Instructions: Read and annotate the following excerpts on the concept of machismo. As you annotate, consider unfamiliar words/concepts (and define them in the margins!) and connections (think about what you already know about Hemingway and his code hero and what you observed in the story “Indian Camp”).

Excerpted from the article “Machismo”

In Latin America, the term macho usually must be distinguished from that of machismo. Macho has different meanings in different social circumstances: sometimes it refers simply to the male of a species, whether animal or plant. In other cultural contexts "to be macho" can have contradictory connotations: for older generations this may refer to something positive for men to emulate, so that a macho man is one who is responsible for the financial welfare of his family, whereas for younger men to be macho can refer to culturally stigmatized behavior like beating one’s wife, and thus in order to differentiate themselves from this kind of stigmatized practice many men of these younger generations would not readily refer to themselves as macho.

Although the term machismo is generally specific to Latin America, the concept has also spread to the United States where the connotation suggests physical toughness, masculinity, and old-fashioned family values.


Excerpted from the article “Historical Context: The Old Man and the Sea”

Cubans, like other Latin Americans, place a high value on the innate worth of the individual. Success in life is defined under the code of personalismo as the achievement of one’s spiritual potential or personal destiny rather than one’s financial or career status. Thus Santiago is respected as a skilled and unique individual even though he has not caught a fish in three months. As seen through the eyes of Manolin and the omniscient narrator, Santiago is a heroic and majestic figure who, like Odysseus or Christ, has undergone a great ordeal and provides a model to emulate.

Machismo, or maleness, is an important male goal in traditional Latin American society. Machismo is ideally developed in several ways, including military, athletic, and intellectual exercises, and sexual prowess. Most men are not expected to live up to the machismo ideal in practice. Yet by cultivating these powers, one can approach being the ideal man. Santiago, for example, is admired because of his physical power of endurance. He takes great pride in having in his youth defeated a powerful Negro in an all-day hand-wrestling contest in Casablanca. Santiago also places a high value on mental qualities like his self-confidence and his vast knowledge of the “tricks” of fishing. Santiago is so confident of these qualities that he can bet “everything [the fish] has against only my will and my intelligence.” It has often been noted that in his own life, Hemingway also strove to challenge himself intellectually through his friendships and writing, as well as physically, through boxing, war service, hunting, fishing, and bullfighting. Although Hemingway is sometimes criticized for what is interpreted as an attraction to violence for its own sake, it is not hard to understand why the Latin American belief in machismo appealed to the author.