

Elias and simoun as revolutionary characters

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



The Filipino's national hero, Jose Rizal, had written two famous novels which are the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. The compelling part of these novels compared to the regular novels we have nowadays is all the symbols that depicted the Philippines' society in Rizal's time. One of the symbols that he used is his characters. Each character represented a real person in society and through these it can be analyzed if that character represented a social cancer in the society. Most of the characters in the novels did represent the sickness that was happening in the society. An example of this is Dona Victorina who was a fat Filipina who always wore jewels and married a Spanish man. She represents the Filipinos who aspire to become a Spaniard to leave behind any trace of Filipino in them and then boasts to everyone about her by marrying a Spanish man. There are many characters that are like this which are people with low esteem and then falling to the traps of the Spaniards. Of course, not all the people are like this. There are those who love the Philippines and their nationality that they fight for this. Rizal has represented these people in the characters of Ibarra, Elias, Simoun and Basilio. However, between these characters, they also represented two types of people. Elias and Simoun are reflections of the revolutionists that wanted radical change while Ibarra and Basilio represented the reformists. It was a common misconception that Rizal represented himself as one of these characters but when analyzed carefully, these characters represented his views to the revolution and the reformation. He keeps arguing the pros and cons of each side and then in the end, we would know which one he chose is better. Elias and Simoun were the two great revolutionists in *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* respectively. They have a lot of similarities but also

many differences. Both of them suffered greatly from the oppressions of the Spaniards which is the reason why they have become revolutionists and wanted independence of the country. In Elias' case, he was a poor lowly man who was not able to have a good education but through hardships, his mind was sharpened and he saw the social injustices around him especially the injustice experienced by his family. His family were killed by the Spaniards but he did not seek revenge and vengeance. He did not want to be ill driven by revenge as his purpose but he still believed that violence was the only way to which the Philippines will have independence. He was a very optimistic person who trusts in Ibarra, God, government, in everything except the civil guards and the friars. He is a man who hates and persecutes the wicked. He saves those who are being persecuted and vindicates the vicious, lazy Filipinos in the novel. Rizal has made Elias a very compelling character of revolutionists but in the end he changes the views of Elias. Elias who at first was a strong believer of the revolution and argued that armed struggle will be the only means to set the Philippines free changed his mind in the end that the revolution will be a failure and so many Filipinos will just lose their lives. This was a much unexpected change of events in the novel because a very strong-willed person suddenly changes his views about the revolution. It is later realized that a missing chapter about Salome and Elias was the reason why this has happened. In the end, the strong revolutionist became weak but he still believed in Ibarra and so he sacrificed himself so that he can live with a dream that Ibarra would be the turning key to the Philippines' independence. Elias believed that there will be no light or education if there is no liberty. Crisostomo Ibarra had the opposite view from

Elias', Ibarra believed that there will be no liberty if there is no light. On the other hand, Simoun was also a character who became a victim of the colonial system. His father was killed by the friars and his sweetheart Maria Clara would leave him to become a sister in the convent because of a dark secret. Unlike Elias, Simoun was driven with revenge against the Spaniards who have taken Maria Clara away from him. He became a radical revolutionist so that he will take Maria Clara from her captors. Simoun's purpose of revolting was a selfish and personal reason which will become one of the reasons why he will fail as explained by the priest in the end. Simoun was still a very rich man like Ibarra so he was very influential to the people. He was also very active as a revolutionist wherein he dared kill all the high friars and military officials in his house. However, this plan failed because Basilio hindered this from happening. Simoun still believed that the Filipinos need to have good education to be worthy for having independence. He believes that to become a nation, both the politics and education need to be changed. Still, like Elias, Rizal also killed by killing himself with poison because he has lost all hope that he would ever succeed. The difference from Elias and Simoun's revolution is the objective and condition into which the revolution was made. For Elias, the revolution should not have any personal objective however Simoun's participation in the revolution was driven by the personal objective of rescuing Maria Clara. The failure of Simoun in saving Maria Clara also contradicts the condition of Elias for a revolution which is careful planning. The similarity lies on the manner of how the revolution should be executed which is through bloodshed and war. Through these two characters, it can be seen that there are great revolutionists in the society. They have also argued

their sides well. However, Rizal was not in favour for the revolution and that is why he had killed them in his novels which are to say that he was trying to tell the revolutionists of his time that the revolution will become a lost cause because this would only drive them mad and a lot of people would be killed.