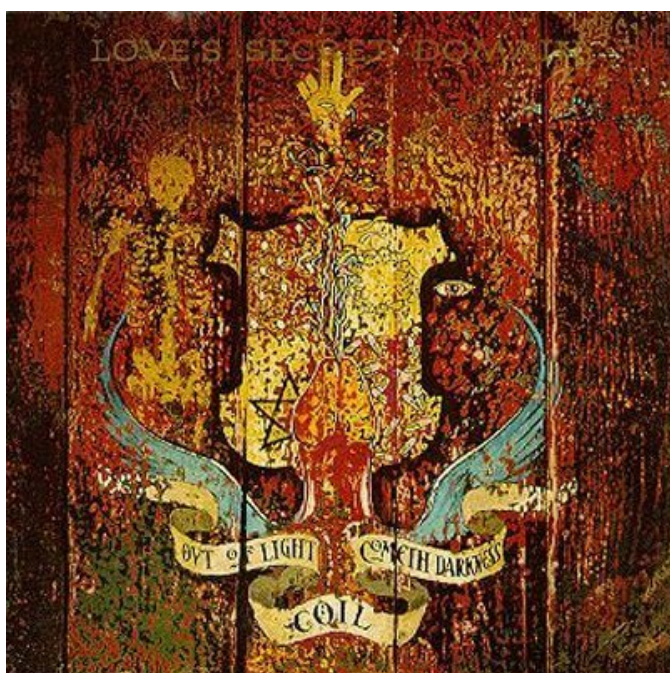


Brainwashed - Coil, "Love's Secret Domain" (Gary Suarez)

Written by Gary Suarez

Saturday, 30 July 2011 21:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 31 July 2011 13:28

In the early 1990s, those scrawny awkward years that formed the genesis of my adolescence, I didn't give one solitary fuck about Coil. Nirvana were mere seconds from breaking into the mainstream and, growing complacent with my parents' classic rock and protest folk collection, I immersed myself in college rock mixtapes provided by my older cousin and Victoria's Secret catalogs stolen from the mailbox. Experimental music was as foreign to me then as any country, and I had no appetite for a challenge like *Love's Secret Domain*, nor was I even aware of its existence. The closest I had come to it at that point were the few doozies on The Beatles' self-titled double album, and I was more inclined to flip the record than endure them.



[Threshold House](#)

Though my music tastes had yet to catch up to Coil, my other interests had accelerated prematurely into darkness. My obsessions—serial killers, the work of David Lynch, Anton LaVey's Church Of Satan, anything romanticizing or at least glorifying death and darkness—served as precursors to the scenes and styles I would later adopt and ultimately grow out of and gleefully discard. These quasi-macabre hobbies inevitably brought me to Coil. These and, of course, Nine Inch Nails.

Trent Reznor's role as taste-maker for a considerable swatch of my generation should not be overlooked. As a comically morose teenager, my interests were his interests. In addition to ingesting the NIN discography, I sought out anything even tangentially related, though in those pre-Spotify times limits were set by the record store and the twice-monthly paycheck generated by my minimum wage community center work. Having passed through gateway to

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the clove-smokey allure of the goth-industrial scene, I discovered so many artists through Reznor's tacit blessing: Aphex Twin, Pop Will Eat Itself, the many incarnations of Jim "Foetus" Thirlwell, and, yes, Coil.

Early on, I had learned to pore over liner notes, and my bookish attention to detail manifested some evening as I sat all-but memorizing the credits on 'Further Down The Spiral', NIN's vexing and underrated "remix" EP that subversively served as a showcase for other artists. The four most wildly re-imagined cuts were credited to "John Balance, Peter Christopherson, Drew McDowall, and Danny Hyde" and after some cross-referencing with magazines I'd collected, I finally realized that these guys were members of a band called Coil. This sort of self-serious amateurish research also led me to connect Christopherson to the infamous "Broken video," which I neglected to return to a friend-of-a-friend.

My scrimping secured me a copy of *Love's Secret Domain* on compact disc. It took years for me to fully get into the entire album, but "The Snow," "Windowpane," and Annie Anxiety's monologue-driven "Things Happen" earned excessive replays on my bedroom stereo. I squinted over the text and sniggered at the drug reference barely hidden in the title much as I'd done years before with "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds." But what floored me was the title track, that murky mix of neo-primal percussion, synth swells, creeping arpeggios, and those effect-saturated, downright menacing vocals. Depraved, obsessive, danceable, and unlike anything I'd heard before, I was especially struck by the lyrics plucked from Roy Orbison's "In Dreams," words I knew better from

Blue Velvet

, a film I adored at the time. Connections were made, synapses fired, and I instantly felt as though I belonged to some cabal of like-minded tortured creatives.

Or at least that's how I choose to remember it.