

Violeta Taboas

Violeta Laura Taboas (born 1985) was born in Argentina. At the age of eighteen, she moved to Europe, where she lived, studied and worked in several countries. In Denmark, she encountered anthroposophy through biodynamic agriculture. After returning to Patagonia, she trained as a Waldorf teacher and subsequently completed a three-year training in anthroposophical biography counselling.

As part of this training, she wrote an extensive monograph on the life of Jörgen Smit, whom she never met personally. This research also led to the development of a practical handbook on biographical work. She lives in El Bolsón, Patagonia, and works as a Waldorf teacher and biography counsellor.

Violeta Taboas in conversation with Rembert Biemond

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RB So I'm here in Basel with Violeta Taboas from Southern Argentina. This past week you attended a conference at the Goetheanum, for the first time in your life. You are a biographical counsellor and a Waldorf teacher, and you have researched and written about Jörgen Smit. You were born in 1985 in Argentina.

VT Yes, in Argentina, on the 29th of September, Michael's Day.

RB And your life led you to Europe for some time, but then you went back to Argentina.

VT Yes. I moved to Europe when I was 18. I travelled, studied and worked. I lived in different countries, and I became a mother of three children. When I was twenty-eight, we decided as a family, with my partner, who is Dutch, to move back to Patagonia.

RB And that is now thirteen years ago. You live in El Bolsón, twenty-four hours by bus from Buenos Aires or so. Almost the southernmost place on planet Earth. And you have been a teacher for some time?

VT Yes, for the past ten years.

RB For the past ten years. But then at a certain moment you decided to do this training as an anthroposophical biography counsellor?

VT Yes, correct. I was in sixth grade at the time… well, not myself, haha! I was the teacher of class six. I knew I wanted to go deeper into anthroposophy, but I had to find a different way. Not through the pedagogical path, and not through the biodynamic path, which is how I found anthroposophy when I was 20. Then someone told me about a training in biography work. Interestingly enough, I had already gone through a biographical process myself when I was thirty-one and a half. I was in a big inner crisis. I was looking for my path and could not really find it. Many things were going on, and someone recommended that I get in contact with a woman who was a biography counsellor. I had biography counselling sessions with her for at least half a year.

RB With her.

VT Yes.

RB And she also had an anthroposophical background?

VT Yes, she did. Her name was Amalia Gherbasi, and she was living in Switzerland.

RB You did it online?

VT Yes, online, with Skype.

RB But I want to ask one more thing. You were a teacher in grade six and you knew you wanted to go deeper into anthroposophy. How did you know that? Was it an inner voice? What did you know about anthroposophy? Through the kids, through the school?

VT I came to the anthroposophical world when I was living in Denmark. There I discovered biodynamic farming. Later, in Amsterdam, I was a member of the Steiner library, so I would pick out books in English, and my kids went to the Waldorf school, the Geert Groote School, so I was surrounded by that environment. In Amsterdam we also had a little kitchen garden in a community garden [moestuin], Vrienden van Sloterland. That garden was in an anthroposophical environment, on land owned by a Dutch farming couple, Hans and Ank Wolterbeek, who were very involved with anthroposophy. I still remember their son, Leo Wolterbeek. He was not a child anymore, he was ten years older than me and had his own family, and they were so beautiful. I was very, very inspired by all that in Holland.

RB In Argentina you had not met any of that before, so it was a new encounter.

VT Yes, it was something new, and it grew stronger after I was twenty-eight.

RB And then you went back to Argentina, and there you also connected with certain anthroposophists or initiatives?

VT When I went back to Argentina, everything I had done before kind of stayed behind. I was working with water birth, midwifery and so on. Then, when I was 29, I did the Waldorf teacher training. I had done other trainings before, but this was the official one, here in Patagonia. It is a part-time seminar, with about six meetings a year, in modules and intermodules. I trained there and I liked it. And this is funny: during that training I was always sure that the most beautiful part would be the plant kingdom, because of my connection with biodynamics. We worked on the mineral world, the plant world, the animal world [the kingdoms of nature as described by Steiner] and the human kingdom. And the plant world was very boring! But when we came to the human world, two modules called "reino humano", I was totally touched.

RB In German we say "Menschenkunde".

VT Yes. It also included the journey of the soul into incarnation, which was very interesting for me. So when I finished that training and was looking for something to go deeper, it became obvious that it had to do with biography. And it's funny, looking back at my biography: I had already met it when I was thirty-one and a half.

RB Okay, so now you start this training as a biographical counsellor on an anthroposophical basis. I think it is amazing in itself that this exists in Argentina. And it took two years?

VT Three years, part-time, in blocks. We had four blocks of almost a week each year, and in between we had meetings, assignments and homework, and I had to complete practical assignments. In the first year I was behind with my practical assignments and I thought I would never catch up. So I said to

the universe: you know what? If I don't do this now, I will never catch up. Send me a sign. And someone showed up. With that person we had many, many encounters, and it gave me so much strength that I thought: this is something I really, really like. Then I came close to the end of the training. It's interesting, because you see similar subjects as in the pedagogical training, but from a different perspective. Here everything was related to the human being, the world of the arts, the personal dimension and humanity. It was very special. And by the end of the training my interest in anthroposophy had grown even bigger. And there is something I think I've never told you, Rembert, and I'm going to tell you now. One or two years after I finished my teacher training, while I was doing the biography training, I had a very strong, very vivid dream. I was in a place, and this teacher came. Her name is Ursula. I saw a huge sea, and there was an abyss, and it was dark. It was just so vivid. I don't remember all the details now, but I do remember that I sent her a WhatsApp: "Look, I dreamed this, and you were in my dream." And she said: "Why don't you come to Bariloche [a larger town in Patagonia, Southern Argentina]? I'm giving a workshop. I would like to talk with you." And that is where she told me about the School of Michael. No one had ever mentioned it, no one in the training, nothing. That stayed with me. That year I had to choose a biography for my studies. I thought of a writer, I thought of a painter, and then I remembered a very special book I had read, "Meditaciones con el Cristo" by Jörgen Smit. That's its title in Spanish. I read the name of the author, and he was from Norway. "Oh, I love Norway!" I studied in Norway for a year and travelled there. There is something very special about Norway, and the nature is actually quite similar to Patagonia in many ways, with these beautiful huge mountains...

RB Fjords.

VT Fjords, yes, lakes, crystal-clear water. And he was a teacher, which I found very inspiring, because I was finishing my first class [at the Waldorf school], seventh and eighth grade, very challenging years, and I really needed inspiration. Then I read that he was a teacher of teachers. I love teaching, and I think at some point in my life I'm going to be a teacher of teachers, though I don't know when. So I thought: oh, this is very inspiring. And then the rest... oh, interesting, he went to the Goetheanum. Well, okay, this sounds very interesting! And the school [for biographical counselling] said: we think this is a very good idea for you. Yes, of course. So I started.

RB Do you think your teachers actually knew who he was?

VT I don't know. They knew he was an anthroposophist. But there are two things I didn't tell you. I was asking for a confirmation again. I really needed a confirmation about this person. Should I choose him? Or a painter? Who should I choose? At that time I was taking a training with an American man who gives lectures and conferences. We exchanged emails about seventh and eighth grade, and he said: why don't you read Nana Göbel's book about a hundred years of Waldorf education? I got the book, opened it, and on the first page she dedicated the book to Jörgen Smit. It's very beautifully written. So I thought: okay, this is a sign. This is the person I really have to go for. And what I was telling you before we started recording is that this decision, really jumping into this biography, came in my second lunar node. I was thirty-six when I had to start deciding whom I would choose, and I was thirty-seven when it became very clear that it would be Jörgen Smit. And this is for the record. I sent some emails to a website, and no one replied. I thought: I will never find enough information, this is going to be a failure. And then I thought: no, I'm not going to give up, I'm really not going to give up. So what do I do? I have nothing to lose. I'll send an email to this woman [Nana Göbel] and write: "Hello, I read your book..."

RB You have met her now at the Goetheanum?

VT Yes! That's it, I cleaned my karma. I said hello to her the other day. She was walking, in a hurry at that moment, and I took her hand and said: "May I ask who you are?" She said: "I'm Nana." "Thank God I found you, because I really want to thank you." Her face was like: "Yes... what?" "I wrote you an email many years ago and you were very kind... I'm sorry I never replied. I didn't reply because I didn't know what to say." She had been very kind. She had said: watch these videos of him [Jörgen Smit], and here is an article I wrote. It was nice, but very short. And then she said: you should get in contact with my friend Rembert Biemond. So I thought: okay, he's from the website. She says he exists! I'm going to find him. So I started searching and found an organisation in Sweden. And I thought: well, who cares? I mean...

RB I'm not so difficult to find.

VT Well, yes, but I didn't find you! I didn't send you a private email. I sent an email to... I don't know where it was...

RB The International Youth Initiative Program in Järna, Sweden, maybe?

VT Could be... I wrote: "Hello, I'm Violeta from Patagonia. I'm looking for Rembert Biemond because I'm working on the biography of Jörgen Smit. If he happens to work at your organisation, could you please give him my email?"

RB They didn't respond?

VT You responded three days later! That was really, really special. My heart was like: oh my God, this is a confirmation. I have to go through with this. After that I just started reading, and we had some [Zoom] calls. For me the most special thing was that I kept Jörgen Smit with me all the time. Not always reading, but thinking about him, wondering about him. The first stage of the monograph was to build a picture of his whole biography, and that was very special. It kept me busy all the time. I would think: oh wow, he [Jörgen Smit] went to the Waldorf school in fourth grade [in Oslo]... I just had him close to me. And that was very... this is the word I cannot find in English... invigorating. Something that gives strength, lively. I was very happy doing it. Not happy in a relaxed way, because it was a lot of work, but it gave me strength. And the biography gave me many signs to follow, like breadcrumbs, and many gifts. One of those gifts is that we got in contact. Another gift was that I came closer to knowing that I really wanted to follow a path very connected with anthroposophy. And the other thing: while I was researching his biography, I had to study everything we had learned again, so I started writing, and I ended up writing a practical book for biographical work. I thought it would be a few pages for a workshop, but it turned out to be about a hundred and eighty pages.

RB That's published?

VT It hasn't been officially published. I print it and give it as a handout in workshops. It's not on Amazon or anything. At some point it will come, but I feel it needs an extra touch before that step. But it's very practical, and it was very inspiring to write it while I was working on his biography. And so here I am, after four years... it feels like more. And I'm happy to be talking to you today, and not through a computer.

RB Okay, so, you were five years old when he [Jörgen Smit] died. You never met him in person. And I believe you are the first person who did not meet him in life to write about him. To write this whole monograph is quite something. Maybe you can share something of it at some point. I guess you not only had to write it, but also present it to the group, to your peers, and speak about him?

VT Yes.

RB So what did you tell your classmates?

VT I was very enthusiastic at the time. I told facts about his biography, grouped in seven-year periods, and I chose very specific events that I found very interesting. I don't know if you want me to say those things now?

RB Well, actually I would like to know: if you had to describe him to somebody who has not met him and has not read his books, what would you choose to say?

VT What made a huge impression on me was the place where he was born and his family line, the family he chose. That was very, very important for me. Parents who were already anthroposophists in 1916! That was very unusual in his biography. Then, in the second seven-year period [7 to 14 years old], there was the Waldorf school, this long-established Norwegian Waldorf school, the first one in Norway. He came there at a special moment, when he was going through what we call the Rubicon, the nine-to-ten-year transition. And there he met his class teacher, a woman who, interestingly enough... later moved to Buenos Aires!

RB His class teacher moved to Buenos Aires? I had forgotten that one.

VT Yes.

RB What was her name again?

VT Her name was Eli Linde. [After teaching in Norway, she moved to Buenos Aires in 1938 and co-founded the very first Waldorf school in Latin America. Later, with an inheritance sent by her sister from Norway, she bought the land and helped build the headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society in Argentina, where she lived until she passed away in 1996.] She had a very important role in education in Argentina. And that was very special, at least for me, like: oh, there is something there. Then the reading... he [Jörgen Smit] had this will to read, to think. And it was very impressive for me that he learned German by reading Occult Science [a book by Rudolf Steiner]. That was very special. And what touched me deeply was a phrase from when he was in his twenties, 20 or 21, saying something like "I cannot live without anthroposophy". Don't take it as a quote.

RB Well, it is a correct quote! He wrote it when he was in his thirties, but it is about when he was twenty-one-ish. It is in his letter to Marie Steiner where he applies for membership of the School of Spiritual Science, written in 1948.

VT Yes, that one. And then becoming a member of the School. I also love the kind of teacher he was. It's very interesting: he didn't need much, and he was very devoted to what he was doing. For me that was something very special in a teacher. And there was something else that caught my attention, about the books he was reading and his life, when I was working on his biography. Something about the mysteries, I think, if I'm not mistaken, when he was 18, but I don't remember exactly. Something to do with language, something to do with self-learning...

RB Well, he started to study ancient languages, Greek in the first place, because he wanted to read the New Testament, and the books Steiner refers to in an early book of his, "Christentum als mystische Tatsache". I don't know the English title, "Christianity as Mystical Fact", maybe? There are a lot of quotes from other authors in it, and he wanted to read those in the original Greek and so on, maybe Latin too. That's why he studied classical philology, ancient languages.

VT Yes. But what I felt, besides the language and the reading and everything (these are my feelings, right? So it might just be a perception), was that there was something with the search for Christ, for truth, for ancient knowledge. That is something that really stayed with me. I saw it throughout his biography, and I found it very "vibrante", vibrant, very alive, very powerful. And it was there again in him as a teacher, when he was teaching teachers. Again, this is what I perceived: this devoted quality, very serious. It was a very serious thing.

RB Is there anything else you would like to add, which I forgot to ask?

VT Well, maybe what we were talking about today. In some of the classes [at the conference at the Goetheanum] there was this invitation to "call" people into the room, and interestingly enough I felt him [Jörgen Smit]. We were supposed to say the names, and I heard his name from someone else. As if there was a very strong presence. I don't know, but that's what I feel. Sometimes I feel the presence of Jörgen Smit. [Added later: As I uncovered his story, it was the beginning that drew me in. But the later years surprised me most: his work with young people, so invigorating and present, and his work with the Class of the School of Spiritual Science. It felt like something of my own future that I could not see yet. His biography is like a lighthouse for mine.]

A note added later In anthroposophical biography work, the lunar nodes come every 18 years and 7 months, when the Sun, Moon and Earth return to the same position they had at our birth. They are seen as windows in which we can touch again the intentions we brought into this life. The second one comes around 37. After these days at the Goetheanum and my talks with Rembert, I see more clearly what that moment brought me. First of all, Jörgen Smit, who has a very special place in my life. And in that same period I was invited to the Michael School, and I read Parzival for the first time with my whole soul, as we had a module on it in the training. Jörgen Smit, the Michael School and Parzival have been central in my biography ever since. They feel like seeds: they have already led me to unexpected places and wonderful people, and I sense they will take me to places I don't know yet.

Editorial note: The conversation was recorded on 8 November 2026 at Unternehmen Mitte in Basel, transcribed and edited by Rembert Biemond. The English version was approved for publication by Violeta Taboas.