

RENEE TOUGAS

THE LABOUR OF REDUCING  
HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION



# ARCHÉ JEAN-TALON

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A LANGUE.  
UNE FIERTÉ QUI S'ENTEND.

U-HAUL





**Oldemark**  
LASAGNE  
AU SAUCON  
LA SAISON

**Erie Meats**  
— 1977  
KEEP FROZEN  
GARDER CONGELÉ



*Organic Sunflower Seeds*

**Organic Chickpeas**

**Organic Lentils**

**Organic Oats**

**Organic Thompson Raisins**

**Organic Whole Raw Cashews**

**Dried Cranberries**

*Case of Mary's Crackers*



## STUFF WE WERE DOING

- cooking kale, beets, and kohlrabi found in our weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes.
- making our own soap and household cleaning products
- transforming backyards into gardens
- learning to can and “put up” food
- raising chickens in suburbia
- hang drying our laundry and ridding our homes of plastic
- eating plant-based diets
- vermicomposting in our basements
- eschewing TVs and their materialistic influences from our homes
- making homemade Christmas gifts







Our consumption habits are "an affirmation of self, a way of acting in the world, of expressing one's identity and difference and participating in something larger than oneself." (Norris, 2011, pg. 14)



In the United States women are “responsible for 85% of family purchasing decisions” (Demo, 2015, pg. 2) and they contribute disproportionately higher number of hours to household tasks (IWPR) (even if they are working outside the home). This situation is not radically different in Canada (Stats Can).



(2015). *The Motherhood Business: Consumption, Communication, and Privilege*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2020). *Providing Unpaid Household and Care Work in the United States: Uncovering Inequality*: Briefing Paper <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IWPR-Providing-Unpaid-Household-and-Care-Work-in-the-United-States-Uncovering-Inequality.pdf>

Statistics Canada (2018). *Time use: Total work burden, unpaid work, and leisure*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/54931-eng.htm>





It's not a stretch to say that in families and households it's women's labour that either diminishes or amplifies a household consumptive habits.



For many years I willing to exchange  
a large share of (unpaid) labour in  
return for the intrinsic satisfaction of  
pursuing an individual household-  
driven ecological shift.





I am no longer willing to bear a disproportionate burden of labour (around consumptive-reducing practices) in a culture of neoliberal discourse that places the responsibility, cost, and locus of sustainability squarely on the individual; and in the case of household economy, squarely on women.



So I shop at Costco where we can buy convenience foods, beverages, packaged snacks. These foods freed up my labor and time from food preparation. And these products significantly increased our household contribution to city waste and recycling.