

Title: Rozanov's *Fallen Leaves*: Undoing Tolstoy's *Path of Life*
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An eccentric philosopher and literati mutineer, Vasilii Rozanov was one of Lev Tolstoy's contemporaries whose autobiographical works critically engage his predecessor's moralizing aphoristic almanacs. As this paper will demonstrate, Tolstoy's *Path of Life*—prescriptive autobiographical-philosophical “book of life”—provides a point of departure for Rozanov's experiments, serving as a negative structuring principle for the “fallen leaves.” Although Rozanov has become an increasingly popular subject of contemporary scholarship, comparisons between his “fallen leaves” and Tolstoy's almanacs have not yet been made. The “fallen leaves” project, as it will be argued, is directly motivated by Tolstoy's late autobiographical work, serving as a critical commentary on Tolstoy's late dogmatic writings. For Rozanov, who arduously worked on his own anti-celebrity image, Tolstoy embodied the literary celebrity par excellence and served as Rozanov's “whipping boy.” As a prototype-counterpart to the “fallen leaves,” the *Path* can then help to explain Rozanov's unusual formal and thematic choices. Seen through the prism of Tolstoy's prescriptive “book of life,” the “basketfuls” containing a disorderly medley of stuff reveal a structural logic, forming a negative reverse image of the *Path*, as it were. In his own “book of life and wisdom,” Rozanov corrodes with his acerbic style Tolstoy's favorite ideas and themes, such as Christian asceticism and the rejection of individual desires. By providing vivid autobiographical detail, Rozanov elevates and validates the issues the late Tolstoy discards as lowly. By insisting on the qualities of the unplanned, the haphazard, and the contradictory, he further mocks the rigid system of steps Tolstoy offers in his “path” to a better life. Rozanov also exaggerates the *Path's* composite quality by orchestrating his own polyphony of voices, all of which come from a single source: Rozanov himself.