

Philip C. Engblom  
SALC  
The University of Chicago

**Title:** The Hazards of House and Home: Translating Kamal Desai's *Ranga*

When translating the Marathi word *ghar*, English-speakers are familiar with one immediate ambiguity--whether to translate the word as "house" or as "home." We rely on the context to determine for us the "correct" translation, and in the majority of cases this produces a reasonable translation equivalence. We rapidly discover however that the more idiomatic the usage in which the word *ghar* occurs in Marathi and "house" and "home" in English, the less likely we are to find a ready equivalent in the other language. Besides these "natural" hazards, which are inherent to Marathi and English as living spoken languages, the literary translator faces the additional very real hazards that characterize an individual author's idiom and style. If you simply tabulate the occurrences of the word *ghar* in the nineteen stories in Kamal Desai's collection *Ranga* [Colors] (1962), for instance, a rather startling problem presents itself-- emerging from the extremely skewed and disproportionate distribution of the word between two taxonomically distinctive story types in the collection-- which bears implications not just for the immediate tactical concerns of translation at the lexical level but for the larger task of interpreting the distinctive artistic intentions of one exceptional twentieth-century Marathi woman writer. Through a stylistic examination of the seventeenth story, "Mi Eka Mungi . . . Tu Eka Mungi (I'm an Ant . . . You're an Ant)," I will attempt to uncover within it the precise nature of the problematic attached to the word *ghar*--the true hazards of house and home--for an imaginary unmarried professional Maharashtrian woman, the central character of the story, who is as close to an alter ego for the author as we are likely to find.