Chapter 4

Ecopsychological Deciphering of Ravi’s Persona in
The Legends of Khasak

O.V. Vijayan’s novel, The Legends of Khasak furnishes the fundamental platform for the ecopsychological surveying of the expansion of mental contours of the protagonist Ravi. Ravi, who is plagued by guilt and sorrow arising from his past deeds, reaches Khasak in the hope of redeeming and reconstructing his self. He comes to Khasak on an assignment to be the first teacher of the only single-teacher-school there. His successful maintenance of a friendly relationship with the villagers, and an empathizing with their lives, guides him to a pleasant existence. The lives of the people become legends to him and he savours the sum total of all his transactions with the place and the people, until his exit from Khasak. Ravi’s experiences while in Khasak, liberate him of his past distressing state, and turn him into a peaceful soul. Even though Ravi’s mind is moulded by the sophisticated social life, his inner psychic structure possesses the capability to adapt to the natural environment. This quality of acclimatization enables him to identify himself with the habitat of Khasak. His association with nature effects and conveys an amelioration of his emotional progression along with an interpersonal association.

Psychoanalysing Ravi from an ecopsychological frame of reference, provides a comprehensive analysis of his growth in relationship with his ecological environment. This materializes with the aid of an array of
Ecopsychological perspective describes the process of Ravi’s psychic maturation with regard to ecological influence. In Ravi, ecological wisdom implies a fulfilling condition with the merging of the conscious and the unconscious that transcends his self to an all encompassing psychic condition. In such a state of existence, Ravi surpasses the egotistic, anthropocentric comprehension to reach an altruistic predicament. This state of existence of Ravi is tantamount to the essence of the concept found in the biophilia hypothesis of E.O. Wilson in his book *Biophilia*, where he maintains the nature of human psyche as one which has, “the propensity to cascade toward a placid and tranquil state of existence” (Wilson 10).

Ravi’s journey toward development happens as a result of his experiences in Khasak, that provide the material for the construction of a mental process. The narrative technique employed in the novel benefits the mode of assessment of Ravi’s journey. The socio-cultural demarcation that exists between Ravi and the people of Khasak does not hinder his progression; instead, it nurtures it. Ravi is guided by his conscious ego before reaching Khasak, his transit residence. His entrance to Khasak, and the “immense canopy” (*The Legends of Khasak* 1) of the tiny village with its denizens and natural surrounding, ushers in positive influences to transport him to a
purgatory state. Each experience transforms his mind into a stream of
consciousness, and transfers the epiphanic wisdom he gains, to a profound
awareness. The life stories of the people become legends in his psyche, and
merge with his ecological wisdom to propitiate his uneasy mind. Ravi’s
ecological sagacity was at its infancy before reaching Khasak. An
ecopsychological perspective of The Legends of Khasak renders an insight
into the development of Ravi’s individuality into a psychic whole, and throws
light on the psychic process that rejuvenates him. His constant association
with ecology, that is projected through latent and manifest modes, concludes
in the attainment of the maturity of his soul and psyche. His interaction with
nature promotes an understanding of an ecopsychological awareness in him. He
willingly submits himself to the depths of nature for a transformative
regeneration. Ravi’s psyche is unfolded by means of the ecological and
psychological principles envisioned by Theodore Roszak:

Like all forms of psychology, ecopsychology concerns itself with
the foundations of human nature and behaviour. Unlike other
mainstream schools of psychology that limit themselves to the intra
psychic mechanisms or to a narrow social range that may not look
beyond the family, ecopsychology proceeds from the assumptions
that at its deepest level the psyche remains sympathetically bonded
to the Earth that mothered us into existence. (Ecopsychology 5)

Ecology and psychology are intermingled to unravel the mysteries of
Ravi’s subconscious to create a consciousness that comes to terms with his fully developed self. His ecological unconscious has a transpersonal trait, with which he selects the village of Khasak as his place of evolution. This enables him to initiate a rapport with the place that is unknown to him, as well as bestow himself with the ability to transcend all boundaries:

When the bus came to its final halt in Koomankavu, the place did not seem unfamiliar to Ravi. He had never been there before, but he had seen himself coming to this forlorn outpost beneath the immense canopy of trees, with its dozen shops and shacks raised on piles; he had seen it all in recurrent premonitions -- the benign age of the trees, their riven bark and roots arched above the earth. (The Legends of Khasak 1)

The recurrent premonitions emerge out of his unconscious to inform him of the place that is unknown to him. It arises from the anima mundi, the storehouse of his racial memories, which becomes the source of all his diverse dreams. The presence of wild tulsi in Khasak is symbolic of the connective and curative property that the place holds. Tulsi, which is widely known as the mother of herbs, has numerous medicinal properties, including soothing the mind. A possible physical and mental stimulation for Ravi is suggested through the mention of tulsi, which has healing capacities. The novel states, “Ravi set out. The old man led the way. They left the bazaar of shacks behind them and walked along a lane cut between deep embankments which
soon opened out into a valley. Wild *tulsi* scented the air” (3).

An entry into the territory of Khasak provides Ravi with an optimistic sensation regarding his mental upliftment. Memories and dreams act as a window through which his psychic elements become vivid and visible. Ravi’s dreamscape is expanded to include the subjective nature of the external world. Ravi’s childhood memories arise from his “world unconscious” and assist him to configure his experience:

Ravi’s memories of his childhood always began with noontide. He sat alone on the veranda of their house on the hilltop. The hill sloped down in flanks of shimmering yellow grass to the valley of coffee below. After the valley, it rose again to the skyline on which diminutive pines swayed in the lucid mirage. His most cherished memory was of the sky-watch, a pastime in which his mother joined him, though not often, as she was big with child. She told him stories of the Devas. These dwellers of the sky drank the milk of the Kalpaka fruit, their elixir of immortality, and flung the empty husks down to the earth. If you gazed on the sky long enough, you saw the husks as transparent apparitions. The sky at noon was full of them. Ravi saw them slide over glistening cloud-hems and pass softly over pine and rock and grass. He watched, leaning on Mother’s belly as she reclined on a couch. (3-4)

Ravi’s psychic evolution gets underway with the evocation of his past
memories through the medium of dreams. The noontime in Khasak is suggestive of the noon in Ravi’s childhood, and it creates a past scene that equates it to the current one, to instigate a matured state through evolution.

A description of Khasak casts its image as an unperturbed locality that is not intruded by any of the aspects of modern civilization. This disposes the place as a congenial spot for the revitalization of Ravi’s psyche:

As a streamer of cloud moved away, red roof-tiles gleamed through dense greenery. Ravi was aware of a mélange of sounds and sights -- a mother calling her daughter home, the arcane name stretched out like a melody; whistling pigeons and hosts of other querulous perchers in the green; a water buffalo, its horns raised in alarm at the sight of strangers; the swift-flowing brook, its banks aflame with flowering screw pine; a flight of complaining crows rising in the distance like pterodactyls into the crystal arches of the sun. Behind Khasak stood the mountain, Chetali, its crown of rock jutting over the paddies below. Wild beehives, one waxed to the other, hung in immense formations underneath the rock, inaccessible to man (6-7).

The psychic depth possessed by the organic and inorganic materials of Khasak pulls Ravi towards it. His psychic connectivity recognizes Chetali as a haven capable of protecting him. By virtue of his ecological unconscious he senses the remedial powers of the place that could provide him with the bliss
of psychic and spiritual stability. He wishes to undergo a metamorphosis under the influence of the bucolic Khasak. His interaction with the denizens of Khasak, who are the very embodiment of Nature, furnishes the source for his ecological wisdom. Ravi enters the place with pain and hope, and aspires to cure his affliction with a constant interaction with Nature and its representatives. The place becomes his psychoanalytical clinic where he undergoes self-treatment:

The rocks were warm with sunset as Ravi walked barefoot to the brook for a bath. Two women bathed downstream, waists and bosoms covered precariously with towels, their thighs dark in the twilight. Ravi sat on the stream’s bed of pebbles with the rich warm rush of the water swirling over his shoulders. The town lay far away in the fading vermilion of the horizon . . . Ravi turned to look again at Khasak, now starlit with kerosene wicks, and beyond Khasak, at Chetali’s looming promontory. (9)

The intricate bond that exists between Ravi and the inhabitants of Khasak is observed through his physical and mental interaction with the human and animal existences, during his first class in the single-teacher school:

Like the mullah he wondered too: What karmic bond has brought me here? What purpose, what meticulous pre-determination? Then came a gust of wind which threw open the window behind him. Ravi went to the window and stood looking out. The children left their
seats and crowded round him to look through the window and see the beautiful thing their village had framed for their teacher.

It was the lotus pond of Khasak, proud in newly blooming purple.

‘Hey,’ said Ravi, ‘there is a little bird caught in the lotus meshes!’

‘A chick of the waterfowl, Saar!’ the children said, and looked up at their teacher. Did he share their excitement?

‘Waterfowl?’ asked Ravi. ‘Then it won’t drown.’

‘It might if it tires, Saar.’

‘Shall we pull it out?’ Ravi asked the class.

A dozen voices chimed together, ‘Let us!’

‘Wait a minute,’ Ravi said, ‘there are two more birds now . . .’

‘Its Attha and Umma.’

The parent birds pecked away the meshes. Soon the chick, its parents on either side, was waddling ceremoniously along the bank.

It was a sunny day. Tiny wind-blown clouds floated by, their shadows moved like cows grazing over the pastures of Khasak. Ravi came back to his seat and called the class to order. He sat long in silence, sharing the memory of that framed vision with his twenty pupils who sat before him with postulant faces. (43-44)

Sharing the excitement with the children is suggestive of Ravi’s knowledge-gaining process. By becoming one with them in enjoying nature, he is educating his psyche to imbibe the quality of innocence from them. This
assuages his disconcerted subconscious, along with an attempt to probe into
the intricacies of the mind that tethers him to his habitat. The ecological
intelligence that is profoundly ingrained in his psyche, enables him to
apprehend the purgatorial quality that is inherent in his bucolic surroundings.
Ravi’s depressive mood gets a reprieve as a result of the interaction with his
ebullient students. In their presence his past hardly makes its appearance in his
consciousness. His willing involvement in the affairs that interest the children
relieves his mind of pessimistic thoughts. The enchanting scenery that Khasak
provides Ravi, regenerates and lightens up his mood and he willingly submits
himself to enjoy its comfort and care. The flora and fauna of the place
generates a long lasting impact on his senses and creates a framework that
incorporates his pupils.

His psyche is interconnected to the sublime intelligence of anima
mundi, the Earth’s psyche, that enables him to recognize the archetypal trait
that exists in the children of Khasak:

Madhavan Nair left, and Ravi was alone with the class again; he
opened the register and silently read the names. Then he reread
them, names of caliphs and queens, indigent dynasties which had
strayed out of the desert sanctuaries and were marooned in Khasak.
The day warmed, the palm winds were blowing. It was the hour of
the teacher. Ravi smiled upon his twenty-two children, and they
smiled back, the caliphs and queens, until smiles filled the seedling
By attributing to the children of Khasak the status of caliphs and queens, Ravi enlivens the psychic residue that occupies his mythical storehouse. By way of storytelling, Ravi endeavours to enhance the knowledge of the children who become the source that provides him with mental stability. By promoting the status of the children from a mundane level to that of a sublime one, he ordains excessive importance to them. He is profoundly affected by the innocence that the children impart. His recognition of this quality in them paves the way for his rendering an important place for them in his myth. He views them as capable of possessing stately qualities by virtue of his ecological consciousness. His interaction with his students promotes a tranquil state in his existence:

Ravi laughed, ‘What's your name, child?’

‘Kunhamina.’

Ravi listened to the ballad of Khasak in her, its heroic periods, its torrential winds and its banyan breezes. There was no death but only silver anklets and her eyes sparkling through the surma. Ravi looked deep into those eyes; the story would have no dying, only the slow and mysterious transit. He began in the style of the ancient fabulist.

‘Once upon a time . . .’

Ravi’s days went by in order and peace. (46)
Ravi’s perturbed mind is pacified as a result of his fruitful interaction with his pupils. The story that Kunhamina narrates enlivens and exhilarates Ravi. The contents of the story that are replete with connections to nature, serve, as a kind of catalyst that takes him slowly and steadily through a progressive mental journey. Inspired by the children, he takes pleasure in narrating to them stories that bring peace to him.

Ravi’s knowledge about the lives of people around takes him through a different plane of existence and guides him to a province where he receives an appraisal of the amelioration of his situation and its further advancement:

Ravi sat on his cot, leaning on a stack of pillows, and looked out of the window. The sun was setting. The grazing herd of clouds was gone. Soon it was dark, and the fantasy returned, the fantasy of the journey. The seedling house became a compartment in a train, and he the lone and imprisoned traveler. Dark wastes lay on either side; from them fleeting signs spoke to Ravi -- solitary firefly, a plodding lantern. The wheels moved along the track with soft, deceptive thuds. Then he heard the far rush of another track racing towards his own, the sorrow of another, futilely seeking comfort. The rails met for one moment, tumultuously, to part again. To race away into the many-mysteried night. (48)

The progressive journey of Ravi, and the regurgitation of that expedition, is projected here along with an indication of the possibility of his development
through association. This points to a fruitful correspondence that awaits Ravi. Ravi’s ecological consciousness enhances its proficiency with the experience he has with the children of Khasak in a constructive and gratifying manner. The text states:

The children came like moving huts, sharing the shelter of large handleless palm-frond umbrellas, heedless of time, as they stopped to play in the rain streams; they lingered at the school gate, some came in, while some turned away splashing and screaming, chasing the creatures of the rain. Helplessly, Ravi watched the palm-frond thatches stray back into illiteracy. Some of them never came back, but there were unexpected entrants who came to watch the King’s angular alphabet being written out on the blackboard. Sometimes an earlier escapee returned to nostalgic reunion. (49)

The unassuming quality inherent in his students pleases and benefits his conscious and unconscious self. By engrossing himself with the lives of people close to nature, he, inadvertently, transcends his woes for a brief period. This fosters the promotion of psychic development in him. The children’s innocence, mingled with mirth, transports Ravi to an ecstatic condition that reconnects him to a past rejoicing, to experience an altogether novel sensation:

The rains were over, the skies shone, and Khasak readied itself for Onam, the festival of thanksgiving. Children went up into the hills at
sunrise to gather flowers. For ten days they would arrange colourful designs in their yards with flower petals to welcome the deities of the festival. Ravi heard the children sing on the hillsides, and for a fleeting moment they touched him with the joy of a hundred homecomings. (56)

Through the relationship with his students, an alignment with his environment is facilitated. Ravi is blessed with delight and happiness by the purer spirit that is ingrained in Khasak. His troubled mind gets a temporary reprieve when he is in the vicinity of the healing forces in the form of nature and innocence.

Ravi tries to find solace by edifying the children with the story of the spiders:

The spiders in the crevices of the walls were brown, and were only as big as an outspread palm. But outside, in the forests of the rain, they were born to power and splendour. Like the kings of old they revelled in the hunt. And in the teeming nights of fear they rose like stars of the nether dark . . . Ravi told the children the story of the spiders, how after they made love the female ate up her mate. The children could not believe that such bloody dynasties ruled over Khasak’s peaceful grass and fern. Then Karuvu stood up and said the male spider was paying for his sins in an earlier birth. The children knew it was Karma, the class was now unusually quiet.

The story of Karma ended, but Ravi had set the children on a magic trail. (59)
The inclusion of the experiences of the non-human psyche in Ravi, is projected through his explication of the lives of spiders. Karuvu’s assertion of the effect of karma on the spider, sparks the ecopsychological thought of attributing equal importance to all beings on earth. Ravi treats the denizens of nature with significance by attributing human qualities to spiders. By doing so, he is expanding the territory of his ecological wisdom that houses the psychic aspects of all organisms. By describing the animals as sharing the human quality and space, Ravi produces a magical situation for the children. By doing so he immerses himself in the enchanting surroundings that he had set up for his students. He lets himself get carried away by the force of his creative capability and remains subjected to that influence. This condition enables him to develop his self by progressing with them. This proves to be of paramount significance with regard to the process of his psychic development and it is reflected thus:

The children had gone home. Ravi closed his eyes, leaned back in his chair and abandoned himself to the charmed weariness. Around him rose the scent of incense, and the sound of bells and cymbals. *Vedan Uddharate Jagannivahate* -- the sloka celebrating the avatars of the Lord, evolute incarnations from fish to boar to man and deity resounded over everything.

The moment passed. Ravi, now awake, looked out. The sun was setting over Chetali’s valley. The sunset filled the seedling house
with the warmth of a sensuous fever. (61-62)

This is suggestive of Ravi’s journey toward his psychic growth. Ravi’s synthesis is promoted through his association with nature and its human and non-human inhabitants. This makes him part of a larger family that brings about a kind of stability in him.

Appu-Kili and Abida are two characters who are in close contact with Ravi. Their influence helps him mature into a perceptive personality. They lost their mothers at a tender age. Ravi, who also lost his mother at a very early age, is able to empathize with them without any difficulty. Their tales of unending desolation effects conclusive ramifications in the consciousness of Ravi:

Meanwhile Appu-Kili had caught a dragonfly and with nimble fingers slipped a lasso round its tail. Abida looked at the dragonfly, into its eyes of a thousand crystals. The eyes shone dully with the chronicles of the dead. If dragonflies were memories of the dead, as they believed in Khasak, whose then was this memory? Perhaps it was her mother’s pining images of sin and regret and drowning.

The crystal eyes fell on her. (67)

Appu-Kili and Abida see their sorrows reflected through the eyes of the dragonfly, which ingrains the essence of nature in it. The absence of mother, the common factor that Ravi, Appu-Kili, and Abida share, forces them all to seek solace in their natural environment. The importance of the dragonfly as
the carriers of the memories of the dead, posits the significance that the people of Khasak offer to members of the non-human beings of ecology.

Abida, a folk of Khasak, seeks solace in the abode of Nature when she gets hurt. The quietude and contentedness that nature imparts, has a pacifying effect on her:

Abida bore the venom of those words. She tried to soothe it with a prayer. She took up the broom and tried to sweep the corridor, but couldn’t. She leant the broom against the wall. There was a bowl of souring gruel, she took a spoonful, but it tasted foul and she did not eat any more.

Abida walked out again. Maimoona did not ask her where she was going. Abida went back to the grove of Arasus. The place was deserted. In the enchantment of the grove she became a dragonfly; whose memory was she? Perhaps a memory of her own sorrows of another birth. From the grove she walked to the brook, she plucked the two Champakas from her ears and tore the petals into fragments and gently dropped them into the water. (67-68)

Abida’s natural response to turn to nature in times of desolation can be compared in sharp contrast to Ravi’s cultivated one. The grove that is part of mother Earth, mesmerises Abida, and in that condition, she presumes herself to be a dragonfly. The close relationship that the people of Khasak share with nature is gradually imbibed by Ravi to strengthen his ecological consciousness.
Ravi’s “world unconscious” enables him to adapt to the new world by virtue of the archetypal trait it contains. Appu-Kili, the cretin, who becomes a prominent figure in Ravi’s life, is plagued by misfortunes. His plight has a profound influence on Ravi’s constantly evolving psyche. Appu-Kili’s life serves as a sort of inspiration for Ravi as the former turns to nature whenever he is struck by misfortune. The text reads:

Appu-Kili slipped out of the house. No one missed him. He sneaked into the dense thickets beside the burial ground and hid there during the day. When night fell he came out and slept beside Neeli’s grave. It rained intermittently, and when it stopped, water held in the leaves came down in large drops, piercing cold. He listened to the Kalan Kozhis, nocturnal birds whose eerie call was an omen of death. They perched on branches overhead and crooned to him. (79)

This is further reinstated with yet another description of his predicament:

Appu-Kili began the walk back holding on to Madhavan Nair’s and Ravi’s forefingers. As soon as they reached the seedling house, Ravi wrapped Kili in a blanket, put him to bed in the corridor, and made a cup of steaming coffee. Ravi began rummaging in his medicine chest. (80)

Ravi’s concern for Appu-Kili is suggestive of the amount of importance he casts on the latter. Appu-Kili is one character who, though alone, leads a life...
that is enriched by ecological presence. He is always at ease when he is in touch with the elements of his environment. Ravi’s psyche gets inspired by the way Kili drowns his sorrows by indulging in activities that demand nature’s presence. By identifying the situation of the cretin with that of all humanity, Ravi tries to universalize the general predicament of human existence. This understanding points to the development that is taking place in Ravi’s psyche. Ravi’s rapport with the cretin expands his mental horizon. This association indoctrinates Ravi’s psyche with the gospel of truth:

Appu-Kili stood at the school gate watching tides of homing parrots.

‘This little one,’ Madhavan Nair said, ‘for him it is always the sunset. And he has no nest to reach.’

‘Who reaches?’

‘True, Maash. No one really does.’

The cretin stood in the twilight of births and deaths. He stood alone. The last flight of parrots receded over the horizon. (85)

Ravi’s “world unconscious” that accommodates the ecological and psychological aspects of his personality is seen as functioning here. This highlights the pace of development that is taking place in his psyche. This reiterates the existence of an ecopsychological soul in Ravi that enables him to perceive the world around him in a different light. It is by virtue of this soul that he is able to adapt to the unknown places, as well as mingle with
unfamiliar minds. The egocentric concepts get a temporary erasure from Ravi’s consciousness with a profound understanding. The relationship between Ravi’s ego and self, undergoes a transformation so as to create a new development that includes the self and the world. His psyche is set in motion to get effected through an active psychological communication with the non-human species on earth. This rapport reduces his tendency to incline toward an anthropocentric psyche and promotes the altruistic and non-egoic self which is key to mental development. The life in Khasak gives Ravi an opportunity to delve into the innards of regenerative spheres, of which he had no prior knowledge, “‘Where are you from, Maash?’”

Ravi didn’t answer. Where am I from, and where am I now, he asked himself, whose face do I see, and whose is this black and silver stubble?”

(88). The school inspector’s query takes him to the questions of existence. It also provides him with the opportunity to purge his mind with a recollection of his past deeds to effect an evolution in his present psychic condition:

The Inspector smiled again, turned towards the registers to attest all the absurd and voluminous information they held.

‘Does your father stay in Pattambi?’

‘No, sir. We have a house in Ooty, in the hills, built during my father’s plantation days . . .’

The land around the house was a generous expanse, a whole hillside.

A neat drive took you to the porch. Inside the house were
sculptured woodwork, carpeted flooring, hand-cut crystal, and a grand piano that had been silent for years. It was in this house that he had sinned with his stepmother. He was at college then; he had come home for the holidays. That was ten years ago. (91)

A retrospection of his past enables him to create a source of inspiration in his mind. The past thoughts help him to make a comparison between what transpired in his earlier life and where he is positioned at present. The realization of the betterment of his psychic situation after reaching Khasak, points to the progress he gains in terms of his development. Reminiscing about past sins creates a kind of determination to get rid of those sins, and this resolution eventually seeks the source for his inspiration. Ravi negotiates with the fact that it is the futility of life and its realization that eventually brought him to Khasak:

Strange indeed; untrodden paths called to Ravi with mesmeric power. The night before the examination, he slipped out of the hostel. The journey had begun.

The journey into the vast unquiet universe, watched by faces in railway compartments, tolerant and incurious. In the nights Ravi curled up on luggage racks and slept to the soft beat of the rails. The names of railway stations changed, their scripts changed. Then on the road, up the high ranges, past hairpin bends in gasoline-perfumed buses. The roadway dust changed colour, sunrise and
sunset changed places, directions were lost in an assailing infinity. The journey took him through cheerless suburbs, through streets of sordid trades, past cacti villages and lost townships of lepers, and ashramas where, in saffron beds, voluptuous swaminis lay in wait for nirvana. And at last, this respite, this sarai in Khasak... (93-94)

Ravi’s recollection of his life’s journey in a gist which is promoted by the inspector’s query on his personal life comes as a result of an extended tranquil existence with his ecology. He regards his pre-Khasak life as a meaningless mechanical exercise that includes the presence of a domineering “id” and “ego.” The seemingly slow movement of his past life, devoid of an ecological consciousness, is attributed to the lack of natural influence. The failure of the non-natural life to enthrall and enrich his psyche is perceived through the retrospection. These thoughts that are akin to dreams provide access to Ravi’s unconscious. His projection of the past points to the willingness to regenerate his self and transform it to an ecologically sustained psyche. His mention of reaching Khasak ingrains a sense of relief that he had longed for. This points to and accounts for Ravi’s comprehension of the fact that Khasak bestows him with a unique satisfying endowment that no previous experiences of his could provide him with. The sense of exasperation with his past receives a reprieve with his existence in Khasak.

The preference of natural products to artificial ones underlines his inclination toward ecological constructs. The palm fibre torches create an aura
of brilliance about them in Ravi’s psyche. Ravi’s wish to unwrap his psyche and let it be lead by nature becomes conspicuous. The philosophical translation of the essence of the journey he is undertaking, gets merged with the thoughts that provoke an erudite reflection from him:

He bought a bundle of palm fibre torches and began the long trek back to Khasak. Soon it was dark. Ravi lit a torch and waved it in the wind. It broke into a brilliant flame.

The brook was still warm when Ravi got back. He undressed and sat immersed in the brisk current for a while, then rose and took the footpath to the seedling house . . . As he went to bed, the cry came through the silent night.

>Allaho Akbar!

>Allaho Akbar!

That was the muezzin’s call for the last prayer. God, Ravi said, in a voiceless chant. No longer was that word harsh or distant. He rose for a draught of water, came back to bed and was quiet. The muezzin’s call had punctuated his turbulence.

Outside, the night lay inebriated with its vastness. The wind was on the palms of Khasak. Beyond the reaches of the village late wayfarers waved their fiber torches, pulses of flame and ember. Like stricken spaceships signalling distress with their incandescent antennae, they continued their desolate journey. (94-95)
The flames of the palm fibre torch, a dip in the brook, and the muezzin’s cry, together soothe Ravi’s mind. The amalgamation of the human and the non-human efforts produce features essential for his developmental process. Ravi’s “world unconscious” gets enriched with each experience. An ego-dissolving process takes place in Ravi’s psyche after he witnesses the altruistic attitude that distinguishes Chandu Mutthu from the ordinary people:

Ravi was reclining in his easy chair after school. Chandu Mutthu had curled up on the steps and was watching her mother’s dreary walk to the well and back.

‘Umma. . .’

‘Yes, my child?’

‘Tired, Umma?’

‘No, my little one.’

Chandu Mutthu repeated the questions each time her mother walked back with the filled pitcher.

‘Umma. . .’

‘Yes, my sweet?’

‘When the boy grows up, you won’t have to carry water, Umma?’

‘Insha Allah, my precious.’

‘When will it be, Umma?’

‘When we see the next Eid moon . . .’

Ravi lay in his easy chair, listening. By now he was familiar with
this engrossing dialogue of hope and the magic calendar of the moons. (100)

Chandu Mutthu’s concern for her mother, and her hope that her brother would redeem them when he grows up, becomes the manifestation of the amalgamation of pristine souls that are guided by an ecological consciousness. Chand Umma and her daughter appear to Ravi as the embodiment of unadulterated innocence that inspires his “superego.” The life story of Chand Umma, and the indirect effect it has on Ravi, highlights the assertion of the change in Ravi’s psychological situation. It also points to the development that Ravi undergoes to reach a poignant phase in his understanding of the self:

As he walked Ravi went over the events of that day again, the desire, the apathy and fulfillment, the invasive curiosity. Where was he, and what was he in this bewildering swirl of live and dead happenings?

Ravi walked over the ridge; overhead, a million dragonflies sallied forth into the bland sun. Memories of the dead, the dead pining for miraculous reprieves. Ravi walked beneath the canopy of little wings. Khasak lay dreaming all round him. In that experience he prayed for an end to Chand Umma’s curse. The ridge stretched before him becoming infinite, spanning recurrence and incarnation. (106)

Ravi perceives the dragonflies as possessing an ecological psyche that equips
them with intuition and cognition. Ravi’s capability to feel the pulse of the non-human world transports his mind to a purer and saner state. His earnest prayer to bring an end to Chand Umma’s curse reveals the influence of Khasak in his mental development with an altruistic streak. The belief regarding the toddy tapper is yet another instance that generates archetypal patterns and adds to Ravi’s impression of the legends of Khasak. The legend revamps the history of the locality that exerts its influence on Ravi’s individual ecological unconscious:

And so ended the epic of the toddy-tapper, an epic from other times, when flying serpents rested on palm tops during their mysterious journeys. The tapper made an offering of sweet toddy to please these visitants. He left flowers at the foot of the palm for the clan’s well-being. In those times the tapper did not have to climb, the palm bent down for him. It was when a tapper’s woman lost her innocence that the palm ceased to bend. . . . (108-109)

The anima mundi in Ravi’s psyche enables him to comprehend the legend of the toddy tapper. The mythical pattern that predominates his collective unconscious creates a pathway that connects him with the people of the place he lives in. Worshipping the palm tree is the symbolic representation of revering nature. Nature is here projected as having a conscious soul that caters to the needs of those who seek a symbiosis with it. A blending of the earth’s psyche with that of its human counterpart is overtly presented and alters Ravi’s
perception regarding nature as he moves on. Ravi’s wish to go to Nallamma’s abode, and the ideas pertaining to it, divulge the grim thoughts that preoccupy his psyche:

Why was he going to the shrine, Ravi asked himself, why to a little hole in which stood a weird idol? Ravi sensed a great love welling within him. *Devi*, Ravi despaired, *why have you chosen this lowly incarnation?* Had she sought refuge from her own awesome cosmic self in the womb of Khasak? He thought to himself he was her kin, and would discover their twinhood in this intimate sanctuary. Then would he share his sorrow with her, the placental sorrow, generation after generation; as he thought this, the sorrow spilled over to become the sorrow of karma, it was the scar of the sinner, the orphan’s pining, the despair of the one who thirsted for knowledge.

Ravi never made that pilgrimage. (134-135)

Ravi’s thinking displays his eagerness to escape the impressions that weigh him down, and the yearning for absolution from past sins looms high. The acquisition of knowledge becomes a constituent element of the agenda he has for the resuscitation of his mental sphere. Nallamma, being the Goddess of smallpox, is associated with the ecology which arouses Ravi’s curiosity and zeal to educate himself on the wisdom regarding nature. He tries to identify himself with Nallamma, and through her, with nature.

Each and every person of Khasak with whom Ravi comes into contact
with, exerts an indelible influence on him to accelerate his mental growth. Their capacity to maintain this operation of continuous transformation in Ravi can be attributed to the existence of the essence of the natural environment, of which they form a significant part. The people of Khasak, with their flaws and innocence, redolent of the characteristic feature of those who are shaped by nature, illumine his mental horizon. Ravi’s collective unconscious tries to construct a rapport with the people and gods of Khasak, to immerse him in their collective beliefs and features, to educate and purgate his self. He endeavours to find an explanation for the inconclusive query that configures in his mind:

Sunday was three days away; Ravi kept those days to himself. He walked the sunsets all alone, and saw the gods of Khasak in the twilight. They stood guard over the follies of men. He saw them in the cavernous interior of the mosque, in the luminous breath of the mouldering dead, on the great tamarind tree, inside the serpent statuettes, beside desolate tracks. What was the mystery they guarded? The palm grove that stretched without end, the twilight neither sunrise nor sunset could resolve? Perhaps this was his sin and his divinity, and the gods and goddesses its witnesses. (139-140)

The ecospiritual dimension in Ravi’s psyche fosters the need for a prolonged natural experience in him with an exposure to the raw and simple ecological minds around him. His prowess to see the gods in the natural environment of
Khasak distinguishes him as one who obtains a sustained and focused psyche. This can be interpreted as his exploration of psychological dimensions in the ecological world with which he aspires to engender a lifelong connection. His transactions with the ecological environment around him become the manifest expressions of his latent contents that lie deep in his unconscious. Ravi’s ethical transgressions become the representatives of the latent contents that were repressed at one time. Thus, transcendental convictions predominate his being in order to acquire the meaning of distant abstractions and represent themselves in spiritual transactions. Ravi tries to probe into the mystery of the place in which he lives, to enrich and update himself on the knowledge of the ecological numinosity. The exploring nature that is inherent in Ravi forces him to search for all the possible sources of inspiration. One such endeavour enables him to receive the information regarding the existence of a serene place in Khasak in the form of Kodachi’s idyllic abode, and this place acts as a means to rejuvenate Ravi’s psyche:

The two walked past the lotus pond and over the ridge; they crossed the rail track of the east-bound train. Beyond the rail track was a grove where, on aged mango branches, owls dreamed and nodded; and further down were the teak forests. Monkeys, a whole clan, were crushing tender shoots of the teak into a red paste which they smeared on their faces . . . From an elevation Ravi looked down. A picturesque village nestled amid the foothills. (141)
Ravi’s quest for the experience of an uninterrupted mental peace steers him to the vicinity of the bucolic village. The dreaming owls and the playful monkeys that trumpet the blissful nature of the place, lure Ravi into yet another embarking of a psychological experiment. The recognition of an affinity with the birds and animals takes shape in his collective unconscious, and this demands a need for a cumulative ecological experience in him. Ravi contracts smallpox, which is regarded as the blessing of the goddess that engenders it, and this provides him with an extremely exhilarating experience:

The sound of drums came from the heart of the village, and the prayer, the frenzied cry to the Goddess of Smallpox, ‘Deviye, Ammae!’

The crystals, dreaded pustules, burst. The oozing pus was the goddess’ sacrament. It was from this sacrament that the scent rose, the scent of chrysanthemums blossoming in the night. (144)

The interpretation of the pus as a sacrament by the people of Khasak suggests the diverse ways in which they incorporate a spiritual meaning to an ailment. It points to the existence of a psychological language that he makes use of for a better understanding of his ecopsychological surroundings. It also brings about a coordination between his mind and the ecological psyche that he aspires to comprehend. This ecological language enables Ravi to unravel the mystery that the place holds.

The spreading of the epidemic smallpox as the result of the
environmental disconnection that is assisted by Kuttadan, serves as an illustration of the repercussion of ignorance and misuse of natural products. The adding of excess amounts of sulphate in the liquor leads to a dysfunction of human bodies during the annual festival which is followed by the outbreak of smallpox creating havoc in Khasak. This can be regarded as an environmental detachment, caused by the unnatural mixing of toddy with excess of chemical substances, by making it impure and unfit for consumption and generates chronic disorder. The epidemic that affects Khasak, is now focused on letting Ravi experience it:

Ravi heard these snatches of conversation. He scanned the images, part real, part dream. He saw the faces encircling him -- Maimoona, Madhavan Nair, the Khazi, Gopalu Panikker. There were others, but the curtain fell before he could put the pieces together. Now he was dreaming of the journey -- the delirious return from the fugitive village, a walk like that of the Devas who walked without touching the earth.

The wind carried in the sound of ritual drums from far away; the drums died down, Ravi was bathed in sweat. Someone was wiping the sweat away, strong hands over him; his father! *He is better*, he heard his father say, *the fever has come down.*

He was asleep again, now he is on his evening walk holding on to his father’s little finger playfully. Along the tracks of sunset purple,
The delirious condition that Ravi experiences incorporates both conscious and unconscious states. The partially waking state gives him an assessment of the ailing situation he is in, and the dreamy state is the manifestation of the unconscious wish that he aspires for. The dream in which his father converses with him becomes a gateway into his unconscious. The yearning in his psyche to enjoy the company of his father finds fruition in the dream. Thus, it becomes an example of a sublimation process that is indirectly enhanced by the ecology in his psyche. Ravi’s wish to experience death, revealed through Maimoona’s reproach, is testimony to the fact that Ravi is on a search. His willingness to learn through dangerous means makes him the true object of a questing principle:

Ravi was well on his way to recovery. One day as Maimoona stooped over him to drop breast milk into his eyes, he said, ‘A little later, Maimoona. I am sorry I make you do these intimate jobs.’

‘It is Janaki’s breast milk, not mine.’

They laughed.

‘But I’m really worried that you move so close. What if you catch the disease?’

‘I have got Nizam-Annan’s talisman round my waist.’ She continued, her voice wavering, ‘I also got myself vaccinated.’
Have many others got vaccinated too?”

‘Yes, a good many. Shame you didn’t. What kind of school maeshtar are you?’

‘I wanted to experience death.’ (148-149)

The need to experience the appalling aspects of death distinguishes Ravi from his fellow beings. The discovery of the various ecological-related aspects in Ravi finds expression through a depiction of his temperament at the most tiring of situations. He wishes to imbibe the negative and repulsive side of human life to enrich his ecological wisdom. A mixture of spiritual and sensuous experiences brings quietude to Ravi that is reminiscent of the conspicuous alternation in his psychic being while he is with Maimoona, “Peace descended on Ravi; he was now the helpless infant god, afloat on the deluge, lying on a pipal leaf, the Creator forever beginning his sorrows anew” (151).

Ravi’s intimacy with Kunhu Nooru announces his willingness to drown his sorrows in others. By doing so, he allows his mind to give space for an altruistic existence. His interaction with Chand Umma and her children, and the benignity he exhibits reveal the evolving nature of his psyche:

‘Kunhu Nooru!’ Ravi called to him. A feeble smile flickered across the boy’s face. He was hidden far away behind the smile, a distant listener inside a mysterious fortress.

A gleaming blue fly flew in with a loud drone; it brought no happy
tidings. It flew round Kunhu Nooru in wide circles. Chand Umma looked at this droning messenger, aghast. Like her child’s eruptions, she withdrew into herself. Ravi had brought oranges for the children; as she peeled an orange she felt that the fruit and her fingers were an unfathomable distance away. (153)

The blue butterfly becomes the symbol of the representative of the natural world that connects the psyche of the humans with that of the environment. The existence of a psyche in nature, and its relation to the human mind, is revealed through Chand Umma’s understanding of the foreboding which enriches Ravi’s ecological psyche.

Ravi’s return to the seedling house after his recovery from smallpox, gives him an idea regarding his position in the strata of his developmental process:

When Ravi entered the seedling house, he felt he had strayed through many births to reach this haven once again. The book half-read, the ink bottle, the shaving set, the teapot and cups -- everything was where he had left it.

A subtle scent pervaded the room, the gentle incense of the traveler. It was the journey of things unmoving and inert, a journey through time. As he wiped the dust and aired the room, he was sad that he had disrupted an incredible pilgrimage. (157)

He senses a parallel existence between himself and the environment that he
lives in. His treatment of animate and inanimate objects alike, shows the extent of his mental growth that has further enhanced the liberal attitude ingrained in him. Ravi’s acquisition of ecological wisdom is comprehended through his underlining the names in green colour. Green is the symbol for life and ecology. His admiration and appreciation for those who are related to nature becomes perceptible through his act of reverence shown to the dead children:

Ravi glanced through the register lying in front of him; he had underlined some names in green -- the names of those who wouldn’t be coming to school anymore: Vavar, Noorjehan, Uniparathy, Kinnari, Karuvu. He had only underlined the names, he couldn’t bring himself to cross them out. Like the fakir who kept his dead grandchild on the mountain and would not give her up to the grave-digger, Ravi kept the names. The lines of green became the little windows of his temple through which he gazed, listless.

Outside, sun and dew, grass and palmyra, in repetition and rebirth, in endless becoming, sorrowless and without desire . . .

Ravi looked up from the register at the places where the dead children used to sit. He did not call the roll that day. (158)

By deciding not to call the roll, he pays tribute to them and in doing so, he becomes ethically expanded. The interactions with the children of Khasak instruct and enlighten Ravi by becoming the agents and distributors of
archetypal wisdom:

Kunhamina wanted to know more, ‘What will Appu’s lice be in their next lives?’

Will they be reborn as lice? Or will they return as people or wild elephants and whales or little microbes? Ravi’s mind suddenly went back to the jasmine-scented night when he had taken leave of his father in silence and stealth. *Will you, my father, come back to me in another birth, if you have sins to wipe out? And who does not sin? Will you come back to me as the creature I detest most?*

There on the wall it clung, its eight legs stretched, looking at him with eyes of crystal in love and uncomprehending grief. He crushed a piece of paper into a ball and threw it at the spider. The spider ran around in wild circles, and again came to its mindless trance on the wall. Ravi swatted it with his sandal. It stayed on the wall, a patch of broken limbs and slime and fur. Ravi stood a long while in contemplation. Gratitude welled up inside him, the gratitude of procreated generations. He shivered and the sandal fell from his hand. What an offering to dead ancestors, what a *shraddha!* (160-161)

Kunhamina’s query takes Ravi back to his past memories, and a recollection of that from his unconscious, tries to bring a balance between the conscious and the unconscious in the presence of the representatives of nature. It is when this chord is struck that the development of the psyche gains
momentum. Ravi’s students provide him with the answers for the puzzling questions which he finds difficult to unravel:

But the children had the answer. They knew that those who went away had to come back, and Vavar, Noorjehan, Uniparathy, Kinnari and Karuvu would be fair babies again. They told Ravi the legends of Khasak, of those who had come back from the far empty spaces, of the goddess on the tamarind tree, of Khasak’s ancestors who, their birth cycles ended, rose again to receive the offerings of their progeny; then like the figurines on the throne of Vikrama who narrated the idylls of the King, each child told Ravi a story. (161)

These narratives supplement his sagacity thereby subjecting his self to a process of gaining knowledge. The discourse becomes a flow of archetypes, transpersonal experience, luminosity, materials of collective unconscious, and dreamstate. Ravi’s ecopsychological growth is employed by the illustration of the time he spends with his students, and its affirmative consequence:

When months passed and Appu’s fez wore thin, when his hair grew long and matted, the lice were born there again. They came pattering on little feet. Vavar, Noorjehan, Uniparathy, Kinnari, Karuvu and all. Their fathers and mothers did not know them. Among the Karmic wefts of hair, they sat grieving and waiting. Ravi lay down to sleep. Through the window, the sky shone and shivered. Oh God, to be spared this knowing, to sleep. To lay one’s
head down, to rest from birth to birth, as forest, as shade, as earth, as sky . . . The knowing eyes grew heavy, the lids began to close. Leaving their skies the stars descended on the screw pines to become the fireflies of Khasak. Out of these infinites a drizzle of mercy fell on his sleep and baptized him. (165)

Life with the people of Khasak leads him to embrace their sorrows as his and lend a helping hand to them. His support to the ailing mullah reveals the effect of his living in Khasak:

‘Don’t hesitate, Umma,’ Ravi said, ‘if there is anything I can do . . .’ Thithi Bi choked. She said, ‘You have been generous, Saar. He never tires of talking about you.’

The Khazi reached out to a shelf on the wall and took down a bottle of medicine. With much effort the mullah sat up, leaning on the Khazi, and drank the bitter concoction like an ailing child. He turned for a moment to look at the Khazi in grateful reminiscence . . . (167-168)

Ravi’s attempt at munificence can be viewed as a repression release mechanism that strives to disentangle him from the past unpleasant experiences. Through this act he is striving to eradicate the feelings of his disappointment for not being able to help his father when in need. His generosity works as a form of relief to him that mitigates his guilt-ridden psychological state that remains in his unconscious. His voluntary service
appears as the product of a constant reworking of his mind in tandem with the ecopsychological spirit.

The Khazi’s assistance to the mullah at the time of a dire situation, leaves a lasting impression on Ravi’s unconscious. His sojourn in Khasak links him intimately to the place and the people. The sorrow that is entrenched in the people of Khasak is passed on to Ravi:

The muezzin’s cry subsided in Ravi’s dhyan, he now hearkened with his inner ear:

*There is no God but the Omnipotent One*

*Come to this tabernacle and worship Him!*

Ravi thought of Khasak’s house of prayer, the sad brooding mosque, it’s attic breeding bats and vermin, and it’s mullah silenced by a dreaded disease; Ravi heard anguished generations of priests calling to worshippers. The gravestones kept no count, they softened and crumbled over men changing to mould and marsh. Ravi could not sleep, he rose restless. He looked out: a dull moon lit the mist, the last of the ferries were torching through the night. (171)

This condition of the mullah allows Ravi’s mind to become restive, only to search for a solution for it to gain wisdom in the end. Ravi’s psyche attempts to negotiate with the numerous psychological intricacies and finds an expression here. Ravi is reminded of his past with the arrival of Maimoona to the seedling house. A past that instigates his archetypal memories, reminds
him of his present journey too:

*God*, said Ravi, *You gave me Your love, gave it with fond indulgence, yet it dies in the deserts within me. I am in flight,*

*Merciful God: let me savour my weariness.* Then through strange and wondrous Mandalas came the voice of his father: *My beloved son, here I lie paralysed, awaiting your return.*

*Father, do not pine for me,* said Ravi. *I journey away to free us both from memory. I walk, an Avadhuta, a renunciate along the shores of the Infinite Ocean. Journeying, I let my slough of memory moult away. When I reach the last shore, when I wait for the last redeeming wave . . .*

His father’s voice said, *I cannot die without my memories, death will be incomplete.* (178-179)

After each incident, Ravi’s mental growth and his environment educates him with the necessary constituents needed for his psychological upliftment. His psyche moves to the rhythms of Khasak. The philosophical rendering of his psychic situation throws light on his position in the ecopsychological developmental thread.

Ravi’s pronouncement on his single-teacher school and his pupils, provides an in-depth analysis of the situation that prevails, “‘It is really misleading, Madhavan Nair. There are far too many classes in my school for any teacher to handle --’” Pupils concerned with the rebirth of lice, with
journeys in time, with dinosaurs, pupils who taught their teacher the lessons of wondering and belief” (183). This is an attestation of the fact that Ravi comprehends the extent of knowledge that the children impart to him. His inexplicit acknowledgement of the knowledge gaining process as a two way traffic, projects the importance of Khasak and the influence it exerts on him through its inhabitants.

Ravi’s school picnic with the children can be regarded as a wilderness experience that reveals the dynamics of the cordial relationship between humans and their environment:

The day after the examination, in which the children shared the questions and answers, they gathered early for the picnic to Chetali. They set out with song and laughter. They crossed the big ridge and began the climb in the kindly sun. As they climbed higher they saw giant insects and plants with large leaves. The children broke ranks and went after these. Singing gave way to glad noises of discovery. Ravi kept anxious watch as he brought up the rear of this disorderly column. (183)

The wilderness trip into the heart of nature with the purest of hearts, enriches Ravi’s mental strength. The naive disorder that the natural beings project becomes a source of order for Ravi. The effect of this exhilarating force creates the source of a purgatorial change in him. The children, along with the flora and fauna, fascinate and educate Ravi. Kunhamina’s growth into
womanhood is yet another experience that enlightens Ravi:

Kunhamina pressed her hands over her navel and bent forward. Ravi held her. Suddenly he saw them on the silver anklets and on her feet -- crimson drops!

Ravi clenched and unclenched his palm, where the lines of fate lay like desert trails; the crimson drops had fallen on them.

Ravi gazed in amazement on the miracle, the first blood-flowers of womanhood! (185)

The attainment of Kunhamina’s puberty, that takes place in ecological circumstances, acts as a symbolic representation. The “flowering” of the girl is compared to the blooming of flowers in nature. It is also reminiscent of the loss of innocence that accompanies the transition to development. The awareness of the loss of innocence dawns on Ravi through this and the expansion of his self takes place.

The impact of his life in Khasak on his psyche is revealed through the conversation with his friend Padma:

‘Buy me something in flaring red and green. Something really loud and obscene.’

‘Why?’

‘Because the women back there will gasp in wonder.’

‘Ooh, Ravi.’

They fell silent. Then Ravi spoke, ‘Did I hurt you, Padma?’
‘This world is full of hurts. The other world too, if there is one.’

‘There is. That is what my pupils have taught me.’ (190)

To keep the women in Khasak enthralled has now become his priority. The existence of a different world made known to him through his pupils, reveals his being as educated by the folks of the pastoral Khasak.

An aside by Ravi depicts the picture of the establishment of his coming to terms with himself along with the realization of an ultimate truth:

And he spoke inside his own impenetrable silence -- there is nothing to learn by looking at the galactic desert outside, turn the spectroscope inward, to where He has set his bow in the clouds within as a sign of the covenant between Him and the earth. Break the Galilean lenses -- the Florentine was wrong, he tempted men with a finite calculus. The confessor and the inquisitor were right, for the earth is not round but an experience of the fallible human mind. (193)

To him, a study of Mother Earth is more valuable than the scientific study of scientists. The significance that Ravi attributes to ecology and its constructs is revealed here. His yearning is disclosed through his reply to Padma:

‘What are you running away from, Ravi?’ asked the despairing voice.

I wish to escape nothing, Ravi answered from within his silence, I want to be the sand of the desert, each grain of sand; I want to be the lake, each minute droplet. I want to be the laya, the
Dissolution into a universal plane becomes his prior and dire need. Ravi’s link with the psyche of the animal shows an effortless reconnecting capacity on Ravi’s part:

Ravi was not listening, his mind was on the cockroaches which had come meekly by their inheritance; he had returned again to violate their mildewed spaces. *I am sorry, my little brethren*, said Ravi.

Children burdened themselves with reading and reckoning here, and I sought a *sarai*, a place of rest on a long, long journey. A black hairy spider which had returned to the seedling house during the absence of its human resident raced on the wall in circles, dismayed. I intruded on this *sarai*, said Ravi, for too long, desecrating its primeval nights with lamps and incense, while Time, untamed and awesome, cried beyond the timepieces, cried out as dark blue winds. Roach and spider lay in wait in these winds. (198)

Ecopsychological traits in Ravi find a powerful manifestation in the form of the above expression. The archetypal traits that are inherent in him make their appearance here. The “world unconscious” in Ravi recognizes his racial memories and it is by virtue of this that he is able to connect to the non-human beings in Khasak.

Ravi’s farewell to his transit residency asserts the depth of his connection to the place, “Ravi stood before the locked door for a moment,
eyes closed, prayerful. *Father!* he said. *Father of my eventides, my twilight journeys, allow me to go. I leave this nest of sewn leaves, nest of rebirth*” (202). This attests to his attainment of ecological wisdom. The description of the natural phenomena offers an insight into a parallel resounding of the state of his existence. It also echoes the course of Ravi’s life since his arrival at Khasak:

Ravi walked out, his meagre belongings in a satchel. The rain fell on his outspread umbrella, it fell first in a mere patter, then drummed on the taut taffeta. The rain grew heavier, the monsoon rain without thunder and lightning . . . Ravi reached Koomankavu. The rain was a steady downpour, a low dome of white opacity. The storm had been more savage in Koomankavu, the mounted shacks had all been blown away, and no one, nothing, moved in what had once been a little bazaar . . . There was still time for the bus to come. Ravi surveyed the scene of the great quiet and stood near the bus shelter, now a heap of sodden clods. He played with the clods, prising them apart with his feet. (202)

This instance becomes the expression of the projection of the existence of the ecological wisdom that he inherits. His composed state at the time of a farewell to the ecology that transformed him, is suggestive of the qualities he imbibed. Ravi’s fondness for the venomous snake is evocative of the regard he has for the creatures of nature:
Ravi looked with fond curiosity at the little blue and black apparition that slithered out of the clods. The blue-black one looked up at Ravi, conversing with its flickering tongue. Ravi saw the tiny hood, outspread now. Infant fangs pierced Ravi’s foot. *Teething, my little one?*

With a last playful flick of its forked tongue, the snake slid back into the alleys of wet earth.

The rain, nothing but the rain. White, opaque. The rain slept, it dreamt. Ravi lay down. He smiled. The waters of the Timeless Rain touched him. Grass sprouted through the pores of his body. Above him the great rain shrank small as a thumb, the size of the departing subtle body. (202-203)

His ability to consider all alike, comes with the gaining of ecological wisdom. Ravi’s regard for his fellow creatures echoes the deep ecological concept of Arne Naess who maintains that, “Every being, whether human, animal or vegetable has equal right to live and to blossom” (Naess 164-65). Ravi abides by the ecopsychological principles and endeavours to create a harmonious base for himself while in Khasak.

Ravi’s sojourn in Khasak can be regarded as an experience akin to the wilderness participation that forms a part of the ecopsychological concepts. Ravi experiences a feeling of mental expansion with his reconnection to the wilderness of Khasak.
The transformation that is conspicuous in Ravi is the reverberation of the association with his natural environment. By the time Ravi leaves Khasak he is loaded with an abundance of ecological wisdom that endorses his attainment of psychic maturity. His psyche becomes the object of lodging an all-encompassing consciousness. Ravi’s recollections prove to be the self-reflective experiences that condition his consciousness to accelerate the psychic process.

A non-egoic awareness becomes the hallmark of Ravi’s psyche towards the end of his maturation process. For Ravi, his rapport with his pupils serves as a meditation practice that leads to the non-egoic process and the understanding of the erudition emanating from them. The soothing effect that the children’s voices provide, acts as a therapy which amplifies the healing capabilities of Nature. Ravi’s acquaintance and assimilation of the children’s character promotes a synthesis in him. His coordination with nature and its denizens revamps his interpersonal relationship and emotional well-being.

The charismatic and purgative capabilities of ecological proximity is recognized by Ravi through ecological experiences. A synergy between science, nature, and spirituality in ecological presence, is detected by Ravi and he utilizes it to the maximum as long as he resides in Khasak. Nature engenders essential virtuous qualities like compassion, altruism, and sacrifice in people connected to it, and this is reflected in them as a congenital distinction. The successful psychic growth in Ravi can be attributed to the
captivating location of Khasak. This makes Khasak a symbol of ecological paradigm, that transmits itself as a place of rebirth, growth, and development. The araby tank and its premises, become a means of occasional solace for Nizam and Maimoona and provide ways of expansion and emotional connection for Ravi too. Ravi’s ability to relate to the people and the ecology, facilitates his personal psychic growth. This has similitude with the Biophilia hypothesis of E.O. Wilson who states that, “human beings have an innate instinct to connect emotionally with nature” (Wilson 16).

Ravi’s ecological wisdom can be equated with the term ecoliteracy, propagated by deep ecologists, that circumscribes a wide variety of spiritual, physical, and social understandings. He can be adjudged as an ecoliterate person with regard to his attributes that include awareness of his kinship with all forms of life that surround him. He has a sense of awe and gratitude for the world, a physical and spiritual connection to the land, a knowledge of ecological self, and a perception of the relationship of the humans and other living organisms. Ravi’s cognition of ecological crisis and his preparedness to experience both discomfort and delight, along with an interest in wilderness for renewal and counsel, makes him an ecoliterate person in every sense. Ravi’s attainment of an ecological self is the outcome of an organic maturation process. The paradigm of ecological self is attributed with qualities described by John Seed:

We underestimate ourselves when we identify self with the narrow,
competitive ego. With sufficient all sided maturity we not only move from ego to a social self and a metaphysical self, but an ecological self as well. Through widening circles of identification, we extend the boundaries of our self interest and enhance our joy and meaning in life. (Deep Ecology 17)

Ravi becomes the embodiment of a synergy that arises from a combination of environmental health and the collage of mental and emotional well being. His direct contact with Khasak’s environment fosters reduction of stress and this is delineated when Ravi remains unperturbed when the letter of acquisition reaches him from the authorities as per an anonymous complaint. Ravi’s unfazed attitude stands out in sharp contrast with the agitative mood exhibited by the Khasi and other supporters. The quality that Ravi displays can be attributed to the ecological wisdom he absorbs. Ravi’s thought process is explicated through an application of Robert Greenway’s reusage of Freudian terms. This helps in the assessment of the various mental processes that take place in Ravi’s mental strata. Ravi’s “ego” gets overstimulated while he is at college and separates him from the natural processes, and eventually he drops out. The college, and its environment, tries to reinforce its pattern on Ravi’s “ego” but the ecopsychological spirit in him helps him to maintain a tranquil life and turns his mind towards a search for the ecological self. Ravi’s “ego” possesses an all-encompassing Nature that is passed on to his collective unconscious as well. His “superego” is always able to negotiate with his “id”
that supports desires, and a harmonious coexistence produces the necessary constitution to promote his successful psychic maturity.

Ravi’s healing process brings to mind the theory of ecotherapy put forward by Howard Clinebell. The absence of a doctor or mediator in ecotherapy makes the ‘patient’s’ perspective all the more significant. This is akin to Ravi’s ecopsychological purgatory process. In ecotherapy, a psychic connection is facilitated between the ecological psyche and the human psyche to engender and testify the mutual flourishing connection. The concomitant phenomenon of the favourable outcome presages the existence of an invisible medium of communication between the “therapist” and the “patient.” This invisible medium is described by some as the validation of the subsistence of an ecological language. This language assists the reciprocal appreciation that takes place between the individual psyche and the natural environment. This substantiates the viewpoint of Greenway’s concept that ecology and psychologies are languages, and thus a search for an ecopsychology is a search for a language, a psychological language about relationships (Greenway 122). From this perspective it can be concluded that the ecological language of Ravi does not require the usage of alphabets to master it, and this advantage predominates his preference to seek consolation in nature more than any other thing. In Ravi, the expansion of self, relief from depression caused by repression, and mental illness, are healed with the constant connection he maintains with his natural environment. The presence of ecology generates in
him positive feelings on a psychic, physical, and spiritual level. It holds the remedial measures for all his distress. An understanding of this, and his willingness to subject himself to a reformative path necessitates a speedy development in his mind. Emotional bonding with nature aids Ravi’s developmental process. He creates a sustainable lifestyle for himself while under the influence of Khasak. This life harmonizes the dispersed elements of Ravi’s psyche, and renders him the much needed emotional stability.

Ravi’s ecological wisdom enables him to be quick and receptive to crisis. His generosity and supportive stance arises out of his comprehension of the human psyche as possessing a universal understanding. His dexterity to associate and equate himself with the people of Khasak by the generation of empathy, accentuates the process of his psychic maturity. Certitude, and the conviction in his self, regarding the rituals and beliefs of the people of Khasak, promotes the interconnection between his collective unconscious and the conscious part of his being. The legends and myths of the people of Khasak are welcomed by Ravi with a zealous enthusiasm unique only to his ecological self. Cosmic consciousness that resides in his collective unconscious enables him to get a better understanding of the celestial connections that come across his life. The psychic process of Ravi has a subtle quality about its perception, due to the ecological association it maintains. The stages of his psychic process is undetectable in a systematic condition. A sum total of ecological experience and wisdom gained out of it,
takes Ravi through an ecological psychic process to a transient matured psychic self.