

**Abstract**

This thesis, *Where Narratives End*, examines the ontological status of art in the late Twentieth Century. In particular it draws on the work of the philosopher art critic Arthur C. Danto. Danto's theory of Narrative Sentences will be discussed in order to reveal the structure of narrative accounts of history, and to examine how history is inextricably linked with the form of the narrative sentence which places one past event into a sentence with a subsequent past event to reveal something about each event in the sentence. I will further develop this idea with examples and present my own take on the hierarchy of narrative structures.

A few examples of art history text will illuminate this account, and provide a backdrop for the discussion of Hegel's account of art history, as well as Danto's. Hegel's account outlines art history and links the development of art to the *zeitgeist*. The most central element of concern in Hegel's account is his description of the end of art history. Danto, too, believes that art history has ended, and is consciously drawing on Hegel in so saying. Danto's theory, however, must be different from Hegel's, and this becomes the next topic of discussion.

That art history has ended provides for serious ramifications within the art world, and what these ramifications are, according to Danto's theory, is well worth examining, and it is the subject of the fifth chapter. The final chapter ties the narrative sentence into Danto's notion of an end to present us with a problem which can be used like a crow bar to pry open Danto's theory, and theories of art history in general by showing us the limitations of such accounts—in particular with the seeming necessity that any account of art history have an end point.

It is not my cause to support or refute Danto's theory so much as to use the problems within it to gain insight into the problems of art history accounts. That I have spent over a year of research and written over seventy pages about Danto suggests that his thinking is worth considerable thought.