The sense of beauty has been defined by Kālidāsa in a verse in the fifth act of Abhijnāna-Sākuntalam, with a precision that is very rare in aesthetic literature. That verse quoted below, will serve as the proper beginning for assessing the place of nature in Kālidāsa'S conception of aesthetics:

"रम्याणि वीण्य मधुमर्षः वनशम्य शान्तः
परदिसुकं भवति वज्जुन्यिः तोषिः अन्नुः।
लक्ष्यितस्त्र स्मरलि नूनमज्जोधपूर्वः
भावस्थिराणि ननानातरसैदुर्वालिः॥"

(The reason why a happy man, when he sees beautiful things or hears harmonious sounds, becomes full of a vague melancholy is that his ante-natal companionship rooted in his emotional nature are remembered by him without their rising to the surface in his consciousness. The experience of beauty when it is expressed becomes art. The experience of beauty is not in the nature of diversity. It has a unity about it. It is not the individual man in isolation, that...
some secrets to her. You drink the nectar of her lower lip, which is the treasure of love's delight, while her hands are quivering with feeling. As we are lost in our search for reality, O honey maker! You enjoy a full life.

Even as KĀLIDĀSA propounds this great principle, he keeps his feet rooted on firm ground and his gaze fixed on surrounding nature. Imagination there is, but that imagination is derived from the experience of the senses. It is this characteristic of the poet that gives to his flowing and vivid imagery an appealing concreteness.

True art for KĀLIDĀSA is a product of a spirit of renunciation and of delight, a spirit encompassing both the heaven and the earth, both the things of mundane existence and the supra-natural. This view is expressed effectively in the twenty-fourth verse of the first act of the ABHĪJñĀNAŚĀKUNTALĀ:

"मानुषीपु: कर्म वा स्यायस्य रुपस्य संभवः

न प्रभातरम् क्षेलितं असुधातन्तत् ||"

(How can such beauty be born from only a human female? A brightness with spreading lustre is not possible to arise from the basis of the earth alone.)

Further, KĀLIDĀSA also seems to be of the opinion
that nature is the ultimate abode for humanity after the fulfillment of all earthly duties:

"नेत्रवा विसाय चलुर्जमतसपल्ली
दैनिकनिर्रतियं तनं सिवेय।
भयं तदपितकुस्मंभरेण साध्यं
शात्वे करिप्यसि पदं पुनस्त्र्यासिम्बिन॥

(Being the co-wife of the earth spreading to four directions, and having established a unique king of the line of DURYANTA, and having endowed your husband with a large family you will return to this hermitage with your other half.)

Thus, according to KĀLIDĀSA, nature is the ultimate abode of humanity and if nature is such an abode that nature is bound to have a determining place in his art.

With this background of KĀLIDĀSA'S aesthetic doctrine, we shall now proceed to a review of the details of his aesthetic concepts with special reference to the element of nature as it is reflected in these concepts.

KĀLIDĀSA delineates all the RASAS. But he excels in the delineation of ŚRūGĀRA, KARŪNA, VIRA, ŚANTA and ADBHUTA. The poet represents the RAUDRA, the BHAYĀNAKA the HIBHATSA and the HĀSYA slightly, occasionally and rarely. We shall take these RASAS in the order of their importance in the works of KĀLIDĀSA. There are three types of ŚRūGĀRA RASA - AYOGA, VIPRAYOGA AND SAMBHOGA. KĀLIDĀSA does not
delineate the first type of सिंगार. But he delineates both the VIPRAYOGA and the SAMBHOGA सिंगारस. The VIPRAYOGA सिंगार is delineated with excellent treatment in the MECHADUTA, the RAGHUVAMŚA, the VIKRAMORVASHIYA and the ABHILJNA-ŚAKUNTALA. There is a solitary instance of AYOGA सिंगार in the RAGHUVAMŚA in the ĀJA-VILĀPA. The imagery in the representation of all these is in quite a large number of cases based on nature.

We take an instance of VIPRAYOGA सिंगार from the MECHADUTA:

"लो आनीथा: परिष्करयो बिपित्तं मे द्विनयं
दुरीभूते मध्य सहचरे चक्रवाकिन्ये प्रकारा
गाईलकण्डु गुरुणु विनिमूलेण जल्यसु बालो
आतो अन्ये शिखरमधितो पवित्री वास्युपाम ||"

(You should know that lady, reserved in speech and lovely
I, her companion, being far away to be my second life, like
a solitary female CHAKRAVĀKI when isolated from her mate.
I think that lady, filled with deep longing, is changed
in appearance while these heavy days are passing, like a
lotus plant struck down by winter.)

The similes conceived with reference to the beloved
are drawn from the phenomena of nature.
The SAMHOGA श्रृंगार is best illustrated in the KUMĀRADASĀMBHAVA. "परवलिप्यस्तववक्ष्यमा निः (रुपवालोक्यस्मात: भवन्)
नेताय दृष्टिक्षेत्रस्तवाय चिन्तामणिरुक्तिः मुलाय-पनालि।"
The whole is a parallel conceived from the phenomena of nature.

The philosophising about the श्रृंगार of both types VIPRAYOGA and SAMHOGA given in three verses in the third act of the VIKRATAMĀVADIYA shows a rare understanding of the emergence of श्रृंगार RASA:

"पायकश्च उष्णशिशृः सुखवत्ति आतं
वाणास्त च व भद्रनयम ममाुल्|
संरक्षकशकिव सुनि ध्रवति-
प्रस्ताबसमने मन तत्तत्तिविनमल"

(The same rays of Moon are bringing pleasure to me, which were unfavourable when I was separated from you, O dear one!
The arrows of MADANA also have become favourable. The happiness that follows misery becomes more pleasant just as the shade obtained after having been tortured in the sun for a long time brings greater peace. As long as my desire was not fulfilled the nights went on elongating, now after having obtained you, I wish that the nights should become as long now.)

This is the expression of the mind of the lover,
No other instances but those drawn from nature could serve the purpose of the poet so effectively.

Next, we take up KARUNA RASA. There is no denying the fact that BHAVABHUTI is a greater master in the field of KARUNA RASA. Even so, in several instances, KĀLIDĀSA reaches great heights and especially when the atmosphere itself is to be charged with that pathos KĀLIDĀSA, perhaps, is supreme. The RATTI VILĀPA in the KUMĀRLAŚCĀVA and the AYA VILĀPA in the RAGHUVAMŚA are classic songs producing the effect of pathos.

"विनतसम विकीर्णंधना समुद्र-वाहिक कुलवी स्थानम्"

"जम्वयोग्यं पार्वतिलिनं नुमुलेनारिण्यं वेजितं।
विद्वतं: कुमालकरतलय: समुद्रतह रथ तत्त चुकुर:।"

A pathos of a different type is represented in the ABHIJNĀNA-SĀKUNTALA, when SĀKUNTALĀ is on the point of bidding farewell to the hermitage. All nature seems to be grieved at this parting:

"दुःसंगमतंभुक्तं मुः: परिविकलिनिना महुः:।
अपस्तुलपाण्डुपुत्रा मुनुचन्त्य-शूरीष तत्त:।"

The VIRA RASA is represented in the context of RAGHU, RĀMA and KUMĀRA especially. The descriptions of their valour or heroism have in all cases become descriptions of nature. RAGHU'S career of conquest, and RĀMA'S search for
ŚĪṬĀ are both described with nature in the foreground. Even KUMĀRA's war with TĀRAKĀŚHUKA is narrated with an imagery that is drawn from nature. An illustration from the description of the beginning of the march of the army of gods will serve to illustrate this statement:

"धनिकित्वादकंसभूवनलं विलकुकं व्योमलं महीलनम्"

If श्रीगः and कौमुडः are कलिदास's principal RASA his ideal is the सांता RASA. The best illustration of the representation of this RASA is to be found in the first, fifth and the eighth cantos of कन्हुवाई, in the description of the penances of दुर्गा and पार्वती in the कुमाकासांह्राववा and in the descriptions of the hermitages of काज्य and मारिचा in the अशिौनाः-साकुंतला. Of all these the best illustration from our point of view is that of the description of the hermitage of मारिचा.

"नमीवांद्रविनिग्रहितिरसा संवधसपत्वचा
काष्ठैं गणिताप्रतानवलयनात्वद्वत्संपपीः
संस्कारं शकुन्तलीउनमनं बिरभुजासामुष्लं
यत्र स्थायनिरवधतो मुनिरसामय्यविषयः सिद्धः"

Along with श्रीकृष्ण, the एपुनुता has been accorded the first place by several Sanskrit aestheticians. कलिदास could not have ignored such an important RASA. We find the marvellous represented in almost all his works. But his approach to the marvellous is purged of all violence and
and extravagance. Beauty and sublimity are its essential elements.

Kālidāsa never fails in relating the marvellous to the human.

The restoration of Urvā in to her original state as a result of the contact of the Sāngamaṇiya gem or the carrying away of Sākuntalā by Manaka or the Himakūta incidents in the last act of ĀdiJñāna-Sākuntalā are all good illustrations of the marvellous.

The Raudra, the Bhātasa, the Bhayaṇaka and the Hāśya Rāsas have definitely a minor place in the works of Kālidāsa. The reduction of Kāma to ashes is an illustration of the Raudra Rasa. The Bhātasa is depicted in the sixteenth canto of the Kūmārasambhava slightly:

"रणाङ्गे शोकितप्रेमःपिचिले कथाकथनंविद्वन्तुनक्षत्रासुःपुः
वनमसु त्ययूः परेल्योकितो गच्छेतु गायत्रस कविकथारामयः"

The horrifying sight of the battlefield made muddy with blood and covered with bodies without heads. The Gajas are shown as dancing in this ground because it is not possible to move steadily there.

The Bhayaṇaka Rasa is represented in a number of verses in the fifteenth canto where the army of the Gods is spreading terrors in succession.

The Hāśya Rasa, though minor is of a higher order than the other minor Rāsas. The incident of the Vinuṣaka in...
the fifth act where he likens himself to the monkey is an illustration in point. There is also another illustration when the VIBHUSAKA compares the Moon to sweetmeat. The description of SANKARA by himself in disguise in the fifth canto of KUMARASAMBHAVA is also an illustration of subtle humour.

In the delineation of all these RASAS nature serves as a very important instrument of both style and imagery.

The next important aesthetic concept is that of DHVANI. We shall proceed to show briefly that KALIDASA is a master in this field also and his treatment of nature has a significant place in his achievement in this direction.

KALIDASA'S manifestation of the power of DHVANI is wonderful. Not only is there suggestiveness in each verse. But there is a characteristic suggestiveness in the whole poems or works. The entire artistic significance and emotional intention are compressed in and suggested through the opening passages or verses. In the first verse of BHAVISHYA, we find the words कक्ता, अस्तंगमिलमहिमा, अनककलनमानुणपपूक्षेषु and रामसित्यशशिवेशु. These words evoke the idea of the quintessence of the whole poem. These words have their basis in nature. Similarly, in KUMARASAMBHAVA the words देवतादेवता and माननदृष्ट: are significant and suggestive. In the RAGHAVAJSA, there are in the first canto, verses describing
the kings of the solar race, which contain in essence the significance of the detailed narratives that follows.

In achieving this suggestiveness, the poet does not resort to artificiality. He does not strain after the secondary meanings to the detriment of the primary significance. The suggested meaning must follow and transcend the expressed meaning and must not suppress the latter.

Thus, we find DHAVANI in KĀLIDĀSA like the secondary rainbow which co-exists with the primary one and which adds an evanescent grace to the primary one. DHAVANI shines with the स्कुरितरूपियि of the rainbow on the dark rain cloud of speech, and is attractive like the plume of peacock feathers on the head of KRŠNA, as the poet has said in the MEKHANŪTA:

"येन समयं अपुर्वितां कल्लिमापस्तते ते अङ्गे अनु स्कुरितरूपियि आपवेष्यस्य लिखि:।"

As in suggestiveness so in GUNĀS or qualities KĀLIDĀSA's poetry is remarkable in its fullness and attractiveness. His PITI is classed as VAIDARŚI by DĀDĪ. These qualities have been produced in his poems with the aid of the various phenomena of nature.

The excellence of KĀLIDĀSA in ALAṆKĀRAS is well-known. We shall have a casual look at this here, and even
that casual look will demonstrate the fact that KĀLIDĀSA’s figures of speech derive their effectiveness from his identity with nature.

KĀLIDĀSA’s works excel in ALĀHMĀRA. A detailed analysis of these would require an independent treatment. Our purpose is to bring out only the essential characteristics of his figures of speech. स्वभावोक्ति, सुपक, उपम, and उत्तेक्षा are the four figures of speech in which KĀLIDĀSA excels. We shall, therefore, take some illustrations of these figures of speech.

There is nothing to equal the description of the dove in the ninth canto of KUMĀRAŚAṬHAKA as an illustration of स्वभावोक्ति:

"सुपक: सावसमणितालुकारे कृत्तिमातृणितसनेहम्।
प्रस्फटितोद्भुतिन्द्रकं। सुपुषुल्लिखितमधृकुरुङम्॥
"विशूद्धवं पश्चातियुक्तमोहेधुनामानशशयिः।
शुभंश्चरण्य अर्द्धारमादित्वस्तमो जाहनकैष्ठतमः॥
"रतित्वेल्लोचन मनोभवन उपासनायः प्रविष्टमालल।
लं वीर्य फेतवस्य च वयं नयनुपितअस्यनस्तेष्यमुक्ति॥"

(Giving out sweet sounds like the inarticulate words of delight of a damsel in her nuptial night, with red eyes
rolling gently this way and that, with its shining neck
expanded and contracted and arched and raised and bent, with
its tail gracefully wagging up and down, unfettered in the
movements of its wings with graceful steps full of sportive
pride, white and radiant like Moon, with tufted forefeet,
flyimg around in graceful circles, and shining like the
foam newly thrown up during the bath of KūPA and RAM in
a pool of nectar: there appeared a dove to the delight of
the Mooncrested God.

A living picture of the passionate dove that this
description is, it also serves as a montage to the equally
passionate state in which ŚAUKARA and PĀRM are. A similar
description of any human being would lead to the production
of the HĪBHATS RASA. KALIDĀSA always keeps himself within
the limits of the ŚRINGĀR RASA and does not slip into the
HĪBHATS RASA.

The classic example of the is the
one in the ASHJNĀNA-SĀKUNTALA, where the flight of the
deer and the speed of the horse are described:

"ŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRĪVĪNĀŚAŚRīVīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāśaśrīvīnāș
The works of Kālidāsa abound in both metaphors and similes. The effect of these figures of speech is heightened by the imagery of nature, that Kālidāsa so successfully conceives. An illustration of a metaphor from the Adbhūtā Chāyodhyālā is enough to communicate Kālidāsa's effective use of this figure of speech:

"ईस्वे किमत्वाचात्मनं वर्षः
स्थपत्तःभमं साधिति द्रुक्तलिः
धुबं स भीमलपञ्चधाराया
रामिलतं धैर्मृत्तिङ्गविस्वलिः"

There is a bewildering abundance of similes in the works of Kālidāsa. He is an unequalled master of the simile. He draws his similes from all conceivable objects, natural, and supernatural, mundane and ultra-mundane, real and imaginary, concrete and abstract.

In a large majority of his similes, we find the imagery of nature. A few illustrations of these is all that...
Kālidāsa's rich and vivid imagination enables him to give a succession of apt and appropriate poetic ideas or fancies, which result in the figure of speech called उपरेषा. We shall give a couple of examples of his use of this figure of speech.

रूपम् ४० ॥ र ० ॥ र ० ॥ र ो ॥ पु ॥ ॥ आतंत ॥
Illustrations of other figures of speech can also be found but that is not necessary here, as our object is only to show that his six figures of speech are in quite a large number of cases derived from nature.

Life, according to Kālidāsa was not merely the life of man. Man does not reach his full stature unless he develops a unity with nature. Not only has Kālidāsa preached the ideal of this unity but he has practiced this unity in his art and that is why all the excellences of his art from the point of view of aesthetics are derived from this harmony and unity between man and nature as is apparent from the brief discussion about these excellences in this section.