

**MILENA KIROVA ABOUT ALBENA STAMBOLOVA'S NOVEL
*THIS IS THE WAY IT HAPPENS***

This Is the Way It Happens, as the title suggests, is not a conventional narrative novel. Its plot is not smoothly interwoven into an easy-to-follow logical sequence. ... The novel begins with a series of seemingly unrelated individual stories, which gradually collide, overlap and blend into a whole, building a complex, and yet astonishingly simple, picture of life's paradoxically chaotic order. The "ontology" of the story is based on the notion that human existence cannot but move towards an inexorable and irrational order: everything happens the way it has to happen, because this is the way it happens. ... The characters in the novel are created on the same principle. They are charged with so much symbolic meaning that in some sense they constitute a catalogue of roles human beings play in their strive for "love." The same could be said about the events, the places and time in the story - everything repeats itself, although with a difference, in a predetermined yet indefinable sequence.

We must underline the fact the Albena Stambolova's writing is deeply informed by psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytical background of the novel is almost openly declared in the brief introduction which emphasizes the central place of love in all human experience. The conceptual underpinnings of the book, however, are skillfully put to work in Stambolova's undeniable gift for story-telling. Her language avoids lavish imagery. On the contrary even, the beauty of her language is in its precision, in its ability to locate the point of intersection between meaning and emotional impact.

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