

# ANTI-MAINSTREAM TENDENCIES IN SWEDISH GRAPHIC NOVEL, AND HARSH NOISE MERGED CULTURES

Wormgod is a publisher of graphic novels based in Malmö, Sweden that combines macabre visuals and noise. It is run by Susanne Johansson, who designed the front cover for this zine, and Mattias Erikop, who made the illustration next to it. Their rare interest in the blending of these two extreme art-forms make them stand out from the general Swedish rainbow range trends. Wormgod has deep roots in anarchism and grotesque visions of the future our world might encounter in the era of post capitalism. Their latest publication *Alter: The Ends Of The World 2* translates these visions into the audio-visual. Together with CBK, Tusen Serier and Noise Against Fascism they organize AICCom festival and TRAUMA in Malmö, the first dedicated to alternative comics, the second to harsh noise, industrial and power electronics, a two days massacre that no one into the genre should miss.

## WORMGOD

I met the Wormgods the first time at the International Comic Festival of Stockholm in 2018. On the CODA distro we had Rien, an autographic novel about a nihilist alien who is lost in space. Someone came to us pointing out that there was another distro exploring similar concepts. So after some swaps, my first Wormgod read, and still my favourite, was *Transgressions*, by both Susanne and Mattias with music by *Federatöim*: A necrotic journey in the mind of a man who didn't want to be a man, and a woman who transformed him into something else, touching themes of gender, migration, necrophilia and memetic transcendence. In a brief chat about how they came up with the idea of merging comics and music, its evolution, they stated:

(M) You can never have too much HNW, Harsh Noise Wall A/N, so I started a long time ago to organize gigs in my release events. Since Susanne was often part of that because we've collaborated for a long time, it felt natural to continue with it when we started Wormgod. Release events turned into the first TRAUMA noise festival in 2017 and it just felt natural after a while to also include soundtracks with some of the books. The first one, *Transgressions*, was released at the TRAUMA 2012 festival. The first *Alter: The Ends Of The World* was just an exhibition at first, which we did in a tunnel with an in-built sound system. We asked some musicians if they wanted to contribute to the exhibition's soundtrack, and later when we made the book version it felt natural to attach the soundtrack. Of course, there's a correlation between the music and the art and stories, but in part it's also an excuse to spread more noise to the people. (S) It is all a synergy when it comes to creating, one thing leads to another - an idea can transform into a narrative as a comic or a lyric, a picture or a sound. I have been listening to noise and power electronics for many years but just recently started making my own music and it has been an interesting and very rewarding journey for me personally to find a new mode of expression.

Politics or anti-politics, play a fundamental role in their works, a thing that became increasingly clear at each of the festivals I met them in. Their political beliefs are broadly anarchism and/or anarcho-syndicalism, including all that comes with it, like anti-capitalism, anti-racism, anti-sexism and no borders politics, with radical feminism and Marxism added into the mix. Long story short, their goal is a classless society where everyone lives their lives with as little exploitation as possible. This, in broad outlines, is the political view of Wormgod.

Still, Wormgod's productions mix a very dark aesthetic with gender issues and anarchism. Why have they chosen the dark side and how does this medium of expression affect the politics that interest Wormgod? What is the relationship between form and content?

(S) It has always been the first-hand choice in how I express myself and the kind of art, literature, music, film, etc I prefer. In my opinion all art forms must have some sort of inherent darkness, depth and disruptive qualities in order to affect the audience. Things that are too easy going and harmless simply do not move me and I want to feel something both in the process of creating and when I experience other people's work. I also have a realistic (or pessimistic if you will) way of looking at the world around me and that of course permeates my artistic vision. As a woman and feminist, I am shaped by the patriarchal society that live in and while this inequality pisses me off immensely, my creativity and motivation also get fuelled by it. All in all, I would say that I strive to portray the horrors, traumas and struggles that we experience in life, in all its stark filthy glory. No safety nets, just diving right in.

(M) It comes naturally when you try to describe the world, I think. There's so much shit going on and that should be reflected in the art. Also, things that are diluted to fit everyone are always more boring than the more personal and harsher expressions. Some often goes for music, films, games and comics that I like, even if there are of course some feel-good exceptions...

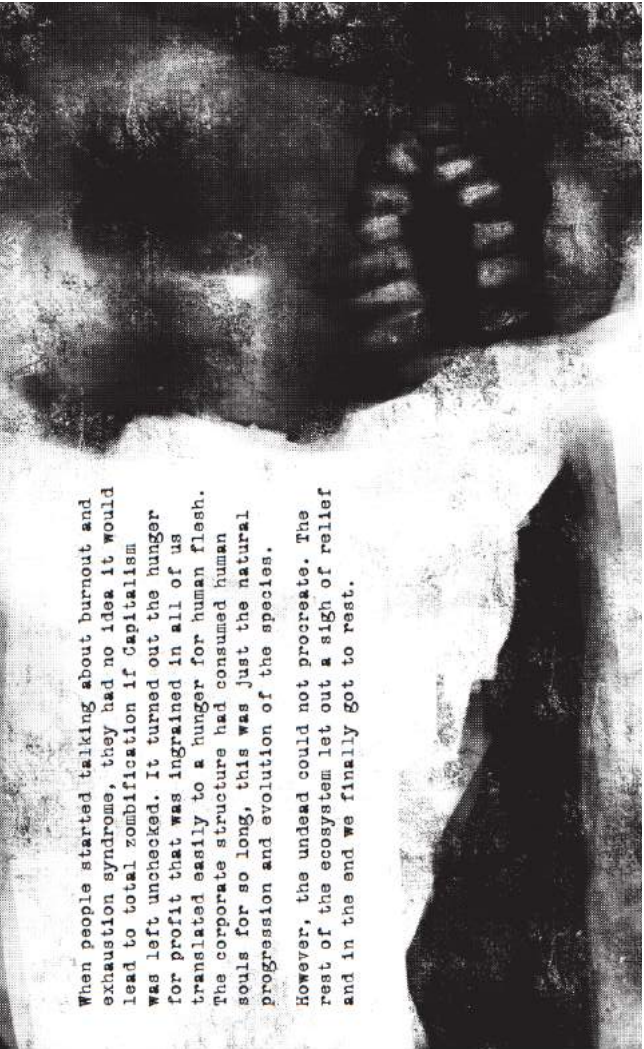
Finally, I wanted to understand whether things are growing, whether through AICCom and TRAUMA Wormgod had demonstrated the viability of their community. Mattias explained that he was: "Not sure, I know a few artists who would openly call themselves anarchists, some of them even in activist groups. Maybe more artists than you think are at least ideologically leaning towards anarchism, but maybe not that outspoken. Reception is difficult to understand, all we can do is try our best and hope that as many as possible will like what we do."

In any case the idea of a compromise is out of the question. In this article we have only touched on the wide variety of themes and influences that Wormgod's extreme imagery draws on. A dive into their world launches the reader into a different vision of the world, forcing them to develop a critical analysis of the relationship between art and politics, especially nowadays, at a time when even extreme arts are conforming, and harsh noise is being played at low volumes.

### WE WANT TO RIP YOU OPEN AND BATHE IN YOUR MIND FLUIDS

You can find *Alter: The Ends Of The World 2* among other Wormgod releases at [www.wormgod.net](http://www.wormgod.net)

And keep an eye open for TRAUMA festival and AICCom, they are worth the visit to the already beautiful Malmö!



Howe'er, the  
relief I finally  
got to rest.  
The dead mem-  
bers of my  
species, I  
could not  
recreate. The  
natural  
order of  
things was  
not to be  
tampered  
with. I  
understand  
the pain of  
my species,  
but I cannot  
recreate it.  
I am a  
man, and I  
am not  
made of  
flesh and  
bone. I am  
made of  
ideas, and  
ideas are  
not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
spirit, and  
spirits are  
not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
being, and  
beings are  
not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
creature,  
and creatures  
are not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
thing, and  
things are  
not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
being, and  
beings are  
not bound  
by the laws  
of physics.  
I am a  
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of physics.  
I am a  
thing, and  
things are  
not bound  
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of physics.



# ANARCHY IN THE SWEETS

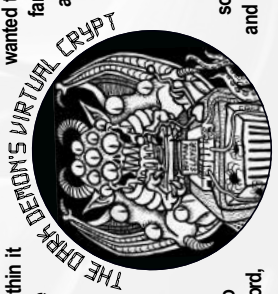
## Slay the Spire

### SLAY IT... WITH CARDS! A Slay the Spire Review and the real nature of modding

A couple of years have passed since the card-game phenomena hit gaming industry hard, but still, there are those who try to create something original and funny at the same time. Developed by MegaCrit, the people from Seattle have managed to create an addictive experience like few others in the entire genre. In Slay the Spire at the beginning of each run we must choose between three characters, each represented with his own artefact, deck and cards, plus more neutral cards that can be used by all characters. The premise is simple, start a journey to reach the heart of the Spire and slay it, because that's the source of all evil in the world. There isn't much to say about our protagonists and after a few rounds you won't even care about it. The gameplay is really solid: the combination of cards with the passive/active artefact effects gives almost infinite replayability. Each map and any encounter within it are totally random, the events are casual too, both with good and bad consequences: it could be the addition of a new powerful card or that damn curse given by an artefact after picking it up. The proper way to play this game is that there isn't a proper way to play it at all, in one word,

experimenting. The possible combinations for literally everything is almost infinite, so you must learn the cards, the enemies, what they are and what they do, the statuses and the terminology of the game. It might look frustrating at first, but I assure you that when you start to realize how things work, you will be already absorbed in this ground-breaking indie title. The battles look like classic turn-based RPG, with the difference that on the lower side of the screen we don't find normal commands to give. Instead, we have a hand of cards to play in order to overcome difficulties. The graphics and the music are pretty basic, but the world design compensate with original creatures and the appearance of the cards.

The best thing that this title has to offer is the possibility to use and create mods, a pretty unique feature in a game like this, usually overwhelmed with expansions and booster-packs to buy to keep up the pace with meta. In the steam workshop there are tons of different mods for balance and brand new characters with their respective cards and artefacts; for example seeing Dante from Devil May Cry beating the face of monsters with cards instead of his trusted sword and guns, or even characters from anime or movies, dealing with blobs and thieves with their signature moves translated into cards that can be combined with many others to create a bizarre yet amazing combo of effects and weirdness. In the last few years different AAA publishers have tried to monetize or even worse steal mods to satisfy their greed, while destroying hours and hours of work from people that really liked a game and just wanted to add more to it, not for profit or fame but pure and simple appreciation of the game itself and the developers behind it: the real nature of modding, love. Fortunately, like in our case, the modding community always comes around, and with something more to add, both odd and majestic.



**DARK DEMON**

