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INTRODUCTION

Medium of Moods and Picturing of Place

AGRA, 1610

An invitation, painted and written on a paper scroll, opens with a depiction of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27), seated under a white pavilion issuing a *farmān*, a decree (fig. I.1). Jahangir, at the request of Agra’s merchants and monks, had proclaimed that all of his subjects were forbidden from killing animals during the twelve holy days of the Jain religious calendar. The painting’s trans-regional audience includes imperial officers, aristocratic nobles, and erudite priests, dressed in distinguished attire and identified by scribal notations (fig. I.2). Both dress and text suggest they come from northern and western India, Persia, Bukhara, Europe, Arabia, and Turkic lands. Standing beside a white-clad Jain monk labeled “Pandit Vivekharsh,” the raja Ramdas is shown holding aloft the rolled-up *farmān* in one hand.¹ The letter written on the scroll’s other end includes the names of Agra’s prominent merchants, who by sending the painted letter-scroll delivered the emperor’s proclamation and invited the eminent Jain monk Shri Vijaysena Suri to inaugurate a new temple.² They hoped the letter would impress the monk, also depicted as the monarchical figure seated under a

blue and gold umbrella, and motivate him to travel from the Gujarat coast to their inland city (fig. I.3).

The scribe writes that the painter, Usta Salivahana, who was in attendance at the court, has captured the mood (*bhāva*) of the moment that the drums sounded. The scribe invites the audience to “imagine the mood” of the durbar and city in one resonant instant by directing the recipient to “view the painted letter” to gain access to the momentous occasion.³ Indeed, the painter drew the messenger monk unrolling and displaying a paper scroll to the invited monk.

UDAIPUR, 1715–20

Almost one hundred years after Salivahana represented the mood of Agra’s durbar, by the late seventeenth century, painters hailing from the lake city of Udaipur in northwestern India had begun experimenting with picturing the sensorial, embodied experience of space. One such picture of spectacular moods, *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession*, shows the Udaipur king and his companions viewing the springtime festival Gangaur, dedicated to the goddess Gauri, the wife of Shiva, which counted the joys of harvest



I.1. *Letter of Invitation to the Jain Monk Vijaysena Suri*, Usta Salivahana, 1610, Agra. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 284.7 × 32.2 cm. Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad; LDII.542.

I.2. Detail of fig. I.1. Depiction of Emperor Jahangir's durbar, with the Raja Ramdas and Pandit Vivekharsha receiving the scroll representing the imperial decree and invitation to travel.



I.3. Detail of fig. I.1. Depiction of the messenger monk displaying the scroll to Shri Vijaysena Suri, shown seated at top left.

and matrimony (fig. I.4). The unnamed painter depicted the king Sangram Singh II (r. 1710–34), his visage easily identified by a gold nimbus painted around his head, and his courtiers on a royal barge three times, to denote the entourage's movement in Lake Pichola. In the upper register of the painting, the artist skillfully employed chiaroscuro to render a night view of the lake and the town on its opposite shore. Parts of the urban precincts are brightened to convey an effect of wall surfaces lit up by blazing torches and rockets. The delicate thin strokes, sprays, and dots in metallic gold sparkle against the dark-hued sky and water. The variety of pyrotechnic displays—including rockets, floating lamps, and radiating aureoles—creates the effect of a shimmering surface that glows in pockets. By contrast, the lower register, a busy urban landscape packed with colorful city dwellers and festivalgoers amid white houses and temples, lends the painting's surface fluorescent brightness. The throngs of women worshipping Gauri are seen carrying on their heads figurines that will soon be taken to the lakeside for ablutions, accompanied by performances of song and dance.

The scribe's inscription on the back of the painting identifies the painted subject as the king and his companions viewing the Gangaur spectacle.⁴ The painter's strikingly distinguished renderings of the two registers, of the king's processional boat party in the lake and the commoners in the street, are equally elaborate, thus creating a picture of mutual admiration by each group of the other—and their enchanted immersion in the sparkling city's celebratory and convivial mood.

UDAIPUR, 1820

Another hundred years later, James Tod, the first senior British colonial administrator in northwestern India, who served with the East India Company in central and western India from 1799 to 1822, evocatively described the landscape of Udaipur's lakes and valley, noting the inability of words to match its real beauty.⁵ Tod's assistant agent, Patrick Waugh, an amateur artist on their expeditions, renders a picturesque watercolor, *View of the Palace of Oodipoor*, in which the lake waters merge into bush-clad outcrops (fig. I.5). Tod's ekphrasis interweaves a historical narrative. First, he enumerates Udaipur's undulating mountains, the scented lake waters, and the sensuous materiality of the marble "columns, baths, reservoirs, fountains, often inlaid with mosaics," of the palace built in the middle of the lake.⁶ Then he damns its royal patrons. In the lake palaces—from which Tod saw a



I.4. Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession, c. 1715–20, Udaipur. Gouache and gold on paper, 78.7 × 78.74 cm. The City Palace Museum, Udaipur; 2012.19.0014_R. Photography courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Photograph by Neil Greentree.



I.5. *View of the Palace of Oodipoor*, Patrick Waugh, 1820.
Watercolor on paper, 27 × 37 cm.
The Royal Asiatic Society,
London; 037.003.

“landscape to which even its inspirations could frame an equal”—he reckoned, “the Seesodia princes and chieftains recreate[d] during two generations, exchanging the din of arms for *voluptuous inactivity*.”⁷ Tod’s rhetoric of praise for Udaipur’s lake environs destabilized the relation between reality and representation but also differentiated between the past and the present, seeking to underscore the shift in moods—from prosperity to exuberance to decadence to decline. The rocks, mounds, and shrubs in the foreground subsume Waugh’s view of the lakefront palaces, suggesting a similar sentiment and a Lake Pichola that had almost dried out, desiccated of life.

Pictures of moods possess the overpowering ability to make places real and times memorable—to create worlds. Since the third century, the poets and intellectuals who shaped premodern aesthetics recognized the art of generating *bhāva*—a word encompassing moods, emotions, and feelings. Udaipur’s painters expanded the conceptualization of *bhāva* in visual terms, rendering moods of the material world around them. What was implied in recognizing a painted vignette as a presentation of the mood of a real place at a historic time? How did painters compose the feel of spaces in a way that made places visible as exceptional, even desirable sites for travel or as places to proudly claim as one’s own? How did audiences perceive pictorial moods, and how do we historicize their practice of sensing moods? Why did Udaipur’s painters circulate across courtly and non-courtly worlds and repeat

across highly valued artworks and objects hardly deemed as art the impression of eighteenth-century locales as plentiful, pleasurable, and pious? *The Place of Many Moods* attempts to answer these questions.

THE PLACE OF MANY MOODS

With its lime-washed white palaces overlooking lakes, Udaipur has stood since around 1559 as the capital city of the erstwhile regional court of Mewar.⁸ As a site, it evokes the imaginary of an oasis within the dry desert landscape of the contemporary state of Rajasthan in northwestern India (fig. I.6). The city has captured the gaze of visitors from around the world for at least the past three centuries. Udaipur’s early modern painters were the first to give visual form to their enchantment with the valley’s sustaining lakes and flowing streams, revealing powerfully immersive and politically contingent conceptions of a place’s *bhāva*. Over the course of the eighteenth century, they emerged as experts in devising new, imaginative ways to visualize historical moods, mining the aesthetics of idealized emotions, enduring natural and built environments, ephemeral atmospheres, and celebrated seasons. In their hundreds of artworks significantly larger than portraits or illustrated manuscripts, they represented the courtly worlds and cities of rajas, sacralized landscapes of many gods, and bazaars bustling with merchants, pilgrims, and craftspeople, thus creating urban imaginings of Udaipur’s local streets and lake palaces as well as

northern India's prominent temples and lavish durbars beyond the city. The potential of these objects—ranging from court paintings one to ten feet long to painted invitation letter-scrolls up to seventy-two feet long commissioned by mercantile collectives—for effectively motivating sentimental attachments among places, pictures, and peoples has remained largely unexplored. Unlike Tod's dismissive descriptions of Oriental decadence, the work of Udaipur's painters represents an overlooked art that passionately praised places. These artworks confront and overturn British visions of territoriality and temporality in the long eighteenth century and the history of painted lands more widely.

In *The Place of Many Moods*, I reimagine the affective, intellectual, and political work of the art and aesthetic practices of Udaipur's painters, poets, and scribes in the long eighteenth century, including those who came before British imperial officers like Tod and those who traveled alongside him to paint lands and landmarks, moods and maps.

As Mughal political authority weakened, new configurations arose. The time period from the late seventeenth century to the 1830s—specifically the years following the death of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) in 1707, when forms of colonial economy gained ground prior to the establishment of a centralized British empire, in 1857—saw the influence of the Mughal court restricted to Shahjahanabad, the capital founded in mid-seventeenth-century Delhi.⁹ The 150 years of the long eighteenth century saw the strengthening of regional courts, urban bazaars, pilgrimage towns, small-scale urban conglomerations on rural hinterlands (*qasbā*), and fixed market towns (*gañj*).¹⁰ These places drew upon a multitude of religious formations, mercantile networks, and devotional sites that had expanded over the *longue durée* of the early modern period, understood here to extend from the fourteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. By the late seventeenth century, further layers of influence were formed by local, trans-local, and trans-regional economies, such as those established at the ports of Surat and Diu by Gujarat's merchants, who dominated trade in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, and the African coast of the Red Sea and commanded trading colonies in Aden and Mocha.¹¹ Concurrently, the British and the French East India Companies, fierce rivals in the subcontinent, which had been expanding their territorial presence and commercial rights since the mid-seventeenth century, strengthened the basis for British imperial rule over the course of the eighteenth century.¹² Eventually, the French abandoned their territorial ambitions.

The material, visual, and literary cultures that flourished across eighteenth-century local domains affirm there was no decline resulting from political-economic decentralization nor did new regional and local formations lead to cultural-artistic waning.¹³ Further, neither did the temporal endpoints of India's long eighteenth century constitute a stark rupture in representational idioms or in the complete erasure of associated skilled and intellectual professionals. On the contrary, the eighteenth-century courtly precincts at Udaipur and Jaipur in the northwest as well as Lucknow in the north developed out of the territorial arrangements created in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mughal imperium.¹⁴ Each of these communities reimaged its place in distinctly local ways, creating equally distinct urban cultures.¹⁵

Looking from the vantage point of Udaipur reveals a localized elite culture and an array of artifacts that presented—and were shaped by—praiseworthy environs, convivial settings, and prosperous ideals. Udaipur city was geographically and topographically different from Chittorgarh, the former capital of the Mewar court. These differences extended to the ways in which it had been memorialized and named as well. The walls and crenellations of the fort at Chittor rise from the rocky terrain and encompass a long elliptical area of eleven square miles that includes temples, commemorative towers, and courtly pavilions, densely covered with trees, vegetation, and bodies of water.¹⁶ By contrast, Udaipur's founders imagined the place as a city (*pur*) and not a fort (*garh*). On display in Udaipur's artworks, larger in size than most paintings made in any of early modern India's court workshops, is the eighteenth-century sociability of courtly men looking out at an urban setting of a large lake, beautiful lakefront, and enchanted citizens (figs. I.4 and I.7). In and of itself, establishing political and personal bonds over pleasurable and material exchanges was not a new practice.¹⁷ Recent writing has only just begun to give serious attention to the sentiments that bonded eighteenth-century communities and the valuable emotive work performed in sensate spaces.¹⁸

The Place of Many Moods seeks to expand our understanding of the long eighteenth century, resting its gaze on pictorial moods and foregrounding their power, seductiveness, and generative potential. To historicize emotions as not only psychological states but also collectively learned practices that may lead to sustained states of feeling—that is, moods—Sara Ahmed relates to Martin Heidegger's conception of “attunements”: “Attunements are not side effects . . . [but] we first immerse ourselves in each [atmosphere] . . . which then

attunes us through and through.”¹⁹ The creation of attunements in the first place, to then be transported into a mood, requires the work of building atmospheres. It was pertinent, as Udaipur’s patrons, painters, poets, and architects reveal, to rebuild exclusive moods, represent idealized moods, and reiterate pleasures, for the attuning to affect an ever-changing group of elite participants. The extraordinary iteration of pleasure and plentitude across artworks reveals the alluring power assigned to celebratory and prosperous moods. Udaipur’s eighteenth-century painters, more so than their earlier counterparts such as Salivahana, exponentially stretched the affective potential of moods. They represented real spaces as charismatic places within long scrolls of painted letters, thus circulating images and ideas about flourishing places beyond and between objects commissioned within courts and bazaars. Along their circulatory paths, several unnamed painters realigned their panegyrics, creating visions of place that conjure up new interpretive possibilities. In the wake of British colonial ambitions, their pictures even suggest counterfactual realities within moods of plenty that work against narratives of scarcity and inadequacy.

If unpacking visual thinking on moods is one frontier, then the other is expanding phenomenological approaches to “place” in art and history. The strongest evocation of a large and significant type of landform comprising forests and lakes, what we may call a material or pictorial “landscape,” could have featured as a prominent place at a given time in Udaipur paintings, but so could the smallest of the open-air courtyards and terraces associated with memorable moods. Depending on what kinds of attachments, points of interest, and selections of objects, spaces, or events an artist makes visible, a “sense of place,” Yi-Fu Tuan reminds us, always “exists at different scales.”²⁰ The lake city’s painters emphasized an open sense of place—as a configuration ongoing and ever changing, as an always-historicized configuration of entangled stories and subjectivities, and as always being constituted by a palimpsest of images and viewing points. Udaipur’s spaces seem constantly bound up in associated painted moods drawn on paper, felt in place, and evoked in read and recited poetry. The materiality of the painted artifacts and the depicted architectures ensured that each encounter was imbued with haptic and sensate interactions that left a trace of embodied memories and experiences, though these are difficult for historians to touch and track. These representations, as Doreen Massey writes, called for you, as a viewer, to move “between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself in the ones to which you relate,” such that places can emerge beyond points

on the “surface of maps” and as “integrations of space and time; as *spatio temporal events*.”²¹ Udaipur’s canon of images displays discursively constructed places bound up between the allure of real and of idealized sites, between the stories of the court and of the city and between the overwhelming atmospheres of changing seasons and of the spectacles unfolding in the lake city. These painted places illuminate the work of sentient beings—the eighteenth-century painters who brought them into existence and the patrons and connoisseurs who became proficient at the art of sensing.

To make the effect of painted moods felt was the ultimate goal. In inscriptions written on the backs of paintings, Udaipur’s court scribes, for their part, identified some, but not all, of the exclusive moods created within imagery of lake palaces, eminent persons, sequential progressions, and momentous occasions. Following these texts, art historians, for their part, classified paintings like *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession* as “contextual portraits”—royal portraits augmented by courtly contexts.²² This nomenclature acknowledges the semantics that made these artworks meaningful for kings yet reduces their settings to backdrops. Many of us, in turn, use the extraordinary architectural and topographic details as image repositories of facts. Tempted by our findings regarding buildings, objects, and landmarks, we assume a direct connection between the re-created world and the material one outside the picture. All of these are valid modes of appreciating Udaipur paintings; yet they are symptomatic of theories and histories of art that impose a taxonomy of the singular and paramount nature of genres—notions of portraiture and landscape nebulously constructed from Mughal and British pictures.²³ Udaipur’s painters were not constrained by such concerns in their art of painting moods, an art of memory open-ended in its capacity to contain sensate details, its ability to create the precise feel of historical moments and places. Its exalted idealizations and multisensory atmospheres leap beyond the limits of facticity. Udaipur’s large-scale paintings become legible only when we acknowledge the plurality and porosity painters saw in moods as a pictorial mode.

I argue that as a result of key choices—composing a plurality and heterogeneity of images, not bound by a singular focus, a standard size, an exclusive kingly portrait, a contiguous viewpoint, or a homogeneous temporal moment—painters freed themselves to constitute moods. The analysis offered in the chapters that follow takes as its object clusters of artworks rather than single images. It draws together

I.6. View of the City Palace complex, overlooking Lake Pichola and the Jagniwas lake palace (today the Taj Lake-Palace Hotel), Udaipur, nestled in the Aravalli valley and established as the premodern Mewar court's capital in c. 1559. Photograph by Emma Natalya Stein.

I.7. (*Following spread*) Lake view of the City Palace, Udaipur. Media Office, Eternal Mewar, Udaipur.









groups of works that reflect upon specific moods, celebrated across media such as poetry, music, and painting. Such groups of works explore the emotions and feelings invoked by the seasons and atmospheres of monsoon and spring or the pleasures generated by the sensate environments of gardens and lake palaces. Painters, like poets, saw *bhāva* as a malleable, multivalent, and valuable concept for seamlessly entwining the embodied, historicized experience of a place with the aesthetics of idealized spaces and times. Recognizing moods as a pictorial priority leads to fundamentally reconsidering the ontological role and the consumption of such artworks. The plurality of images and epistemic knowledge that informs their production implies that their efficacy was not bound to one genre.

Paintings that made moods of Udaipur's locales paramount illustrate the historical stakes for creating attuned communities in India's long eighteenth century. The engulfing of all the depicted figures in the entrancing sensorium of the scents, sounds, and sights suggested in the painting *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession* creates a meta-picture. It invited courtly audiences to recall the immersive mood of the historical spectacle, the confab with friends in the lake city, while demanding that aficionados similarly immerse themselves in admiring the beauty of the painted picture itself. *The Place of Many Moods* explores moods of a place by considering what they do and their changing conceptions, contradictions, and ambitions. The artifacts considered present an emotional sensibility, which can be historicized to lead us to think about the sociability they produced.²⁴ Thus the challenge in addressing poetic and painted artifacts that idealize emotions, represent historical moods, and highlight sensorial experiences lies in identifying precisely the nature of their engagement with aesthetics and their affective work.²⁵ These strands collectively shaped intense "affective economies" within and attachments to the city of lakes.²⁶

I view the multiple foci and painterly effects of *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession*—almost dizzying at times and not instantly apparent—also seen in other painters' compositions of places, as making a formal argument about interpretation itself. This visual multiplicity asserts the plural nature of the artworks that presented the moods of places while also demanding that we adopt a methodological heterogeneity. To trace the aesthetic, epistemic, and political threads that run through the art of picturing moods, I have followed the environmental constituents—mountains, rivers, rains—that shaped Udaipur's lands and its

experience. In researching this book I have inhabited the material world of lakes and lake palaces, architectures of courtyards, and altitudes of terraces, and I have dwelled upon their imaginings in expressive media: paintings, drawings, painted letters, daily court diaries, diplomatic correspondence, and the poetry of esteemed court poets and amateurs—traveling monks who illuminate the historical paths of strolling and point of views for admiring places. These eighteenth-century intellectuals' contemplations on the sensorial and the atmospheric gave voice to descriptive modes of world making that made affective images as important in rendering real places as they did in imagining mythical places. In yet other instances, I have tracked the political roles and personal bonds of represented participants—kings, nobles, and colonial officers; merchants, messengers and monks; and ordinary folk and court attendants—whom painters scrupulously included to create busy images of worlds immersed in praiseworthy moods.

The arguments of *The Place of Many Moods* concern the history of aesthetics, the history of affect, the history of painting places on paper, the history of the building of exceptional spaces, and the histories of eighteenth-century politics, literature, religion, and mobility to make sense of artifacts that yield new questions about Indian painters' visualization of deeply sensorial urban imaginaries. In between these lines of inquiry, mood of a place emerges as a phenomenon that was created to do enormous work, to be powerfully effective in making worlds feel alive on paper and cohere together on land. Beyond the intimacy of the story of a city, a region, or a subfield, *The Place of Many Moods* raises questions about relations between the sensorium and spatial knowledge, the affect and efficacy of artifacts, and the work, thinking, and agency embedded within meticulous aesthetic constructions of historical moods.

The representations of moods at Udaipur may not be shared symmetrically across South Asia, western Asia, and Europe. The creation of circumscribed assemblies, the building of spaces such as gardens, pleasure pavilions, and coffeehouses, and the consumption of material objects, books, and poetry, however, comprised activities central to cultivating friendships and the making of knowledge and beauty in the eighteenth century.²⁷ The artistic contemplation of passions and pleasures attached to places was integrated as much to concepts of sensorial immersion and practices of bonding as to artifacts and practices of mapping. *The Place of Many Moods* explicates the phenomenon of Udaipur's contribution of a novel art history

form that was synchronic with interests across Eurasia in establishing sociability based on structures of feeling and experiences of emotions. Besides the trans-regional conversation on eighteenth-century pleasure, the affective turn across fields has generated comparative and intercultural historicized perspectives on the relation of senses to perception and to emotions.²⁸ For premodern India's intellectuals, this relationship never stopped being fascinating.

EMOTION, IMAGINATION, SENSATION

In common parlance today, we understand *bhāvanā*—a concept closely allied to the occurrence and ability of sensing the *bhāva* of an event, conversation, or atmosphere—as an implication of one's feeling for something or someone or even a strong intuition or judgment. The prehistory of both terms, however, was tied to the enterprise of literary imagination and the actualization of literary emotions. In sixteenth-century southern India, David Shulman finds a particular self-awareness in the historical use of *bhāvanā*, especially for the “mind-born calling of a world, any world, into being.”²⁹ The subtleties of *bhāvanā*, as debated by Sanskrit logicians and grammarians, infused the term with agency and potentiality, and in some cases also tied it to “mental generation of things such as memory.”³⁰ Based on a corpus of classical texts on Sanskrit aesthetics, Sheldon Pollock translates *bhāva* as emotion that is less psychological and more affective and physical, a state that may incite emotions or may constitute emotions within it.³¹ As such, the shifting intellectual history of *bhāva* and *bhāvanā* make static understandings untenable.³² These theoretical traditions of aesthetics from Sanskrit literature were propelled by the seventeenth century in northern India's new courtly poetry in the vernacular of Brajbhasha, a literary dialect of classical Hindi. Aesthetic theory in Brajbhasha poetry included practice, which Allison Busch finds in the emphases placed on exemplification and description: these were equally incisive deliberations on *bhāva* as the stress laid on systematization and typology of *rasa* in Sanskrit treatises.³³ Hindi poets innovated by saturating their verses with “sound and sense” as well as a “wondrous rapture” with the world.³⁴ The scholarly emphases on poets' layered and varied engagements with emotion and imagination, especially in terms of how active processes of creation may reside in the root of *bhāvanā*, are instructive—not necessarily for directly translating the scribal iterations of *bhāva* in relation to paintings but for the methodological paths we may adopt for tracking

the artistic constitution of *bhāva* in the picturing of the moods of places on paper.

Likewise, *rasikas*, or connoisseurs, were seen as astute men and women adept at experiencing *rasa*, the aesthetic taste, flavor, or essence of any art. While early thinkers generated theories of *rasa* in Sanskrit that focused on the arts of dance and drama, poetry and painting were considered allied arts. In his foundational *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Science of drama), dated to the third to fourth century, Bharata laid out eight types of *rasa*: love, mirth, wonder, anger, courage, compassion, fear, and disgust.³⁵ He drew analogies between aesthetic appreciation and the sense of taste, according to Pollock, “on the grounds both of the physicality of emotion—it is something we feel, not something we think—and of the blending of ingredients that complex tastes and aesthetic moods both evince.”³⁶ From its very inception, the conceptualization of emotions was theorized as a temporal unraveling and kindling of feeling. The inclusion of somatic response gestured an intellectual interest in codifying the experience of real emotions and embodiment, and not the systematization of aesthetics alone. This explication was also a call to all artists—poets, performers, and painters—to create material, visual, textual, and sonic artifacts that invoked aesthetic emotions in ideal ways so that art offered moments of transformational experiences for a *rasika*.

Contemporaneous treatises dating to the third century defined *kama*, which literally means pleasure or desire, not simply an isolated practice of sex, but as a component of an aesthetically encoded world of the eponymous Hindu god of love and of the urbane man, the *rasika*.³⁷ The connoisseurs of this idealized world of delight, which Daud Ali calls the “‘*kama* world’ on earth,” were courtly men.³⁸ For kings, a “properly lived worldly” life included “proper enjoyments” of material things like wines, perfumes, garlands, and jewelry. Consumption, likewise, was defined and refined by men in the Indo-Persianate worlds of pre-Mughal sultanates and imperial Mughal circles. The education of a mirza, the cultivated gentleman, outlined within the genre of *mirzā nāmah*, the Persian conduct manuals written in India in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, speaks specifically, as Rosalind O'Hanlon argues, to the emergence of new nobility by the late seventeenth century.³⁹ A high value was placed on a variety of etiquette and knowledge, from cultivating new tastes to discerning artistic cultures, refining bodily manners, and acquiring hunting skills, within imperial durbars and regional courts. The connoisseurship ideals demanded of the mirza of

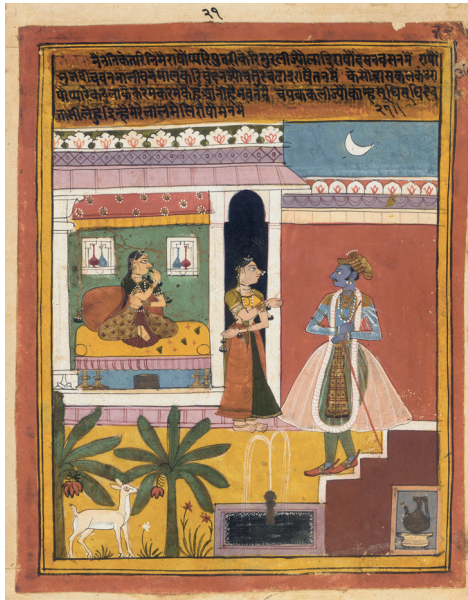
Indo-Persianate worlds echo those enlisted for the *rasika* of Sanskritic worlds. Both emphasized sensuous, spiritual, and emotional experience.

The peculiarly affective language that suffused courtly life, aesthetics, and literature continued to be deployed and recast across religious, courtly, and intellectual milieus in medieval and early modern India. Poets engaged conceptions like *bhāva* and *rasa* in transcultural ways from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century in practices associated with Muslim, Hindu, and Jain patrons. The newness of late fourteenth-century Hindavi Sufi romances, such as the *Candāyan*, composed by Maulana Daud, lay in the combination of Persian verse narratives and Sanskrit aesthetics, and of classical languages and regional poetic and spoken forms of northern India.⁴⁰ By revealing layers of implication, Aditya Behl eloquently reads the poet's use of "*rasa* as the keystone" in romance verse stories to elicit emotional responses from audiences.⁴¹ Similarly, the eminent poet Bhanudatta, under his patrons at the Nizamshahi court of Ahmadnagar in the Deccan, created the *Rasamañjarī* (Bouquet of literary emotion, c. 1500), which explores the nature of aesthetic emotions by describing heroines (*nāyikā*) and heroes (*nāyaka*) of Sanskrit literature.⁴² At the Mughal court of the emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605), Abu al-Fazl, the illustrious historian, in his *Ā'in-i Akbarī* (Edicts of Akbar, c. 1595), written in Persian, acknowledged Bhanudatta's poetry as an exemplary work for its discussion of the nine sentiments associated with literature in Hindustan. The late sixteenth-century *Kitāb-i nau-ras* (Book of nine/new emotional essences), composed by Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1580–1627) in Dakhni at the Bijapur court in the south, systematized an aesthetic interest in *nau* as "nine" or "new"—that is, the mixing of nine types of *rasa* or the making of a new *rasa*, thus emphasizing the feeling and emotional experience of art.⁴³ Ripe with tantalizing allusions to mixed audiences and interreligious devotional imagery, it generated an idealized vision of a new city, new music, new arts, new wines, and so on and so forth. This trajectory of literary *bhāva* displaces any neat divisions we may want to hold onto between medieval and early modern or between early modern and colonial. A major impetus for poets and patrons innovating practices of imagining lay in introducing established aesthetic ideas as centered on emotions and experience to new audiences.

One significant way by which painters engaged the concepts of *rasa* and *bhāva* was through representing aesthetic systematizations and erotic moods composed in poetry. For instance, Bhanudatta's poetic descriptions of types of heroines and emotions in his *Rasamañjarī* were artistically visualized

by seventeenth-century painters from Udaipur as well as the courts of Punjab and the Deccan. In northern India, Mughal emperors, imperial officers, and Rajput kings patronized poetic texts in Sanskrit and *ritigrantha*—manuals on literary theory that elaborated *rasas* and *nāyikās*—in classical Hindi.⁴⁴ Both genres engaged the rhetoric of *rasa* as a literary emotion for imagining portraits of ideal emperors and for expressing imperial interest and connoisseurship in diverse literary and intellectual registers. One of the three works on aesthetic theory that the leading Brajbhasha poet Keshavdas composed between 1591 and 1602 at the sixteenth-century Rajput court of Orchha, the *Rasikpriyā* (Connoisseurs' delights, 1591), directly addressed *rasikas*.⁴⁵ The theoretic definition of each *rasa* was accompanied by an example that featured the love story of Radha and Krishna. These invited connoisseurs to imagine all the nine *rasas*—from how Krishna displayed the erotic mood (*śṛṅgāra*) by stealing the clothes of Radha and her friends to how even the gods were overcome by wonder (*adbhuta*) at seeing Krishna's play, while Krishna always embodied the emotional state of quiescence (*śānta*) at heart.

The aesthetic effects innovated in the terse verses of Keshavdas were especially savored by Udaipur's painters and patrons of the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. A painted page from Udaipur, made around 1640, depicts the non-illusionistic compartments dividing the spaces and emotional states occupied by the lovers, the blue god Krishna and his consort Radha (fig. I.8). Court paintings such as these, like other arts, Molly Aitken writes, were "designed to move viewers to experience feelings," to partake in the imagination of an emotional intensity of separation.⁴⁶ The turning of the folios of the illustrated *Rasikpriyā* serially evokes the expectation of Krishna and Radha's union and of the devotees' perception of a longing that is akin to their own desire for Krishna. In a page from the mid-seventeenth-century devotional and poetic manuscript of the *Gīta Govinda* (Song of Krishna), which praised the love of the Hindu god Krishna and his consort Radha, attributed to the Udaipur court artist Sahib Din, the lovers are seen within a red-colored space created by the arched bower, or *kuñj*, praised as the ideal place for lovemaking, where there was "forever spring" (fig. I.9).⁴⁷ As the image of the bower was reiterated in poetry, manuscripts, multiple folios of a single series, and across disparate genres, it became a devotional icon that carried along familiar associations of love and longing. The forest beyond the *kuñj* on the right in this image is equally resplendent: trees painted in greens, reds, oranges, and browns, which also hold the attention of



I.8. “Radha awaits Krishna,” from the *Rasikpriyā*, by the poet Keshavdas, c. 1640, Udaipur. Opaque watercolor on paper, 25.7 × 21.6 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Page, FI991.91.



I.9. “Krishna and Radha in a Bower,” from a dispersed *Gīta Govinda*, attributed to Sahib Din, c. 1665, Udaipur. Opaque watercolor on paper, 24.4 × 19.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of Ernest Erickson Foundation, 1988.103.

Radha’s companion (*sakhi*). Her gaze, away from the lovers, toward the other direction, evokes the image of a deeper jungle beyond the physical page. Such immersive abstractions invited audiences to perceive the feeling invoked by forest beauty and the spring season; today they offer a glimpse into the interests of the mid-seventeenth century before Udaipur painters turned to admiring their city’s lake environs.

Real places and the empirical world played a central role in reshaping the imaginations of painters and poets alike. When Keshavdas described the real-life gardens of his student Pravin Ray, a courtesan, he emphasized not only verisimilitude but also the stirring of *bhāva* and the activation of feelings and emotions that one feels in real and ideal places alike.⁴⁸ The views that the court poet Kavi Nandram and the traveling Jain monk poets Yati Jaichand and Kavi Khetal offered in their urban poetry suggest that evoking the many moods of the city of Udaipur and the broader region was meaningful for historical communities. These works of literature have barely been studied or even transcribed; this book introduces select verses in translation for the first time. Nandram, deeply immersed in the moods of the mid-eighteenth-century city, wrote a 405-verse-long poem,

Jagvilās (World of pleasure), focused on the Udaipur lake palace Jagniwas.⁴⁹ It reveals multiple communities bound together by partaking in the delights of a newly built space in the middle of the lake. Many of these early modern poets of northern India drew upon various aesthetic topoi of urban praise, such as *nagara-varṇana*, seen in classical Hindi poetry, and *shahrāshūb*, seen in Persianate literary cultures, revealing the breadth of multilingual practices and mixed audiences.⁵⁰ That “*bhāva* of a place” was a meaningful category for historical communities is also evidenced by the sufficient number of instances we have of scribes at Udaipur deploying the term *bhāva* to describe ephemeral and emotive aspects of a place. Painting inventories and scribal accounts found on the backs of numerous paintings attest that scribes used the term to denote the mood and feel of places, of seasons, of momentous spectacles and festivals.⁵¹ *Bhāva* was also used to refer to fleeting moments and the ephemeral sounds, sights, and scents that made places sensate. This scribal vocabulary is reminiscent of Keshavdas’s prescriptions in *Kavipriyā* (1601) directed toward poets steeped in the Radha-Krishna universe, in which he examined the material qualities of colors and the feel of fleeting impressions.⁵² Using the

term for such varied descriptive purposes—across inscriptions and verses—demonstrates the centrality ascribed to *bhāva* for relating acts of imagination and perception.

Scholars have overlooked relationships between historical poetry and depictions of moods of worldly places because history traditionally separates manuscript illustration from other genres of painting, and the study of painting from studies of the other arts.⁵³ While the relations between *bhāva* and painters, as well as *bhāva* and connoisseurs, did not always result in one-to-one mappings across poetic and painted genres, the intermedial associations between painting, poetry, and places are clearly apparent. Evidence that eighteenth-century connoisseurs understood poetry and painting to be mutually dependent arts is also fairly abundant. The first painted page from the *Sundaraśṛṅgāra* (Beautiful adornments, 1726), for instance, depicts Maharana Sangram Singh II of Udaipur receiving the poet Kaviraj Jagannath and a painter, both of whom are pictured holding a page of writing and a page of painting between them. The verse on the depicted page indicates that the poet may be the supervisor of the manuscript and praises Sangram Singh as he “who understands with sweet discrimination [*sarasavicāra*] the joyous appreciation of pictures.”⁵⁴ While the following chapters reveal the consumption of associated poetic and painted ideas, they also insist that formal departures seen in the constituting of *rasa* and *bhāva* on paper in precolonial India command our attention on material, compositional, and painterly terms.⁵⁵ In spite of silence in textual archives on the ways of knowing, making, and displaying large-scale pictures, instances of sophisticated visual thinking on emotions and places are discernible. By tracing the Udaipur painters’ picturing—a tool for visualization that included ways of knowing, drawing, measuring, composing, coloring, layering, juxtaposing, citing, and adapting images—we learn about the actualizing of enchanting moods on paper.⁵⁶ The visualization of moods of real places created worlds that far superseded material and living examples, reflecting the ideational power of painters.

PICTURE, LAND, PLACE

The history of picturing lands, thereby producing places on paper, has always been tied to politics, poetics, and embodied practices on the ground. One of art history’s founding preoccupations—the mimetic representation of worldly spaces, objects, and peoples—departs from excavating painted places. In one way, rethinking conceptions of landscape ties into older debates on the preoccupation with

Cartesian vision in art history and the associated belief in the supremacy of a one-point perspective as a pictorial strategy.⁵⁷ As such, the gaze that rendered the concept of space as geometrically isotropic and the eye as singular led to, as Denis Cosgrove writes, “withdrawal of painters’ emotional entanglement with the objects depicted in geometrized space.”⁵⁸ Nonetheless, the shifts in recent years from an exclusive focus on illusionism to knowledge has been spurred by three historiographies that have been fairly trans-regional and not centered exclusively on Europe.

First, the intertwined nature of land and imaging of land with histories of ownership, territorial expansion, and colonialism has been addressed by scholars delving into multiple archives, formulating critical positions across fields from South Asian and African art to British and American art.⁵⁹ The more recent turn in humanities, art history included, toward pressing concerns of ecology and climate change has provided the ground for looking at familiar pictures of landscapes and seasons anew.⁶⁰ Lastly, integral to the above shifts are the approaches to senses and subjectivity taken up across the humanities and social sciences. They ask you to consider who has done the picturing, how terrains are encountered on the ground and negotiated with the aid of teams and technologies, and how the aesthetics of rendering lands in response to material worlds and to visual tropes reveal or conceal a sense of place. Painted places, as one author has put it, are “sensescapes” rather than landscapes.⁶¹ With the interdisciplinary questions scholars have asked of India’s painted lands, while looking anew at well-known artworks, all of the above shifts have made their mark. This book moves the field forward by introducing key questions about moods and affects into the discourse.

The Mughal emperor Babur’s textual memoirs and copies of the illustrated *Bāburnāmah* constitute a watershed in the consideration of painted lands. Periods and places of hiatus structured the emperor’s act of memorializing his journey into new lands within this first-person account.⁶² Babur’s writing vividly evokes the sensate, corporeal, and tactile experiences of travelers and arrivals “in and out of place,” elucidating the function places perform in art historical inquiries.⁶³ The moods of these punctuated moments became the sites Akbar’s painters illustrated. The well-known double folio depicting Babur as the first Mughal emperor, made around 1590, shows him directing the gardeners who are planting and plowing in the Bagh-i-vafa, the garden of fidelity, which the emperor built on newly acquired lands in Kabul (fig. I.10).⁶⁴ This image presents early Mughal gardens as significant



I.10. "Babur Supervises the Laying Out of the Garden of Fidelity in Kabul," from a *Bāburnāmah* manuscript, Bishndas and Nanha, c. 1590. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, each page 26.6 × 16.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London; IM.276A-1913 (left), IM.276-1913 (right).

painted, constructed, and ideated spaces. The painterly emphasis on the brick wall marking the garden's boundaries from the wilderness, on the water flowing from the channels into the tank, on orange trees and blooming flowers, and on flying birds and laboring gardeners assembled elements from contemporaneous garden sites and from visions of idealized gardens. The personal voice of the memoir insists on accounting for the genre that shaped such described gardens and landscapes, but the material genre of the painted *Bāburnāmah* also creates a new text, image, and object by way of selection, commemoration, and collaboration among painters, calligraphers, and imperial historians, among others. There is no desire to re-create an indexical verisimilar picture of the world.⁶⁵

The depictions of gardens and assemblies are significant, for both mirror the stakes in and the modes of depicting moods of places. Just as painted gardens emerge in every instance as heterotopias—spaces shaped by real places and historical practices as well as by ideal imaginaries and aesthetics—so do painted assemblies.⁶⁶ Painters intertwined purposeful compositions and painterly choices to evoke the immersive nature of both. More than a few pictures from the worlds of the Mughal, Deccan, and northern Indian courts

certainly asked their courtly viewers to identify with the protagonists but also with the sensate spaces that sought to bind those assembled into a collective mood. A representation of Babur's assembly emphasizes an outdoor setting's sensorial overload (fig. I.11).⁶⁷ The curling lines of running and rippling water and the miniaturized trees near the lower edge of the painting become the central feature around which the painter assembles the seated group of musicians and elite men. This rendering of the portraits of the emperor, his attendants, and the men presenting poetry, playing music, holding books, or offering wine, as well as the hills and trees, in fine ink and gold, painted in two tones with a hint of pale greens and pinks, demands close looking and re-viewing. These kinds of painted assemblies potentially engaged historical viewers in acts of slow consumption, appreciation, and discernment. An etiquette manual, the fifteenth-century *Ni'matnāmah-i Nāshirshāhī* (Nasir Shah's book of delights), commissioned at the Malwa sultanate of Mandu, includes concise textual instructions on recipes of delicacies and rules of courtly protocol that painters supplemented with images of the sultan and his friends and lovers partaking in shared tastes.⁶⁸ The painter's artful abstractions iterate the feel of boundaries of



I.11. *Emperor Babur with Attendants in a Garden*, c. 1590. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 19.1 × 12.2 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; purchase, Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1954.27.

crenellated walls and interior chambers in illustration after illustration, reinforcing the division between those on the inside of the assembly and those left outside, as one turns the book's pages.

Even as the visual and haptic gain primacy when we examine the painted spaces emergent within books, manuscripts, albums, and independent folios, the immediacy of places and times can be felt only by reaching beyond what immediately meets the eye—in image and in verse. Among the lushest conceptions of painted lands, as seen above, were the illustrated *bhāva* of forests depicted within manuscripts praising the erotic beauty (*śṛṅgāra rasa*) of the blue god

Krishna. From the creators of a thirty-six-foot-long painted scroll made from lightly primed cotton cloth in mid-fifteenth-century Gujarat of a *Vasantavilāsa*, a poem that celebrates the moods of *vāsanti*—the desired season of spring and the desired woman blooming in the spring of her youth—to the illustrators of leafs in the *Gita Govinda*, painters responded to verses invoking the sounds, scents, and sights of the beauty of the forest.⁶⁹ Their resplendence reveals itself in alliance with poetry that saturated the season of spring with emotions of love. Similarly, Sunil Sharma finds the constitution of a “Mughal arcadia” in the reciprocal reinforcement of affect-saturated verses of Persian poets and images of painters that

evoked Kashmir's highlands as a pastoral paradise.⁷⁰ These painted images of emperors' and courtly nobles' boat excursions on lakes and of windows looking onto vistas of scenery, included within illustrated books or as single folios, shifted the idealized landscape from city to countryside for Mughal elites in the mid-seventeenth century.⁷¹ The proclivity toward courtly poetry that praised wondrous ideals at the Deccan court of Bijapur is thought to have shaped the mixing of miniature and gigantic elements as well as of otherworldly spatial and landscape settings in deeply contrasting colors.⁷² Surely, painterly effects that suggested misty haze settling on lakes or manipulated the sizes of bees and butterflies invite the viewer to contemplate synesthetic experiences and patterns of poetic imaginings.⁷³ To gain access to painters' strategies of emplacing and idealizing places across courts and artifacts of early modern India thus demands paying astute attention to the tropes that defined genres across media.

The painter as witness within Mughal circles offers access to the subjective and affective experience of historical encounters—far more so than we have thus far acknowledged.⁷⁴ If we consider the circulation of images of landscapes that have shaped questions about painted lands in Mughal Hindustan, Europe has been at the heart of the debates. Following Ebba Koch's lead in evaluating architectural representation in seventeenth-century imperial manuscripts from two decades ago, Gregory Minissale and Kavita Singh have underscored the deliberate non-illusionism and selective mining of Europeanizing and Persianate visions within Mughal artworks.⁷⁵ Not that the primacy given to mimesis and naturalism in Europe were unitary: the calculative design of "tight handling of brush" and a paint surface built from "tiny units"—the facets that define seventeenth-century descriptive manner—was embedded in an aesthetic of curiosity tied to medieval Christian art that was not simply representative of newness or "independent" scientific curiosity.⁷⁶ Even the all-too-familiar images of castles, turrets, and bridges found in numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century examples, Mika Natif argues, do not exhibit Indian painters simply citing distant European lands or learning the subject of "landscape" from circulating Flemish engravings. Instead, they transformed distant European landscapes, in imperial productions as early as the 1580s, into renderings that sought to depict Mughal lands, dotted with red forts and village farms through which yogis traveled and farmers toiled.⁷⁷ To charm viewers into moods of wonderment, curiosity, and contemplation while observing depicted lands and landmarks was of

consistent interest. It is worth considering that alongside the theme of the wondrous, the strange, the exotic, and the miraculous subsumed in the Perso-Arabic tradition of the *aja'ib*, Persian texts and inscriptions contain promising cues for pictorial *bhāva*.⁷⁸ Just as literary research has overturned the divide between "Mughal Islamic" and "non-Islamic, Hindu or Jain" sources and made space for multilingual conversations, the idiom of *bhāva* was part of drawing the sense of a place into Mughal pictures.⁷⁹ The Agra painted letter-scroll operates as an intermediary object to display the understanding of conceptions like *bhāva* within Mughal circles (figs. 1.1–3). After all, emperors from Akbar onward were fluent in Hindi, the commonly spoken vernacular in northern India, and the associated learned literary idiom of Brajbhasha.⁸⁰

Against these precursors, eighteenth-century painters intertwined the rendering of real places, aesthetic ideals, political claims, cartographic knowledge, and sensate encounters with natural and built environments. Moving away from the decline paradigm, Indian painting studies have followed understudied painters, manuscripts, styles, and patrons. For artists practicing in the courts of Kishangarh, Faizabad, and Lucknow, a predilection for lakeside terraces and fantastical gardens demonstrates a sensory immersion in beautiful places.⁸¹ For other painters working at Kota, Udaipur, Delhi, and Jodhpur, exchanges with the notable cartography workshop of eighteenth-century Jaipur, as discussed in chapter 1, led them to revise their approaches to and conventions of observing, surveying, extracting planar and elevation forms, and incorporating recognizable built and natural environments in the early decades of the eighteenth century. In light of shrinking Mughal territories, Yuthika Sharma shows that artists such as Nidhamal, who worked for multiple patrons including European officers, deployed conventions to signify accuracy and beauty in the earliest cartographic representation of Shahjahanabad, Delhi's Red Fort, prepared around 1750.⁸² Chanchal Dadlani has made a case for the historicisms established by eighteenth-century Mughal architecture and their commemoration within visually heterogeneous painted representations as related attempts that "effect" rather than "reflect" the "reality" of restricted Mughal authority.⁸³ Debra Diamond sees a similar purposefulness in early nineteenth-century monumental paintings of Jodhpur that combined planar map vignettes of temple spaces and royal portraits in order to define boundaries and make picture-viewing part of devotional practices.⁸⁴ The shapes and expressions of eighteenth-century vernaculars and

localizations may look very different from one locale to the next, thus demanding assessments on individual terms of the continuities and discontinuities that rather mobile and urbane painters defined.

The sheer number of commissions at the Udaipur court that negotiate the dialectic of rendering the moods of real places and evoking idealized abodes far exceeded the corpus created at any of the other regional workshops. It cumulatively opens our minds to the artistic, intellectual, and historical capaciousness of “*bhāva* of a place” as a meaningful and pertinent conceptual category.

Emotions were at the heart of painted lands. The unnamed Udaipur painter’s *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession*, Tod’s words on Indian princes’ hedonist play in lake palaces, and Waugh’s watercolor depicting a less aqueous Lake Pichola may seem entirely discrete on first glance. Indeed they were. Yet the way that the processes of each imagining were imbued with emotions and sensate encounters links them. That is, these artifacts not only are linked by a common place but also present a case of homologous aesthetic practices that sought to reveal places through the idiom of moods. Just as Romita Ray reminds us that the political underpinnings of the picturesque in colonial India were centrally made out of intense sensory encounters with new environments, Vittoria Di Palma has argued that pictorial landscapes in eighteenth-century Britain were ultimately not about representing architectures, pastoral grounds, or wilderness but essentially about mediating moods.⁸⁵ The emergence of landscape painting as a distinct kind of artwork underscores the new emphasis on affect. With the shift from the space of production to modes of reception in aesthetic theory, taste became central to defining beauty. What mattered most was the “emotional impact” of art, and thus, “objects capable of generating strong responses became those that were most highly esteemed.”⁸⁶ Emotions such as wonder, fear, and disgust were central to the making of landscapes in the first place—and thereby, Di Palma emphasizes, “pastoral landscapes composed of verdant meadows, meandering brooks, and flowering shrubs were displaced in the cultural imagination by sublime landscapes featuring jagged rocks, desolate plans, towering cliffs, thundering cataracts, and exploding volcanoes.”⁸⁷ By contrast, Udaipur’s painters instead sought emotions such as longing, love, beauty, delight, pleasure, prosperity, devotion, piousness, and plenitude, especially of rain and lakes.

The ways that art history tells the story of landscape, via a history of empire and colonialism, critically motivated my

initial forays into the archives, objects, texts, and travels that collectively suggest an intersecting, yet different, history of painted lands as well as of India’s eighteenth century. I do not write about “moods of a place” as an emic textual category, especially since the act of painting moods of a place onto any surface is itself an imaginative, artistic, scientific, and embodied practice that requires artists to move between sensing moods and representing them. It is impossible to escape corporeal experiences and topographic terrains in navigating and picturing lands. Likewise, a stronger acknowledgment that ways of knowing were always sensate also means accounting for this centrality in the histories we write about historical moods and painted lands today. To write a trans-regional intellectual and material history of pictured moods that revealed places and mobilized new bonds between people, lands, spaces, and politics on emotional grounds, first and foremost necessitates a critical evaluation of each localized practice on its own terms. *The Place of Many Moods* takes precisely that step.

HISTORICIZING INDIA’S EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

How did Mughal Hindustan’s cultures of mobility, sociability, and self-representation provide the basis for Rajput kings, nobles, merchants, and emergent elites to transform themselves into sophisticated patrons of distinguished localized cultures? While the rulers of Rajasthan’s courts, who identified themselves as Hindu Rajputs, “sons of kings,” had controlled small and large kingdoms since pre-Mughal times, by the late sixteenth century their political and artistic histories were transcultural, mutually transformed and entwined within Mughal networks.⁸⁸ The histories of aesthetics, sensation, and emotions, as embodied in the pictorial histories of painted lands in the early modern world, reveal the critical role of poets and painters, books and illustrated manuscripts, in expanding affect-saturated ideas and imaginings. These objects were consumed and exchanged by patrons and connoisseurs in impressive courtly interiors and gardens within convivial assemblies enlivened by the presence of learned men, poetry recitations, and music performances. I discuss the alliances and approaches, not only among kings and courts but also among non-courtly trans-regional agents, crucial for examining the sensibilities of belonging and the claims of territoriality that became significant in the long eighteenth century. In moving away from fetishizing marginality and mobility only in relation to Europe, the forthcoming chapters explore artifacts representing and circulating the moods of

places among kings and nobles as well as merchants, monks, and British East India Company officers. Each chapter highlights the affective work performed by painted moods of places in shaping the efficacy of material culture from early modern letters to court paintings. The politics and powerbrokers emergent in eighteenth-century Udaipur speak to both continuities and changes in the *longue durée* and the broader context discussed below.

Far less opulent than numerous Mughal imperial productions, the painted letter-scroll sent from the emperor Jahangir's durbar with the support of Agra's rich local merchants is a revealing historical object, one that incisively presents the material, methodological, and historiographical ground on which this book stands. It offers a tantalizing glimpse into early seventeenth-century Agra (fig. 1.2).⁸⁹ Jahangir holds an emerald bowl, exemplifying the delicately crafted and luxurious objects associated with the emperor's taste. Prince Khurram (the future emperor Shah Jahan) is shown standing opposite the emperor and his fan-bearing attendant, with the Persian noble Mirza Rustum Safavi behind them, while the Rajput raja Ramdas and the learned Jain monk Vivekharsha are receiving the scroll. The other identified persons of repute in Jahangir's assembly include a Jesuit priest, possibly the Goa-based Portuguese Father Xavier or the Florentine Father Corsi; a European man, likely William Hawkins, who is known to have posed as an ambassador of the king of England, seen removing his red hat as a sign of respect toward the court; and aides, identified by labels, including Farsat Khan Khoja, Shaikh Farid Bukhari (Murtaza Khan), and Kotwal Agha Nur.⁹⁰ Beyond the durbar, Salivahana rendered a red-colored gateway, emphasizing the fort's iconic imperial threshold, followed by arcades to denote Agra's bazaars that lay beyond. Merchants, musicians, laymen, and laywomen join the group that will collectively deliver the letter-scroll to the eminent Jain religious leader. His audience, too, is seen celebrating. The scroll's images ascertained that a prosperous city awaits the invited Jain monk Vijaysena Suri, who was residing in the town of Devapattan in Saurashtra, Gujarat's peninsular region, near the Arabian Sea. Both the letter's authors, the scribe and the painter, reinforced the scroll as a meta-object that tells the story of its own mobility and mediation while announcing a decree for the empire's citizens, particularly the Jains. The painted letter-scroll depicts people hailing from all these locales and regions—Persia, Arabia, the Mediterranean, Gujarat, Goa, Portugal, and courts and towns of

northern India—assembled in the world commanded by Jahangir. In identifying each of these places, regions, peoples, and itineraries, the feel of the cosmopolitan Mughal durbar is perceptible.

The tracking of mobility, of knowledgeable individuals, and of influential intermediaries; the mining of vernacular artifacts; and the study of historical poetry and travelogues have cumulatively propelled the understanding of Mughal Hindustan as an early modern space shaped by local, regional, and trans-regional participants. One impetus is bringing the Mughal Empire into a broader conversation—charting the beginning of an early modern epoch across the world, not only in Europe.⁹¹ That modernity, as seen through markers like historical consciousness, self-fashioning, travel narratives, and rise of the individual in Europe, was shaped not by exclusions but by connections. The period between the 1500s and the 1800s was characterized by new geographical discoveries, the expanding mercantile networks and imperial territories of the European East India companies, and the mobility of people and things and associated cross-cultural encounters. The travel routes to India, however, were not singularly imbri-cated by Mughal imperial presence or European mercantile presence. Merchants, pilgrims, scholars, and messengers who traveled from port towns in Gujarat, or from other ports such as Goa and Calicut, along the Malabar coast in the south, formed central nodes in the western Indian Ocean world and the global economy that expanded from the 1300s onward.⁹² Since the sixteenth century, the Mughals and the Portuguese, who were powerful actors in the export of textiles and spices from Gujarat's port towns even before the arrival of the Dutch and British East India Companies in the early 1600s, found themselves continually negotiating with Jain mercantile networks.⁹³ By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the expansion of pan-Indian and pan-Eurasian mercantile networks contributed to Jain merchants commissioning elaborate painted letters.⁹⁴ The moods of the thriving places featured within artifacts such as pilgrimage scrolls, maps, and invitation letters keep open the possibility that routes, apart from imperial and courtly networks, contributed to the innovation and proliferation of aesthetic sensibilities, embodied knowledge, and urban imaginaries.⁹⁵

Professionals such as scribes, painters, poets, and pandits in the service of multiple patrons in the early modern world were among the most mobile.⁹⁶ While Mughal Hindustan may have been global at an unprecedented scale, the itinerary of Salivahana's painted letter from Agra to Gujarat makes clear

the intensity of local and translocal travels and the vitality of imperial access to communities and networks of regional kings, nobles, merchants, and religious men. Salivahana was a painter from the Usta family, which claimed a trans-regional lineage from the region of Herat, who since the late sixteenth century had settled in Multan.⁹⁷ Along with one of Akbar's Rajput nobles stationed in Lahore, the Ustas arrived at the regional court of Bikaner in northern Rajasthan. Likewise, the Jains were key intellectual interlocutors, religious advisers, and political negotiators in the Mughal court.⁹⁸ One contemporaneous description of Agra's bazaars is recounted by the Jain poet, philosopher, and merchant Banarasidas, in his autobiography (composed in verse in 1641); Banarasidas arrived in the city the same year the painted letter was sent, with a consignment of precious stones and jewelry.⁹⁹ He described the merchants who were signatories on the painted letter as famous Jains who dealt in textiles, precious stones, oil, grain, rice, and indigo, and who supplemented their income as astute moneylenders in Akbar's and Jahangir's dominions.¹⁰⁰ In drawing India (and Asia) into an early modern world of "historical synchrony," scholars have argued for explicating the contours of humanistic thinking within microhistories penned down in Persian, the official language of the Mughal Empire, but also Sanskrit and the regional and vernacular registers of Hindi that flourished in northern India.¹⁰¹ Others have questioned this search for "European cosmopolitanism" in every place. Mana Kia argues for the primacy of other modes of being a curious and astute cosmopolitan.¹⁰² The Agra letter-scroll, as an object, text, and image, crossed multiple durbars and bazaars and connected imperial, vernacular, and popular domains, and thus demonstrates that to explore pictorial moods of a place we must step outside of courtly domains. This focus, pursued in chapter 5, also contributes to the limited conversations we have had thus far between courtly arts and bazaar arts in early modern India.

Within the domains of courtly spaces, both Mughal emperors and Rajput kings found it imperative to assert visions of local sovereignty within multiple idioms of language, aesthetics, and spaces. When Rajput kings entered into Mughal service, it impacted their political claims and historical narratives, the status of individual powerbrokers, their access to regions and resources, and the broader, heterogeneous populace on both ends. I surmise these relationships, seemingly distant from the perspective of eighteenth-century visions of Rajput kings, in order to pinpoint precisely the early modern pasts that mattered in the coming years. Abandoning

center-periphery models to examine Mughal-Rajput exchanges on strictly hierarchical, religious, or ideological grounds, Catherine Asher's well-known work on Raja Man Singh's architectural patronage of forts, palaces, gardens, temples, and mosques establishes the Rajput raja's pivotal role in asserting Mughal authority and aesthetic taste across northern, western, and eastern India while expanding his own kingly status.¹⁰³

Alliances with Rajput kings were prominent successes for the Mughals and one of the primary supporting pillars for imperial expansion in the north. Akbar instituted various forms, such as marriage (*sāgā*) and notions of brotherhood (*bhai-bandh*) to incorporate the Rajputs.¹⁰⁴ Raja Man Singh (r. 1590–1614), of the Kachhwaha clan, whose grandfather was the first king in alliance with Akbar after the Rajput princess of Amber (later Jaipur) became his queen as early as 1561, was the recipient of the Akbar's special affection. As a high-profile *manṣabdār*, a noble who held the *manṣab* rank in the Mughal court, which entitled him to land, salary, and protection in exchange for armies, Man Singh led many imperial conquests while operating as a king in his own right. Rao Surjan Singh of Bundi (r. 1558–1607), along with others, surrendered in 1569 to Akbar's army when the formidable Ranthambhor fort was attacked but rose to greater heights as a Mughal noble.¹⁰⁵ The expansion of Rajasthan's courts and Mughal authority gained political legitimacy from imperial capitals, and itinerant durbars set up in pilgrimage towns and gardens—thus, co-constituting territorial claims, social networks, and artistic cultures.

In contrast, Akbar's armies vehemently fought the Sisodia Rajputs at the fortress of Chittor in 1567–68—even though the Mewar king Udai Singh II (r. 1537–72) had escaped and established Udaipur as the new capital by 1559. The Sisodias of Mewar prided themselves on being the premier Hindu Rajputs, who did not surrender to the Mughals. The Sisodia king Rana Kumbha (r. 1433–68) was an avid patron of intellectual treatises on music and architecture and also an important builder of forts, who expanded the fortified capital complex at Chittor in southwestern Rajasthan.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, the signing of a Mughal-Mewar treaty in 1615, spearheaded by Prince Khurram before he became the emperor Shah Jahan, brought Mewar's Maharana Amar Singh I (r. 1597–1620) into Jahangir's ambit of authority—a significant victory for the Mughals, widely commemorated in texts and pictures.¹⁰⁷ While fully part of the empire, by the mid-seventeenth century the Mewar court had bolstered its genealogical histories (*vaṃśāvalī*) and martial tales.¹⁰⁸ The emphasis placed on noble descent and being a

cultured participant at the Mughal court meant that Rajputs, in particular Mewar kings, felt more compelled than ever before, as Cynthia Talbot notes, “to demonstrate their connection to an illustrious past and dynastic history.”¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the Mewar maharanas’ patronage of grand books of the Hindu epic *Rāmāyaṇa* and of public works such as the Rajsamand Lake underwrote their attempts to assert “superiority” over the Mughals and the Kachhwaha Rajputs at Amber.¹¹⁰ While the preference of Udaipur’s painters for pre-Mughal visual archaisms in the mid-seventeenth century is well established, owing mainly to key differences between the genres of imperial portraiture and devotional manuscripts, painters, as discussed in chapter 1, also valued the formal vocabulary of Mughal imperial portraiture to praise gods as kingly men—as ethical, righteous, religious, and refined connoisseurs of aesthetic beauty and material pleasures.¹¹¹

For both politics and culture, the grounds for loyalties, personal friendships, and representation had shifted by the late seventeenth century. The structure of nobility that strengthened the Mughal Empire ultimately contributed to larger numbers of high-ranking nobles with increased pay scales.¹¹² For a long time, eighteenth-century decentralization of Mughal authority was seen as an outcome of the emperor Aurangzeb’s conservative turn toward religious orthodoxy, though historians have questioned such all-encompassing characterizations.¹¹³ In reality, each assertion of independence over the course of the eighteenth century by former Mughal imperial officers, who had already operated as kings in their own right in Bengal, Awadh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, panned out distinctly based on the new alliances that emerged among regional powerbrokers, including the British East India Company, which expanded territorial operations across the subcontinent. The Marathas, a group that, like the Rajputs, claimed roots in warrior clans, had become powerful in seventeenth-century western India and were looking to expand their authority after the Mughals.¹¹⁴ For instance, in the northwest, the Sisodias of Mewar and the Kachhwahas of Amber (later of Jaipur, after 1727, when the capital shifted), earlier considered staunch adversaries, forged an important political and marital alliance in 1708, when Sawai Jai Singh II married the sister of Udaipur king Sangram Singh II.¹¹⁵ The Rajput kings of Udaipur, Amber, and Jodhpur came together again in 1734 at Hurda (near Ajmer) to form a political alliance against the Marathas. Within the city of Udaipur as well as in other regional courts, kings were increasingly dependent on relationships with estate holders (*thakurs* and *rāwats*)—elite

men who populated their daily courts.¹¹⁶ The positions of Rajput (and sometimes non-Rajput) estate holders were linked to their kings through complex kin-based relationships, political alliances, and estate lands (*ṭhikānā*) that can be understood as “little kingdoms” in their own right.¹¹⁷ The Mewar court’s *thakurs* of the 1730s–40s had begun to build forts and palaces in their independent territorial domains and, in such construction, patronized painters and poets, seen most strongly in the establishment of a painting workshop in the *ṭhikānā* of Devgarh.¹¹⁸ Thus *thakurs*, quite apart from kings, employed cultural practices on their own terms to challenge the Udaipur court’s centrality. It is this new community of friends that is seen accompanying Maharana Sangram Singh II in the depicted boat procession, collectively immersed in admiring a spectacular night (fig. 1.4).

Closely allied to the innovations of transcultural forms and idioms lies the question of mobility and sociability among elite men. In the extensive field of Indian painting, work on the mobility of painters, patrons, and paintings in the early modern world, and Andrew Topsfield’s scholarship on Udaipur’s courtly arts especially, are indispensable for tracing the shift toward large-scale paintings containing a plurality of images that collectively present the mood of a place. Also key are the interdisciplinary turn toward understanding the centrality of arts in producing sociability among political men in the early modern world and the sensory turn, as discussed above, most notably in the study of the Deccan sultanates; both factors impact the major pictorial change *The Place of Many Moods* addresses. The stakes of accumulating cultural capital, aesthetic taste, and artistic expertise were serious—for patrons, painters, poets, and other skilled and intellectual men. Through patronage and refinement, Rajputs established their noteworthy position in the imperial circle and beyond. This included the dynamics of establishing intimate friendships—within assemblies held in itinerant camps or in the Mughal capital cities—through the exchange of books, painted albums, and manuscripts, among other material and musical and literary pleasures.¹¹⁹ The creation of convivial moods was central to diplomacy but also enabled learning about new and unfamiliar objects, literature, and connoisseurship. The cultivation of curiosity, desires, and tastes was imperative to ultimately appreciate, admire, combine, reject, or adapt—whether it was painters drawing upon Persianate, classical pre-Mughal genres, European artifacts, or Flemish engravings; poets engaging in creative multilingual exchanges; or Muslim, Hindu, Jain, and Christian thinkers

partaking in intellectual conversations. Inquiries in these directions have offered new historically contingent stories about personal intimacies and bodily experiences by interpreting texts concurrently with other material archives—books, paintings, verses, music, delicacies, and perfumes that were part of early modern elite sociality.

As individual eighteenth-century elites became increasingly powerful in the early colonial period, the Udaipur court's revenues declined. As the British colonial agent based in the city, Tod, who favored Mewar kings over other Rajputs, came to view the thakurs as responsible for the court's ruination—a view that supported his belief that the British should “protect” and “restore” the power of the Udaipur ruler Bhim Singh (r. 1778–1828).¹²⁰ While the British formally occupied Delhi in 1803, Tod's efforts resulted in individual treaties with Rajasthan's kings and led to proclamations of indirect British rule in northwestern India by 1818.¹²¹ Ultimately, Tod's account enabled Lord William Bentinck, governor-general at Delhi, to establish the province of colonial Rajputana in 1832 and Rajasthan as the quintessential “place (*sthāna*) of kings (*rajas*).”¹²² The Udaipur painter Ghasi's spectacular commemoration of the mood of Bentinck's monthlong *darbar* in Ajmer, discussed in chapter 4, suggests that Ghasi was reclaiming authority for his courtly patrons.

Querying the historical contours of India's long eighteenth century begins with questioning moods of decline. Tod's account bore the intense imprint of local encounters and ecumene; nonetheless, his narratives created persuasive Oriental stereotypes. By probing iterative tropes, historians have laid bare the evolutionary logic found in antiquarian projects such as Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829, 1832): the narrative arc of progress that culminated in the early nineteenth-century British present and the colonial future that was to come.¹²³ In part, *The Place of Many Moods* explores moods apart from decline, including also moods of celebratory spectacles and pleasurable assemblies that are recounted as such, thus historicizing the deliberate creation and agentive role of delightful, even decadent moods.

There is no doubt that the transpiring of spectacular moods in places and in pictures can dazzle audiences and generate lingering memories for a collective. Comprehending representations of people enchanted by wondrous and momentous moods, created in and shaped by extraordinary natural and built environments, however, is far from simple. The designation of Udaipur's large-scale court paintings as a corpus of “*tamasha* paintings” surely acknowledges their

spectacular nature but otherwise as a descriptor raises issues of translation.¹²⁴ *Tamāśā* (or *tamasha*) may be approximately translated as “spectacle,” likely meaningful to local audiences as modes of collective activity. Or, based on the circumstance and tenor of its use, the word may suggest a staged episode or the sense of a somewhat hollow and extravagant event. Interestingly, *Maharana Sangram Singh II at the Gangaur Boat Procession* is the only known Udaipur artwork with an inscription (on the verso) stating that the picture describes a *tamāśā*. That is, the inscription specifically refers to the painter's depiction of a spectacle of fireworks on the banks of Lake Pichola on a dark moonlit night.¹²⁵ In one way, Tod seems embedded in a longer tradition of smitten admiration of the city of lakes and lake palaces, though the valence of the mood strikes him as empty. That material consumption and celebratory extravaganzas could be open to interpretation—decried as meaningless or praised as meaningful—was, however, dependent on when and who did the looking, responding, and recalling.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The evocation of *bhāva* in place-centric art is the unifying topic of inquiry across this book's five chapters. The following chapters unfold as a spatial and chronological journey. Each chapter traces the itinerancies of objects and people but more importantly of artistic practices and aesthetic ideas within and between media.¹²⁶ The chapters are sequenced so that the reader encounters the interrelated images of painted lands from the perspectives of courtly communities; officers, explorers, and artists connected with the British East India Company; and merchants, pilgrims, monks, laymen, and laywomen who intersect within bazaars. While the major pictorial changes heralded by Udaipur's court painters mark a critical point of departure for *The Place of Many Moods*, the unraveling opens a polysemous world. In the process, the book considers the methodological and historical problem of situating place-centric imagination, not as a peripheral anecdote to the history and historiography of South Asian art but as a central component that opens up broader questions for the field.

Chapter 1 explores the Udaipur painters' conceptions of moods of a place by using formal analysis to discern pictorial choices. The textual evidence available to understand the imagining of moods is plentiful, considering the copious inscribing on the backs of paintings by Udaipur's scribes as opposed to other courts, yet this evidence is limited in relating the picturing and

the perception of moods. To understand the emergence of moods of a place as an operative category, this chapter thus accounts for the creation of Udaipur as a city of lakes; the urban, architectural, and political expansions of the early 1700s; the regional mobility of painters, patrons, and artworks; and cartographic practices. Chapter 2 examines the emphasis on rainfall and lakes seen in Udaipur's small and large paintings, poetry, history, and building of waterworks. It interprets historical perspectives offered on the emotions, ecology, and politics associated with rain and reservoirs in the early 1700s to find the multilayered significance attached to abundant monsoons and prosperous places. Closely connected to mediations on the moods of the monsoon, chapter 3 shifts our gaze from the lake-side city to the moods of pleasurable lake palaces. The myriad images of Udaipur's Jagniwas lake palace reveal the significance of aesthetics and affects of delight when examined alongside contemporaneous poetry that commemorated the lake palace as a "world of pleasure." Collectively, these three chapters illuminate the role of artifacts in shaping social histories of senses and sentiments, the material and visual means deployed to effect mid-eighteenth-century politics, and the role of moods in crafting lingering memories for a community.

The last two chapters address how the extraordinary interest among Udaipur painters to visualize real spaces as charismatic places across pictorial genres extended beyond courtly worlds. I have stressed courtly sociability for historicizing political, artistic, and cultural shifts at the turn of the eighteenth century and for constituting the moods of a place. The circulation of images featuring Udaipur's flourishing moods into vernacular objects such as painted letter-scrolls that traveled along mercantile and pilgrimage routes, and the itinerancy of non-courtly artworks and scraps of preparatory drawings among mixed publics, chiefly enable us to deliberate the efficacious potential of pictorial moods. Both chapters contribute to the revisionist histories of knowledge making at

the interstices of the early modern world and the emergent colonial space in eighteenth-century India.

Chapter 4 turns to the artist Ghasi, who worked for Udaipur's rulers as a court painter and also for the British agent James Tod, as his artist-assistant. His corpus widens our understanding of changing artistic practices and attitudes toward the moods of place and the conventions of drawing, mapping, and recording architectural sites in the early nineteenth century. Ghasi forged critical conversations on the theme of picturing place, both within and between the visual and political worlds of the Udaipur court and the British East India Company. Chapter 5 focuses on a seventy-two-foot-long, eleven-inch-wide painted letter, the longest known scroll of this type of invitation, that regional merchants and the ruler of Udaipur jointly sent in 1830 to an eminent monk residing in the town of Bikaner. As expert panegyrists of urban places, Udaipur's painters, alongside iterating the established imagery of a lake-centered geography, extended the epistolary genre of painted invitation letters to function as an effective map of the city's shifting territoriality. By presenting the prosperous moods of the city's bazaars, the letter-scroll critically displaces the authority of the newly settled British agents of Udaipur and their letters, which reported a collapsing court and urban economy.

The excess inherent to panegyric representations of place and the emphasis on emotions of plentitude and of pleasure reveal new histories of the eighteenth century. While praise as such is descriptive, with its aesthetics commonly standardized, the performance and interpretation of praise instead evokes subjective spaces of redolent historical moments that are under-studied and under-theorized. To consider any art of place is always to consider a practice of localization. The imagining, picturing, perceiving, composing, singing, and reciting of the moods of a place can never come from outside of an intense local experience. Thought of in this sense, places are made, always, from local and intimate worlds.

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