

Iran's Conservative Media's Lash out at Iranian Pro-LGBTQ Poet / Translator Abroad



An Iranian progressive author who translated a French graphic novel about lesbians has become the newest target of Iran's religiously conservative media outlets.

The latest round of gay-bashing in Iranian media started following the promotion of the newest book by Ms. Sepideh Jodeyri, an Iranian modernist poet and author, who previously translated Julie Maroh's award-winning "Blue is the Warmest Color" into Persian. Ms. Jodeyri is currently based in the Czech Republic and has been an outspoken ally of the LGBTQ community in Iran.

The "Blue is the Warmest Color" book, which is about the life of a teenage lesbian girl, inspired a movie which won the 2013 Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or from the official jury as well as the FIPRESCI Prize.

In the aftermath of the highly contested 2009 presidential election in Iran, which resulted in the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2009-2013), Ms. Jodeyri's spoke publicly in support of the pro-democracy movement (known as the Green Movement). Shortly after, Ms. Jodeyri's works were banned inside Iran, forcing her to publish the Persian translation of "Blue is the Warmest Color" in Paris, by Naakoja, an Iranian publisher ([link of this book](#)).

Under Iran's current President, Mr. Hassan Rouhani, the government has relaxed some of the cultural restrictions, including easing the licensing process for publishers to publish books. Although the censorship office at the Ministry of Islamic Guidance continues to vetting every book before issuing publication license, the agency is less concerned with personal history of the authors and claims to have no official black list of authors whose works cannot be published inside Iran.

Given the new opening, Ms. Sepideh Jodeyri recently was allowed to publish a short volume of poems, titled “And Etc.”. The book was published with the help of an independent publisher in Tehran last year, without any drama. However, last week when the publisher announced that a book party to promote Ms. Jodeyri’s poems, the conservative media started their which hunt.

Raja News, a controversial web-based news outlet close to religious conservatives, published a thorough article with name of “Using government resources to promote a pro-LGBT author” ([Link to this article](#)) The article was especially critical of the fact that a state-run facility (a museum) would host the panel to discuss the poems about the poems of an author who has a history of supporting LGBTQ. The article reminded its audience of the translation of “Blue is the Warmest Color” book by Jodeyri in Paris, quoted an earlier interview of the translator about the theme of the book “When first I read this book, I realized that the book, in a very easy-to-understand manner... talks about challenges that homosexuals in every society face. This dimension of the book was more important to me. I am so interested in raising awareness in the society. I thought this book can be part of our culture, that’s why I translated it into Farsi.”

Raja News’s article continued, “The translator even spoke favorably about the acceptance of homosexuality in Iran. She was quoted in the interview as saying, “Over the last two decades, we have witnessed a broader global acceptance [of homosexuality] and I think as we move ahead, with all the good works of LGBTQ activists, this acceptance will be more and more on the rise.”

Raja News also quotes the author’s Facebook post, “Although I am not gay, but I will have no shame if somebody thinks I am a homosexual simply because I translated this book or because I defend homosexuality. There is nothing wrong with homosexuality that makes me afraid of people assumption about me being gay.”

Raja News also criticized the new Minister of Culture for allowing Jodeyri’s poems to be published and also letting the publisher to openly promote and discussed this book in a governmental building, recommending other government agencies to intervene and stop the book party.

The response to the conservative website was swift. After the scathing article was wildly re-post in other conservative websites and was published in several weekly and daily papers inside Iran, the Intelligent Services immediately intervened and cancelled the meeting; the director of museum hall –where the book party was scheduled to take place- was also sacked from his job.

At the same time, other conservative critics have published articles condemning Sepideh Jodeyri, her translation of the French novel and her sympathy for homosexuality. Although she lives abroad and is not personally at risk, but her publisher in Tehran may be in danger of more backlash from religious conservatives and security apparatus.

Here are just some of the scathing articles published and republished by the other news agencies and journals in this regard:

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<http://tehranpress.com/fa/news-details/78303/%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%85-%DA%A9%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C%D8%9B%C2%AB%DA%A9%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D9%81%DA%A9%D8%B1-%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%AF-%DA%A9%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3%E2%80%8C%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%C2%BB/>

<http://iusnews.ir/fa/news-details/156120/%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%85-%DA%A9%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C%D8%9B%C2%AB%DA%A9%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D9%81%DA%A9%D8%B1-%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%AF-%DA%A9%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%87%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%B3%E2%80%8C%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85-%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%85%C2%BB/>

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<http://khabar.parsijoo.ir/showNewsPost.pj?npid=NDIzMjQxLC00MDQ2NzcxNTE=&title=%D8%B3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B7+%D9%81%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF%DB>

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