

HAPPY LITTLE EXTROVERTS AND BLOODTHIRSTY TYRANTS:
MINOANS AND MYCENAEANS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
AFTER EVANS AND SCHLIEMANN

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ABSTRACT

In literature in English, and in the popular imagination in English-speaking countries generally, the Minoan period is a kind of golden age, an Atlantis or Garden of Eden before the Fall. And, in such a construction, the Fall comes with the Mycenaeans, who are represented as a tough, militaristic people who destroyed Troy for trade reasons. This chapter traces the emergence of the idealistic depiction of the Minoans in response to the circumstances before, during, and after World War II. While some recent authors have begun to challenge the image of happy and peaceful Minoans, it suggests that the Minoans and Mycenaeans are still locked into antithetical perceptions that hinder real understanding of the cultures.