

‘The Logic of Place’ and Common Sense¹

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Abstract: The essay is a written version of a talk Nakamura Yūjirō gave at the Collège international de philosophie in Paris in 1983. In the talk Nakamura connects the issue of common sense in his own work to that of place in Nishida Kitarō and the creative imagination in Miki Kiyoshi. He presents this connection between the notions of common sense, imagination, and place as constituting one important thread in contemporary Japanese philosophy. He begins by discussing the significance of place (*basho*) that is being rediscovered today in response to the shortcomings of the modern Western paradigm, and discusses it in its various senses, such as ontological ground or substratum, the body, symbolic space, and linguistic or discursive *topos* in ancient rhetoric. He then relates this issue to the philosophy of place Nishida developed in the late 1920s, and after providing an explication of Nishida’s theory, discusses it further in light of some linguistic and psychological theories. Nakamura goes on to discuss his own interest in the notion of common sense traceable to Aristotle and its connection to the rhetorical concept of *topos*, and Miki’s development of the notion of the imagination in the 1930s in response to Nishida’s theory. And in doing so he ties all three—common sense, place, and imagination—together as suggestive of an alternative to the modern Cartesian standpoint of the rational subject that has constituted the traditional paradigm of the modern West.

Key Words: Common sense – *sensus communis* – place – imagination – *topos* – *basho* – *topica*

Prefatory Note³

As I state within the essay, the following piece, “‘The Logic of Place’ and Common Sense” is a talk I gave when I was invited to the First Public Lecture Series of Collège international de philosophie led by Mr. J. Derrida at the time, after his visit to Japan. I intended to give it my best shot but, in any case,