

## SAVOY BOOKS



## Horror Panegyric

**Keith Seward**

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*Horror Panegyric* begins with a penetrating essay by **Keith Seward** on the three **Lord Horror** novels produced by **David Britton** and **Michael Butterworth**. The first novel, *Lord Horror*, was the most recent work of literature after *Last Exit to Brooklyn* to be banned in Great Britain and obliged Britton to serve a term in Strangeways Prison.

Savoy's "franchise of Lord Horror productions," Seward writes, "is provocative, original, visionary, and contains at least one outright masterpiece (*Motherfuckers*). Young writers should be looking at it the same as they do *Naked Lunch*, i.e. as a work that shows them what the possibilities are in the hands of a master."

"Lord Horror," Britton has said, "was so unique and radical, I expected to go to prison for it. I always thought that if you wrote a truly dangerous book -- something dangerous would happen to you. Which is one reason there are so few really dangerous books around. Publishers play at promoting dangerous books, whether they're *Serpent's Tail* or *Penguin*. All you get is a book vetted by committee, never anything radically imaginative or offensive that will take your fucking head off. Ironically, I think it would do other authors a power of good if they had to account for their books by going to prison—there are far too many bad books being published!"

Following the essay are excerpts from the three difficult-to-find novels *Lord Horror*, *Motherfuckers: The Auschwitz of Oz*, and *Baptised in the Blood of Millions*. Rounding out the volume is a timeline of Lord Horror productions that includes the novels, comic books, and recordings for which Savoy Books has earned its worldwide notoriety.

Jacket illustration and design by **John Coulthart**.

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"Keith Seward is a rare and wonderful creature: a writer with an insight and vocabulary the equal of his devotion. Unlike most of us, he can actually explain why he thinks a book

is important, without resorting to meaningless, slogan-like declarations. This inspired appraisal of the three Lord Horror novels will move you to appreciation even if you haven't read the books. And if you read Seward's tribute, I promise that you will be driven to seek Lord Horror out, in at least one of his incarnations, even at great personal expense.

"I will diverge here to say that I loved *Lord Horror* so much that I feel cheap telling you I loved it.

"When I finished it, I put down the book and sat there quietly staring into space. My wife asked me how the book was. I didn't know what to say. I couldn't answer her for about thirty seconds while I tried to think of something that would not sound petty and stupid in comparison to what I had just experienced.

"I think *LH* is the equal to *Motherfuckers: The Auschwitz of Oz*, the second novel in the sequence. It is just gentler on the gas pedal. Personally, I was intoxicated by its languid pace, especially its long, loving tributes to Edgar Rice Burroughs and Burne Hogarth. The Frankensteinian resurrection of the Ononoes left me dead drunk with glee. I fucking loved it.

"*Horror Panegyric* is a love letter with bold intentions. It dares to explore the nature of good literature and how to recognize its elusive face. Specifically, it seeks to recognize that Britton & Butterworth have written at least one unsung masterpiece, *Motherfuckers*, and two works of near-indescribable genius, *Lord Horror* and *Baptised in the Blood of Millions*. It questions why these works have not been given the attention they deserve.

"If you have already read the Lord Horror novels, Seward's essay is still worth the price of admission. It is filled with gems like the section called 'The Boschian Method in Literature', which works both as art critique and writer's manual on how to break from the dull, exhausting, everyday torture that passes for contemporary literature. If you have not read the Lord Horror novels, then you will want to start here for a very practical reason: *Horror Panegyric* includes four long excerpts that are the cheapest and easiest introduction to the works you are ever going to find. The actual novels can be so costly and difficult to obtain that they seem forbidden by God. They are as far from mainstream as anything I have encountered. I am surprised they exist at all.

"If I had not just read *Lord Horror*, Seward's appreciation of it would have inspired me to hunt the thing down, even at grave personal cost. His assessment that *Motherfuckers*, "was like hearing rock and roll for the first time and knowing that, however much you'd enjoyed music till then, you'd just found something more intense", is easy to agree with. Britton and Butterworth's work has had the same effect on me.

"In fact, I feel ruined by Britton et al. It's hard to go back to anything less than the genuinely demented. Even authors I once found ballsy as hell, like Chuck Palahniuk, fatigue me like malaria now. Last year, I tried to read his book *Survivor* and my eyes slammed shut as I was violently thrown into instant REM sleep. I couldn't get past the first few pages without blacking out from boredom. I blame *Motherfuckers* for that. I look at the paperback sleeping pills that line the library shelves where I work and I groan with exhaustion. I get tired just looking at them. I read less and less, because it's harder to find anything that keeps me awake these days.

"Given the long tradition of resistance Savoy Books has shown to reprinting anything, even their finest publications, I recommend you snatch up *Horror Panegyric* before it goes out of print, before it becomes another priceless artifact in Savoy's catalog of lost treasures. (And thank you, Keith Seward, for writing an essay that has given me the language to appreciate Britton and Butterworth even more than I already did.)"

*ABEL DIAZ (an amplified version of his Amazon review)*