Report on Critical Analysis of the Chinese Painting, 'Brocade of Spring'

The Chinese painting, Brocade of Spring (???), is an artwork originally painted by Giusepp Castiglione, an Italian painter, whose Chinese name is Lang Shining (???) in the Qing Dynasty. Now, it is located in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Taiwan. The facsimile of the painting is made by AnHui Arts Press in 2012, and it is in the?? (green box) of EAL storage room at the Cheng Yu Tang East Asian Library in the UT Robarts Library. The proposal will focus on the information and the description of the facsimile. Also, some differences of the facsimile and the original painting will be included.

Brocade of Spring is a rectangle hanging scroll painted with ink and colors on silk. The size is 200 centimetres in length and 70 centimetres in width mounted with the white frame. However, the facsimile is not reproduced at the scale of 1:1. The original format is shorter and wider than the facsimile where the size of the original is 169.2 centimetres in length and 95.2 centimetres in width. The subject matters include a pair of golden pheasants, rocks, bamboos, flowers, crab-apple blossoms, and spirit fungus. The colorful cock stands on the rock in the centre of the painting, where the black feather cock with the white stomach is at the lower right of the colorful cock. The white tail of the colorful cock is in the downward direction into the ground. The colorful cock takes the dominant position and is larger than the black feather cock. The bottom half of the painting is mostly rocks and earth ground with a few piles of flowers. The rocks are larger than the cocks, but it is in dark blue, which makes the cocks stand out. The background could be looked through the holes of the rocks. The right-side edge is the white crab-apple blossoms and bamboos, whereas the left part is mostly empty, in the color of the silk, with only one branch of crab-apple blossoms. The top right covers with branches of crab-apple blossoms seem not too empty. The bamboos and blossoms are taller than the cocks, but it is pretty thin and the green color echoes with the color of the rocks. The blossoms and spirit fungus create a strong contrast in the color of light and dark. The earth ground is indicated by dark color and shadings, which covers one-thirds of the painting. The colour of the facsimile is better than the digital image. In addition, the tactile property is allowed for the facsimiles, but not for the digital image. The facsimile is mostly replicating the original format. It is done with great quality that the eleven seals and even the tiny characters at the bottom right are all included. The color and small details are also in a high-quality standard. The facsimile also copied some places that a tiny bit of ink sticking out of the object, such as on the top of the rock. However, there are some white dots, for instance, the dots on the neck of the colourful cock, that made the facsimile not so perfect.

For the project, I will explore more on the quality of the facsimile. I will be talking about using the symbolism and style to express the beliefs and feelings from the facsimile comparing to the original. (Hearn) The facsimile not only has the outer appearance, but also the inner essence of the subject. I will examine how the Chinese plants and flowers are done in the facsimile. (Yang et al.) I will mention the seals (Gulik) of the facsimile. Also, I will discuss on reproduction techniques and modern ink (Noth). Moreover, I will focus on the “aura” of the painting as comparing both the facsimile and original painting (Latour and Lowefor). So, I could understand the original painting through the facsimile with migration (Latour and Lowefor), and copying, adapting, and the “aura” of reproduction (Cao). Above all, these aspects will better analyze on

the quality of the facsimile.

The painting, Brocade of Spring, by Lang Shining presents longevity and good fortune with brocade that formed with flowers and the pair of golden pheasants, which is a realistic scene. The colourful golden pheasant is the major exponent of the painting showed by the position and color. Some surrounding colors match, like the rocks and bamboos, while some contrast, such as the crab-apple blossoms and spirit fungus. The facsimile did a great job in replicating the original painting, even with some details. Yet, the facsimile is still a facsimile; there still are some areas not the same, such as the size, and some areas not good enough, like the white dots. I will focus on investigating and analyzing the quality of my Chinese painting facsimile in the final project.