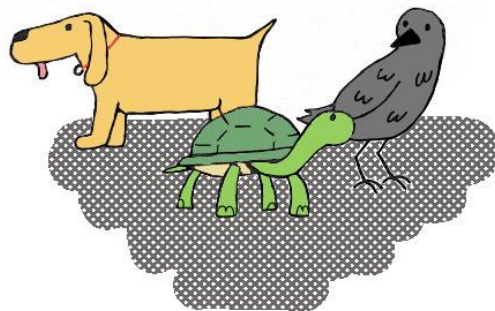




This is not what Crips look like, so why treat them like they do?



As the semester progressed, our class was introduced to multiple novels and stories that represented people with disabilities in a variety of ways. Unfortunately these ways are not always positive. With my comic, I wanted to portray the moments in these novels—specifically *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Secret Garden*, and *Of Mice and Men*—where people with disabilities are compared to animals; this is dehumanizing.

In my comic I have characters that are not entirely human, but are not in any way related to animals. I had a hard time deciding on race and gender for these characters so I decided to make them non-binary placeholders. Instead, I had them each be a different color from the rainbow to show inclusion. I gave the people with disabilities extra “hairs” on their head to show that disability is not something people lack, but something people have gained, a good thing. Each visible or invisible disability shown is in relation to the quote. There is also an animal in every comic that was also used in the novels as similes or metaphors to describe disabled people. For examples, Lennie is compared to a terrier the way he approaches George; Colin is compared to a crow when Dickon does not know how to talk to him; and Arthur “Boo” Radley is described as a turtle who can not feel, according to Jem. In Lennie’s case, his disability is seen as inferior and needing instruction, like a dog. To flip this, I made the person with disabilities be a master to his dog. Instead of being unable to communicate with Colin, I made the person with disabilities speak first. Rather than having no feelings like Arthur, I had a turtle bite at the person with disabilities, a tear to show the pain they felt.

The only thing colored in these comics are the people and there is a reason for that: I wanted the viewer to realize *this* is what we should focus on, the person *with* a disability, not how the person acts or looks like in comparison to the animals. However, with the bystanders, I made them act in animalistic ways to show how hypocritical people can be when it comes to

judging other people who are different from themselves. For examples, the comic with the dog has a bystander who tilts their head at the person with disabilities; the comic with the crow stares at the person with disabilities like a crow does; and the comic with the turtle has a bystander who hides behind their book like a turtle would normally do. Every bystander is also holding the corresponding book of the quote.

In the last panel, I included all the animals together in their normal colors: the turtle green, the dog golden, and the crow dark gray. I chose to do realistic colors for them so that viewers would have a better connection with them. These are animals from our world. This is what they look like. In no way do they look like my “humanistic” characters. So my question is, why do we treat them like they do?

I pledge... J. Faith Hopkins

Word Count: 519

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