

Addressing Stigma in 'Emmanuel's Dream' and 'I Am Rosa Parks' Picture Books

Sherley Navelia¹

¹Universitas Pamulang
¹Email: sherley@gmail.com

Abstract

This study entitled “Stigma Actions in Emmanuel’s Dream and I Am Rossa Parks Picture Books” purposed to analyze how the issue of stigma depicted in Emmanuel’s Dream (2015) by Laurie Ann Thompson and I Am Rosa Parks (2014) by Brad Meltzer. The picture books described the stigma issues happen in the main characters’ life; rooted from their differences from the society. Emmanuel was born disabled and Rosa had physical defect despite her black skin color. Both were experiencing stigma actions performed by the people around them. In conducting this study, the writer applied the qualitative method as the analysis depicted in various perspectives, pictures, and text. The analysis is accomplished by applying Erving Goffman’s (1963) theory of stigma. The study found that the main characters strive against disqualifying actions and negative thoughts from the society. In relation to the struggling condition, both characters gain self-achievement, obtain their rights; thus, prove that they could stand equally as normal people.

Keywords: *picture book, stigma*

A. Introduction

It is often found in social life that a person or a group who is different from society will experience labeling and disqualification from society. It can be described as a problem that persists over time. It can be seen through the behavior one performs towards other. It relates to stigma, which occurs because society gives labels and stereotypes to people who are physically different so that they create boundaries such as "us" and "them" (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.333). The boundaries will make the stigmatized people rejected by the community since they belong to minority group. The society cannot except their existence and make them lose their social status for

their value is decreased. The actions done while people disqualifying an individual because of the stigma known as stigma actions.

Stigmatized people get stigma actions from other based on their physical defect, unfit social norms behavior and background of their race or religion (Goffman, 1963). The actions can be displayed in various way and hurts the stigmatized people. For instance, the case in Ghana, stigmatized child especially the one disabled since birth, makes the parents become the targets of seclusion and mockery (Enoch et al., 2015). It tells that being stigmatized excludes the person from social life. Some people even have the stigma fear, a condition where a person fears of being stigmatized by others and need support from others (Zaussinger and Terzieva, 2018). It is clear that when community gives label on stigmatized people, they put them in struggling condition as they find the way out from being labelled. This of course will lead to some defensive actions showed by stigmatized people as response to the actions done towards them (Goffman, 1963).

The issue of stigma happens in daily life is also reflected in one of literary works, picture book. There are two biography picture books display the existence of stigma in the characters' life. The first is *Emmanuel's Dream* by Laurie Ann Thompson. The winner of the ALA Youth Media Awards Schneider Family Children's Book Award talks about Emmanuel Ofori Yeboah's real life story. Emmanuel is a teenager which was born with one leg and being stigmatized by his community and society. Since the beginning of his life, people think that Emmanuel will be a useless person because of his disability. Despite all the negative thoughts other people have on him, Emmanuel makes his dream come true as he succeeds to ride his bike for four hundred miles across Ghana in 2001.

The second picture book is *I Am Rosa Parks* written by Brad Meltzer in the series "Ordinary People Change the World." It tells the true story of Rosa Parks, who is known as the "mother of the civil rights movement" in the United States. She is a short black woman who is stigmatized by society. Contrary to her appearance, Rosa is a courageous woman as she tries to fight a bus driver who asks her to give her seat to a white man. At the end, Rosa was arrested because of her courage to stand against the law on the separation of blacks and whites. This case caused the Montgomery bus boycott by African Americans. Since then, Rosa is considered a hero because African Americans finally have freedom.

The picture books graphics the struggle performed by the characters in responding to the stigma actions done by others. It is relevance to nowadays situation where people easily stigmatized by other just because of their differences. Knowing and understanding how the actions hurt and put others in a hard condition will educate and prevent people to act stigma actions. Therefore, this study is conducted and the title chosen for the study is Stigma Actions in Emmanuel's Dream and I Am Rossa Parks Picture Books.

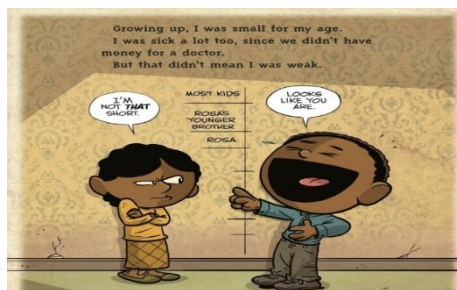
B. Method

The data that have been collected from *Emmanuel's Dream* (2015) and *I Am Rosa Parks* (2014) picture books were classified by the context of problem. The differences of characters' appearance, disqualifying actions, disparaging thoughts and impacts of stigma actions were noticed and observed by Goffman (1963) theory of stigma. Social approaches were also used to support the analysis. The last, analyze the data found by matching the social issue in the picture books with stigma theory and described the analysis into paragraphs.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. The Depiction of Stigma in *I Am Rosa Parks*

I Am Rosa Parks (2014) portrays of Rosa's journey to struggle against stigma actions in her life. She was born with a condition which her height is under other children her age and black skin. Because of this condition, Rosa experiences lots of stigma actions such as negative thought and disqualifying actions from the bus driver and all the white people. Furthermore, Rosa does not give up to this situation. She stands for herself and the black community to prove that they deserve to have the same traits as white people. The stigma issues depicted in the picture book is as discussed below.



Picture 4.2-1: Rosa and her friend

Rosa Parks is a girl who gets the stigma actions done by the white people due to her abnormal physical appearances and her skin color. Black people usually described as poor and weak. It is mentioned, "Growing up, I was small for my age. I was sick a lot too, since we didn't have money for a doctor." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 3). This statement is a prove that as black people, Rosa and her parent do not have enough money to bring Rosa to the doctor. They can only receive what God has given to Rosa's body. The illustration above, also shows that Rosa is mad because the boy laughs at her when she stands on the altimeter wall. The gesture given by the boy depicts disqualifying action. The action Rosa displays regarding the laughter she is accepted simply states her consciousness of her condition and her feeling of the

mockery done by the boy; it corresponds to the theory that stigmatized people are having self-conscious and calculating their impression (Goffman, 1963, p. 14).

Moreover, the stigma actions towards Rosa Parks happens in some public areas such as school, street, neighborhood, restaurant, and public transportation. Furthermore, the analysis below describes how hard Rosa's life is because she experiences lots of stigma actions during her childhood to adulthood.



Picture 4.2-2: Rosa pushes a boy back

Commonly, childhood becomes a beautiful memory for people as it consists of new experiences of one's life. Children usually tend to have good health, good friends, and they also have a lot of time to play; however, Rosa doesn't. The illustration above shows Rosa experiences a bad incident by a white boy on roller skates who pushes her to the ground when she is walking home from school. The white boy empowers Rosa because as a white boy, he feels more powerful than Rosa as she is short and black. This case is a prove that white boy is disqualify Rosa as blacks by doing physical bullying. As a young child, he shouldn't have bad thoughts to be rude to a short girl. The difference in skin color is the cause of this violence. As a black tiny girl, made Rosa looks frail. Based on Goffman's (1963) theory, Rosa gets stigma action by physical defect (short body) and tribal (race or skin color). Thus, the stigma action often happens to the people who looks weak and have lower social status in society.

Since childhood, Rosa has dared to think that she should not be stigmatized because of her different appearance. It is mentioned, "He thought I'd be an easy target." and "To his surprise, I turned around and pushed him back. I knew fighting was wrong. But I didn't want him picking on me again." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 4). It is depicted that Rosa put up a fight against others who looked down on her because her appearance was different from other children her age. Rosa's response to put a fight suits the theory that stigmatized person is possible to make direct attempt to correct what he sees as the objective basis of his failing (Goffman, 1963, p.10). Rosa is aware

that her condition makes her gets the bullying; thus, she knows fighting is wrong, still she fights to correct his wrong doing and tries to say she does not deserve that only because she is black.

As a result of her doing, the boy's mother gives negative thought to Rosa when she sees Rosa pushes her son back to resist the physical bullying given by her son. There is mentioned, "But y'know what made her even madder? I was black and her son was white. She immediately started yelling." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 5). It proves that skin color has become a big problem for Rosa. The boy's mother facial expression on the illustration above describes how angry she is as she opens wide her eyes and her finger points at Rosa. She also threatens Rosa by saying "I'll have you put in jail! You'll never get out again!" (Meltzer, 2014, p. 5). The boy's mother gets angry and hates Rosa because to her belief, as black child, Rosa does not deserve to treat her white son harshly. Negative thoughts will cause hatred and a desire to hurt others, either verbally or in action. In other hand, Rosa's facial expression on the picture above shows that Rosa tries to stand still when she has to receive the boy's mother anger as she closed her eyes and put her chin up. Her gesture implies the approach she is making to her insulter. She is not being coward.

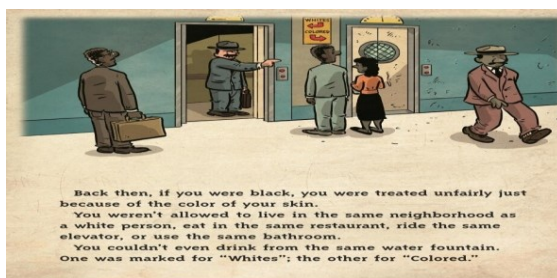


When the boy's mother is angry to Rosa, she tries to explain calmly and firmly. However, her effort takes her nowhere but in the same position, as mentioned, "I was standing up for myself." and "Still, it's hard to change things. Sometimes it can take a long time" (Meltzer, 2014, p. 6). It is clear that Rosa is struggling to make a change as an impact of the stigmatization she has got from the people around her. She acknowledges that the process will take a long time; it is almost impossible to make such changes in an instant. Therefore, she starts it by herself in hope that it will also affect others to change, at least their perspectives. The change of perspective will make change in behavior. Rosa's different response in the incident with the boy and his mother clearly states she is making contact to those who bully her. She performs face to face interaction. It relates to Goffman's (1963, p. 18) theory saying that instead of cowering, stigmatized individual may attempt to approach mixed contacts with hostile bravado.



Picture 4.2-3: Rosa and the boy's mother

Beside negative thoughts, people with different appearance tends to be disqualified by society (Goffman, 1963). Rosa Parks also experiences disqualifying actions in public areas. The illustration above shows there are two elevators with directions on the wall about white and colored; it depicts that all the whites disqualify blacks by not allowing them to use the same public facilities. This because Black people usually they are considered being inferior, poor, dirty and weak. This leads to unfair treat as mentioned, "Back then, if you were black, you were treated unfairly just because of the color of your skin." (Meltzer, 2014, p.7). This statement proves that Rosa and her group get stigmatization by race. As human beings, black people can't live their lives happily because they live under the pressure of white people. The different of the tribes' social position is written, "You weren't allowed to live in the same neighborhood as a white person, eat in the same restaurant, ride the same elevator, or use the same bathroom." (Meltzer, 2014, p.7). This statement reflects the difficult situation when black people cannot do all their basic needs freely.



Picture 4.2-4: The whites and black's elevator

There is social inequality between blacks and whites. Only whites can use the good and comfort facilities but blacks cannot. They also cannot drink through the same water fountain. Next, the illustration above clearly describes a condition when Rosa used the water-colored fountain for blacks. The water fountain for black people is named “Colored”, outside, no block to stand, and have a dark side. On the other hand, the water fountain for the white people is named “White”, inside a room, have a block to stand and brighter. Through the colour on the illustration above, it can be shown that the bright color in white people’s side means that they have nicer condition than blacks. Rosa’s facial expression also implies that she feels disappointed as she put her face down and her eyes closed. This is becoming evidence of white people always be the priority in many aspects as they always get the best facilities. Black people must obey all the rules that forbid them to use the same public facilities as white. The disqualifying actions in public area matches Goffman’s theory (1963, p. 69) which states that due to one’s social identity, his differentness will get exposed; thus, the exposure leads to expulsion. Rosa’s black skin is exposed and made her expelled from using the same public facilities or making connection in the society.

Other disqualification actions against black people also occur in educational aspect. Education is a right that everyone must obtain. It is an essential aspect for humans because it can support them to get a better life in the future. A child can get a good education if it is supported by various factors such as books, qualify teachers, and proper school buildings and facilities. This does not happen to Rosa and other black skin children. They are not supported by those qualified things on their education. Simply being black has detained them on getting good education. Being black has expelled their right of having good facilities and supplies in their education. The different facilities and supplies for both tribes can be seen on the pages showing the condition of the blacks versus the whites’ class as pictured,

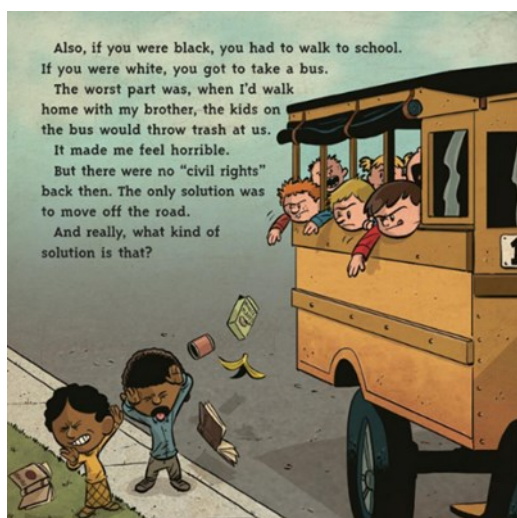


Picture 4.2-5: Rosa and the colored water fountain

The information through the illustration and text above, describe how different the school building and facilities are between blacks and white's school. The black's school has a dark colour means that they are in a difficult condition and seems no future for them. Rosa's school only have a small room, no windows, no desks, no playground and only have few books (Meltzer, 2014, p. 9). Children sit in a long wooden bench together. Even worse, all children are studying together in the small room with one teacher. This is a prove that as black children, Rosa and her school friends are disqualified by studying in the uncomfortable old wooden school building with bad school facilities. The uncomfortable can also be seen on the faces of the children studying in the room. They seem gloomy. In contrast to the blacks' class, the whites' class is not a small room, it has good light as there are windows, there are tables and teachers to teach them. Each child sits on his chair, and they have books. The children seem to have a happy learning process.

Furthermore, the picture shows not only left behind in the form of facilities but also left behind in the study time they use. Black children also have to work to help their parents earn money as they are very poor (Meltzer, 2014, p. 9). They live in the same country, but no laws protect black children's rights because they do not get proper schooling and have to work at a very young age.

It is getting worse when the white children on the school bus bullied Rosa and her brother by throwing trash at them. The character of white children can be seen clearly by how they treat black children. Children should not think of doing bad things to other children, such as throwing garbage, bullying and yelling.

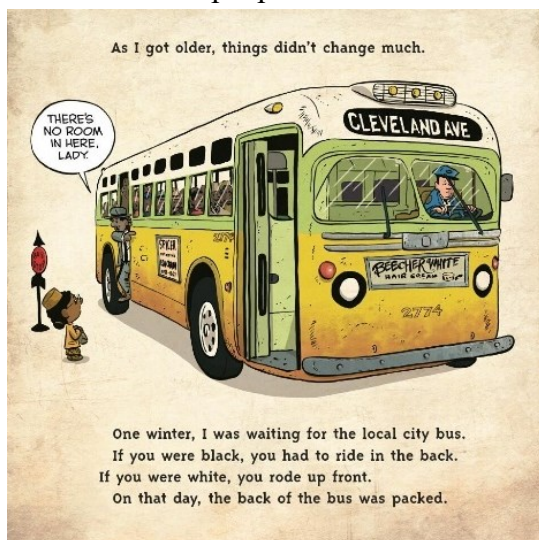


Picture 4.2-6: Rosa and her brother bullied

The illustration above shows that the white children hate Rosa and her brother as their face all showing anger and throwing trash to them. In other hand, Rosa and

her brother's gesture shows that they are ignoring the bad treatment from white children on the bus by put their hands up to them. Stigmatization by race to black people occurs over generations. Parents' parenting style in educating children is certainly very influential in the growth and development of children. Children will also make their parents' role models so that they will follow what their parents do. In this case, white parents have been stigmatized since time immemorial so that the stigma is automatically passed on to young children. There is mentioned "Also, if you were black, you had to walk to school. If you were white, you got to take a bus." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 11). This statement is a prove that black children being disqualified again as they are not allowed to ride the school bus as white children. It is depicting in white people's minds that they are different from black people as they feel that they have higher social status and powerful than black people.

Time flies and Rosa has suffered a lot from stigma actions from white people such as negative thoughts and disqualifying actions on her childhood. However, the stigma actions continuing occurs in her adulthood. It can be taken from the statement "As I got older, things didn't change much" (Meltzer, 2014, p. 12) reflects that as time goes by, stigma still keeps happening. One of them is when Rosa experiences stigma action from the bus driver who always disqualify Rosa to do not sit on the bus. Rosa experiences disqualifying action in the local bus named Montgomery Bus. Ideally, a public transportation should be one of a good facility used by its citizen. Citizen should have the same access on using it due to their need of commuting. They should not be differentiated in using the facility. But the statement is not working for Rosa and other black people.



Picture 4.2-7: Rosa was waiting the local city bus

In the picture, there is a statement "If you were black, you had to ride in the back. If you were white, you rode up front." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 12). Again and again, the whites get the best facilities than blacks because they have lower social status than

white. This phenomenon happens as a prove that people with different appearance always being stigmatized (Goffman, 1963).



Picture 4.2-8: Rosa at the Montgomery bus

Rosa Parks has to deal with the stigmatization of racism and she receives more harsh treatment from the bus driver. One day Rosa enters through the front door of the bus. The bus driver wanted Rosa off the bus because there is no empty space for black people. Rosa dropped her purse near the front door when she wants to go out the bus. To pick it up, she sat in the front seat which is especially for white people areas. It makes the driver madder ever so he treated Rosa rudely by grabbing the sleeve of her coat and saying: "Get off my bus." (Meltzer, 2014, p. 14). Not only doing that, the bus driver also acts as if the bus was his. It is impolite for a public bus driver treat his woman passengers very rude, where he should be able to serve his passengers in a friendly manner regardless of skin color. The bus driver's attitude did not respect Rosa as a female passenger, where usually female passengers were usually prioritized. The bus driver's action against Rosa is a form of stigmatization against race.



Picture 4.2-9: Rosa at the NAACP office

From the illustration above, it can be seen that Rosa grows up became a brave woman who still fights against stigma actions that happens to her and all black people. Again, she put her chin up and her eyes close as she proves that she is not afraid with the bus driver. It is also written, "From there, in addition to working as a seamstress, I started working to change things. At the NAACP, we fought for fairer laws, and made sure that people's stories were heard." (Meltzer, 2014, p.16). The passage implies that Rosa has experienced being one of many whose voice is unheard; thus, she has been treated unfairly in front of the law. She is struggling to make things stand the way it should be. It states that the things she does is to make changes. As the impact being stigmatized by others, Rosa fights for her rights, to be heard and stand

equally in front of the law. This is a prove that Rosa tries to find a solution from the stigma problem so all black people have the same traits as white. Since that, Rosa refused to follow the rules that forbid black people to use the same public facility as white. Rosa prefers thirst rather than drinking from the “colored” water fountains and she also prefers to take the stairs instead of taking the elevator for black people.



Picture 4.2-10: Rosa and the bus driver

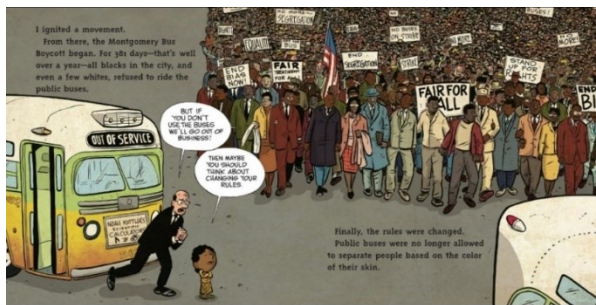
The stigma problem still happens to Rosa parks in a local city bus. Just because of the skin colour, the bus driver is being unfair to the passengers. The bus driver gesture and facial expression on the illustration above clearly describes his anger to Rosa as he opens his eyes wide and use his two hands pointing at Rosa. He asks Rosa as the black woman to get up and give her sit to the white man. It is also mentioned, “I knew what the rules said. But I also knew in my heart: That’s not how you treat people.” (Meltzer, 2014, p.22). This sentence implies that Rosa is aware and well known of the differentiate done by the people around her to those who ae difference than her majority. It is against her perspectives and hurt her deeply. It gives the pain; thus, encourage her to fight for her right. She wants to be seen and treated equally and fairly. She fights it by keeping herself cool and never raise her voice as they do to her. The statement proves that Rosa felt it was unfair. She already follows the bus rules which say that the black passenger has to sit at the back. But the bus driver asks Rosa to give her seat to a white man who does not have any seat. The picture below shows how angry the bus driver is because of Rosa still refuses to give her seat as a form of defense against stigmatization by bus drivers.



Picture 4.2-11: Rosa doesn't give her seat

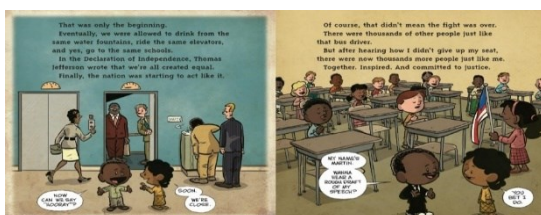
The bus driver color on the illustration above, shows the scary side because he is already seething with rage. Black colour here represent as evil, madness, authority, power, and strength of the bus driver. Even though the bus driver was mad at Rosa, it could not change her decision to keep her seat. Rosa stays calm and ignores the bus driver's instruction. It is written, "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in." (Meltzer, 2014, p.25). This statement portrays that Rosa's patience is running out, she has lost temper. The bus driver forces her always to follow what the bus driver wants as the black people. She stands on her point of view, makes her belief be seen and acknowledged by others. The bus driver intimidates that he will arrest Rosa because she refuses to give her seat to the white man. From that moment, Rosa got arrested. It is not fair that Rosa got arrested because she tried to defend her rights.

Rosa's actions confronting the bus driver actions show her great effort to make the stigma against black people getting wider or looming larger. As Goffman (1963, p.124) says that stigmatized individual may performs a great effort to keep the stigma from looming large. Rosa feels the need to face it ones and for all. She tries to reduce tension, make it easier for her and withdraw attention from the stigma, and to sustain spontaneous involve-ment in the content of the interaction. Afterwards, she is getting it.



Picture 4.2-12: The Montgomery bus was boycotted

Since Rosa got arrested, everything has changed. The Montgomery bus was boycotted for 381 days. The illustration above describes all blacks and a few white people were demonstrating to refused to ride public buses. The bus driver gesture shows that he begged Rosa to stop the boycott because he didn't want the bus company to close. Rosa gave a condition to abolish the rule about the separation between blacks and whites. It is stated in the story, "Finally, the rules were changed. Public buses were no longer allowed to separate people based on the color of their skin. (Meltzer, 2014, p.28). This sentence shows the result of Rosa's continuing wrestle. Not only that her point of view is finally seen and heard by the society, but also it changes and moves the others to stand on what she believes. According to Goffman (1963, p.132), the stigmatized people will do some effort to find the way out of dilemma.



Picture 4.2-13: Blacks and whites use the same public facilities

As the illustration above tells there is no skin color matter anymore and all people are the same. The blacks and whites are able to use the same public facilities and they are not separated anymore. Since that day, there are no more rules to separate black and white people in using public facilities (Meltzer, 2014, p.29). This is a good impact that Rosa gives because of the stigma action done by the bus driver. It is written. "In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that we're all created equal." (Meltzer, 2014, p.29). This statement portrays that there is no racial segregation anymore in society.

Furthermore, it is also mentioned, "But after hearing how I didn't give up my seat, there were now thousands more people just like me. Together. Inspired. And committed to justice". (Meltzer, 2014, p.30). It tells how Rosa's wrestle on the matter has made others, whose voice and right are discriminated, stand together. They join and support her, trying the best they can to change the discrimination that had happened for a long time. They stand together to fight for their right to not be discriminated anymore.

The stigma actions experienced by Rosa in her life provide good impacts to herself and community. The pain and sadness she feels during the stigmatization has made her tougher and braver. Rosa states that no one should belittle her for being small, being black, and being different. She also states, "But if they try, you must stand strong. Stand for what's right. Stand up for yourself (even if it means sitting down)". (Meltzer, 2014, p.32). Rosa believes in her own competence. With her courage, she fought for the rights of black people to NAACP (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). This action could break people's negative thought about black people being weak and deserves to be treated badly

Even though Rosa gets stigma action, she shows self-achievement and changes the discriminative regulation between black and whites in Alabama, U.S. Because of her struggle on equality, she empowers black people to fight against discrimination. Rosa delivers her principle to the black community by saying, "I hope you'll always stand up for yourself, and I hope you'll remember that we're all in this together". (Meltzer, 2014, p.36). This relates to Goffman's theory (1963, p.36) saying that stigmatized individual might appears as 'speaker' before various audiences of the stigmatized and normal people. Rosa's struggle of extreme mistreated, hurt feelings, complained and aspirations has led others to acknowledge her values. These principles on fighting for the equal rights of the black people, influence them to start fighting from one's self and believe they will obtain their rights. Once you stand for it, keep it going, do not give up, cause finally you will gain good result from it. The picture

Picture 4.2-14: Blacks and whites all together

above shows happy expression of the people for being treated equally. Now they can live together happily.

D. Conclusion

After finding and analyzing the data collected from *Emmanuel's Dream* (Thompson, 2015) and *I am Rosa Parks* (Meltzer, 2014) picture books using Goffman's (1963) theory concerning stigma issue, the study concludes that both main characters of the picture books experience some stigma actions. The actions they experience roots from the differences they have from others. Both Emmanuel and Rosa gain self-achievement; thus, it impacts the society around them. The stigma actions they experience from childhood to adulthood makes them struggling on painful and hard condition. This condition then encourages them to wrestle and finally change their life. The analysis shows that the stigmatization can give positive impacts not only for personal but also for the community and even for the country. Emmanuel is born with handicap on his leg. This condition makes him experiences stigma actions such as negative thought as he cannot do the activities in daily live as normal people. He also experiences disqualifying actions from his schoolmates and people in the workplace. Emmanuel has a big dream to prove that his disability does not mean inability. He is able to reach his dream by pedaling south to the sea and back up to Accra nearly four hundred miles in just ten days. So, he got the CAF Most Inspirational Athlete of the Year Award and Nike's Casey Martin award. Rosa is born with short body and black skin color. These differences make the white people around her act superior. She experiences stigma actions as negative thought and disqualifying actions from white people and the bus driver in the Montgomery local city bus. Furthermore, Rosa Parks known as "the mother of the civil rights movement", received the NAACP's Spingarn Medal and Martin Luther King Jr. Award. Meanwhile, Rosa Parks as succeeds to end the racial segregation in her country. It cannot be denied Rosa contribute essential humanism values that lead people to realize the human rights on equality and freedom. By the wrestle she have done, the society changes to a better state where people finally accept and respect differences. The study focuses on stigmatization rooted on the difference one's has from the society, and the analysis concerns on the kinds of the stigma actions performs and the impacts to the stigmatized people depicted in picture books. The fact that it is delivered in picture book also states the importance of teaching young learners about the issue. It is very important for them to know about it so they will not grow to be one of those who performs stigma actions toward others. Hopefully the study benefits the reader by providing useful information about the issue and give support to stigmatized people for always strong, confident, and though in facing the world. Further research can be done to make improvement and give different point of views. Students whose focus is studying the same issue are suggested to deeply look on it by using other theories or perspectives.

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