
Crisostomo Ibarra and the mysterious and powerful Elias are quite similar, even though the former is an immensely wealthy mestizo and the latter, an impoverished fellow who has seen better days. Both have been victimized by the colonial system, yet have contrasting approaches to addressing the social ills that surround them. In one pivotal scene the two debate passionately about their respective views, as though the author were debating himself.

1. How do their experiences shape these views? What reforms does Ibarra advocate? Why does Elias consider these futile?

- Ibarra and Elias' experiences shaped their own views, Ibarra preferred to fight in a peaceful means while Elias believed that violence was the only option on how to help the country have its sovereignty. Their experiences were based on how to face the invaders.
- The social reform that Ibarra advocated was the moderate liberalism through secular education.
- Elias considered Ibarra's reform as futile or ineffective because his only option as mentioned was violence.

Through Ibarra, Rizal the social reformer makes it clear that he believed greatly in the transformative power of secular education. To learn only by rote prevented the ordinary Filipino from truly understanding his situation, hence Ibarra's proposal to build a school for the town of San Diego.

2. In contrast, what was the conventional view of education in San Diego? Why were Padre Damaso and, later on, Padre Salvi, against such innovation? How did race figure in their opposition?

- Father Damaso and Father Salvi were against building a school in San Diego embodied by Ibarra because they don't want the Filipinos to have better and deep understanding about what was really happening then. Also, they insisted that the Filipinos must be contented to know only their language.