

Record in the Commens Bibliography. Retrieved from [http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal\\_article/campos-daniel-2014-peirce%E2%80%99s-prejudices-against-hispanics-and-ethical](http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal_article/campos-daniel-2014-peirce%E2%80%99s-prejudices-against-hispanics-and-ethical), 02.06.2026.

---

**Type:** Article in Journal

**Author:** Campos, Daniel

**Title:** Peirce's Prejudices against Hispanics and the Ethical Scope of His Philosophy

**Year:** 2014

**Journal:** The Pluralist

**Volume:** 9

**Issue:** 2

**Pages:** 42-64

**Keywords:** Spanish-American War

**Abstract:** in two letters concerning the Spanish-American War of 1898, Charles Sanders Peirce openly expresses some egregious prejudices against several groups of people, including Hispanics—people of at least partly Spanish origin in the Iberian Peninsula or the Americas (L 254 and L 339; reprint, translation to Spanish, and commentary in Nubiola and Zalamea 76–81). In an undated letter to his cousin Henry Cabot Lodge, a Massachusetts politician, Peirce writes regarding the war: “I don’t believe the Spaniards will make a good fight; for as I have studied them in Spain, the whole people has been corrupted with the centuries of cruelty, injustice and rapine they have indulged in, and have little real manhood left” (L 254; reprint in Nubiola and Zalamea 77). In the same letter, Peirce characterizes Cubans favorably, but only by disparaging almost everyone else: “As for the Cubans, they have passed through the refining furnace of adversity, and those of them that inhabited Key West, refugees mainly, the winter I was there, were far better than the Negroes, the Bahama people, or the Americans, there” (L 254; reprint in Nubiola and Zalamea 77). Presumably the United Statesians were not New Englanders of Peirce’s educated elite. Furthermore, in a letter dated 7 May 1898, to his brother James Mills Peirce, Peirce writes: “I am entirely in favor of the war. Two years ago I thought the United States instead of recognizing Cuba, for which there was no justification, ought to have intervened in the name of civilization. Besides, I have always thought we wanted Cuba, and what I have seen of the Cubans makes me think them very superior to the Spaniards of Spain” (L 339; reprint in Nubiola and Zalamea 79). As it turns out, Peirce thinks well of the Cubans, but only insofar as they are worthy of the United States’s imperialist, allegedly civilizing, tutelage. In the letter, Peirce goes on to say that even if no formal proof can be produced that the Spaniards in Cuba blew up the USS Maine, he

thinks it is clear that the Spaniards did it and that the United States did well to go to war because of the explosion, even if the sabotage was not formally declared the cause of the war. He concludes: "Besides that, I think it is a very fortunate thing to have a war with Spain; for we could not go on forever without a war. It might have been Germany, with which we must probably fight sooner or later; certainly we must if we are not prepared for it. Now nothing could wake us up but an actual war" (L 339; reprint in Nubiola and Zalamea 79).

**DOI:** 10.1353/plu.2014.0013

**Language:** English