



# FTIS Foundation Gazette

March 2025

Issue 44

شماره 44 ماهنامه بنیاد حامیان منتشر شد



FTIS Gazette Since 2021



*The Classroom of Thought*

# *Celebrating DisCafe*

*March 1*

*Madani Hall*







# UT International Day Festival

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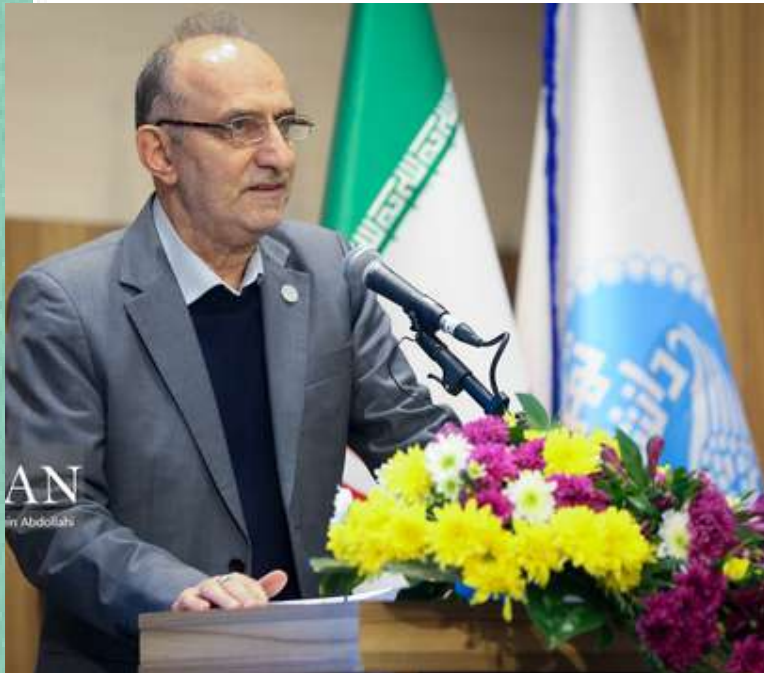
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News

visits:31



UT International Day Festival was held at 14-17 hours on 26 February, 2025 in the presence of Prof. Hosseini, Acting President and a number of high-ranking officials, ambassadors and international students and professors. During the program , those with high record of activities in promoting international cooperation were acknowledged. A Plaque of Appreciation was presented to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Iran. In this event, the Ambassador of Poland also had a short speech on the significance of international cooperation. There was music and cultural performance and prizes were awarded to the selected number of international activist in higher education.,



# 14th UT International Day Festival



*Nadia Maftouni*  
*FTIS Professor & Yale Senior*  
*Research Scholar*  
*Awarded as*  
  
*Distinguished*  
*International Professor*







FTIS FOUNDATION

**Nadia Maftouni**

*tells her stories of  
philosophy*

*Session 09*

*March 9*

*2025*



*Calderón's Dream*

*Philosophy as Storytelling*





Zoe teaches Calderón's *Dream*, a famous Spanish play by Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

*Dream* (*La vida es sueño*) explores themes of fate, reality versus illusion, and the search for truth, so we could incorporate those elements into the classroom scenes or even use them to reflect the students' personal growth. The students are broken into small groups. Zoe is walking around, observing as they rehearse parts of *La vida es sueño*. Elen and Theophil are paired together to act out a scene, where Segismundo is confronted with the reality of his fate.

Zoe whispering to herself

This is it. They're going to feel it now.

CLASSROOM

Theophil and Elen stand in the middle of the room. Theophil is playing the role of the King, Basilio, while Elen plays Segismundo. Elen holds the script in her hand but has a faraway look in her eyes.

Theophil impatiently

Alright, Segismundo. It's time you face reality. You're not as free as you think. Your father, Basilio, decided your fate before you were even born. You're nothing but a puppet in this game.

Elen struggling to hold back emotion

But if my life is already decided... what's the point of even trying? What's the point of dreaming if I can't shape my own path?

Theophil challenging her, mocking

You can't change fate, Elen. The world is what it is. You're just stuck in the dream.

penned by  
*Nadia Maftouni*

He smirks.

Elen fiercely

Then tell me, Theophil. What if the dream is what makes me feel alive? What if I can't escape this dream, but it's mine to control?

Theophil is taken aback, visibly caught off guard by the passion in Elen's words.

Zoe stepping forward

Stop right there, both of you. (to the class) This—right here—is what Dream is about. Can we control our lives, or are we just actors in a play written by someone else?

CLASSROOM - LATER

The class reconvenes. The energy is different now—there's a deeper engagement. Elen and Theophil sit at their desks, their minds clearly turning over the themes they just acted out. Zoe writes a quote from the play on the whiteboard:

Zoe

"The greatest thing in the world is not to be free, but to know that we are."

Zoe looking at her students:

So, class. What does this mean? If Segismundo had never known that he was in prison, would he have ever cared?

Theophil staring at the board:

It's like... if you don't know you're trapped, you don't realize you have the option to break free.

Elen softly

But if you know you're trapped, does that make it worse?

Zoe nods

Exactly, Elen. Sometimes, knowledge can be a prison in itself. The awareness of our limitations, our fate, can keep us from breaking free. But the power is in what we choose to do with that knowledge.

Theophil stubbornly

So, what? If I'm stuck in my own life, I can just wake up and poof—everything changes?

Zoe smiling

Maybe not "poof," but awareness is the first step. The play is asking whether we control our actions or if we're merely dreaming our lives away.

The Transformation

CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

The students are seated, each with a sheet of paper. It's quiet, with only the sound of pens scratching paper. Zoe moves through the room, reading over their shoulders.

Zoe casually, as she reads Theophil's paper:

Interesting, Theophil. I see you're taking a different approach.

Theophil surprised

Yeah, I guess. I thought about what you said yesterday... about being aware of what's real and what's not. The thing is, I always thought life was just, like, random. But now... I don't know, it feels like we're all kind of pretending to be in control. Like Segismundo. He thought he was in charge, but he wasn't.

Zoe nods

That's a big realization, Theophil. In the play, Segismundo's reality shifts when he realizes his fate, but he doesn't have to let that define him. He still has choices. And so do we.

CLASSROOM - LATER

The class packs up. Elen gathers her things slowly, looking thoughtful. Theophil stands nearby, shifting from foot to foot. He finally approaches her.

Theophil softly

You know, Elen... I think I get it now. About the dream thing. It's like... even when things suck, you still have to figure out what kind of dream you want to live. Even if it's not perfect.

Elen smirking

You mean like creating your own reality?

Theophil grinning

Something like that.

Elen smiles back, her skepticism replaced with a new understanding. They leave the classroom together.

## HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Zoe watches them leave the classroom, a satisfied smile on her face.

Zoe to herself

Sometimes, the best lessons aren't in the books.

Zoe stands at the front of the classroom, the students now gone. She looks at the empty seats, reflecting on the change in her students.

Zoe to herself

Every dream has its reality. It's what we make of it that counts.

She closes the lesson plan, picks up her bag, and heads for the door.





*Majid Farahani*



Contributions Are Welcome  
to:

FTIS FOUNDATION  
Head of the Scientific and Cultural Department  
maftouni@gmail.com

Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies  
(FTIS)  
University of Tehran  
No.47, Motahari St., Tehran, Iran.  
Postal Code: 1576613111  
Phone: 02142762000  
Google Map:  
<https://goo.gl/maps/dxjRk9QdrdM2>

