

Title: Nabokov and Tennis
Author: Gavriel Shapiro, Cornell University

Sports is an important domain of human culture. One of the most celebrated athletic activities, tennis, or lawn-tennis, as it was initially called, originated in the 1870s in England and quickly spread throughout the world, including Russia. Nabokov grew up in an Anglophile family in St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century. He learned to play tennis in his boyhood and became an accomplished player. Nabokov was so good at the game that while in the interwar Berlin he was permitted, entirely on the strength of his performance, to play at one of the city's best tennis clubs. At that time, Nabokov was also earning a supplemental and by no means negligible income by working as a tennis coach. The paper surveys Nabokov's fascination with tennis throughout his life and proceeds to examine the manifestations of this sport in the writer's works of both the Russian and the American years, from "The University Poem" (1927) and *Glory* (1932) to *Transparent Things* (1972) and the posthumously published *The Original of Laura* (2009).