise some of his theories because they weaken the impact of the book.
 - B He disagrees on some points with Mischel's conclusions, but still recommends the book.
 - C He is impressed by Mischel's scientific approach, but doubts the book's practical value.
 - D He thinks Mischel's contributions to psychology are unrivalled and clearly presented in the book.
- “Resistance is futile” (titel)
- 1p 14 Wordt deze uitspraak in dit artikel nader uitgewerkt?
Zo nee, antwoord “Nee”. Zo ja, noteer het nummer van de alinea waarin dat gebeurt.

Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.