7. While we could get the interviews of some of the parents of *aRavaaNiGaL*, we weren’t able to talk to most of them as they did not like being interviewed or the *aRavaaNiGaL* have severed connection with their parental home.

8. The parenthetical documentation of the interviews quoted in the dissertation follow a specific method. Each interview in the Appendix is numbered question wise. Please follow the name and number in the parenthesis (wherever applicable) and refer in the Appendix.

Chapter 1

Conceptualising the idea of home
In order to understand the concept of home, we will consider few definitions of home from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. These definitions of home will be analysed in connection with the Tamil idea of home. The first of the dictionary definitions is as follows: “A village or town, a collection of dwellings; a village with its cottages” (“home”). Home in the first definition is a:

1. Village
2. Town
3. Collection of dwellings
4. Village with its cottages

Here, home refers to an entire village or town which is “a type of large space” (Selvamony “A Note on *Tinai* Home”).

The second definition is as follows: “An estate, a possession” (“home”). The words “estate” and “possession” refer to ownership. While the first definition refers to home in spatial terms, the second does in terms of ownership.

Here is the third: “a dwelling-place, house, abode; the fixed residence of a family or household; the seat of domestic life and interests; one’s own house; the dwelling-place in which one habitually lives, or which one regards as one’s proper abode” (“home”). From this definition, the following senses of home can be elicited:

1. a dwelling-place
2. a house
3. an abode
4. the fixed residence of a family/household

5. the seat of domestic life/interests

6. one’s own house

7. the dwelling-place in which one habitually lives

8. the dwelling-place one regards as one’s proper abode

Senses 1, 2 and 3 refer to home as a place of dwelling, a house and abode. In Selvamony’s words, “abode” “conceptualises home as a type of small space” (Selvamony “A Note on Tinai Home”). This can be contrasted with the earlier definition which refers to home as “a type of large space.” Though both definitions talk of home in terms of space, the difference lies in the “scale.” But while considering sense 1 where home is defined as “dwelling-place,” one cannot be sure whether the space is large or small. Sense 4 does not limit itself to space that makes a home but also prefixes residence with the adjective “fixed.” Can all fixed residences be considered home? A “fixed residence” can become home only if it is regarded as “one’s proper abode.”

There are many residences which are fixed but cannot be called homes. For example, an old age home is a fixed residence but not a place which one “regards as one’s proper abode.” The word “proper” requires explanation at this point. “Proper,” according to OED means: “Belonging to oneself or itself; own; owned as property; that is the, or a property or quality of the thing itself, intrinsic, inherent.” In other words, “proper abode” means an individual’s own abode. Since an old age home is not one’s own abode, it cannot be one’s home though it is referred to as ‘home.’

Sense 8 which defines home as a “dwelling-place one regards as one’s proper abode” is therefore a reference to one’s own home. Are senses, 8 and 6, one and the same? The home implied in sense 8 need not be one’s own but only what one considers one’s own. According to sense 5,
home is “the seat of domestic life and interests.” The word ‘domestic,’ according to OED, suggests attachment and devotion to home life or duties. When we consider sense 7, “the dwelling-place in which one habitually lives” it is worthwhile to recall Selvamony’s poser: “How long does one have to live in a place in order to call it one’s home?” Can a rented house in which one lives habitually be considered one’s home? Many people live habitually in the footpaths and open spaces. Can those places be called their homes? The term “habitual living” suggests time, “but when continuous occupation for a specified period of time is the determining parameter . . . present occupancy alone will not count for calling a place home” (Selvamony “A Note on Tinai Home”). Therefore, any “place of habitual living” cannot be considered home. According to sense 8, home is a place “one regards as one’s proper abode.” This can be seen in connection with the earlier one where home is “the dwelling-place where one habitually lives.” An individual can live habitually in a specific place without considering that place his/her “proper abode.” While habitual living suggests time, “proper abode” refers to a definite and defined living space. According to definition 8, footpaths and open spaces cannot be considered proper abodes. While the first sense points to a collection of dwellings, definitions 6, 7 and 8 point to an individual dwelling as one’s home.

The fourth definition is as follows: “the place of one’s dwelling or nurturing, with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it” (“home”) and it consists of two senses:

1. Place of one’s dwelling with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.
2. Place of one’s nurturing with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.

The definition mentioned above provides a picture of two different homes: One, a place of dwelling and another, a place of nurturing. But for each home, there are “conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.” The definition also gives the impression that a place of dwelling is not necessarily a place of nurturing and vice-versa. Before discussing the various senses, the meaning of the word ‘dwell’ from *OED* could be considered:

1. to remain (in a house, country, etc.) as in a permanent residence; to have one’s abode; to reside, ‘live’

2. to occupy as a place of residence; to inhabit (“Dwell”).

In both senses ‘dwell’ means occupancy on a temporary basis. But it is interesting to observe that none of the senses mention the word ‘temporary.’ Therefore one can conclude that the word “dwell” could either refer to ‘live’ or ‘stay.’ Now coming back to the senses of the fourth definition, the following examples can help us understand them better. An individual could dwell in a place like a hotel or an inn without being nurtured. Since he/she is dwelling in that particular place for a considerable period of time, that place, according to the dictionary, could be that individual’s home. In the same manner, residents in a University/College could be nurtured by a Warden, till the residents continue to stay in it. In both the examples cited, the stay is temporary but one is a place of dwelling whereas the other is of dwelling and nurture.
According to the fifth definition, home is “a place, region, or state to which one properly belongs, in which one’s affections centre, or where one finds refuge, rest, or satisfaction” (“home”). The following are the senses in this definition:

1. a place where one properly belongs
2. a region where one properly belongs
3. a state where one properly belongs
4. a place in which one’s affections centre
5. a region in which one’s affections centre
6. a state in which one’s affections centre
7. a place where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction
8. a region where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction
9. a state where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction

Before analyzing these senses, it is worthwhile to differentiate between place, region and state. ‘Place’ can refer to any kind of space which has a base, not necessarily land. But the word ‘region’ means, “a more or less defined portion of the earth’s surface, now especially as distinguished by certain natural features, climatic conditions, a special fauna or flora, or the like” (“Region”). ‘State’ is defined as “a body of people occupying a defined territory and organized under a sovereign government” (“State”).
While ‘region’ and ‘state’ are defined in terms of boundaries, scale and jurisdiction, place is not. The fifth definition also mentions four different features of home.

a. belongingness

b. geographical location

c. a centre of affections

d. personal gratification

We could say that the place “one properly belongs” to is one’s place of origin. It is not just the place of birth or nurture, but of one’s fathers and forefathers. It is the place where the roots of an individual lie. Senses 4, 5 and 6 tell us that the place/region or state in which an individual’s affections are centered is home. There can be many places for which a person may have affection but only one of them becomes the centre of one’s affections and that place is home. According to senses 7, 8 and 9, home is where an individual finds rest, refuge and satisfaction. After an exhausting day at work or school, home is the place which offers rest for the body and mind. Home also becomes a place where an individual takes refuge from the different demands of the outside world and experiences satisfaction.

The last definition is as follows: “The seat, centre, or native habitat; the place or region where a thing is native, indigenous, or most common” (“home”). This definition consists of the following senses:

1. the seat

2. the centre
3. the native habitat

4. the place where a thing is native

5. the place where a thing is indigenous

6. the place where a thing is most common

7. the region where a thing is native

8. the region where a thing is indigenous

9. the region where a thing is most common

Like definition five, definition six also makes a distinction between “place” and “region.”

The word “seat” in sense 1 could refer to many things both living and non-living. For example, the statement, “tiRuvaRuuR is the seat of classical tamiz music,” could mean that tiRuvaRuuR is the home of classical tamiz music or tiRuvaRuuR is the hub of classical tamiz music. Similarly, “Australia is the seat of coral reefs” could mean that Australia is home to coral reefs. In the above examples, the word “seat” is used in different contexts. Sense 2 defines home as “centre.” In definition five, home is the place which becomes an individual’s “centre.” Sense 3 which defines home as “native habitat,” again refers to the place of origin. Though the previous definitions deliberated the meanings of home with reference to humans, the present definition includes non-human beings as well. Senses 4-9 mention the words “native,” “indigenous” and “most common.” While “native” and “indigenous” can be used interchangeably, “most common” cannot because it has a different connotation. When an organism is “most common” in a place, it means it is found abundantly there though that place need not be its place of origin. A good example of this is Prosopis juliflora (veeliKkattaaN), a thorny shrub which is found in
abundance in Tamil Nadu. But its place of origin is Mexico. Quoting Selvamony: “To biologists, frequency of occurrence could be a legitimate parameter to call a place home . . . If we go by the criterion of nativity and indigenousness, an individual could have only one home” (Selvamony “A Note on Tinai Home”). Analysing the present definition of the dictionary, home is the place of origin of an organism, its native place. Along with the place of origin, the dictionary also seems to value the “frequency of occurrence,” (Selvamony “A Note on Tinai Home”) as mentioned by Selvamony.

The following senses of home are elicited from the definitions in OED:

1. Village
2. Town
3. Collection of dwellings
4. Village with its cottages
5. An estate
6. A possession
7. A dwelling-place
8. A house
9. An abode
10. The fixed residence of a family/household
11. The seat of domestic life/interests
12. One’s own house

13. The dwelling-place in which one habitually lives

14. The dwelling-place one regards as one’s proper abode

15. Place of one’s dwelling with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.

16. Place of one’s nurturing with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.

17. A place where one properly belongs

18. A region where one properly belongs

19. A state where one properly belongs

20. A place in which one’s affections centre

21. A region in which one’s affections centre

22. A state in which one’s affections centre

23. A place where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction

24. A region where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction

25. A state where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction

26. The seat

27. The centre
28. The native habitat

29. The place where a thing is native

30. The place where a thing is indigenous

31. The place where a thing is most common

32. The region where a thing is native

33. The region where a thing is indigenous

34. The region where a thing is most common

Definitions of home from OED

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<td>A place where one properly belongs</td>
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<td>A house</td>
<td>Place of one’s nurturing with the conditions, circumstances, and feelings which naturally and properly attach to it, and are associated with it.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The region where a thing is native</td>
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<td>A region where one finds refuge, rest or satisfaction</td>
<td>The region where a thing is indigenous</td>
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Though at the outset, the word home seems a very simple one, we can identify thirteen features from the 34 senses found in the six definitions. They are:

1. A dwelling and its accompanying conditions
2. permanence
3. domesticity
4. ownership — real and assumed
5. belongingness
6. habitualness
7. nurture
8. centre of affections
9. refuge
10. rest
11. satisfaction
12. nativity
13. indigenousness

If not all, most of these features could be found in *oikos*, a Greek word. Spirit beings, are not mentioned in the dictionary definitions of home but are part of the *oikos* which “includes the family, the spirit beings associated with the family, and the land that houses the family and supports it” (Selvamony “Oikos as Family” 38). The spiritual dimension of the home and land cannot be explained in the dictionary as they are abstract notions which are complex to be stated in definitions that are denotative. The spirit beings are usually the spirits of ancestors who inhabited the land and are present as spirits to guide and guard the community. It can be seen as the household which has three entities: natural, cultural and supernatural. If land with all its physical entities is a natural entity, the family is a cultural one and the spirit beings that are associated with the family are the supernatural entities of a home. According to Selvamony,

As study of the oikos, ecology will not address merely a quantifiable and empirically verifiable relation between organisms and the non-organismic world, but acknowledge that the unquantifiable spirit is also a member of the oikos and therefore, the relation between these three members will not be entirely quantifiable and empirical. (Selvamony “Introduction” xix)
Further, he goes on to say that if ecocriticism is the study of the *oikos*, then “Ecocriticism will be oikocriticism, criticism of the oikos” (“Introduction” xx). *Oikos* is the root from which the word ‘eco’ (of economics and ecology) is derived and this ‘eco’ forms the first part of the word ecocriticism, the critical theory used in this dissertation. Let us now see how the senses mentioned above apply to the Greek term *oikos* from which the term ecocriticism is derived.

The first feature of home is “Dwelling and its accompanying conditions.” *Oikos* which means household is a definite place of dwelling and also has its conditions for the same. The conditions are the interrelationship between the natural, cultural and supernatural entities. *Oikos* as a dwelling place cannot be an abstract idea but a concrete one with land, a house, heretosexual family and the ancestral spirits of the family.

*Oikos* includes the family the spirit beings associated with the family, and the land that houses the family and supports it. . . . It (oikos) consists of a heterosexual couple, their children, the spirit beings, especially the ancestral spirits, the land and all the organisms that dwell therein. (Selvamony “tiNai” 38)

So we can see that the first feature from *OED* can be applied to oikos.

Let us see how the second feature permanence applies to oikos. *Oikos* is largely a primal setting with a close interaction between the natural and the cultural. The land that is considered the home is the same land that belonged to the fathers and forefathers also. If we consider the duration of occupancy, oikos is the permanent home of several generations of people.

Domesticity is the third feature that characterizes home in the dictionary. The very term “oikos” itself means household which includes the duties and obligations that are
connected to home. If we attribute the two dimensions: the inner and the outer to oikos, the inner dimension is the place where domestic roles and responsibilities are fulfilled. The “spousal, parental, and spiritual experience” constitutes the “inner dimension” (Selvamony, “Oikos as Family” 38). So, we can say that oikos cannot exist without a vibrant inner or domestic dimension.

The fourth feature of ownership can be either real or assumed. It is real when the house of dwelling is owned by an individual while assumed ownership is when an individual lives in a place and “occupies [it] as a place of residence” (“dwell”). Assumed ownership can extend to a couple of years and almost seems as if the individual owns that place but actually he/she is only a temporary occupant. Ownership as a feature does not characterise oikos. While there is a prevailing sense of belonging in an oikos which can count as ownership, there is no legal document whatsoever to prove that an individual is the owner of a particular piece of land.

Belongingness is another feature that characterises home. One of the senses from the dictionary refers to home as a place where “one properly belongs” which is the place where an individual’s roots lie. Oikos is always the place where one’s own roots and those of one’s fathers’ and forefathers’ roots lie.

The sixth feature of home is habitualness which can be linked to domesticity where actions, roles and responsibilities are realized and followed as set pattern. The inner and outer dimensions have specific set of roles and codes of conduct and since they follow a pattern, they are habitual actions. Since oikos has specified roles and follows a certain pattern, it is a type of home where there is habitualness in everything.
The seventh feature of home is nurture which is an indispensible part of the inner dimension. As Selvamony mentions, “. . . inner life is fulfilled not merely in their sexual relationship, but also in their parental role . . .” (“Oikos as Family” 38). Relationships, both sexual and parental require nurture and this feature is not only between human relationships but also between human and non-human entities.

Home is the centre of affections, according to the eighth feature. Dwellers of an oikos are indigenous to that particular place and it is but natural that their affections centre in their home which is also the home of their fathers and forefathers.

According to the ninth, tenth and eleventh features, home is a place of refuge, rest and satisfaction. These three features can be grouped under the affective dimension of home. In oikos, these three features are tied to the inner dimension of “intimate relationship” between the members of the family which includes the mother, father and children. When the outer part of home proves tense and discordant, it is the inner which provides refuge, rest and satisfaction to an individual. Though the outer dimension is also associated with the home, the inner is something that is closer to the individual.

The twelfth and thirteenth features of home are nativity and indigenousness. Recalling Selvamony’s lines, “When residential occupancy is stretched beyond the lifetime of an individual well into the past . . . the home of the resident could be considered ‘indigenous’” (Selvamony, “A Note on TinaiHome”). oikos comprises not only the living members but also the ancestral spirits of the fathers and forefathers. But the sense in the dictionary, though talks of indigenousness, does not mention ancestral spirits.
From the listed thirteen features of home from the dictionary, only one feature does not
directly connect with *oikos*. Since all features but one match, *oikos* can be seen as a complete
home. Central to ecocriticism is the relationship humans share with nature and culture. Theories
like structuralism, post-structuralism, postcolonialism and other such engage in the discussion of
home within the purview of culture and society. While poststructuralists dismiss “the traditional
notion of home” (Selvamony “Migrancy in Literature” 118), postcolonialists understand home
through “unboundedness” like “migration, indentured labour, invasion,” exile and other issues
(118). However, the engagement with home is limited to the cultural in the theories mentioned
above and ecocriticism is the only theory that looks at home in connection with nature and
physical environment. Thus home in ecocriticism is an amalgamation of natural and cultural
features. Though nature is integral to ecocriticism, all writings on nature cannot be ecocritical,
according to Selvamony. The term ‘nature’ is a generic one which can be extended to many
things but when the term *oikos* is used, it refers to “a real community located in a definite place”
(xxi). While certain theories of ecocriticism talk about the bigger picture of land, place and
living, bioregionalism, *tiNai* and *oikos* give importance to the idea of home. Since home is a
major concern of ecofeminism, it is also taken up for study in this dissertation. Now, first let us
see how bioregionalism deals with the concept of home.

To the bioregionalists, “Home is the place where we live, with our human families, in our
human communities, within our biotic communities” (Andruss et al 33). If home is a “place
where we live,” how does it apply to nativity and indigeneity? An individual could be born in a
particular place but her/his roots might lie elsewhere. In his essay titled “Towards a
cosmopolitan bioregionalism,” Thomashow mentions how “… people search for their roots, (and)
they recognize the depth of their uprootedness” (129). His statement gives the impression that “place” in bioregionalism can refer to any place and not only the place of one’s origin. “Reinhabitation” is the term that is used quite often by bioregionalists and the word means:

learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation. It involves becoming native to a place through becoming aware of the particular ecological relationships that operate within and around it. (Aberley 23)

The words “becoming native” in the definition mentioned above implies that the inhabited place is not necessarily the native place of an individual. With regard to “human families” mentioned in the definition, it is unclear whether the families are related by marriage, blood, friendship or work. But “human communities” mentioned in the definition could refer to interaction with people belonging to “other social change movements” who are part of the bioregion (Aberley 34). Since bioregionalism is a social change movement, it “calls for human society to be more closely related to nature and to be more conscious of its locale, or region, or life-place” (Andruss et al 2). But what makes the definition in Home! A Bioregional Reader stand out from definitions in the dictionary is the mention of the word ‘communities’; communities both human and non-human are given equal importance in bioregionalism.

Ecofeminism, like bioregionalism is another critical theory which gives importance to ‘home.’ Let us consider a definition provided by the ecofeminist, Greta Gaard in her book, The nature of home: Taking Root in a Place(2007). Gaard describes home as, “. . . not a static place or a destination, not a noun but a verb, a process of creating relationships to place, to creatures, and to people” (199). Home according to Gaard is:
a. Not a static place

b. A process of creating relationships to place, creatures and people

Gaard problematises the permanence of ‘home,’ by referring to it as a place that is not static. She does not view home as a static walled construction but as an organic form which is constantly evolving and nourishing. She extensively talks about creating home in places where one lives but seems to overlook the possibility of living in places over a period of time and still not feeling ‘at home.’ She seems to give the impression that home can be established anywhere where the self ‘feels’ one with the place. Answering the question: “Why don't you associate permanence of place with 'home?'” in an email correspondence, Dr. Gaard replies:

I was responding to the fact of global mobility, made inevitable for so many of us through the forces of global economies, warfare, famine, and floods—climate change, really, as well as economic globalization from liberal capitalism. So I tried to address the question of *how to feel at home* for those of us who must leave those ancestral spirits of place.”

(Gaard, Message to the author)

Gaard’s home is akin to the Buddhist philosophy which seeks impermanence. She says, “I tried to work with a Buddhist feminist perspective on place and identity . . . and one of the factors of existence in Buddhism is the truth of impermanence (anicca) (the others are the pervasiveness of suffering (dukkha), and the truth of no-self, anatta) (these are English translations of the Pali words) [sic]” (Gaard, Message to the author). This quality of impermanence completely negates the physical and concreteness of ‘home,’ rendering it abstract and even “static.”
The next point from Gaard’s definition is “a process of creating relationships to place.” How does an individual create a relationship to a place? By closely interacting with the diverse non-human entities of the region, a person establishes a connection to the place. But this interaction does not happen overnight. It requires long association with a particular place to actually connect with the flora, fauna and other physical entities. And how exactly can an individual “connect” with a specific place? There are different ways of doing this. First, a person who belongs to a tribal community will be connected to his/her place invariably because of the interrelationship that exists between the human and the non-human entities. A tribal person need not be taught to live in tune with the physical world. His/her worldview is completely different from that of a city or town dweller. Another way to connect with a place is through “self education through physical, chemical, biological, and cultural patterning” (Aberley 32). This latter way of “connecting” is what the bioregionalists and ecofeminists practise and propagate.

The last point from Gaard’s idea of home is: “a process of creating relationships to creatures and people.” This point can be linked with the earlier one which mentioned “creating relationships to place.” When an individual connects with the place where he/she lives, then he/she is bound to be aware of the different organisms that are part of the environment. In both ecofeminism and bioregionalism, home is a place where an individual connects “with the place” and enjoys an interrelationship with the different non-human entities.

Intrinsic connection with the place is the link between the two theories — bioregionalism and ecofeminism. Judith Plant speaks of “a partnership between bioregionalism and feminism” (21) because both theories “value all our relations” — with nature and with humankind, — and both value home” (21). Ecofeminism links the oppression of women by men and the earth by humans. All forms of ecofeminism address the issues faced by women within their homes and
outside. Besides fighting for women’s issues, ecofeminism has integrated and diversified its objectives into areas such as bioregionalism, social ecology, deep ecology and animal rights.

The bioregional and ecofeminist homes, though similar to oikos, have differences as well. The similarity lies in the interrelationship between the human and non-human communities. While the family in oikos is a ‘heterosexual’ one, the family in bioregional and ecofeminist homes is not necessarily a heterosexual alone. While the communities defined by bioregionalists could be a group of people who live together and perform communitarian acts, they are usually not related by blood. Though there may be families who are part of the community in a specific bioregion, the members of these communities need not be kin to each other. Another distinguishing factor is the presence of ancestral spirits in the land that houses the ‘home.’ Though Dodge talks about bioregionalism favouring “primitive animist/ Great Spirit tradition of various Eastern and esoteric religious practices . . . ,” (Dodge 10) the role of ancestral spirits is not mentioned as a part of the bioregion. The absence of ancestral spirits in the homes defined by bioregionalism and ecofeminism points to the fact that these are not indigenous homes. Reinhabitation, not place of origin, is given importance in bioregionalism. But sometimes a bioregionalist could also be native to a specific place. Inspite of an individual being native to a place, the presence of the ancestral spirits is not acknowledged by the bioregionalists and ecofeminists.

The next and final definition of home is from tiNai. The ancient Tamil concept of tiNai is similar to the Greek oikos.

The term tinai has four distinct, but interconnected meanings. They spring from the basic meaning, namely, 'to join' (in-to join; t+in--tin, hard from joining compactly;
Paavaanar 1956, 100). Earth is *tinai* because it is an unbroken continuum out of the compacting of sand, rock, soil and other substances. Mark the phrase 'man tininta nilam' (*puranaanuuru* 2:1). By extension, *tinai* can also refer to any specific place on earth; especially, a house with its own land surrounding it, a homestead. By further semantic extension, *tinai* has come to mean "family", particularly, family that occupies a specific place, and also family with kin members. Earth and the household are *tinai* because the constituents that go to make these entities, namely, earth and household are so compacted as to produce a hard, firm unit. The first and second meanings combine to yield a third, namely, 'human community indigenous to a specific ecoregion'. By extension, when *tinai* refers to non-material firmness, then it means 'conduct'. Consider the phrase 'karpu ennum tinmai' (*tirukkural* 54).

Not only is character a kind of non-material firmness (or *tinai*), but also persons marked by such character are *tinai*, in fact, 'uyar tinai' distinguishable from other beings not endowed with such character (Nilakanta Sastri 1993, 27; Cu.Kumaaracuvaami 270). These beings that lack character are called 'altinai' (al, not; al+tinai, without tinai, beings without tinai i.e. character).

Like *oikos*, it is a nexus of three features: natural, cultural and spiritual. *Tina* home is defined as:

. . . any specific place on earth; especially, a house with its own land surrounding it, a homestead. . . . *tinai* [has also] come to mean ‘family,’ particularly, family that occupies a specific place, and also with kin members. Earth and the household are *tinai* because the constituents that go to make these entities, namely, earth and household are so compacted as to produce a hard, firm unit. (Selvamony “Tina studies” 1)
The features of a tiNai home are as follows:

1. Homestead

2. Family with kin members

3. Specific place

From the definition of tiNai, we can say that the members of a tiNai home consist of extended family members who live in the same home. The tiNai home has two domains: akam (interior) and puRam (exterior). “akam, consists of such actions that are private and intimate and do not directly involve more than two persons. . . . puram, comprises actions that are public and may involve any number of persons” (Selvamony “An Alternative Social Order” 223). The woman played the central role at home orakam. The foster mother, along with the biological mother took care of the children. The father was responsible for teaching “his children the skills required to pursue the occupation of their community” (Selvamony “An Alternative Social Order” 224).

Another feature of tiNai home is a specific place in a region to which each individual belonged. Each region has its own flora, fauna, food, livelihood, art, polity, economy and religion. The following tables illustrate the five tiNaikal and their natural and cultural features:
### Montane Social Order

#### Natural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain;</td>
<td><em>Strobilanthes kunthianus</em>; Fig</td>
<td>Peafowl;</td>
<td>Elephant;</td>
<td>Wild rice;</td>
<td>Mountain dwellers (<em>kuravar; punavar; iravular</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountainous</td>
<td>tree; Teak; Sandalwood</td>
<td>Parrot; Grey</td>
<td>tiger; boar; bear</td>
<td>millet; bamboo rice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>jungle fowl; Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>greathorned owl</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilgiris,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaimalais</td>
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<tr>
<td>(include</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palani, Cardamom</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>hills, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamilnad Hills</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Javadis,</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shevaroys, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cultural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Polity (leader)</th>
<th>Economy (Occupation)</th>
<th>Communicati on</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Kurincci</em>;</td>
<td>Man <em>(kilavan)</em>: <em>kuravan</em>;</td>
<td><em>Verpan</em>;</td>
<td>Primitive cultivation;</td>
<td>Through first language and</td>
<td><em>Kurinci-yal</em></td>
<td>Ceyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountain</td>
<td>women <em>(kilatti)</em>: <em>kuratti</em></td>
<td><em>poruppan</em>;</td>
<td>digging tuber; collecting</td>
<td>appropriate drums which</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cave: <em>mutur</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>cilampan</em>;</td>
<td>honey</td>
<td>conveyed specific messages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>malaik-kilavan</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equivalents</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Pastoral social order

#### Natural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grazing/pastoral land;</td>
<td><em>Jasminum auriculatum;</em></td>
<td>Skylark;</td>
<td>Sheep;</td>
<td>Milk and milk products;</td>
<td>Shepherds (ayar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scrub jungle</td>
<td><em>Jasminum humile;</em></td>
<td>bittern; grey</td>
<td>cattle;</td>
<td><em>Paspalum scrobiculatum;</em></td>
<td>*itaiyar, potuvar,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Tamilnadu</td>
<td><em>Jasminum grandiflorum;</em></td>
<td>quail;</td>
<td>Indian hare;</td>
<td><em>Panicum miliare</em></td>
<td><em>kovalar</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gneissic low lands of</td>
<td><em>Jasminum sambac</em></td>
<td>partridge; red</td>
<td>deer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala; coimbatore</td>
<td></td>
<td>spurfowl</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>plateau; Palaru/Ponniyaru</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trough</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cultural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Polity (leader)</th>
<th>Economy (Occupation)</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>pati</em></td>
<td>man: <em>ayan</em>;</td>
<td>*annal; tonral;</td>
<td>shepherding; dairying</td>
<td>through first</td>
<td><em>mullaiyal</em></td>
<td>Mayon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>woman: <em>ayacci</em>;</td>
<td><em>kanaka natan</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>language and</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kannan; Visnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>drums which</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equivalents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>conveyed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>messages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Desertic social order**

**Natural features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>desert</td>
<td><em>Wrightia tinctoria; Bassia longfolia; Mahua</em></td>
<td>eagle; kite; hawk; pigeon; vulture; falcon</td>
<td>hound; Indian wild dog and other desert animals</td>
<td>Meat of hunted animals; roots</td>
<td>warriors (maravar); hunters (eyinar, expert shots; pulluvar, fowlers and vetar, hunters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Tamilnadu</td>
<td>Dry south east (Upper Vaikai, Ramad, Tirunelveli, Madurai Districts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Desertic social order**

**Cultural features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Polity (leader)</th>
<th>Economy (Occupation)</th>
<th>Communicati on</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kurumpu</em></td>
<td>man: maravan; woman: maratti; child</td>
<td><em>mili; vitalai; kalai</em></td>
<td>hunting</td>
<td>through first language and appropriate drums</td>
<td><em>arumpalai</em></td>
<td><em>cankarap aranam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern equivalents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shakti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Riverine social order

#### Natural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>riverine plains; agricultural tracts</td>
<td>Lagertstroemia flos regina; Calamus rotang; Trewia nudiflora</td>
<td>inland water fowls; pond heron; open bill stork; water hens; jacanos; snipe; grebe; king fisher</td>
<td>buffalo; Indian otter; pond tortoise; fresh water fishes</td>
<td>rice (various varieties)</td>
<td>farmers (ulavar; kalamar; katainar; tuluvan; mallar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Tamilnadu</td>
<td>alluvial and lateritic shelf of Kerala; Kaveri delta Madurai Districts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Riverine social order

#### Cultural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Polity (leader)</th>
<th>Economy (Occupation)</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ur; perur</td>
<td>man: ulavan; woman: ulatti; latter wife; child</td>
<td>uran; maktlan</td>
<td>harvesting; threshing and weeding</td>
<td>through first language and appropriate drums</td>
<td>maruta yal</td>
<td>Ventan karakara piriya Indra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Littoral social order
### Natural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Bird</th>
<th>Animal</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sea coast</td>
<td><em>Nymphaea stellata</em>; <em>Colophyllum inophyllum</em>;</td>
<td>night heron; wild duck; wild geese; medium egret; large egret; sea gull; flamingo; black-necked stork; grey heron</td>
<td>fish; shark; crocodile</td>
<td>fish; salt</td>
<td>Fisherfolk (paratavar; katalar, timilar) navigators (timilar; kalavar, paratavar) salt makers (umanar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coasts of Kerala; coromandel coastal plain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Present Tamilnadu**

### Cultural features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Polity (leader)</th>
<th>Economy (Occupation)</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pakkam, pattinam</td>
<td>man: paratavan; woman: paratti; child</td>
<td>cerppan; turaivan; konkan</td>
<td>fishing; making salt; navigation; pearl fishing and maritime trade</td>
<td>through first language and appropriate drums</td>
<td>vilarippan toti</td>
<td>Varunan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Selvamony says, “each tiNai is a web of life not wholly exclusive but overlapping in nature” (qtd. in Selvamony “Tinai Studies” 6). The word “specific” implies that an individual belongs to one of the five following regions: kuRijci, neytaL, paalai, mullai or maRutam. Communities belonging to the regions mentioned above are indigenous because the place where their home stands is the same place that was previously occupied by their foreparents. Quoting Selvamony: “When residential occupancy is stretched beyond the life-time of an individual well into the past, the time of one’s parents, grandparents and even fore parents, the home of the resident could be considered ‘indigenous’” (“A Note on Tinai Home”). And when foreparents lived in the same land that is presently occupied by an individual then it implies that the ancestral spirits still continue to live in the land and thus “bridge the natural and the supernatural.” And this brings us to another important feature of tiNai home: ancestral spirits.

According to jeenukurubar, even though the ancestors have passed away, they continue to live in the land as spirits. The invoking of spirits practiced even today by the jeenukurubar in H.D. Kote, Mysore District, validates this statement (Alex, “Physical Archive” 24-26). Death is not seen as an end but a passing on from one state to another. It is a transition from the physical to the supernatural. The presence of the ancestral spirits in the land offers emotional stability to the dwellers as the spirits are also seen as protectors of those who are living. The following words of Chikkaya, a man belonging to a tribe called jeenukkuRubaaR, will bear this out:

“When we were in the forest we used to have songs and dances every day. But now we do not have anything. In those days when we prayed, we prayed to our ancestors, because
they were with us in the forest. But now, we are out of the forest and they are still in the forest. So now, no one prays to their ancestors. Our Gods were big-big trees and stones. Some of the trees were teak, pala, poola, venga maram and others were believed to be our gods. All our rituals used to be under these trees. If we see a happy tree, we believe that that is our god. Wherever water springs up from, that place becomes a sacred land for us. Now there are no trees and stones.” ("23rd September – 26th September, 2008")

jeeŋukkuRubar, who live in Mysore, belong to tiNai social order and are part of kuRinciNai. They are a mountainous tribe. The tribe’s close connections with elephants, honey bees, teak trees, mountains, caves and Sivan explains their natural, cultural and supernatural relationships with the ecosystem of Nagarhole forest ("23rd September – 26th September, 2008"). These connections with the specific entities of natural, cultural and supernatural elements of kuRinci landscape are elaborated by Selvamony in his essay, “An Alternative Social Order” (217).

jeeŋukkuRubar were “one of the largest hunter-gatherer societies and their presence stretches along the western side of the ghat forests being parts of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu” (“Introduction to the Jenu Kuruba Digital Archive”). The people of this tribal community do not speak of a generic abode of the ancestral spirits but point to specific trees and stones as the dwelling places of their deceased ancestors. Since many generations of families stayed in that particular land and region, their dwelling-place and home are permanent. tiNai dwellers visited other regions in search of wealth and knowledge. But they never made another tiNai their permanent home by migrating from their own tiNai. They were traditional people enjoying relationship “with the entire range of natural phenomena,” (Berry 258) and they did not have to travel to different places and establish ‘homes’ elsewhere. A man of the mountain always remained one. His identity, culture and home were invariably tied to the mountain. As P. T.
Srinivasa Iyengar observes: “culture results from (their) environment” (Iyengar qtd. in Selvamony, “Tinai Studies” 11) and that is seen in tiNai ‘home.’

Since tiNai includes the land that houses the home, interrelationship between the human and non-human entities becomes an important feature. This interrelationship is an integral part of a tiNai dweller’s life. This relationship is such that even the trees are seen as kin, more specifically, a sibling. To illustrate this, a poem from the coastal landscape is given below:

Playing with friends one time

We pressed a ripe seed

Into the white sand

And forgot about it

Till it sprouted

And when we nursed it tenderly

Pouring sweet milk with melted butter,

Mother said,

“It qualifies

As a sister to you, and it’s much better than you,”

“praising this laurel tree.
So,

We’re embarrassed

To laugh with you here

O man of the seashore

With glittering waters

Where white conch shells

Their spirals turning right,

Sounds like the soft music

Of bards at a feast.

Yet, if you wish

there’s plenty of shade

elsewhere. (Anonymous; NaRRiNAI naanuuRu 172; trans. A. K. Ramanujan)

“In the neytaL poem quoted above, the coastal girl considers a laurel tree her sister and blushes when her boyfriend tries to woo her under the shade of that laurel tree” (Selvamony, “Il: The Oikological Human”). The given example is but one of the many in which we find the kinship between human and non-human entities. Due to this interrelationship between human and non-human entities tiNai dwellers form “an embryonic community” (Douglas qtd. in Rapport and Overing, 157).
After discussing *tiNai* home, the thirteen features explicated from the dictionary’s 34 senses could be used to analyse the same. Like *oikos*, *tiNai* home also consists most of the features except for one from the thirteen extracted from *OED*.

The first feature is “Dwelling and its accompanying conditions.” For illustrating this point, it would be worthwhile to quote Bachelard. In his 1958 book, *Poetics of Space*, Bachelard uses phenomenology to architecture and talks about the apartments in urban Paris remarking that,

> . . . in Paris, there are no houses and the inhabitants of the big city live in superimposed boxes . . . They have no roots . . . Home has become mere horizontality . . . houses are no longer set in natural surroundings, the relationship between house and space becomes an artificial one. (Bachelard qtd. in Stefanovic, 93)

From the quote given above, it can be said that for French phenomenologist, Gaston Bachelard, houses are those which are “set in natural surroundings” and not those which resemble “superimposed boxes.” Bachelard makes a point which talks of boundedness which exists between the structure of a house with the natural surroundings. This boundedness creates an “integration of nature and man” (Selvamony, “An Alternate Social Order,” 230). This interrelationship becomes an important feature that characterises *tiNai* home. Thus the nexus between the cultural and natural are the conditions which accompany the dwelling in *tiNai* home.

While houses are cultural and “natural surroundings” natural, there is also another entity which is part of *tiNai* home: Ancestral spirits of the foreparents. Thus we can see how *tiNai* home satisfies the first feature extracted from the definitions in *OED*.

The second feature that characterizes home is permanence. Like *oikos*, *tiNai* home is also a largely primal setting with the nexus of the cultural and the natural. Selvamony,
quoting Schmidt, in his essay “tiNai in Primal and Stratified Societies” states that “orality (lack of literacy), common ancestry, small-scale and simple technology” (39) are characteristics of primal society. Selvamony further explicates by saying tiNai is “a small-scale society” which “traced its origin to a common ancestor and adopted simple technology” and also showed an “absence of structural stratification” (39). Since tiNai was divided into five regions, each had its own “appropriate technology to mobilize its resources” and the natural resources “available in a region fashioned the technology that emerged there” (“An Alternate Social Order” 227). A society can make use of the resources available to its region only when there is an intimate and close connection between the land and the people. Further, relevant small technologies practiced in tiNai society have been done over many generations. This system of following technology appropriate to one’s region and practicing the forefather’s occupation stems out of dwelling in a specific land for many generations. Another factor which lends to permanence is the presence of ancestral spirits in the land which houses the home. Ancestral spirits are the spirits of dead ancestors who continue to live in the land. This feature is an important part of oikos as well. But OED fails to mention this aspect in its various entries of home. But another way of looking at this omission is tying this feature to indigenousness which is listed in OED’s definition of home. Any home which is indigenous cannot be without the presence of ancestral spirits. This kind of dwelling with ancestral spirits and using appropriate technology practiced by past generations gives the feature of permanence to tiNai home.

Domesticity is the third feature of home. The initial paragraphs of tiNai home elicited three features that characterized the former and two out of them are homestead and family with
kin members. The two features of *tiNai* home clearly spell out that matters that concerned with the home are its family and the various actions that revolved around the home.

The fourth feature of ownership can be either real or assumed. Similar to *oikos*, ownership as a feature does not characterise *tiNai* home. While there is a prevailing sense of belonging in *tiNai* home which can count as ownership, there is no legal document whatsoever to prove that an individual is the owner of a particular piece of land. While there is no overt sign of ownership, there existed a sense of duty or obligation to one’s own region. This can be aptly illustrated by an example by Selvamony: “. . . although an artisan served at times villages other than his own his primary loyalty was to his own” (qtd. in “An Alternative Social Order,” 233). Therefore, we can say that, inspite of not possessing any legal document to attribute ownership to the land, *tiNai* dwellers shared a bond bound by loyalty towards their home and region.

The next feature that characterizes home is belongingness. This feature can be linked with the earlier one which suggested that dwellers in *tiNai* home were bound by a sense of belonging to their land rather than ownership. This belongingness could also be extended to the relationship shared with the different non-human entities of the land. But *OED* talks of belonging in terms of the place where “one properly belongs.” If we connect the points — sense of belonging and belonging which comes through relationship between human and non-human entities and link it with the point “one properly belongs,” we can establish that all the three are directly proportional to each other. Further the presence of ancestral spirits in the land reaffirms that the place of dwelling is the same which was occupied by their foreparents ages ago. Only the place where “one properly belongs” could
be the place of ancestral spirits for it bespeaks permanence, the second feature which was discussed earlier.

Habitualness is the next feature of home. This feature can be applied to different aspects of tiNai home. If we view the different roles and duties present in akam and puRam of tiNai home, we can say that the domestic front has certain habitualness. Similarly if we consider the occupation of tiNai dwellers, they followed a systematic set of actions which was followed by their ancestors. This also could be characterized as habitualness.

Nurture, the seventh feature of home is an integral part of tiNai home. As discussed in the initial paragraphs, in tiNai household “children were looked upon as treasures . . . The tiNai family was largely responsible for fostering the values of society . . . love at home and renown in the society” (Selvamony, “An Alternative Social Order” 224). We could say that there was nurture at two levels: One, between the members of the household and second, between human and non-human entities. Since “every aspect of culture was closely bound to the natural environment,” (Selvamony, “An Alternative Social Order” 231) tiNai dwellers demonstrated “the love and respect they had for nature” by preserving and conserving nature’s wealth for future generations. As Selvamony rightly mentions, “They have admirably demonstrated to posterity how best natural riches could be enjoyed without squandering them” (“An Alternative Social Order” 231). Thus we can say that nurture was an indispensible part of tiNai home.

The eighth feature is that home is the centre of affections. Nurture cannot take place in a household without the existence of affection. Hence this feature could be linked
to the earlier one. Further, for any tiNai dweller his/her home was the only place of dwelling unlike today’s situation where there exist multiple homes in different places. Since home was only one, it is but natural that the affections will centre only in the place of dwelling.

Home is a place of refuge, rest and satisfaction, according to the ninth, tenth and eleventh features, elicited from OED. Similar to oikos, the three features mentioned above can be tied to the inner dimension or akam of the household. When situations in the outer dimension or puRamis not fulfilling, it is in akam that rest and satisfaction are found. Therefore the three features are essential and comforting factors of home in tiNai.

The twelfth and thirteenth features of home are nativity and indigenousness. While on the surface, the two terms, ‘native’ and ‘indigenous’ seem quite similar in meaning, a close scrutiny brings out the difference between the two. A note accompanying the word meaning of ‘native’ in OED says: “Legally, a person is a native of the place or country where the parents have their domicile, which may or may not be the place of actual birth (N. E. D., 1906)” (“Native”). The word ‘indigenous’ is defined as “Born or produced naturally in a land or region; native or belonging naturally to (the soil, region, etc.). (Used primarily of aboriginal inhabitants or natural products) (“Indigenous”). While the word ‘native’ “may or may not be the place of actual birth,” the word ‘indigenous’ is referred to in terms of “land,” “soil” and “region.” Further, ‘indigenous’ is used “primarily” to refer to “aboriginal inhabitants.” Being native to a particular place does not mean that one is indigenous to that place but when one is indigenous to a particular place, one is also a native of that place. An individual who is indigenous has a stronger tradition and rootedness when compared to an individual who is native to a place. One can live in a
place for many generations and yet not be indigenous to that place. If one’s ancestors have been displaced from their ancestral land and soil and have resettled in another place for many generations together, then they naturally become natives of the place in which they have resettled. But the place of resettlement, though spanning many generations cannot be considered as indigenous. Talking of indigenousness, *tiNai* home is definitely indigenous, as it “is native to the Tamil land” (Selvamony, “An Alternative Social Order” 228). Since *tiNai* is “a type of primal society,” it “preceded the stratified caste society” (Selvamony, “*tinai* in primal and Stratified Societies” 38) thus making it indigenous. Hence we can say that *tiNai* home is both native and indigenous.

Having discussed the definitions of home from some of the major ecocritical theories and Ecofeminism, we can now compare these ideas of home with *tiNai* home and try to explain why *tiNai* home is a complete one. The following table shows the features of homes extracted from the dictionary and compares those with them from different theories that we have discussed.

**Table 3**

Comparison of the features of home present in four different theories namely, Bioregionalism, Ecofeminism, *oikos* and *tiNai*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Features of home</th>
<th>Bioregionalist</th>
<th>Ecofeminism</th>
<th><em>oikos</em></th>
<th><em>tiNai</em></th>
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<tr>
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<td>Permanence</td>
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The features of home elicited from the dictionary do not include ancestral spirits as part of the homestead, inspite of giving indigenousness as one of the senses. But ancestral spirits are an important feature of oikos and tiNai homes. Though bioregionalism and ecofeminism acknowledge the presence of the spirit as a member of home, these two theories do not necessarily define home as a nexus of the natural, cultural and supernatural. Acknowledgement of the spirit is a matter of choice in bioregionalism unlike in tiNai and oikos. It is, however, found that some features of oikos and tiNai homes are found missing in bioregional and ecofeminist homes.

Since most of the features elicited from OED fit the idea of oikos and tiNai home, we could say that tiNai home will be the yardstick for a normative home, in this dissertation. After discussing home in the light of four different theories, the following question arises: Why should we employ the idea of tiNai home to read the oral narratives of aRavaaNiGaL (transgenders)? First, the study conducted is on Tamil-speaking individuals whose natal homes still have some semblance to tiNai homes. Second, almost all respondents live in Ri. kalluppaTTi, a town in madurai district, which could be described as a part of paalaitiNai, which refers to the desertic landscape in the tiNai classification by ancient Tamils. Selvamony in the essay “An Alternative Social order” has classified the present Tamil Nadu into the five tiNaikal and in that classification, the present day Madurai falls under the desertic landscape and since Ri. kaluppaTTi is in Madurai, it comes under the paalai tiNai. though the present lifestyles ofaRavaaNiGaL are a far cry from the dwellers of paalaitiNai. The present study attempts to find
out what home means to these aRavaaNiGal. While many theories and disciplines discuss home and related concepts, they fail to include the sacred and the non-human entities that are a vibrant part of the land. Ecocriticism, by giving importance to oikos, “exhorts theoreticians to revisit theory from an oikological stance which involves viewing things from the point of view of the whole oikos” (Selvamony “Il: The Oikological Human”). Since tiNai is based on the tamiz worldview and tiNai home is the most inclusive one, it is employed as a critical tool to study the five homes of six aRavaaNiGaL in Ri. KalluppaTTi.

In order to take the concept of home further, the following chapters will analyse in detail the different homes of six aRavaaNiGaL. The next chapter will deal with the natal homes of six aRavaaNiGaL and the natal kootihome of one aRavaaNi.