

Value of rubbish

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



In this essay I shall portray my arguments of how in today's society rubbish can be seen as having value or as valueless waste through economical means or material means and also how we value such items. With the rise in affluence, material goods are no longer simply about meeting basic needs. We now define ourselves much more by the goods we buy and choose (Hinchliffe, 2009, p. 23). It helps us create our identities and status, and have become a form of socialization and self-expression. Consumption, value and use all play key role in the way we look at "rubbish". Rubbish and waste can play either a positive or a negative effect on our environment. Rubbish is often perceived to be worthless, however this definition can be misleading as its meaning can alter to temporal change in social attitude resulting in its revaluation. Yet value, like rubbish is an ambiguous term since, it too, is subject to the same social processes that can modify its meaning. The relationship between rubbish and value is dynamic and complex. Rubbish is commonly defined as a thing that has no worth, it is what nobody wants, and it is disvalued, so it is worthless and has zero value. This seems straight forward, but "value" is a complex term. Items do not have value by virtue of their physical properties. Items have value because people value them. (Brown, 2009, p. 105,). Value as universal perception can have different senses "intrinsic value" "economic value" "use value", all these help us categorize what we see before us. Thompson highlights that there are three categories that determine how objects pass into and out of the category rubbish. Objects that are produced for ordinary use, a 'rubbish' category whose value increases over time. Thompson argues that products are produced for either mass consumption or elite consumption. Thompson is

interested in the way items move from the transient category into the durable category. Using Thompson's theory for, example the art work of Stevengraphs. Items need to lose value to become valuable again, these art works were extremely popular in their time. Due to change in taste, they became worthless. In 1960s and 1970s they regained value being considered as collector's pieces, there was no supply, but demand only. The value would increase and then move into the durable category. We also have value in recycled items. The consequences of such high waste volume are the driving reasons for the introduction of recycling rubbish. Which has become a lucrative business, that involves the collection of used and discarded materials. To effectuate recycling it is desirable to segregate the rubbish being collected, processing these materials makes the environment cleaner and the air healthier to breath. There are many international disposal and recycling industry just as there is an international consumption goods industry. Emma Maersk (Brown, 2009, p. 119,). Which, was the largest ship in the world able to carry 11. 000 containers was arriving to Europe with goods and was returning to China carrying the same amount of rubbish. This scale show some balance, consumption equal to rubbish, thus the process of recycling gives a positive value to what was rubbish and had no value producing outputs that have positive value; that is positive price. This often involves transporting rubbish and waste around the world and back again in the form of recycled products for use in production or as new consumer products. Most of the rubbish generated in the household can be recycled and reused, organic kitchen waste such as leftover food stuff, vegetable peels, and spoilt or dried fruits and vegetable can be recycled by putting

them in the compost pits that have been dug in the garden. Rubbish recycling has some significant advantages; it leads to less utilization of raw materials, reduces environmental impact arising from waste treatment and disposal, makes the surrounding cleaner and healthier, saves on landfill space. Saves money reduces the amount of energy required to manufacture new products. Having mentioned the positive aspects of rubbish I would also like to highlight the negative aspects of rubbish, which has far devastating consequences on our environment increasing environmental unsustainability. Rising affluence also affects people's choice between labour-intensive and labour-saving activities (Brown, 2009, p. 112,). The amount of rubbish has grown also as people are more likely to buy disposable products than one can mend and reuse. One example of waste increase would be disposable nappies. It seems convenient to many busy parents, the greater range of supermarket products and availability has also led to an increase in waste. They constantly attempt to make their products more attractive by excessive packaging, packaging material produces rubbish that has no value and cannot be recycled such as styrofoam gift wrapping paper, milk cartons, fast food wrappers credit cards etc... As technology zooms toward the future, gadgets are phased out rapidly, creating piles of electronic waste, which they then reach a landfill somewhere in Africa, where they sit and cause problems not just for the land, but for the water supply as well. The metals and chemicals seep through the soil, contaminating and polluting the environment and human health risk is involved when people scrap the metal and copper out of machines. Landfill waste remains a potential environmental hazard. Weed killer in the rubbish, chemicals from car

batteries and other dangerous liquids can be washed through the soil, contaminating rivers and drinking water. In landfill sites where toxic industrial wastes have been dumped indiscriminately, the land can become poisoned and unsafe for farming or building. ([http: www. ypte. org. uk/environment/recycling/93](http://www.ypte.org.uk/environment/recycling/93)). Affluent countries are consuming (including wasting) at a rate that is environmentally unsustainable, thus putting at risk the ability of the planet's ecosystem to continue in the future (Brown, 2009, p. 115,). The environmental unsustainability measured in terms of global foot print grew from 0 per cent to 40 per cent in little more than 20 years (Brown, 2009, p. 116,). Contemplating on the essay's question I wanted to evaluate which argument is stronger, does rubbish has value or not, items are disvalued, has no value to those who want to dispose of it. Yet we have seen that rubbish can be revalued, or given new value, by recycling it or passing it on to others who have a use for it. Nevertheless the negative aspects are frightening, global warming is rising see level we observe weather irregularity nature disasters, all of which threaten homes, harvests and livelihood (Brown, 2009, p. 138). Few can deny, that drastic measures need to be taken in order to preserve our environment. We all may not be able to give up our cars and walk or bike everywhere nor can most of us afford solar panels, but we can change the way recycling has an impact on the environment. To accomplish this we can reduce our consumption, avoid being wasteful, control our shopping and not get seduced easily, not only will it help us preserve our environment, but it will help us save our money as well.