

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	The Event in Contemporary Literature	1
1.2	Defining Contemporary Literature.....	3
1.3	The Event.....	10
1.3.1	Defining the Event	10
1.3.2	The Event in Modernist and Postmodernist Texts	11
1.3.3	Diminished by the Event: the Postmodern Subject.....	15
1.3.4	The Event and the Subject in Contemporary French Phenomenology	21
1.4	Being Struck by the Event: Captivation.....	23
1.5	Contemporary Events: Authorship, Ethics and the Sacred	27
2	Relating the Subject to the Event	31
2.1	Introduction	31
2.2	David Mitchell's "An Orison of Sonmi~451": The Ascension of the <i>Homo Sacer</i>	33
2.2.1	The Clone as <i>Homo Sacer</i> -Figure	33
2.2.2	The Event as Gift.....	50
2.2.3	Conclusion	69
2.3	Captivation and Event	72
3	Captives of Authorship	77
3.1	Introduction	77
3.2	Authorship by Mistake	82
3.2.1	<i>Atonement</i> —The Child as Author	82
3.2.1.1	Introduction	82
3.2.1.2	Briony Tallis—The Subject in Question.....	83
3.2.1.3	The Letter	87
3.2.1.4	The False Testimony	89
3.2.1.5	Briony—The Bride to Be	91
3.2.1.6	Captivating the Audience.....	94

3.2.2	<i>The History of Love</i> —The Invisible Author	96
3.2.2.1	Introduction	96
3.2.2.2	The Invisibility of Leopold Gursky	98
3.2.2.3	Fantasies, Imagination and Authorship	100
3.2.2.4	Authorship, Fatherhood and the Holocaust	104
3.2.2.5	Stumbling on Authorship	105
3.3	The Captivated Reader	107
3.3.1	<i>Ghostwritten</i> —Possessed by the Author	107
3.3.1.1	Introduction	108
3.3.1.2	The Narrator in Hiding	110
3.3.1.3	Captivated by the Ghost of the Narrative....	113
3.3.2	<i>Atonement</i> —The Giant from the Mist	116
3.3.2.1	Introduction	116
3.3.2.2	The Displaced Reader	116
3.3.3	Claimed by the Author	123
4	Captives of Ethics	125
4.1	Introduction	125
4.2	The Responsible Subject	128
4.2.1	<i>The Road</i> —The Responsibility of the Liar	129
4.2.1.1	Introduction	129
4.2.1.2	The Captivation by the Son	132
4.2.1.3	The Son: Embodiment of the Fire.....	137
4.2.2	<i>Oryx and Crake</i> —The Responsibility of the Unknowing.....	140
4.2.2.1	Introduction	140
4.2.2.2	The Inside and the Outside: The Compounds and the ‘Pleeblands’	141
4.2.2.3	Jimmy’s Captivation by Oryx and Crake	145
4.2.2.4	Enforced Guardianship	149
4.2.3	<i>The White Tiger</i> —The Responsibility of the Murderer	154
4.2.3.1	Introduction	154
4.2.3.2	Consumers and Consumed	155
4.2.3.3	Under Attack by Events	160

4.2.3.4 The Consumption of the Master	166
4.2.3.5 The New Master.....	171
4.2.4 Conclusion: Prisoners of Responsibility	174
4.3 The Witness	176
4.3.1 Introduction.....	176
4.3.2 <i>Atonement</i> —The Selfish Witness.....	176
4.3.2.1 Introduction	176
4.3.2.2 Atoning through Fiction	177
4.3.3 <i>The Gathering</i> —The Blind Witness.....	182
4.3.3.1 Introduction	182
4.3.3.2 The Inadequate Witness	184
4.3.3.3 The Victim: Liam Hegarty.....	186
4.3.3.4 Turning into an Involuntary Witness.....	189
4.3.4 Conclusion: Seized Witnesses	196
5 Captives of the Sacred	199
5.1 Introduction	199
5.2 <i>Oryx and Crake</i> —The Prophet	205
5.2.1 Introduction	205
5.2.2 Becoming a Guardian	205
5.2.3 Becoming a Prophet	211
5.3 <i>The Road</i> —The Voice of God	215
5.3.1 Introduction	215
5.3.2 Language: Empty Signifiers and Hidden Meanings....	216
5.3.3 Keeping Promises	220
5.3.4 God's Image	224
5.4 <i>The History of Love</i> —The Child God	227
5.4.1 Introduction	227
5.4.2 Bird—The God Behind the Curtain	228
5.5 Claiming the Sacred	232
6 Conclusion	233
7 Bibliography.....	245