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**“Uprooting the Evil In The Fields That We Know”: Reflections on  
 the Legacy of and Prospects for AVP in the Modern World**

Mike Nellis  
 Professor of Criminal and Community Justice  
 Glasgow School of Social Work, University of Strathclyde  
 (mike.nellis@strath.ac.uk)

In the week I was asked by Liz Anderton of AVP Scotland to do this talk a Hollywood film called *The Killer Inside Me* was released in Britain, to much furore about its extremely graphic depictions of violence towards two attractive young women at the hands of their shared psychopathic boyfriend, who happens to be the generally well-respected sheriff of a small American town. The violence was justified by its director, Michael Winterbotham, on the grounds that most screen violence nowadays pulls its punches, so to speak, has been sanitised and stylised to such an extent that it does not make people recoil from it, or worry about real violence in the real world. This is undeniably true of acrobatic and spectacular superhero violence, and indeed of some ostensibly realistic violence, across which the censor draws a line, but the idea that the way forward is to make screen violence *worse* in order to get people to have an adequate emotional response to it seems like a moral and intellectual cul-de-sac of a peculiarly nightmarish and dispiriting kind. Some critics found *The Killer Inside Me* “unendurable” and left the cinema; whether it inspired them to join a campaign against domestic violence - or even AVP - isn’t known. Maybe it did. Maybe some women who saw it were inspired to leave destructive relationships. One would not begrudge either result but the film seems more like part of the problem of screen violence – not that as many people think of it as a problem as they used to – than the start of a solution to it. The furore about it was actually short lived, just enough to get it a lot of extra publicity, and when the film comes out on DVD soon it will just be one of thousands of violent movies, and violent video games, probably watched for all the wrong reasons.

No-one is saying that violent movies or TV programmes cause violence. All the evidence is against that. Violent imagery heightens aggression for a short period after people have been exposed it, and is only likely to trigger actual violence, of some degree, in people who are already disposed to it. So ..... it may not cause - but it does legitimate and normalise violence, saturates our culture with it, envelops us in it to such an extent that we are hard pressed even to imagine what a world would be like if it wasn’t there. Violent entertainment is not consumed by everyone to the same extent but the demographics who do are vast enough, worldwide, to make it commercially worthwhile; there is a sustainable demand for it. Could that demand, that appetite, ever be diminished?

If it's not the movies, it's the news. The invitation to speak came just a few days after a lonely resentful middle-aged man ran amok in Cumbria, randomly shooting eleven people, and just a few weeks before an equally resentful younger man in Northumbria used a shotgun to wound his former girlfriend, kill her new boyfriend and blind an unarmed policeman before killing himself. Neither of these were men with long or serious criminal records. Their resentments seem to have been building up over a long period of time in seemingly tight-knit, local communities – but either no-one noticed or cared, or they thought it normal, or they thought it not their business to say anything, or were too afraid to do so. One lesson that might be drawn from these events is that although they were initially reported as eruptions of violence that came “out of the blue” they both had a history, a context, a series of incidents, interactions and decision-points, each of which may have seemed insignificant themselves but which cumulatively, one grain of sand at a time, set the final event in motion, made it a possibility, brought it closer.

To say that such an event has a history doesn't mean that the actual outcome was inevitable – there are always points along the way when choice, chance and circumstance may have shifted things onto a different path. For that reason we should not read into the Cumbria and Northumbria shootings some kind of message about the wholesale decline of community, the fraying of the threads that bind us together. Nationwide, this is a patchy affair – in some places “community” thrives more than others. Events like these shootings are mercifully rare, but that may not be because there are only a tiny handful of people – men, in the main - who are actually capable of such things, who think about doing such things – but because, in some communities if not all, the ordinary everyday activities of family, friends, neighbours, patient social workers, observant teachers, alert police officers – do have the effect, without their ever realising it, of dissipating the resentments that might, if untouched, lead down the line to explosive violence. There may in fact be a worryingly large number of people – men, in the main - who feel resentful enough to do vicious, vindictive things but who don't because they still have enough residual ties, a sense of connection, to sensible people and helpful networks – and something to lose – such that they think twice, or maybe don't even think, just drown their sorrows and sleep it off, let the moment pass and forget about it.

But what if you are resentful, prone to outbursts of anger and violence, and have not got sensible friends or helpful networks – just friends and networks who think and operate just like you. What if you've spent a lot of time in prison, on and off – and your only mates are people you met there – and if sensible people shun you because you've been inside? Who challenges your attitudes, dissipates your resentments, allays your fears, gives you a bit of perspective, calms you down? Who says, counter-intuitively in the milieu in which you operate, that violence is not normal, desirable or necessary? What if a whole culture or subculture says that certain aspects of violence are okay, doesn't even need or bother to say it out loud, just takes for granted what everybody knows and does. How do we change a whole culture, or even a subculture? Can we?

One of the best analyses ever written about Peter Sutcliffe was an essay called “There's Only One Yorkshire Ripper” by journalist Joan Smith (1989) the title being a taunt that was called out by West Yorkshire football crowds in the 1980s to mock the police about their failure to catch him. The essay uses the taunt ironically, because

while there was indeed only one Yorkshire Ripper, the point she makes is that as a man he simply did not stand out from the crowd, that in terms of his attitudes and demeanour towards women in general and prostitutes in particular there was nothing that made him different from his mates in the pubs, or his dad, and nothing that distinguished him in police eyes from a whole raft of suspects who frequented red light areas. And by dint of not standing out, his reign of terror lasted longer than it might otherwise have done.

Gender relations. Conceptions of masculinity. One can't think about violence for too long without getting into these issues. One of the reasons why the Northumbria killer shot his former girlfriend – intending to kill her, was lucky he didn't, and seems to have regretted it – was because she'd left him for another man while he was in prison. Not good, but not a reason, never a reason – for killing. If I can't have you nobody else can. That's becoming a rather commonplace mantra for men murdering or maiming women, their ultimate way of controlling them. After a spate of such killings in Italy, it has become a *cause celebre*. That hasn't quite happened here yet, despite the press coverage, but – notwithstanding all the good campaigns against domestic violence and femicide that we have already had - perhaps it should.

What else is in the news? It does not get any better when one turns to the international scene. Seemingly endless suicide bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan. The picking off of “our” soldiers one by one with low tech IEDs buried at the roadside – quite a contrast, technologically if not morally, with the picking off of “their” Al-Qaeda and Taleban leaders in Afghanistan (and anyone else who happens to be nearby) using missiles fired from unmanned drones remote controlled from an air base in Nevada. So many soldiers returning from distant tours of duty with PTSD and/or getting involved in violence when they come home that the Howard League for Penal Reform has set up an enquiry into their over-representation in English prisons. Sex trafficking organisations who rescue/ steal abandoned children in disaster zones. Murderous rivalry between two huge gangs on the US/Mexico border for control of the drug trade which in just a few years has cost the life of thousands of people, in the midst of which is the town of Ciudad Juarez, with the highest rate of murdered women in the world, mostly unsolved. The mass rape of 500 women and girls in east Congo within driving distance of the UN peacekeeping force that was there to protect them.

Such a surfeit of sorrow in the global village, so much so that any ordinary person, even any non-violent activist could be forgiven for being immobilised, despairing, not knowing where to start - but at the same time, maybe also a spur to urgent action, a moment to say enough is enough, to decide to do something, any little thing before it spreads or gets worse, just to be able to say to yourself in the mirror, I'm not part of this, I will resist it, with every breath.

It was in such a moment – an enough-is-enough moment – that the American Civil Rights movement was borne. Just as explosive violent incidents are the endpoint of many accumulating lesser incidents, so too does justice have its tipping point, when long-borne routine injustices just become too much. Rosa Parks refused to get out of a seat on a bus that according to anti-Negro by-laws she was not supposed to sit in, and got arrested .....and out of the ensuing unrest among outraged Black people in the southern states of the USA a new leader emerged, a man who had a dream, a crazy

beautiful dream which he hoped and prayed would change American culture for the better. On a day to day basis, however, he (figure-)headed up a movement of understandably angry and volatile people, who experienced constant and extreme provocation from powerful white American interests, who would have loved them to turn violent. A cadre of the civil rights movement did live by the discipline of non-violence, but many more didn't, simply couldn't, given where they lived and what happened to them, at least to begin with. I am sure that when Martin Luther King preached non-violence in 1960s America he did not do so in the foolish and arrogant belief that every violently inclined Black person and every brutal southern sheriff who heard him or read him was going to stop in their tracks, there and then. If some did – and some did - fine, but he had a larger ambition, a grander design – to make violence in America utterly shameful, to raise the moral threshold at which interpersonal physical violence – hitting, kicking, stabbing, shooting, burning, and jailing - became culturally acceptable, to make all people think twice about the point at which they resorted to it, to make the moral stakes so high, in fact, that it would one day cease to be culturally acceptable at all, cease to be normal. A forlorn hope? At least Martin Luther King tried, to his utmost limits. Where now in politics are the voices that tell us violence should not be normal and commonplace, the voices that would have us be ashamed of it ?

And even if there were political voices, would they nowadays be drowned out by the all pervasive violence of the entertainment media and 24 hour news channels: would they seem in comparison still and small and unimportant? Who says that politicians matter more? Not necessarily our own new UK government, the Con-Dems – it's not what the state does, we are being told, it's the Big Society where the action needs to be – the “little platoons” of voluntary and community organisations, and the churches and faith groups, and of course the much bigger private sector organisations – who between them will be able to soak up so much more of what the public sector used do. There is no alternative, apparently.

Many voluntary and community groups are already the mainstay of certain sorts of social service and progressive campaigns to change the culture. Think Women's Aid, Rape Crisis and Victim Support Think Nacro and Sacro. Think a whole raft of sanctuary seekers support and campaign groups. Think AVP. These are not auspicious times for funding programmes and projects that reduce discrimination and violence and support victims of social disadvantage, or indeed for thinking that violence will lessen. We know from a recent book, *The Spirit Level* (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) that levels of violent behaviour within disadvantaged groups tends to increase in conditions of increasing material inequality, and that more repressive forms of law and order are then needed in such times to manage unrest. Contrary to the new government's own claims that the recent budget was a progressive one which insulated the poorest from its worst effects, the IFS – a body to whom the Conservatives have often appealed for economic truth – showed that it was in fact a regressive one, with large numbers of the poor hit hardest, followed by a small number of the very rich. Neither it nor the budget to follow will do anything to address the widening material inequalities in Britain, and the much vaunted commitment to increasing “social mobility” that is being made alongside it is a sham - the wider the gap becomes between rich and poor the harder it is to achieve social mobility across classes, and to create “equality of opportunity”, another weasel-phrase in this context that sounds good and means nothing when inequality hardens and the

rich pull up the drawbridge. (It was in this context that someone wrote a letter to *The Guardian* saying that they had finally worked out how the new coalition government was working, how the two parties complimented each other: the Lib Dems want to stand up for poor people, and the Conservatives want to create more poor people for the Lib Dems to stand up for).

Across Scotland, a 9% cut in police officer manpower is expected and understandably the police unions are incensed, saying that the force is being asked to do 21<sup>st</sup> century policing, meet 21<sup>st</sup> century expectations or security and safety, with 1990 staffing levels. Specifically the claim has been made that the murder rate – which has gone down a little in recent years – will go up because there will not be enough officers to engage in pre-emptive intelligence-led activities that sometimes underpin them. Now, this could be a self-serving claim on the part of the police – the prevalence of the police is not the only deterrent to murder – but does anyone want to risk it? Unpalatable as it may be to acknowledge, there may be good reasons for thinking that the police are nowadays more important in reducing low level local crime than they used to be, because there are fewer respected authority figures in the community able to mobilise informal social controls which nip anti-social behaviour in the bud. The Big Society has in some respects been shrinking – there has been *some* fraying of informal social control and support. We have tried to stop that with new posts like “community warden”, but that can equally be seen simply as diversifying – civilianising – the police force rather than reinvigorating a sense of community as such, or changing the culture of a locality. At the opposite end of the crime spectrum, organised crime (whether national or international, will not get less organised or sophisticated in the coming age of austerity, and is already a huge challenge to policing.

Closer to home, because it has funded AVP workshops, the Connexions service is likely to be cut – vulnerable young people not in education and employment are likely to be hard hit. Government seem not to be looking for a people power solution here – they think schools and academies will take on career guidance, though they are already overburdened and are not necessarily skilled in this work. Unison has launched a Save Our Connexions Service and wants to challenge the legality of the cut. Insofar as Connexions has been an important supporter of AVP, our fate is to an extent bound up with theirs.

All the way though this talk I have been asking - alluding to - what it means to change a culture for the better. It's a sociological question, with historical, geographical, economic and maybe philosophical elements – but despite having a lot of sociology in my head, and bits of the others, I've grown ever more uncertain about how to think about this question, and every now again I get drawn to speculative theology instead, to Teilhard de Chardin's idea of “the noosphere”. So, before concluding with some reflections on AVP itself, a little detour is called for.

The French theologian and scientist Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) had the idea that all living human beings were immersed in and constituent parts of what he called “the noosphere”, a kind of ether or atmosphere formed by the aggregated psychic energies that radiated out from millions, billions even, of individual consciousnesses, connecting them - us - in a single mental entity which enveloped the Earth. It's not a group mind as such, a superior intelligence more powerful than any of the individual

minds that make it up – each ego mostly still feels that it stands apart, separate, untouched by any other – but it is like a vast ocean in which we are all submerged without knowing it, whose swirling currents above, below and around us shape the mental milieu in which we each do our “own” thinking. Teilhard believed the noosphere – like the biosphere - to be a *natural* rather than a *supernatural* phenomenon (though that was not a distinction which meant much in his thought) which could nonetheless be modified by human tools – communication technologies, for example - but it is not yet a scientifically validated concept, a proven reality – and maybe it never will be – but that is not to say that it is without metaphorical or poetic merit. It speaks, albeit in a different and more neutral idiom to the same thing that Jung called the “collective unconscious” – another way of denoting that individual human minds are linked, at some deep level connected and aggregated, and heir to common influences. Both “the noosphere” and “the collective unconsciousness” speak essentially to the fact of our fundamental *interconnectedness as people*, for good or ill, whether we recognise it or not - to the sense, the all too oft-suppressed intimation, that we are all members one of another.

Just suppose that the noosphere was indeed real. Just suppose that at any given moment every violent impulse in every human heart anywhere and everywhere in the world emanates out into this ether, coalesces, swirls around, expands, thins out, disperses like a vapour, permeates the mental space of every other living human being, exerting just the faintest of imperceptible pressures on their – our - moods and thought patterns, tilting them - us - just a little more towards aggression and violence than they - we - might otherwise be inclined to. And then, in turn, inexorably, our own angry thoughts and feelings ripple out from within us, strengthening the very currents that helped nurture them in the first place, adding to the malaise. Just suppose that every murder, every maiming, every rape, every drunken stabbing, every casual act of cruelty, every suicide bombing, every assassination-by-drone, every massacre, every war sends not just ripples but seismic convulsions of rage and hatred surging though this ether, some short and sharp and localised, some sustained and far reaching, all dissipating over time and distance like an ebbing wave, but leaving no-one’s mind and heart untainted by its passage.

If it was like this - if this is how violent energies come to suffuse and engulf our lives without our ever knowing it – if this is how the ether works, if this is what the noosphere permits - what would we do, as peaceable people? I guess for a start as individuals we might try to insulate ourselves from these violent currents, to steel our minds against them, but that might be like trying to insulate ourselves from the very air that we breathe, cutting ourselves off from something we actually need. The noosphere is not something we can separate ourselves from, live outside of. We cannot help but be part of it, we have to participate in it. We have to actively shape the currents that swirl within it by living non-violently, by being non-violent, by promoting non-violence, by draining the violence of others, cultivating a still centre within our innermost selves and in our communities, from which peaceable energies then radiate to counter and challenge their violent counterparts – an ocean of light contending with an ocean of darkness, as George Fox put it, for the minds and hearts of every man, woman and child on the planet. Just as the noosphere is a vast shape-shifting receptacle and conduit for every violent thought and for the emotions attendant upon every violent action, so too is it a receptacle and a conduit for the trails and traces of every act of love and kindness, every gesture of goodwill and

generosity, every sincere civil exchange, every mindful moment, every heartfelt prayer, every high-minded thought and lofty ideal.

It was primarily in terms of high-minded thoughts that Teilhard conceived of the noosphere. He did not have much to say about human evil (or violence) and seemingly believed that it would wither away as mankind evolved - via improved scientific knowledge of his own nature and his own world, and better education - towards a higher, more spiritually-infused consciousness, a planetary union of peoples and peace on earth. He seemed somewhat undaunted by what he saw of the horrors of 20<sup>th</sup> century - and he lived long enough to see some of its worst - but he thought that the Omega Point, the point of highest consciousness, a moment of unity and peace, was an ordained, inescapable destiny. That's by no means a bad hope to live by, not a bad aspiration for the species - it just still seems a very long way off.

It is important to understand that Teilhard was a materialist. He spent his life as an evolutionary biologist and paleontologist studying the transformations and adaptations of our flesh and blood natures, the traces left behind in the fossil record. He was less interested in, and less knowledgeable about anthropology and sociology, but he understood that the groups and networks into which people organised themselves were tangible, material - though sometimes fluid - structures. But for Teilhard, as you'd expect from a Catholic priest, the material was not just the material, our world was not exhausted by the things you could see or touch. Thus, the communities and institutions that we build - or break - in the real world; the creative - or destructive - social practices in which we engage day to day; the tenor of our own individual conduct - all have immaterial consequences *in* the noosphere, *for* the shape and strength and texture of the noosphere, which act back as a matter of course, like sunset and sunrise, on the mood, the energy and the imagination that we humans have - or have not - for changing the world in better or worse ways. For Teilhard the energising and directing of the noosphere towards a certain point was all important - man's spiritual future depended in it - but, notwithstanding the operation of God's grace, the ordinary actions of men and women in the material world in the here and now were indispensable to bringing it about.

And so to AVP. AVP was born amidst the concrete and steel of two American prisons - Green Haven and Auburn penitentiaries in New York state - not in a monastery on a mountain far removed from the violence of the real world, or in a seminar room in the halls of academia, or a think-tank full of earnest young policy wonks looking for the next big thing. The Green Haven prisoner - Roger Whitfield - who triggered the development in 1974 - did in fact call what he was doing on his own the "Think Tank Concept". What he was doing asking the police to send upcoming young delinquents on visits to the prison so that he and his fellow prisoners could harangue them about the evils of imprisonment - scare them straight - and hopefully deter them from a life of crime. Whitfield eventually had the nous to recognise the limitations of a purely deterrence-based approach, and asked Lawrence Apsey (1991), whose work with the Quaker Project on Community Conflict he had heard of, to run a workshop. Apsey teamed up with Dr. Bernard LaFayette, a man who had personally worked with Martin Luther King, and was advised by Faye Honey Knopp, a Quaker woman who had already run a non-violence workshop in Oklahoma in 1973. Apsey, LaFayette and two others ran the first workshop in Green Haven in March 1975.

The first workshop in Auburn in July 1975 had slightly different provenance; it grew out of an existing Quaker meeting for worship in the prison, where prisoners had been encouraged to live their lives on the wings and landings according to the Peace Testimony, with rather untoward results when they lacked non-violent ways of responding to prisoners who had no qualms about victimising them. From trial and error in the evolving workshops in Green Haven and Auburn, and in dialogue with other groups involved in non-violence training, the work grew into what we would recognise today. The Light and Livelies – the bits that make workshops fun - crystallised in dialogue with a non-prison group from Philadelphia. Lawrence Apsey bequeathed the term Transforming Power, the title of a book he'd written on Gandhi some years before, and in time the Quaker Project on Community Conflict was renamed the Alternatives to Violence Project<sup>1</sup>.

And then from the USA AVP spread across the world, usually nurtured in the first instance by Quakers, and has created a niche for itself in the prison world, and the community conflict resolution world more generally. The move into the community may sometimes have been dictated by force of circumstances - the prisons would not let you in – but it was a wholly good move, because it is in communities that the anger, resentments and frustrations out of which explosive violent incidents can be borne are best – necessarily - addressed. There was a need there, for the voice of non-violence. It's not exactly a move from the reactive to the preventive – those words can be interchangeable – but it is a recognition that it is always worth trying to reduce crime and violence and to keep people out of prison as far as possible, as well as working constructively with them once they are there.

We routinely think of AVP as groups of people who go into prisons – true enough – but I've always liked the idea that AVP actually germinated in prison, and came out from there into the community - that there were prisoners, violent men, who saw the need for it, prison authorities who saw its potential, and people of goodwill from many walks of life who took on the work prison by prison, city by city, country by country. The passion that went into its development, and helped spread it around the world, must surely have made a good imprint on the noosphere, must have cancelled out some of the more negative energies that swirl around there. As a worldwide movement, AVP seems to exemplify something of the global consciousness that Teilhard was hoping would flourish.

I've also always liked the idea that from that first AVP group in Green Haven, through the person of Bernard Lafayette, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, there is a direct link to Martin Luther King, to the architect of the greatest non-violent movement of the late twentieth century. AVP was – is – a spin-off from that movement, an application of its principles in a penal context, grounded in the first instance in the intimations of largely Black prisoners that there was a better way of living than they had lived upto then – a prison-gift to the wider world. I think it is good to hold on to that aspect of AVP's past when we are thinking about what we might become in the future, and what we call ourselves. I try not to be sentimental about tradition but I do think it is of value to carry the best of the past into the ever new circumstances of our runaway world, and – unless there are good reasons not to – to honour the moment that brought us into being. I've always liked the name "Alternatives to Violence Project" for its plainness, simplicity and exactness and I



think it is still serviceable. Other people may not immediately grasp that by “violence” we mean something broader than what the term usually denotes, but only if we use the word in the way that we want it to be used, do we stand a chance of enlarging their understanding of it. It’s an ugly word in many ways, but it should not be shied away from.

What AVP does/is – is a humble but determined attempt – a “project” in the best sense of the term - to challenge and change an important aspect of contemporary culture: its complacency about violence and the social, cultural and political milieu in which it grows. It keeps alive the voice and practice of non-violence in settings that no-one else might otherwise go to, or think it necessary to have a presence. It seeks to change culture by quietly lifting the dead weight of prevailing attitudes and practices from workshop participant’s minds, illuminating a better way, marching to a different drum, taking a step at a time, maybe dealing with and helping only one person or group at a time – but, in truth, if culture can’t be changed by diktat from above (and it can’t), what else is there but this piecemeal, ground-level approach? What other means are available to ordinary non-violent people who do what they do for love and nothing, in their spare time? Call it “militant gradualism”. Cumulatively, however, all these individualised actions add up to something bigger, and maybe what AVP has accomplished worldwide in its thirty-five year history is now actually too large and amorphous now for any one person to fully comprehend it; simply by keeping non-violent energies alive it will have had consequences in the world which transcend the specific impact on the individuals who benefit from its workshops.

It is a combination of auspicious roots and the contemporary interconnectedness of worldwide AVP, the simultaneous and shared nature of its practices across the globe, its common point of origin in Green Haven and its single heartbeat, that gives AVP some of its distinctive power - its Transforming Power, if you like. In valuing the interconnectedness of its own people, it mirrors the interconnectedness of us all – the sense of us all being members one of another. “Everyone is much more simply human than otherwise”, as Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), an American psychiatrist, one wisely put it, and the less we see others as “the other” the less likely we are to espouse violence and the more likely we are to act in concert for our greater good.

Even as a collective, global entity, AVP can’t, of course, do it all; there are always limits to what volunteer-based organisations can do – as well as opportunities that are not open to state-based professionals. At local level, to maximise its impact, it probably does help AVP to be part of mutually supportive coalitions of offender support, social justice and conflict resolution organisations – different combinations in different localities, according to what’s available and what’s possible given the finite time and busy lives of its volunteers. At national level, participation in and collaboration with penal reform networks would probably enhance its reach and reputation, and in turn these networks would be enhanced and strengthened by its distinct contribution. But this is not an argument for “professionalizing” AVP, for believing that if only AVP were closer to the heart of the establishment it could do more, better. It’s genius lies precisely in the goodwill and dedication of its volunteer-base, its uncluttered commitment to non-violence, its independence – the *directness* of its imprint on the noosphere unfiltered by political and professional constraints and allegiances. Even in its present “disembedded” form AVP is indispensable and its finest hour has probably not yet come.

I'll end with a quote from Gandalf in Book Three of *The Lord of the Rings*, a trilogy full of sombre wisdom about violence - whose young heroes risk everything to renounce it – which I hope aptly captures both the limits and the glory of AVP's task in the modern world:

... it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evils in the fields that we know, so that those who live after will have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule. (Tolkien 1955).

AVP has the wind of a fine tradition at its back. You were borne of something truly great, and you will forever be connected to it, taking it forward. What a tremendous thing it is that you do in AVP. What a privilege it has been to talk to you.

Thank you

1. In the discussion which followed this talk Mark Bitel pointed out that the term “alternatives to violence” emerged by accident, when a prison guard gave directions to visitors to the Quaker Project on Community Conflict, whose proper name he did not know. He called them the “alternatives to violence people”.

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