Sample Application of a Secondary Source

English 1110

This is an example of how to summarize the arguments of a secondary source and then use those arguments to analyze an artifact. If this were my actual Secondary Source Integration, it would start with:

1. An introduction of the artifact (who took the picture, where and when it was published)
2. A description of the artifact (A white woman wearing a hoodie and carrying a sign that says “I am Trayvon Martin” at a Black Lives Matter Protest, etc)
3. My initial analysis of the artifact (What explicit messages does the woman’s protest convey? What messages does her rhetoric imply? Does her message employ ethos, pathos, logos, etc to engage the audience? Does she employ or bust any binaries, etc.)

Following those three sections, I would introduce my first secondary source, summarize its arguments, and then apply those arguments to my analysis. Here is an example:

In her article 2015 article, “ While Black: Millennial Race Play and the Post-Hip-Hop-Generation,” published in the journal *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies*, Aisha Durham argues that in this era of postrace mythology, while George Zimmerman’s killing of Trayvon Martin inspired a generation of Black and Brown hoodie activism, the real and imagined body of Trayvon Martin “animated white racial humor and rage” and became a medium for young white men to engage in race play (253). Durham analyzes “trayvoning,” the trend of white millennial men dressing up “as Trayvon”—complete with Black face—and then creating social media posts portraying themselves as such. Durham establishes “doublethink” and “white fantasy” as useful analytics of whiteness as she unmasks the impulses behind modern race play.

According to Durham, race-players (white people who perform Blackness) must engage in doublethink, the simultaneously belief of contradictory ideas. Durham also argues that race play uses the Black body as the repository for White fantasy and by unmasking this modern day minstrelsy, we expose the white fantasy that lies beneath. In her analysis of “trayvoning” Durham argues that the white male “pleasure in playing a dead Martin comes from the experiential knowledge of whiteness that allows them to strike a fatal pose and walk away unharmed” (257).

For the purposes of her article, Durham limits her characterization of race play as being the act of white millennials who “try on Trayvon for fun.” I will consider the implications of using the unmasking of race play as a tool for analyzing the rhetoric of white liberals who participated in “I am Trayvon” protests, by dressing up as Trayvon or posting with the hashtag #IamTrayon. To analyze this as an act of race play, we must identify the doublethink required to perform this rhetoric and the white fantasy it exposes.

The white woman dressed as Trayvon at the Black Lives Matter protest must understand that state violence targets Black people, and that a Black person wearing a hoodie will typically be seen as a thug, whereas a white person wearing a hoodie is generally understood to be on their way to the gym. If she did not understand this, she would not be at this protest. However, by dressing as Trayvon and carrying a sign that says “I am Trayvon Martin,” the woman expresses the implicit message, “what happened to Trayvon could just as easily happen to me,” and exposes the doublethink involved in her act of protest. White activists who seek to express solidarity by wearing a hoodie and proclaiming “I am Trayvon,” must understand that Black (not white) bodies are the targets of state violence, and simultaneously believe the contradictory idea that by wearing a hoodie or saying “I am Trayvon” a white person can somehow share the burden of being targeted.

Identifying the doublethink required in this woman’s act of protest helps expose the white fantasy at play in her actions. If the words “I am Trayvon Martin” imply the belief that the white woman can act in solidarity with her Black peers by somehow sharing the burden of being targeted by state violence, perhaps we can understand this form of protest as a way white activists explore a desire to be of color and therefore relieved of the guilt they feel because they benefit from white supremacy. Perhaps this form of protest reveals an underlying belief that being the target of oppression is in some way easier than bearing the burden of being an oppressor who does not wish to oppress.

Following this section, I would:

1. Introduce and summarize the arguments of a second secondary source
2. Apply that secondary source to my analysis
3. Put those sources in conversation with each other (show how they relate)
4. Add my own analytical ideas to the conversation.