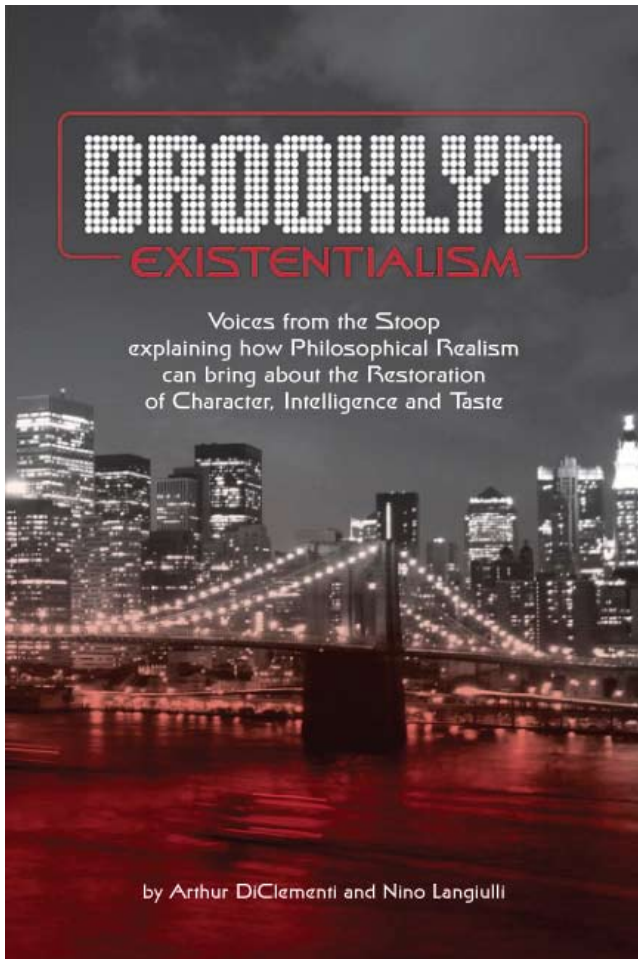


# A Guide for the Perplexed



Immortalized by some of the greatest Hollywood films of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Italian Brooklyn became one of the icons of American culture. Brooklyn Existentialism shows that the culture of that time and place was more than just an icon. The oxymoronic combination of uprootedness and ethnic solidarity that were found in Brooklyn during the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provide an opening that takes the reader not just back to Italy, not just back to Europe, but back to the sources of philosophical realism that made Europe, Italy, and America possible in the first place. Brooklyn Existentialism is ethnophilosophy with a vengeance. It is a take-no-prisoners attack on the bad ideas which have corrupted the academy over the course of the last century combined with an equally frank discussion of the moral mischief these bad ideas have caused.

Why Existentialism? Because existentialism derives from being and not thought. Because existentialism is a voice that describes the theme of human mortality and its counterpoint, moral imperfectability. Why Brooklyn? Because it is a particular place with a particular attitude, an attitude that can prove especially salutary to the inanities and mendacities that the dominant culture has imposed on all of us. Think of what Matthew Broderick learned about the politically correct America of his stepfather in *The Freshman*, you have some idea of how the brash and dismissive ridicule so common to Brooklyn is the best antidote to bad “ruling” ideas!

In the end, it turns out that ethnophilosophy is not only not an oxymoron, it turns out to be the only philosophy worth doing. What were Socrates, Plato and Aristotle if not residents of an ethnic neighborhood, who became skeptical of the ruling ideas of their day and decided to do something about it by speaking out. DiClementi and Langiulli have provided the same service to humanity in our day and age.

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