

A Symposium in Celebration of the Life and Work of Dr. E. D. Goy

**Celia Hawkesworth
University of London**

A symposium was hosted by the Center for South-East European Studies on Friday, 16 March 2001, organized by Dušan Puvačić and Jasna Levinger-Goy, to celebrate the life and work of Ned Goy, who died suddenly on 13 March 2000. The event was attended by many of his colleagues and friends, former students and other admirers of his work. The evening was divided into two parts: “Ned to others” and “Others to Ned.” The first part consisted of selections from his own writings, essays, and poems. E. D. Goy devoted his life to literature—teaching Russian and Serbian and Croatian, writing critical essays and commentary, and producing numerous invaluable translations from both Renaissance and contemporary Serbian and Croatian literature. But it only recently emerged that he had also himself written poetry all his life. As Jasna Levinger-Goy put it in the foreword to the little book of poems and drawings she has now published, the essays and translations were the work of the scholar, Dr. E.D. Goy, while the poems were written by Ned, the man many of us had been privileged to know and love. It was extraordinary and moving to hear the poems read by Ned’s own voice on a tape and this gave us a remarkable sense of his presence.

The selections of the essays read bore witness to a scholar of penetrating intelligence, sharp critical perception, and wide reading. They had been carefully selected from his works to give, in addition, some insight into the personality and recurrent preoccupations of the man. The second part of the evening consisted of two poems dedicated to Ned, read by the poets Melanie Rein and Richard Burns, both close friends of Ned and Jasna’s; two further readings from his works—one from a substantial monograph on the two Renaissance Croatian poets, Džore Držić and Šiško Menčetić, printed in Belgrade with extraordinary speed to coincide with the symposium—and brief personal statements by former students and colleagues. Patrick Miles, who had worked on a Ph.D. on Chekhov under Ned’s supervision, spoke among other things about the remarkable find recently made by Jasna Levinger-Goy and Dušan Puvačić among the vast treasure trove of Ned’s papers: a series of lectures of great originality on Russian literature. These are

next in line for publication. Sir Peter Hall, the last British ambassador to the former Yugoslavia, spoke about his experience as an undergraduate studying Serbo-Croatian and the particular quality that Ned brought to his teaching: one of mutual respect between teacher and student and a sense of embarking together on a voyage of discovery. Celia Hawkesworth too remembered him as a formative teacher, but then also as a deeply valued colleague over many years of shared examination duties in Cambridge and London. Richard Burns brought the evening to an end with his recollections of his friendship with Ned in recent years.

The evening, so sensitively conceived by its organizers, had an extraordinary quality. There is a word in Serbo-Croatian, used by literary critics to describe the effect of the work of some writers, including Ivo Andrić, about whom Ned has also written. The word is *dočaravanje* (conjuring up). It seems to me that Dušan Puvačić and Jasna Levinger-Goy succeeded remarkably in doing just that, in conjuring up the spirit of this great scholar, this eminently English gentleman, an eccentric, and perhaps above all gentle, infinitely kind man.