

## Group Work of Rhetoric 102: Interview Transcript

### Introduction

the producer: Emily/ Yu Yuqi

the interviewer: David/ Yang Bingqi

the interviewee: Jimmy/ Jin Yucheng

Our team is very interested in interviews with famous people like scientists. This kind of interview requires the interviewer to learn more basic information about the famous people in advance. Besides, the interviewer also needs to pay more attention to his tone when talking to the interviewee. We want to show this kind of challenging but interesting interview with famous people to the whole class; therefore, we choose to go fictional rather than interview our classmate who is a undergraduate student.

Here is our background context:

Professor Frank is a nuclear physicist who was controlled by the German Nazis and was forced to develop nuclear weapons during World War II. David is a reporter from a historical program *Talk with History*. Today, David is the interviewer, and Professor Frank is the interviewee. The interview will mainly focus on the scientist's experience in World War II. And the interview is held at the living room of Frank's house in a cold winter day.

### Interview

Q: Hi, Professor Frank, nice to meet you. I am David from a historical program *Talk with History*, and we are going to make a documentary about scientists in World War II. So, Professor, could you share your experience during that time in this interview?

A: Of course.

Q: Professor, you live in America now but I've heard that you are an Austrian, right?

A: Yes, I was born in a small village near Vienna, and I spent my entire childhood there. However, since I left my hometown to Zurich at 14, I haven't been back for almost 40 years.

Q: So, did you finish your college at Zurich?

A: Yes, I got my PhD degree in physics in Switzerland. But I didn't stay for long there because my parents, friends and fiancée were all in Austria. Therefore, I returned to my country and served as a nuclear physicist in University of Vienna for nearly 10 years.

Q: 10 years, that was a long time. But why did you suspend your job in University of Vienna? Because of the war?

A: Yes, that was 1938. The Germans occupied Austria, and I was invited to work on a nuclear project for the German government.

Q: Did you accept this invitation?

A: Yes, I agreed at first, and I almost laid aside all other researches to work on the project. Actually, I did make some breakthroughs, however, I didn't tell anyone about my work at that time.

Q: Oh, why you didn't tell others about your achievements?

A: Because I wanted to quit.

Q: Professor, you didn't want to work for the Germans anymore, right?

A: Yes.

Q: So Professor, could you tell me what made you change your mind?

A: Because I witnessed some violence that I will never forget.

Q: Would you mind talking about the violence you saw?

A: I saw many Jewish people were beaten and arrested in street. Their belongings were snatched, and their stores and shops were severely damaged. Glass pieces were scattered everywhere. I saw they were running desperately, trying to escape, but no one succeeded. One of my colleagues, and also one of my best friends, he was a Jewish, a very kind, honest and modest physicist, was also arrested, and I never saw him again. I began to realize that maybe I was working for evils. And I also found that the project was not launched for scientific research, but for developing nuclear weapons.

Q: And your work had great significance in developing nuclear weapons.

A: Absolutely! I discovered an effective method in purifying Uranium, and to purify Uranium is a key step in the whole process. If Germans applied my method, the entire human beings would be in danger. Therefore, I must keep the secret.

Q: But the Germans wouldn't let you keep silent, and they couldn't let you leave, so was this the reason why they controlled you for years?

A: Yes, they suspected that I hid something important, and I was arrested and jailed in a single cell until the end of the war.

Q: Professor, would you mind telling me what was the jail like? And how did the Germans treat you?

A: My cell was very, very empty, except a bed, there was nothing. I had no cellmates and the guards' anteroom was far away from my cell. Though they would come to my cell regularly to give me food and water, and I could get some precious time to talk with them, however, apart from these guards, I had no one to talk with, and I was really, really lonely. That was totally an unbearable spiritual torture, and I knew the Germans wanted to break me down through the endless loneliness.

Q: But they finally failed, Professor.

A: Yes.

Q: Then how did you endure such torture?

A: By playing chess with myself. It may sound pretty strange, but that was the only way that I had to relieve my stress and stay focused. Actually the Germans took away all my personal items before they put me into my cell, however, one day I was taken out for an interrogation and I secretly stole a chess manual when nobody noticed. Since then, I had played chess with myself for tens of thousands of times, and that was almost the only spiritual pillar of me during the darkest days. Luckily, I sustained my faith and was finally liberated by Soviet army at the end of the war. And I felt very proud that I didn't let the Germans prevail.

Q: I want to ask the the last question, Professor. If you were given another chance, would you make the same choice or would you make some compromises?

A: Honestly, I had fear, and I might escape and exile, but I would never surrender, and I would never give in to the evil power.

Q: Professor, thank you very much! You are really a courageous and indomitable scientist! We've learned a lot during the interview. Thank you for taking the interview again!

## Reference

Stefan Zweig. *Chess Story*. Shan'xi Normal University Central Publishing House. May 2013.