

The Bangladesh war

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I was astonished to read in [Nayanika Mookherjee's article](#) (8 June) the generalised claim that in my book *Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War*, "Pakistani army personnel are gentle, quiet, kind, honest, 'fine men' with a good humour and 'with no ethnic bias against the Bengalis.'" I believe that these are foolish and highly irresponsible allegations to make against a book on such a sensitive subject. On the contrary, as an [earlier article in the Guardian noted](#) (21 May), *Dead Reckoning* "complicates" such simplistic narratives of that war. My book contains numerous examples of positive and negative characteristics in individuals from both sides. Historically, attempts to disentangle myth from reality in the 1971 Bangladesh war have been bedevilled by false claims – sometimes on a spectacular scale. Mookherjee quoted Professor Willem van Schendel as though he had pronounced on my just-published book. I gather from Professor van Schendel that he has not reviewed that book.

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