Truth About Recycling

I’ve often wondered if recycling was really made sense. Before I explore some of the possible answers to this question, I better define my terms so that there is no chance of misunderstanding. By recycling I mean the usual gathering and separating of the various materials of modern life (e.g. paper, plastic, glass, etc.) for subsequent pickup, future processing, and reappearance in some other guise in consumer packaging. Contrast this with conservation where the original material is saved and reused locally or simply isn’t used to begin with. Conservation always makes sense – it is always better to not waste a thing – but what about using and then .