

Tma1



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

TMA 02. Outline the ways in which rubbish can be said to have a value in a consumer society. Consumerism, value and use all play key roles in the way we look at ??? rubbish???. Rubbish and waste can play either a positive or negative effect on our environment depending on its worth and social distinctions.

Through this essay I shall portray how in today??™s society rubbish can be seen as having value whether through economical means or material means and also how we value such items. ??? Items don??™t simply have value by virtue of their physical properties. Items have value because people value them???. (Making social lives p. 105)How we as society value. When we look at how we value items it is important to understand that items take on more or less value depending on who is valuing such objects.

With this concept in mind we can see how ??? value??? as a universal perception can have different senses such as ??? use value??? ??? intrinsic value??? and ??? economic value???. All these senses determine just how we categorize what we see before us. How we value is also dependant on how we live our lives for example our moral standing in society can give what others may see as rubbish or waste value. A concern for the environment has also had a dramatic effect on how we value such items for example items that were once thought of as worthless now generate value through their recyclable worth such as plastics, glass and food waste . it is now more cost effective to recycle rather than start from zero and safer to the environment. In his book Rubbish theory Michael Thompson suggests that there are three different categories??™ that determine how objects pass into and out of the category of rubbish, these are as follows ??? transient??™

which gives items a sort of expiry date suggesting that items lose value over time such as mobile phones, then the 'rubbish category'™ made up of items with zero value such as obsolete or broken phones which have no saleable value and lastly the 'durable'™ category for items that have the potential to gain value with time like antiques and collector's items.

(Michael Thompson Rubbish theory: the creation and destruction of value 1979) Making social lives, chapter three argues that 'mass consumption' is one of the main causes for the rise in quantity of rubbish and waste in the UK, this may be the main factor in why rubbish must now be re-evaluated and given value due to its quantity rather than discarded. Through all these key points we can see how we as society value and just what determines how we value. The rubbish business Through the development of recycling technologies items that were once discarded and worthless can now be seen as valuable by transforming them to saleable products providing it is cost effective to do so. For example there has been a significant growth in recycling papers and plastics which are converted into saleable products given that the sale price of such products covers the cost of recycling them and maybe generate a profit.

I touched upon earlier that mass consumption may play a factor in why items must be re-evaluated both for the better of the environment and sustainability. As a scale of this 'mass consumption'™ in the textbook 'making social lives'™ we see the arrival of the Emma maersk which is one of the largest container ships in the world capable of carrying 11, 000 containers. One year in particular this ship arrived from china full of

consumer products for Christmas it then returned also full of products for disposal and recycling.

The rubbish business doesn't end in what we discard it can also be evident in how we re-circulate unwanted items either by the means of charity shops were items that are of no value to us gain value to the seller. Also second hand shops were we are able to sell or exchange items such as computer consoles and other items of technology thus which again illustrates Thompsons theory of how items pass into and out of the category of rubbish. This portrays how just because we see an item as worthless it does not mean that it is necessarily of no value and that there are positive factors in re-evaluating rubbish and how in a consumer society items can gain value regardless of how they are viewed. Rising wastefulness In addition to mass consumption there is the concept of wastefulness which suggests that items are used extravagantly or used up for no good reason. During the report the food we waste (WRAP, 2008a, 2008b) we can evidently see that one third of food bought in the UK each year is thrown resulting in 6.7 million tonnes of food waste. This is calculated on average of a ? 420 loss for each household. Although this portrays a negative effect on food waste it also can play a vital role in sustainability if recycled correctly.

Food waste that is disposed of on landfill sites biodegrades having negative consequences on the environment such as methane gas which is a contributing factor to global warming. However if food waste is recycled correctly it is then taken in bulk to a place known as biogengreenfinch were it is anaerobically digested meaning it is broken down without the presence of oxygen in a sealed system using naturally occurring organisms. This is

them sold on as fertilizer showing its transformation into a saleable product. Another positive effect of this process is that it produces biogas which is converted into electricity and heat ironically creating a sustainable energy through the food we waste. Conclusion To conclude we can see that even though discarded items may not have value to us it does not mean it is bereft of value all together. We have also looked at how the term value has different sense which we use to determine an items worth. It is clear that rubbish has much value in a consumer society and even more value in a society were rising affluence and mass consumption are on the increase.

There are many key points in why we should re-evaluate rubbish such as the environment and shortness of space on landfill sites. It is also clear that the value of rubbish doesn't end in the growth in consumption and waste we can see through Michael Thompson's Rubbish theory the durable category items can be re-circulated into society as they gain value over time or provide use for others if not ourselves. Rubbish has a value in today's society through both the use of re-cycling and transforming into saleable products and the re-circulation of items wether they lose value or gain value.