Critical Summary of James Elkins’s “The Failed and the Inadvertent: Art History and the Concept of the Unconscious”

Instructions: Write a short one to two page critical summary of James Elkins’s “The Failed and the Inadvertent: Art History and the Concept of the Unconscious.” Your critical summary should be organized into three sections: the introduction, body, and conclusion. Remember to make sure to state the title of the article and its author in your introduction. Also, end your introduction with a strong thesis statement, which is a one-sentence summary of the main point you will discuss in your essay. Your conclusion should revisit your thesis, synthesize the ideas from the body of your essay, and leave the reader with a final thought without introducing any new information. Make sure each paragraph in the body of your essay contains a topic sentence. Proofread your paper to make sure you are using correct spelling and grammar throughout. You do not need to do any extra research to complete your summary, rather consider and respond to the following questions as you write.

1. What is the article’s main thesis (i.e., what is the main argument made by the author)? Try to be succinct as possible and remember the author may be making secondary arguments as well. You only need to focus on identifying and restating the author’s primary argument.

2. What types of evidence does the author use to support his argument? Does he provide historical or textual evidence? Does he critique other scholars or other analyses of artworks?

3. Do you think the author has made a convincing argument? Why or why not? What you write for this section in not necessarily right or wrong, but you need to be able to support why you think the author has made a strong argument or why you are not convinced. Remember that a strong essay will use specific details from the article in support of your ideas about Elkin’s argument.