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Imagining Space in the Lost Gardens of Apollo

Collaborative Virtual Environments (CVEs) are unique spaces that defy materialist interpretations of space and place. In drawing upon Edward Soja's work of spatiality, CVEs can be considered as thirdspace, a space that has as much relevance as that typified by our physical, or 'real', existence. Virtual space undermines the rigid polemic of the 'real' and 'imaginary' by revealing lived experience as a combination of both real and imagined experience. The virtual illuminates experience as a relativist combination of perception and interpretation that inhabits both the corporeal and the virtual realms. Using the example of Second Life's Lost Gardens of Apollo this paper will illuminate the fluidity of real and imagined place through an environment of rich visual experience. In addition, such spaces will be discussed as places of potential social and political reconfiguration by challenging the traditional socio-cultural and historical aspects of space.