



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 6, 2013

The Most Interesting Career: Housewife

On the heels of my [recent article](#) on women in combat, in which I defend traditionalism, it's perhaps a good time to also take up the cudgels for that bugaboo of women's studies classes: the housewife. Thus do I provide you with the quotation below from G.K. Chesterton's [book](#) *What's Wrong with the World*. He wrote:



Women were not kept at home in order to keep them narrow; on the contrary, they were kept at home in order to keep them broad. The world outside the home was one mass of narrowness, a maze of cramped paths, a madhouse of monomaniacs. It was only by partly limiting and protecting the woman that she was enabled to play at five or six professions and so come almost as near to God as the child when he plays at a hundred trades.

[...] When domesticity, for instance, is called drudgery, all the difficulty arises from a double meaning in the word. If drudgery only means dreadfully hard work, I admit the woman drudges in the home, as a man might drudge at the Cathedral of Amiens or drudge behind a gun at Trafalgar. But if it means that the hard work is more heavy because it is trifling, colorless and of small import to the soul, then as I say, I give [the word] up; I do not know what the words mean. To be Queen Elizabeth within a definite area, deciding sales, banquets, labors and holidays; to be Whiteley within a certain area, providing toys, boots, sheets, cakes and books, to be Aristotle within a certain area, teaching morals, manners, theology, and hygiene; I can understand how this might exhaust the mind, but I cannot imagine how it could narrow it. How can it be a large career to tell other people's children about the Rule of Three, and a small career to tell one's own children about the universe? How can it be broad to be the same thing to everyone, and narrow to be everything to someone? No; a woman's function is laborious, but because it is gigantic, not because it is minute. I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness.

As usual, Chesterton cut to the heart of the matter with peerless profundity. I'll thus add nothing to it save to say that "housewife" isn't actually a career but something far greater: a calling. A career is the most narrow of things, which is why careerism is a fault of the narrow-minded. It is the altar at which worship people who look up and see only their own egos.

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