

## Multilingual Russian Writers in Finland: Zinaida Lindén and Polina Kopylova\*

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This article investigates literary texts in Swedish, Finnish and Russian by two Russian-born writers living in Finland, Zinaida Lindén and Polina Kopylova, from the viewpoint of literary translanguaging and self-translation. Both writers can be characterised as translanguaging writers: they have written literary texts in a second language. Both can also be considered to have self-translated their literary texts. Lindén has written and published prose texts in Swedish and Russian, whereas Kopylova has written and published poetry in Russian and Finnish. However, both writers are critical of the view that their texts in different languages should be considered simply as self-translations and stress that both texts are versions of the same original in different languages. The article addresses the question of how Lindén and Kopylova approach the multilingual writing process in practice, and what kind of connections can be observed between the two versions of their texts in different languages. The investigation of literary texts as well as essays and interviews, where the writers express their views on multilingual writing, reveals multiple ways in which the literary texts in different languages overlap.

This article investigates literary texts written in Swedish, Finnish and Russian by two Russian-born writers living in Finland, Zinaida Lindén and Polina Kopylova. Both writers can be characterised as translanguaging writers, which means that they have written literary texts in a second language – Lindén in Swedish and Kopylova in Finnish. Both have also written literary texts in their native language, Russian. Polina Kopylova was born in 1976 in Leningrad and moved to Finland in 2002. She works a journalist, free-lance translator, editor and writer. Kopylova's first publications came out in the 1990s, when she was still living in Russia, including a fantasy-novel, *Letopisi svjatyh zemel'* (1997) [Chronicles of sacred lands]. After her immigration to Finland, she continued to write in Russian, and her poetry and prose works were published both in Finland and in Russia. Kopylova's texts have been published, for instance, in the anthology *Struktura sna. Stihi i prozaičeskie miniatjury molodyh avtorov Finljandii* (2008) [Structure of a dream: Poems and prosaic miniatures by young authors in Finland], which also includes texts by the writers Tatjana Pertseva

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and Anna Anohina, as well as in the prestigious literary journals *Novyj mir* and *Zvezda* in Russia. Some of Kopylova's prose and poetry texts have been translated into Finnish, by professional literary translators and as self-translations in the anthology of stories by Russian writers in Finnish, *Huhupuheita* (2013) [Rumours] and in the literary journal, *LiteraruS*. In recent years, Kopylova has not only translated her earlier poetry written in Russian into Finnish, but also ventured to write new poetry in both Finnish and Russian. She is a well-known figure in Finnish media as a commentator and expert on Russian society and politics, and she takes an active role in social debate. Among other things, she writes a bilingual blog in Finnish and in Russian.

Zinaida Lindén (born Ušakova) was born in Leningrad in 1963, where she studied Swedish language and literature at the Leningrad State University. She moved to Finland for family reasons in 1991, and in 1999-2000 she lived in Japan. Lindén started to write prose in Swedish in Finland and since 1996 she has published three novels and four collections of short stories and novellas in Swedish, as well as three novels and three collections of short stories in Russian. All of her works have been translated into Finnish. Lindén's debut novel, *I väntan på en jordbävning* (Waiting for an Earthquake) from 2004, was awarded the Runeberg Prize in 2005. Lindén was the first writer with a foreign background to have won the prize. The novel has also been translated into Finnish, Russian and Croatian. In addition, Lindén regularly publishes essays and columns in Finland-Swedish newspapers and journals, and she has translated Finland-Swedish fiction and non-fiction into Russian. In addition to Finnish, her texts have been translated into Croatian, German, Danish, French and English (see Hansen 2020; Klapuri 2016; Nissilä 2016; and Sorvari 2016, 2018; for a Russian review of Lindén, see Vostrov 2015).

In this investigation of Kopylova and Lindén as Russian writers living in Finland, publishing in both the languages of their new home country and in their native language, I am interested in how they approach the multilingual writing process, what it means for them to write in two languages and how these are reflected in their literary texts. I will analyse several recently published texts by the writers: Zinaida Lindén's short stories in Swedish published in the collection *Valenciana* (2016) and the Russian versions of short stories published in the journal *Zinziver* (2015) and Polina Kopylova's bilingual collection of poems, with a bilingual title in Russian and Finnish, *Dorogie pokojniki / Rakkaat vainajani* (My Beloved Departed, 2018b). I will also investigate essays and interviews where Lindén and Kopylova have discussed self-translation and their work as multilingual writers in Finland. I will discuss their work in the context of recent studies on literary translingualism and self-translation.

### Aspects of literary translingualism and self-translation

Literary translingualism is not a new phenomenon, but during the past two decades there has been an increasing interest from literary scholars in literature written in a language other than the author's mother tongue. Steven G. Kellman's *The Translingual Imagination* (2000) is an important pioneering study, in which he made literary translingualism its own special object of study. Kellman defines literary translingualism by distinguishing between

“multilingual (ambilingual) translingual writers” who have produced significant works in more than one language and “monolingual translingual writers” who have written in a single language other than their first language (2000, 12). This distinction is relevant concerning the notion that multilingual translingual writers “demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility” than “monolingual translingual” writers (Kellman 2020, 13). On the other hand, in his recent work, *Nimble Tongues* (2020), Kellman observes that translingual writers in general would seem to incline toward “metalingual awareness, manifested in ostentatious verbal play and in reflexive constructions that lay bare the devices of their arts” (2020, 15). These features can certainly be found in non-translingual authors’ texts as well, and each translingual writer has their own unique way of producing such effects (*ibid.*, 16). What interests me and many other scholars investigating translingual writers is the way literary translingualism makes their texts unique: what kind of layers of different languages and cultures can be found in their texts?

Consequently, scholars have studied what features literary translingualism adds to the poetics of literary texts. Yasemin Yildiz (2012, 13–14) emphasises that a writer using a non-native language does not move his or her mother tongue aside, but writes as if going “beyond” it. This writing “beyond” the mother tongue manifests itself in various metalinguistic skills and means. Yildiz refers to Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour’s (1989) study of how bilingualism reinforces a writer’s metalinguistic skills: “Bilinguals are continuously reminded of the contingent relation between sound and meaning, signifier and signified” (Yildiz 2012, 118). In particular, the “natural” and subconscious link between one’s mother tongue and one’s identity is questioned, and the sounds, forms, and connections to other languages and their sounds become more visible; awareness of the essence of language as signs, becomes clearer (*ibid.*). It has been argued that literary translingualism challenges a monolingual reading of literary texts by bringing to the fore connections between different languages, and using code-switching and multilingual wordplay to emphasise the function of language as a code (Yildiz 2012). Multilingual language imagery, word play, and puns also provide a different kind of reading enjoyment for a multilingual reader: they “transcend the semantic boundaries of individual languages, reminding the reader that words are not always what they seem and are not always limited to a particular context” (Hansen 2012, 548).

Changing from one’s mother tongue to another, foreign, language, may be a means for the author to develop artistic expression, but it may also depend on their personal circumstances. Thus, literary translingualism is connected to broader contexts of transnational, diaspora, migration and world literatures (Hansen 2018, 113–114). Rita Wilson (2011, 126) points out in her article that a writer may have a compelling reason to write in a language other than his or her mother tongue. He or she may be a victim of political persecution in his or her own country, and switching literary language provides protection. Switching language can also sometimes be the only way to take part in the literary field of the new home country and get a share in its literal capital. In addition, writing in another language can offer new freedom of expression, speaking positions and identities that would not be possible in the author’s mother tongue (Wilson 2011, 126).

As has been noted by previous research, literary translanguaging often involves self-translation, in which a writer working in two or more languages translates his or her own text from one language to another (Hokenson & Munson 2007, 1). Emily Apter has suggested that when writing in the language of the new home country, the migrant writer “skips” the translation phase and goes straight to the finished product, the target language. In this way translation can be understood in a broader sense as part of cultural (self-) representation (Apter 2006, 99). In other words, in a way, the migrant writer “translates” (autobiographical) stories involved with her or his native environment when writing about them in another language. This kind of translation activity, where the “original” is already, as suggested by Apter, a translation of the writer’s cultural background and identity and is then translated for the speakers of the writer’s native language, blurs the boundaries between “original” and “translation”. As Heidi Grönstrand (2014, 122) has noted, the dichotomic perception of “original” and “target” text in literary translation has been criticised among translation scholars, who emphasise the artistic value of both the original and the translation, because the translation requires creative activity on the part of the translator. In the case of literary self-translation, the borders between original and translation become even more blurred, because the author and translator are the same person.

Many authors who have written in multiple languages have indeed rejected the notion that they are self-translating and prefer to talk about their texts as two “versions” or “parallel works” (Fitch 1988, 132–3, quoted in Grutman 2009, 259; Wanner 2018, 125; Gentes 2013, 266). In this way, they dismantle the hierarchical relationship usually formed between the original text and the translation, where the original is the primary text and the translation is secondary. At the same time, the authority attached to authorship also characterises the translation, which becomes another original work (Grutman & Van Bolderen 2014, 324). I suggest this perception of parallel works, rather than of original and (self-)translation, highlights the multilingual creative process instead of a monolingual vision of two separate works, although they might be published individually and in different places. In some cases it may even occur that the first (published) version in the second language is based to some extent on the version in the writer’s first language, when the self-translation is “simultaneous” (Grutman 2009, 259). As Eva Gentes notes, “[i]n such ‘simultaneous self-translations,’ the writer switches between both versions, translating back and forth, thus incorporating the translation process into the creation process in such a way that both versions can at the same time serve as original and translation” (2013, 273). In this case, a dichotomous approach separating translation and original, and looking for similarities or differences is not very fruitful. So, when analysing versions in two languages, instead of applying concepts like “equivalence”, or looking into gaps between the texts, Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson (2007, 4) propose that it is more important to investigate how the texts overlap and intersect. In the following sections, I will apply these aspects and perceptions of literary translanguaging and self-translation to Kopylova’s and Lindén’s texts in two languages and their perceptions of how writing in two languages influences their artistic work.

### Kopylova's poetry in Russian and Finnish: writing "through Finnish"

In her essay, "Samoperevod v poëzii: opyt marginal'noj tvorčeskoj praktiki" (Self-translation in Poetry: Personal Experience of a Marginal Creative Practice), Kopylova describes how and why she started to self-translate, and later, to write poems both in Finnish and in Russian. Kopylova explains how, when she started writing in the first place, she had to deal with the following statements in Russian culture, which many consider as axioms: (1) poets best express themselves only in their mother tongue; (2) it is essential for poets to maintain contact with their roots and homeland and (3) any Russian – not just poets – who lives outside his/her country will necessarily suffer an irrevocable loss (Kopylova 2018a, 57). These "axioms" point to the centrality of language and linguistic purity within the idea of the modern nation: of one's mother tongue and native land as markers of belonging, and the emotionally-charged perceptions of languages. In the word "mother tongue" this is emphasised through the use of the word "mother" referring to "maternal origin, corporeal intimacy, and natural kinship" (Grönstrand 2014, 119; Yildiz 2012, 10–14). This is reflected in the Russian equivalent of "mother tongue", *rodnoj jazyk*, where the root *rod* refers to birth, kin and family. Literary translanguaging challenges the idea of linguistic purity and the notion that an author can best express himself only in their mother tongue.

Kopylova notes, however, that after living in Finland, certain factors encouraged her to switch from Russian to Finnish. One of them was the new and different power of expression of the Finnish language; Kopylova argues that Finno-Ugric languages have preserved a certain "closeness to nature" which in Russian is only found in certain dialects. Another was the increasingly important role of Finnish in her living and working environment (and the consequently reduced contact with the Russian language), and finally, the marginality that writing in Russian in a foreign-language environment meant (Kopylova 2018a, 58). In order to reach a wider audience for her poems, Kopylova first translated her poems written in Russian into Finnish, or, according to her own view: expressed the artistic idea of her Russian poems in Finnish. However, after this the next step for Kopylova was to produce the same artistic idea *simultaneously* in two languages, Russian and Finnish (Kopylova 2018a; Kopylova 2019). According to her, writing in two languages, one being her mother tongue and the other an acquired language, means a different take on the writing process:

It is about projecting the same concept into two different languages with the same intensity of meaning. Because I know exactly what I want to say and why, language works as a medium, not as a tool. Of course, this method of my choice makes it difficult/limited, for example, to use language in sound, rhythm and other patterns, so the end result is usually quite simplified. Of course, this applies to recent texts, which I usually wrote first in Finnish and then in Russian, because the Finnish version requires more concentration and at the same time the idea becomes brighter (Kopylova 2019).

Kopylova's bilingual collection of poems, *Dorogie pokojniki / Rakkaat vainajani* (2018b) [My beloved departed], is a result of this working method. In the collection, the Russian and Finnish poems come in turns, first, the Russian poem

on the left-hand page, and the Finnish version on the right-hand page. Considering Kopylova's account of her writing process ("first in Finnish, then in Russian") this spread design contradicts the "order" of writing. On the other hand, it epitomises the turning of her previous Russian "self" into something else: "At some point, you realise [that] ... there is a growing being in you, speaking in another language, who is like you, but not quite. The birth of oneself is at the same time the loss of the previous self – along with self-image, dreams, views, friendships and enemies" (2018b, 5). For Kopylova, writing poems in two languages is also a matter of remembering an earlier self and past life associated with her mother tongue. In this way, writing in another language can be a process of remembering, where autobiographical reflection on the acquisition of a new language and a new self necessarily implies forgetting and transforming an earlier language, culture and self into something else (Seyhan 2001, 92). As the title of Kopylova's collection indicates, death and remembrance of the departed is a central theme – it is a connecting factor between the lyrical self and her past life associated with the mother tongue: "For a long time I have been thinking about honouring the memory of all my 'departed'—internal and real, close and almost unfamiliar, dead and just missing from sight—telling the most memorable things about them" (Kopylova 2018b, 4).

Besides the figurative meaning and significance of "death", the poems in the collection also address concrete cultural differences linked to death, for instance, how the departed are remembered in different cultures, in this case, Russian and Finnish culture:

По обычаю многих народов, отходящую душу чествуют на  
третий, девятый и сороковой день.

В Финляндии нынче хоронят через две недели после кончины.  
И сразу после этого устраивают единственные поминки (Kopylova 2018b, 54).

According to the custom of many peoples, the departing soul is celebrated  
on the third, ninth and fortieth day.

In Finland, they now bury two weeks after their death.  
And immediately after that they arrange the only commemoration.

The following passage shows that, despite the Russian version coming before the Finnish version in the bilingual edition, the idea probably originated from the Finnish expression, *ottaa osaa (suruun)* to express one's condolences, literally: to take part (of one's grief):

на третий день притупляется боль  
на девятый отпускает тоска  
на сороковой чувство горя становится частью тебя –  
и более не требует ничего сочувствия (Kopylova 2018b, 54).

on the third day the pain is dulled  
on the ninth melancholy is eased  
on the fortieth the feeling of grief becomes a part of you –  
and no longer requires anyone's compassion.

kolmantena päivänä hautajaistouhuissa hellittää terävin kipu  
yhdeksäntenä rauhoittuu suurin kaipuu  
neljäntäkymmenentenä surusta tulee osa elämäsi,  
eikä muiden enää tarvitse sitä osaa sinulta ottaa (Kopylova 2018b, 55).

on the third day the funeral arrangements ease the sharpest pain  
on the ninth the sadness is calmed down  
on the fortieth, grief becomes part of your life,  
and others no longer need to take that part of you.

In this stanza the Finnish expression *ottaa osaa suruun* – to express one’s condolences, literally “to take part in someone’s grief” has influenced the Russian version – *čuvstvo gorja stanovitsja / čast’ju tebja*, – “the feeling of grief becomes a part of you”. In Russian, to express one’s condolences is *vrazit’ soboleznovanie*. The passage plays with the Finnish expression. In the Finnish version the expression *ottaa osaa* “to express one’s condolences” has been deconstructed whereas the Russian version has been made to work with the same trope: “surusta tulee osa elämäsi, eikä muiden enää tarvitse sitä osaa sinulta ottaa”, literally “grief becomes a part of your life and others no longer need to *take that part* from you.” Kopylova has commented on this difference in the Finnish and Russian expressions in her essay: “For example, in Finnish, no condolences are expressed or brought, they take part (of the grief) on themselves, and such an idiom can make the incarnation of the text in Russian difficult” (Kopylova 2018a, 59). Kopylova has made her own interpretation of this Finnish phrase and mediated it in the Russian version of her poem. In the Russian version the word *čast’ju* [part] resonates with the words *čuvstvo* [feeling], and *sočuvstvija* [compassion, empathy]: “čuvstvo gorja stanovitsja čast’ju tebja – i bolee ne trebuet ničego sočuvstvija” [the feeling of grief becomes a part of you – and no longer requires anyone’s compassion]. In this stanza we can see an example of how a Finnish expression has influenced the Russian version: not linguistically or phonetically, because the versions are quite different on that level, but on the level of semantic solutions.

In some cases, the Finnish and Russian poems seem to repeat not only the same semantic idea, but also the same phonetic impression, as in the following passage:

День ото дня отбит, как долотом,  
ударом со всего святого духа.  
И слух исполнен окающим глухо  
молением – о том, о-том-отом (Kopylova 2018b, 10).

Day is knocked from another day, as if by a chisel  
by a blow with all the power of the Holy Spirit.  
And ears are filled with a hollow  
prayer – about this and that

Päivä kuin taltalla lyöty toisesta päivästä irti  
kaiken Pyhän Hengen voimin.  
Kuulo täyttyy kumeasti voihkivasta  
rukouksesta – tuosta tuosta-tuosta (Kopylova 2018b, 11).

A day knocked from another day as if by a chisel  
 with all the power of the Holy Spirit.  
 Ears are filled with a haunting moan  
 of prayer – about this and that

In the first and the last lines of both versions of the poem, the repetition of the sound “t” in different phonetic positions seems intentional – mimicking a chisel stroke, and the dull repetition from day to day. The third and fourth lines in both versions repeat the sounds “o” and “u”: *sluh – kuulo, gluho – kumea, o tom-o-tom-otom – tuosta tuosta-tuosta*, again reinforcing the power of the mind-numbing continuum of days.

Based on these examples from Kopylova’s bilingual poetry collection and her own accounts, Kopylova’s bilingual method of working in Finnish and in Russian can be seen to influence the creative process in a substantial way. The examples show how sounds, forms, and connections between Finnish and Russian become the fabric of the poems as well as the importance of the metalinguistic awareness of the materiality of both languages as signs.

Kopylova’s above-quoted preface and the bilingual edition of her poems, where the Russian and the Finnish version face each other on the same spread, resembles what Gentes (2013, 268–269) has observed about the “healing power” of bilingual publishing: in bilingual editions, multilingual writers can represent their identity as “whole”, in both languages at the same time, and make their multilingual agency and creativity visible. In a similar vein, Wanner suggests that a bilingual collection of poems, with two versions of the same poem in different languages facing each other, creates a space where both sides of the poet’s linguistic identity are present at the same time and are in dialogue with each other (Wanner 2018, 128–29). These observations point out that adopting a new language may signify the emergence of a new self and identity: the subject, the “I”, learns how to speak anew, to use a new language, and at the same time embraces a new way of perceiving the surrounding world. If “death” metaphorically means a farewell to the previous self, and to the previous cultural environment in Kopylova’s bilingual collection, expressing and creating oneself in two languages at the same time also means the birth of a new self (cf. Kopylova 2018b, 5).

### Lindén’s prose in Swedish and Russian:

#### Between translanguaging and self-translation

Lindén is one of very few authors in Finland who has written and published her prose texts in two languages. When an author produces the same work in two different languages, the question arises as to how it happens in practice. Lindén has herself answered this question in a very interesting way in her essay:

Most often, when I am writing a first draft, I use both Russian and Swedish (but seldom in the same phrase), and sometimes even fragments of English, Finnish, Polish, Japanese, and so on (if I have to quote some songs or poems). Then I usually make two versions of my text. In some cases I have written the whole first draft in Russian or only in Swedish, depending on the subject, but more often I combine these languages. *I thus operate both as an author and as a translator.* My method is tricky, time-consuming and rather difficult to explain. It has its pros and cons (Lindén 2020, 134, italics added).

As can be seen here, the writing process is multilingual in a way that it is difficult to determine which version is the original and which is a translation, as the author is free to move between the two versions and transform them “in a way that suits my purposes”, as Lindén puts it (ibid.). In this way, both versions involve translation, and the different versions form a “twin work”, a multilingual entity (Beaujour 1989, 176; Hokenson & Munson 2007). Rebecca Walkowitz considers this kind of writing in two languages as “preemptive translations”, which means that the author “operates both as author and as translator” as well as “treats translation as a species of production ... [that] should be understood as an original creation” (2015, 14). It is also noteworthy that Russian and Swedish are not the only languages involved in the writing process, but the author uses a few other languages as well. The presence of many languages is a notable feature of Lindén’s fiction, and it demonstrates the importance of metalinguistic awareness of translanguaging. For example, the short story, “A conversation course”, is set in Finland, and depicts a warm friendship between two women, Teresa, a Polish nun living in Finland and the first-person narrator, who is Russian. The story’s environment is multilingual: a conversation course in Finnish, where foreigners from different backgrounds speak in multiple languages while trying to learn Finnish conversation. The text includes many Polish expressions, among others, lyrics from a Polish pop song, and references to famous Polish people. Expressions like *Katarzyna Jagiellonka* (Catharine Jagiellon), *Polska królowa Szwecji* (Polish queen of Sweden); *Solidarność* (Solidarity); and *Piękna i Bestia* (Beauty and the Beast) appear in both the Swedish and the Russian text.

Language plays an important role in the story, as it is symptomatic of geopolitical power relations: Teresa, a Polish nun living in Finland, is the first Polish person the narrator has met in Finland who is willing to talk with her in Polish. This is related to the Cold War division when Poland and other Central Eastern European countries came under Soviet influence, part of the Eastern Bloc, resulting in, for example, children there having to study Russian at school instead of English. That is why Teresa does not speak English at all:

- I don’t know English, you explained.
- At all?
- At all.
- And at school what foreign language did you study?
- Russian.

I felt ashamed. The historical guilt lay on my shoulders like a lead blanket. It is my homeland that is to blame for the fact that millions of Poles who grew up during the Warsaw Pact do not know English. In the modern world, this is the same as not knowing the multiplication table. Millions of Poles live cursing Soviet imperialism, imperialist tsarism, the Russian language, Puškin, who wrote *The Queen of Spades*, and me, a descendant of the oppressors and occupiers (Lindén 2015/2016, 184; see also Lindén 2020, 136).

The Swedish and Russian version of the short story have minimal differences; the few differences which can be noticed are probably made by the author in order to make each text understandable to its respective Swedish and Russian readerships (cf. Lindén 2020, 135). Important in Lindén’s fiction and its poet-

ics is the depiction of how different words sound in different languages or how words in different languages resemble each other but can mean quite different things. This works in the Swedish and Russian versions differently. For example, in the Swedish version of the short story there is a word play with similarities between the Swedish word *kapell* (chapel) and Polish *capella*:

“En gång ringde pappa till klostret. Teresa är i kapellet, fick han höra. Pappa blev förbryllad. Har Teresa kanske börjat spela cello eller fiol? På polska betyder *capella* kammarmusikensemble.” [Once Dad called the monastery. Teresa is in the chapel [*kapellet*], he was told. Dad was puzzled. Had Teresa maybe started playing the cello or violin? In Polish, *capella* means chamber music ensemble]” (Lindén 2016, 194).

In Russian, the similarity between the Swedish and the Polish words has to be explicated in a separate sentence, explaining the meaning of the words in Swedish and Polish:

“Папа звонит в монастырь, а ему отвечают: ‘Тереза в часовне’. Папа ужасно удивился. Думает: неужели я начала играть на виолончели или на скрипке? Ведь по-шведски ‘часовня’ будет *kapell*, а по-польски *capella* – это ансамбль камерной музыки!” [Dad calls the monastery, and they answer him: Teresa in the chapel. Dad was terribly surprised. He thinks: Have I really started to play the cello or the violin? After all, in Swedish, *kapell* means a chapel, and *capella* in Polish is an ensemble of chamber music!]

It is not clear from the Swedish or the Russian version of the text which language was used in the telephone conversation between Teresa’s Polish father and the monastery personnel in Sweden in the first place. Walkowitz (2015, 5) notes that born translated texts may pretend “to take place in a language other than the one in which they ... have been composed”.

Another example of linguistic similarity works better in the Russian text than in the Swedish text. In this case the resemblance between Polish and Russian expressions is almost identical, and therefore the Polish expression has not been quoted in the original in the Russian text, as can be seen in the following case: “*Čto mozet byt’ prekrasnee tvoego glubokogo golosa proiznosjaščego slavjanskije slova ‘dlja tebjja?’*” [What could be more beautiful than your deep voice pronouncing Slavic words ‘for you?’]” (Lindén 2015). The resemblance is emphasised by using the expression *slavjanskije slova* (Slavic words), enhancing the closeness between Polish and Russian (and between the two women conversing in the text). In the Swedish text, the Polish expression has to be included, in order to emphasise the use of the common code for both women and the “soft” phonetic effect of the words *dla Ciebie*: “Finns det något vackrare än din djupa altstämma som uttalar orden *dla Ciebie*, till dig? [Is there anything more beautiful than your deep alto voice pronouncing words *dla Ciebie*, for you?]

(Lindén 2016, 197). These examples imply that the language in which the characters communicate in the text (notwithstanding the language in which it is narrated) is an important constituent of the narrative.

Lindén has stated that in her Swedish-language writing she tries not to involve everyday details and associations that are linked with her Russian background to too great a degree, because they would be difficult to understand for

a Scandinavian reader. This can be observed when reading her texts in Russian and Swedish side by side. The short story, “The Love for three oranges” has many obvious and hidden references to Russian literary tradition. From the short stories included in the Swedish collection *Valenciana*, it is perhaps the most “Russian” in terms of themes and cultural references. It tells a story about a young girl living in Leningrad experiencing a deep depression. At the beginning of the story, the first-person narrator tells in a retrospective tone about how she had tried to commit suicide in February, 1983. Her parents, who at the time were in the middle of a divorce, which was probably one of the reasons for the narrator’s depression, arrange for her private therapy sessions at a mental hospital with a Dr Vilensky.

While the story and the text—in both Swedish and in Russian—do not emphasise multilingualism as obviously (and “audibly”) as the previously discussed short story “A Conversation course” does, “The Love for three oranges” certainly contains many cultural and literary allusions connected with the Russian *global* or *cosmopolitan* cultural context. These features point to the story’s “born translated” quality: it works for different, multilingual audiences. Understandably, the Russian text employs more of the “local” cultural allusions, which are more familiar to Russian readers, than the Swedish text. For instance, at the beginning of the Russian text is a dedication to V.M. Garšin, a nineteenth-century writer who suffered from depression, was treated in a mental hospital and committed suicide. Garšin’s novella “A Red flower” tells the story of a mentally ill person who is being treated in a mental hospital in St Petersburg, and who in the end dies of fatigue after not having slept for days. In the Swedish version the dedication to Garšin is omitted, which is not surprising, since he is probably not a familiar writer to many Finland-Swedish readers. This omission points to how Lindén takes into account the difficulty of transmitting cultural allusions to different audiences, managing the suitability and effect of these allusions.

As noted, there are other literary and cultural allusions in the text that may well be understood in the Finland-Swedish context. For example, the name of the mental hospital doctor who treats the protagonist, Vilensky, is an obvious reference to Vladimir Il’jič Lenin, or, V.I. Lenin, from which the surname has been formed. The story takes place in Leningrad/St Petersburg, which has also been the venue for Lindén’s earlier texts (Klapuri 2016): the protagonist makes observations about the architecture of the mental hospital building and its history: “The building was built 1832–36 according to the plan of architect Charlemagne. ... Before the revolution the building was a penitentiary, then a prison, and after that a mental hospital” (Lindén 2015/2016, 139). Other famous names and places associated with St Petersburg mentioned in the text are, for example, Mariinsky Theatre, Lermontovskiy Prospekt, and Dostoevsky. The depiction of the city area, the mentioning of its grand architecture and historical events emphasises for both (Finland-)Swedish and Russian readers the cosmopolitanism of Leningrad/St Petersburg (cf. Walkowitz 2015, 16).

Lindén has stated that “[o]ne of my main problems is that the cultural references of my readers are not the same” (2020, 135). This comes up in the dedication (“to V. M. Garšin”) to the short story “The Love for three oranges”. How-

ever, in the Swedish edition of *Valenciana*, where the Swedish version of the story has been published, the back cover advertising the book states that in one of the stories “a young woman’s depression is blooming red”. While the dedication to Garšin is omitted, this seems an intentional reference to his novella “A Red flower”, mentioned above, although no actual reference to Garšin or the novella are made. The expression “blooming red” can be understood on its own as a metaphor referring to deep depression, but for those who are familiar with Garšin and his novella, it has a double meaning. Thus, “[w]hile the same story can be interpreted differently depending on the audience, some things get ‘lost in translation’” (Kauranen et al. 2020, 16; Lindén 2020, 138).

## Conclusions

Both Lindén and Kopylova have in their essays and interviews expressed the idea that although they write their texts in different languages, they are first and foremost interested in mediating the same artistic idea to their readers in different languages (Lindén 2020, 134; Kopylova 2019). The different versions of Kopylova’s and Lindén’s texts investigated in this article presented different methods by which the writers aim to realise this idea. Kopylova’s bilingual collection of poems and examples taken from it, as well as her essay on self-translation, suggest that Kopylova’s starting point is the foreign language, Finnish, which influences the making of the Russian version. Externally, the same would seem to be the case with Lindén’s texts, many of which have been published first in Swedish and then in Russian. According to Lindén’s own account, however, the opposite is true: often the text is first written in Russian and then in Swedish. In any case, the two linguistic versions are very close to each other, and for this reason both writers are critical of the idea that their texts in different languages would be considered self-translations. This critical attitude is not unusual for bilingual writers, as previous research has pointed out.

However, it is clear that there is a certain degree of translation and a translation-like process involved in the creative activity of both authors – translation itself can be seen as creative, which has been highlighted especially in literary translation. Translation is not just a change of vocabulary from one language to another, but instead a multicultural process taking into account the context of the source and the target cultures. This aspect of translation is clearly present in both Lindén’s and Kopylova’s multilingual creative work: they both bear in mind the intended readers and their cultural context, which both writers know very well.

The influence of different languages in Kopylova’s and Lindén’s creative work manifests itself in different ways: in Kopylova’s poems, linguistic expressions can shift from one language to another, and phonetic repetitions and literary devices can be partly the same in both versions. In Lindén’s prose, differences in cultural allusions come up when a comparison between the two versions are made. This is understandable because in poetry the phonetic expression is more significant in general, while in prose intertextual references may work better than phonetic allusions. However, as the discussion of the writers’ texts and accounts of their literary work suggests, both writers work *through* their different languages. As Hansen points

out, “the word *translingual* implies the idea of language going beyond and even breaking free of itself” (2018, 114). The idea of working and writing through different languages is pointed out by Mary Besemeres (2016) and Yildiz (2012, 13–14) in their investigations of translingual and multilingual literature. According to Besemeres, Anglophone writers “extend” the limits of expression and understanding in English by translating and using Russian words and conceptualizations in their literary works; they are “traveling through Russian in English” (2016). In a similar way Kopylova and Lindén are extending the limits of expression and understanding in Russian and Finnish and Russian and Swedish by creating two versions of their texts in different languages, writing through and beyond the mother tongue, Russian.

Finally, it is interesting that Russian-speaking writers in Finland today have chosen Finnish and Swedish as their literary expression, languages that are very small on a global scale, much smaller than their mother tongue, Russian. Among Russian translingual writers – and translingual writers in other cultural and linguistic contexts as well – this is surprising (Hansen 2018, 114). Literary translingualism in different national contexts, then, shows how translingual writers are, to paraphrase Rita Wilson, highlighting “intercultural dialogue and translation, but also ... drawing discrete literary traditions into contact” (2011, 237). This is aptly illustrated by the examples by Kopylova and Lindén discussed in this study.

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