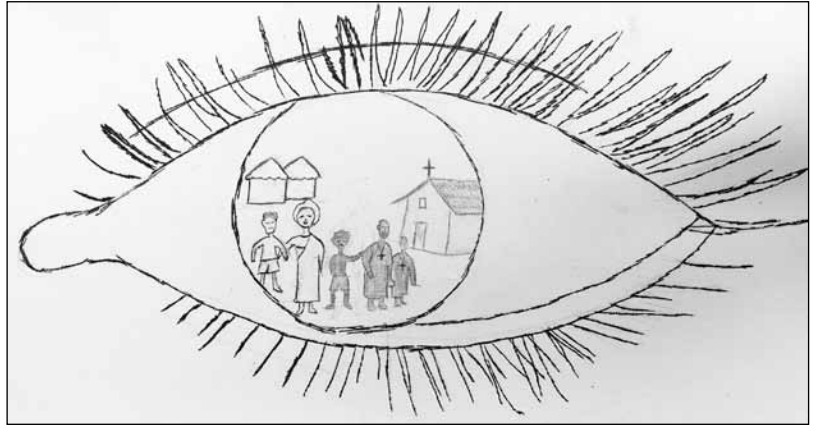


Strange

Phillip Glascock, 16, wrote this poem after reading the book, "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe. Phillip is a Mexican American citizen who was born in California and raised in Arizona. He has spent a great deal of time in Mexico and a few other Latin American countries. This summer he worked with a mobile health clinic to provide health care to children in Costa Rican villages. The drawing shown here shows Okonkwo's eye reflecting the changes he sees to the African village because of the missionaries' presence.



These foreign men come and they create much change
They build peculiar places of worship
Yet I find it worthless
They boldly claim there is only one God
Their different beliefs seem quite odd
They invade and explain our religion is false
They explain that our concepts have many faults
Day by day they are building and expanding
Creating a world of their own on our land
The land on which our ancestors used to be standing
The strange men decide to build on the evil forest
A sacred land of utmost importance
I believed that the men would die on the land
It has been days and they remain in the same place they stand
I begin to question the values of my religion
Could my principles be false compared to those of the Christians?
My world is ending and things are falling apart
My eldest son Nwoye has joined the white men
He has put their faith and beliefs in his heart
I feel sick and troubled
Everything I have ever believed in is starting to crumble
Why is my son disregarding everything?
Have I raised him to be a peasant to a king?
Alas, my son is not the only one
My people are slowly conforming
Our people's beliefs, our ancestors' beliefs, are absorbing
I cannot take this change and pain anymore
In a while, I shall be nothing but a corpse.

The picture shows a close-up of Okonkwo's eye, which represents his perspective in *Things Fall Apart*. The reflection shows the struggles that occur in a community when a new religion is introduced and changes the ideals and values of the people. In the reflection of the eye there are several people and buildings used to portray how the new religion is changing the Igbo people's ideals and values. I drew two huts belonging to the Igbo people, an

African woman and child next to the huts, a church belonging to the missionaries, two missionaries, and Nwoye, Okonkwo's eldest son, holding onto the missionaries. This shows there is a separation and a struggle with the old religion.

I drew the side with the Igbo people in black and white and the side with missionaries and Nwoye in color. I incorporated the separation of color to show that this new religion, Christianity, is different from the Igbo people's traditional religion. The colored portion is bright, while the other side is depressing and dreary. I did this to show the emotions of the missionaries versus the emotions of the Igbo people.

The Igbo people, like Okonkwo, are confused and upset with the missionaries invading their land. They see things in black and white and think there is no other religion. They believe they are spreading the word of God so they are quite content and believe they are improving the lives of the Africans. While they also believe theirs is the only true religion, the color shows they think that the Igbo people will be happier and have better lives if they are Christian. Okonkwo is also affected by the new religion because his son and people have completely disregarded their African religion and starting to believe in the Christianity. The effect that religion plays on their society is monumental because it alters their behavior and traditions in many ways.

—Phillip Glascock, 16, Arizona.