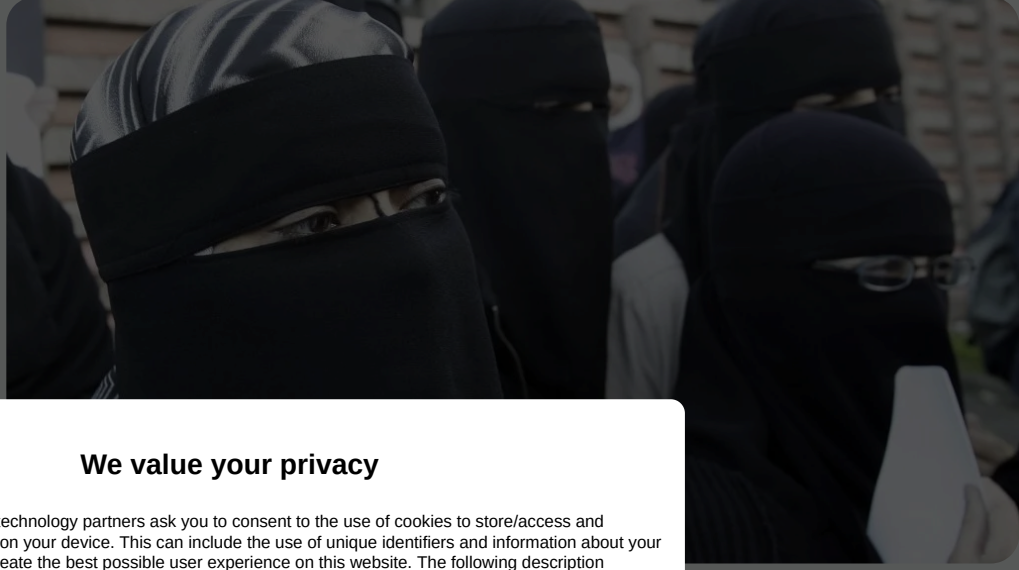


## No feminist should defend the niqab

BY [JOAN SMITH](#)



'The cultural relativism which defends some forms of discrimination against women is not yet dead and buried.' Credit: Getty

- BURQA
- FEMINISM
- FGM
- IR
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s through my head when I see why she's wearing it, whether ure. Demanding that women, minatory that it makes me —

the cultural relativism which defends some forms of discrimination against women is not yet dead and buried. It appears, as it so often does, in the guise of opposing racism, as though any criticism of someone's culture can only be motivated by xenophobia. Over the weekend, pro-migration campaigner Zoe Gardner called out the broadcaster Colin Brazier, who had complained about seeing women wearing niqabs on Oxford Street in the center of London.

Gardner denounced his post as "racist as fuck", and asked the aforementioned question about the niqab. "Go on spell it out you nasty Muslim hater," she added. What actually needs spelling out once again, it seems, is the fact that some cultural practices are hugely damaging to women. Culture is no more benign than nature, which gives us plagues and avalanches as well as sunsets and beaches.

There is a disturbing history here. In the Eighties, I used to argue with women, some of them feminists, who believed in equal rights but refused to condemn "female circumcision". Their defense of mutilating women's genitals always started and ended with the same statement: "It's their culture." Even Germaine Greer fell for it, describing moves to ban female genital mutilation as "an attack on cultural identity" in her 1999 book *The Whole Woman*. Now FGM is a criminal offense in Britain, and rightly so.

I'm not in favor of banning the niqab, but it certainly isn't harmless, let alone something to celebrate. It's a deliberate statement, signaling that women who wear it exist under different rules and conditions than men. The impact may be ameliorated in countries with

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BY

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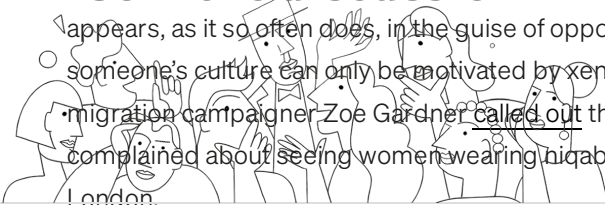


23 2026 - 11:20AM

iqab?" It's not the question that goes through my head when I see hidden, except for the eyes. I wonder why she's wearing it, whether coerced through some form of pressure. Demanding that women, but not men, cover their faces in public is so obviously discriminatory that it makes me — and many other people — uncomfortable.

A minor spat on social media is a reminder, however, that the cultural relativism which defends practices against women is not yet dead and buried. It appears, as it so often does, in the guise of opposing racism, as though any criticism of someone's culture can only be motivated by xenophobia. Over the weekend, pro-migration campaigner Zoe Gardner called out the broadcaster Colin Brazier, who had complained about seeing women wearing niqabs on Oxford Street in the center of London.

### Join the discussion



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65 COMMENTS

There is a disturbing history here. In the Eighties, I used to argue with women, some of them feminists, who believed in equal rights but refused to condemn "female

**Britt Harrison** 18 days ago

Building a sense of neighbourhood undermines the very possibility of engaging in this basic building block of our shared humanity. The same statement that's made in the West with Germany. The Green Party for it, describing moves to ban female genital mutilation as "an attack on cultural identity" in her 1999 book *The*

0 | 0   REPLY

*Whole Woman*. Now FGM is a criminal offense in Britain, and rightly so.

  Most Voted

David Renton 18 days ago

Reply to [Britt Harrison](#)

I'm not in favor of banning the niqab, but it certainly isn't harmless, let alone something to celebrate. It's a deliberate statement signaling that women who wear it exist under different rules and prohibitions than men. The impact may be ameliorated in countries with religion" - yeah guess they don't get irony either.

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## No feminist should defend the niqab

BY [JOAN SMITH](#)

'The cultural relativism which defends some forms of discrimination against women is not yet dead and buried.' Credit: Getty

UnHerd Reader 18 days ago

Reply to [David Renton](#)

Want to take a bet if the lone white female police officer will get some censure for her actions? A rare example of common sense - therefore she will be prosecuted.

0 | 0

Graham Bennett 18 days ago

Reply to [UnHerd Reader](#)

Exactly! We can't have a lack of commonsense in the police. We have to nip that

0 | 0

UnHerd Reader 18 days ago

Reply to [David Renton](#)

Frankly in today's UK a

0 | 0



David Renton 18 days ago

Reply to [Britt Harrison](#)

I remember in the 2011 London Riots, who messed up the neighbourhoods and who fixed them afterwards, lets say it was telling

0 | 0

"What's wrong with the niqab?" It's not the question that goes through my head when I see a woman with her face hidden, except for the eyes. I wonder why she's wearing it, whether she's chosen it or been coerced through some form of pressure. Demanding that women, but not men, cover their faces in public is so obviously discriminatory that it makes me — and many other people — uncomfortable.

David Renton 18 days ago

Feminists are bringing in their own handmaidens Islamic tale, guess what they won't be so accommodating. When something has no sense to it, the people pushing it need to be excluded from any decision making, inc their right to vote to be honest. If people are suicidal, we intervene, well these feminists are suicidal

0 | 0

A minor spat on social media is a reminder, however, that the cultural relativism which defends some forms of discrimination against women is not yet dead and buried. It

Graham Bennett 18 days ago

It's just the glaring and grotesque hypocrisy of the extreme feminist Left. They've always been like this, which is why no one takes them seriously, which just makes them more neurotic and extreme. Well, I suppose if they're willing to wait long enough, you can hear them pleading now: 'But wait, we were on your side. We welcomed you and supported you blindly in enabling you to institute sharia law throughout the UK. Now you want us to wear a niqab?' 😊

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David Renton 18 days ago

Reply to [Graham Bennett](#)

you know eventually even the most stupid people get it one day, oh the emperor had no clothes on after all.

At what point do Feminists go erm wait we imported millions of men with very different views on women , and who will use violence to get their way. at what point do they understand "racist" is just a 5 letter meaningless word but a persistent safety history have in the Eighties. I used to argue with women, some of them feminists, who believed in equal rights but refused to condemn "female

65 COMMENTS

Britt Harrison 18 days ago

Building a sense of neighbourhood is the same statement that's their culture. Even Geneva. The Greens fell for it, describing moves undermines the very possibility of engaging in this basic building block of our shared humanity.

0 | 0

Diane Ferretti 18 days ago

Reply to [David Renton](#)

to ban female genital mutilation as "an attack on cultural identity" in her 1999 book *The Whole Woman*. Now FGM is a criminal offense in Britain, and rightly so.

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[Reply to David Renton](#)

**UnHerd Reader**  · 18 days ago  
You are wrong, stupidity is immortal

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Want to take a bet if the lone white female police officer will get some censure for her actions? A rare example of common sense – therefore she will be prosecuted.

**David Renton**  · 18 days ago

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
some people are born with it, some are not. I don't see for age that's nothing to with mental health. I'm more forgiving.

**Graham Bennett**  · 18 days ago

[Reply to UnHerd Reader](#)

Exactly. We can't have a police officer with common sense. We police officers have to nip that

[Reply to David Renton](#)

**UnHerd Reader**  · 18 days ago

[Reply to David Renton](#)

Frankly in today's world, a woman wearing a niqab is a woman who is not a citizen of the law, she

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**David Renton**  · 18 days ago

**Mr Robert G Miles**  · 18 days ago

I remember in the 2011 London Riots, who messed up the neighbourhoods and who fixed them

afterwards, lets say it was telling

there's something not just disgraceful but completely deranged about some so-called feminists'

attitude to Islam. On the one hand when one can advise it's suggested a woman that goes through my head when I see

women shouldn't go around in provocative attire, we saw "s\*\*t Marches" in Britain while these same

women are apologists for sharia law which in extreme forms prohibits females from ever being

outside the home. She's chosen to do so because she's under some form of pressure. Demanding that women,

Feminists are bringing in their own handmaidens Islamic tale, guess what they won't be so accommodating,

When something has no sense to it, the people pushing it need to be excluded from any decision making, inc their

right to vote to be honest and many other people — uncomfortable.

If people are suicidal, we intervene, well these feminists are suicidal

**David Renton**  · 18 days ago

A minor spat on social media is a reminder, however, that the cultural relativism which

we see 95% of Western White Feminists support is not yet dead and buried. It

appears, as it so often does, in the guise of opposing racism, as though any criticism of

someones culture can only be motivated by xenophobia. Over the weekend, pro-

So I once went to a greer thing back in the 90's (in westminster hall) thought she was rubbish at the time, but like

my dad said about CND (if full of women, so I went) and was probably the only straight man of 500

niqab. Let's see how they like a niqab. I can hear them screaming now. But wait, it was on your side. We

complained about seeing women wearing niqabs on Oxford Street in the center of

London. I don't know if you're a woman, but I bet the men in the high end of the

paid subscribers

Gardner denounced his post as "racist as fuck", and asked the aforementioned question

about the niqab "Go on spell it out you nasty Muslim hater," she added. What actually

seems, is the fact that some cultural practices are hugely

damaging to women. Culture is no more benign than nature, which gives us plagues and

after high status jobs etc. with upper middle class women. They don't give a [rude word] about poor

or disadvantaged women. They don't give a [rude word] about poor

At what point do Feminists go erm wait we imported millions of men with very different views on

women? and who will use violence to get their way, at what point do they understand "racist" is just a 5

letter meaningless word but a personal safety history have in the Eighties. I used to argue with women, some of

this argument kills them feminists, who believe in equal rights but refused to condemn "female

about it, but in the voting booth you reform, restore the men from an organ of prison

circumcision. Their defense of mutilating women's genitals always started and ended with

Building a sense of neighbourliness same state with their culture. Even Greece. The Greeks for it, describing moves

undermines the very possibility of engaging in this basic building block of our shared humanity.


to ban female genital mutilation as "an attack on cultural identity" in her 1999 book *The*

*Whole Woman*. Now FGM is a criminal offense in Britain, and rightly so.


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**Ethnicodo Rodneydo**  · 18 days ago

**Brian Harrison**  · 18 days ago

**Diane Ferretti**  · 18 days ago

**William Adams**  · 18 days ago

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