

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The development of a nation and how the way the society thinks influence one another because all the acts will encourage the society on action and giving respond in the social life. As the superpower nation, United State of America is also a nation that developed by the thoughts of the people. It is proven by the patterns of American thoughts development could be seen in the American literature, philosophy of Puritanism, Enlightenment and Deism, Transcendentalism, Realism Naturalism.

Philosophy is one of the disciplines that is as the main source of various sciences in the world of education. As we know, that humans are creatures of knowledge. Philosophy is a thought and feeling deeply about everything to the core of the problem. The word philosophy comes from Greek which the word Philo means love, and the word Sophos means knowledge or wisdom. Thus, philosophy means love of knowledge or wisdom.

American has a lot of thinkers or philosophers that have given a lot of influences on the nation of America or even the world. Almost all the thinker is a writer as well. That is way that the philosophy and literature have a thread and also those give influence on each other in the history of American thoughts development. Linked that, literature is created from imagination that can be pictured everything in mind, emotion or even

background of the author and can be published in such way to educate, entertain and delivering message or information to the reader or society. Through the form of drama, poem, novel, short story and essay the writer will deliver what they are believe in or what they want people to believed in and it will shape the society way of thinking.

Transcendentalism is a philosophy that come from American thinker. Transcendentalism basic foundation is concepted by the thoughts of modern and classic thinker from Europe. The core of this philosophy is a human potential to answer all of life phenomena by intuition. In America, transcendentalism developed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and this philosophy has a believer that called transcendental club that dominated by New England writer they also have a belief that there is a strength beyond human experience strength, that is intuition and personal revelation.

The thinker of this philosophy is Ralph Waldo Emerson, he said that selfreliance is important because it is a reflection of god presence on ourself (Jason Brits;2016). Moreover, David Thoreau said that living close to nature will bring peace to human, and Brook Farm said that the intellectualism should be combined with spiritualism (Asgeirsson,Arnaldul;2011). They all describe about self-reliance, nature, and intuition to reach God and answer life phenomena and those are the fundamental beliefs that a transcendentalist believe-in. The biggest contribution of a transcendentalist towards America is to give America a

spirit of democracy because there is a belief in transcendentalism on how people should consider as an important person to rely on and this has created a democracy condition in America at the time.

In this study, the researcher analyzes novel "*Transcendent Kingdom*" by Yaa Gyasi using Transcendentalism philosophy by Emerson perspective. This novel "*Transcendent Kingdom*" by Yaa Gyasi is talking about dichotomy between religion and science and everything is in Gifty's head surrounding that. And then it's also partially about why Gifty studies what she does in her PhD candidate and how her personal history with her brother and her mother partially inspired that. Gifty was raised in Pentecostal and grew up in the very religious household, going to church quite frequently but when her brother died, she stopped believing in God and abandoned religion completely, and pursues science as this sort of alternative to understand the world. The author explained story in novel with sort inner dialogue of Gifty as an adult, reevaluating her relationship with both science and religion and trying to understand the roles that they play in her life and what fulfill for her. With the same base elements that found in the "*Transcendent Kingdom*" novel such as spirituality, science and intuition, the researcher use Transcendentalism philosophy to analyze the novel.

The novel "*Transcendent Kingdom*" by Yaa Gyasi that the researcher analyzes from transcendentalism philosophy began with Gifty as a protagonist, who is PhD candidate at Stanford Medical student and she is

basically studying the concept of addiction. Gifty's mother is clinically depressed and she has come to California to stay with Gifty while she is trying to recover. Before that, when Gifty was in the age 11, her mother had prior depression. At the time her brother died in a very young age when he was in high school from a drug overdose, and that's what originally set her mother down this spiral when she was a child. After that Gifty was sent to Ghana to live with her family because her family are Ghanaian immigrants, however now she is an adult, so she is dealing with similar experience to what her mother dealt with years and years ago.

Gifty's experiences related to her on grief and related to her own past are very particular to her and how she experiences them, but the emotion that she feels as the result and a lot of the ways that she reflects on her own life is what a lot of people can see similarities in their own lives, and they also can reflect in similar way to her. Gyasi also really talked about some of the more harmful aspects of religious community, especially Gifty's community which was quite racist against her, while also acknowledging that religion or God itself still had a really profound impact as a child and she will never really be able to fully separate her life from religion in some ways because it is still has been like a mark on her past and how she thinks about the things in the present.

Gyasi as an author really raises a lot of interesting points and questions and another theme in this novel is grief generally, which Gifty uses both religion and science as tools for her to process her own grief

and to understand her own grief but with the very interesting way on exploring grief in how it contrasted in Gifty experiences it versus her mother, because Gifty has witness to her mother experience such as depression. She has very conflicting views about how she processes her own grief as the result of witnessing other people experience which her mother.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The researcher will analyze use transcendentalism theory towards the “Transcendent Kingdom” novel by Yaa Gyasi by two problems below.

1.2.1 How does the author represent Transcendentalism elements in the novel “*Transcendent Kingdom*” by Yaa Gyasi?

1.2.2 What factors have influence Gifty as protagonist to have transcendentalism thought?

## **1.3 Scope of the Problem**

This research covered to analyze the problem that makes the protagonist has changed and how all the transcendentalism elements influence the protagonist which the author was trying to portray in “*Transcendent Kingdom*” novel by Yaa Gyasi.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

Based on the statement of problem above, the researcher tries to reach some objectives of the research:



1.4.1 To investigate the Transcendentalism elements by Ralph Waldo Emerson from the “Transcendent Kingdom” novel by Yaa Gyasi

1.4.2 To analyze the influenced factor of Gifty’s life as main character to have the Transcendentalism thought

## **1.5 The Significances of the Research**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Significances**

This research main goal is to become as sources to the reader in order to get more information and enrich the knowledge about the transcendentalism philosophy and to make larger body of knowledge to this literary work “*Transcendent Kingdom*” novel by Yaa Gyasi.

### **1.5.2 Practical Significances**

The researcher want this to become new contribution as the reference material on the next research especially for other literary student of Khairun University and generally for all the other people who want to learn about literature or who want to get to know more about this novel “*Transcendent Kingdom*” by Yaa Gyasi as well as the Transcendentalism philosophy.

## **1.6 Review of Related Literature**

“Transcendent Kingdom” novel by Yaa Gyasi is rarely to find that it has been analyzed in any journals, it might be because it just published in July 2020, so it quite difficult to find another literature review about this novel. But to theoretically helping the researcher develop this research is

the perspective of the related literature that the researcher has been found.

First, the journal of Language Teaching and Research by Noor-Tehrani Mahini, 2018 entitle **“Scarlet Letter: Embroidering Transcendentalism and Antitranscendentalism Thread for an Early American World”**. This journal is talking about “Scarlet Letter” novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne by using the transcendentalism philosophy. In analyzing the novel, the researcher tries also to serve the opposite of the philosophy after the researcher interpret is contained in that novel, where it is not only about transcendentalism elements, but also the antitranscendentalism. In this journal the researcher elaborated all the transcendentalist such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau perspectives. The second journal that the researcher use as the reference of this research is **“Self-Reliant Transcendentalism in Five Modern American Non-fiction Text”** By Jason Brits 2016. Slightly different with the first related literature, this journal is more specifically talking about Self-Reliant in transcendentalism in some American texts. As we know that self-reliant is one of the important elements of the transcendentalism philosophy. So, instead of talking about all the elements of the transcendentalism philosophy, the researcher of that journal only detailly introduce transcendentalism history first, then analyzing the self-reliant issue on each American text.

According to this research entitled *“Transcendentalism in the novel “Transcendent Kingdom” by Yaa Gyasi”* explains all the Transcendentalism elements such as self-reliance, nature, and intuition from the novel *“Transcendent Kingdom”* and why the Transcendentalism thought can be appeared in someone’s life. This research also shows the correlation between the problem of the main character, Gifty, with the action as she responds towards the problem and how Gifty survives with it and finally lives with Transcendentalism thought.

As a comparison, the first journal of Language Teaching and Research by Noor-Tehrani Mahini, 2018 entitled ***“Scarlet Letter: Embroidering Transcendentalism and Antitranscendentalism Thread for an Early American World”*** explains Transcendentalism and also anti-transcendentalism in the novel *“Scarlet Letter”*, in addition the second journal with the title ***“Self-Reliant Transcendentalism in Five Modern American Non-fiction Text”*** by Jason Brits 2016 only focused on analyzing the first elements of Transcendentalism, which is self-reliance towards some American texts, but this research analyzes all the Transcendentalism elements with the background as the influenced factor behind someone's life to become a transcendentalist.

## **1.7 Theoretical Bases**

### **1.7.1 Concept of Transcendentalism**

To comprehend the elements of Transcendentalism, the theory from Ralph Waldo Emerson suits towards this research. According to the Jason



Brits (2016) in his *"Self-Reliance Transcendentalism in Five Modern American Nonfiction Text"* Transcendentalism is a philosophy born from American movement at 19<sup>th</sup> century began in New England, Northeastern America. Before that, Unitarianism was religious movement at that time, and transcendentalist start off the unitarians, the Transcendentalist felt unitarians emphasize too much on logic or reason to determine the ultimate truth of the universe or understanding reality, or they believe that all the idea could be derived from physical words, transcendentalist dissatisfy with this idea, transcendentalism began as a reform movement from unitarians church orthodoxy, so it is not religion but it is a philosophy.

Transcendentalism is essentially a kind of belief of people have knowledge about themselves and the world around them that goes beyond what they can see, hear, taste, touch or feel. One of the major writers who is connected to this movement and he is the first who shape this concept through his writings, he is Ralph Waldo Emerson, his popular works are *"American Scholar"*, *"Self-Reliance"*, *"Nature"* and *"Oversoul"*. In context, transcendentalist exposes to emphasize using inner spiritual experiences to approach the divine, they often relate personal experiences in nature to demonstrate the link between man, god and the universe. There are some elements or beliefs of the transcendentalism philosophy by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

### 1.7.1.1 Ralph Waldo Emerson Concept of Transcendentalism

#### 1.7.1.2 Self-Reliance

Emerson wrote the essay in 1841 and talking about his views of “*Self-Reliance*” essay. Throughout the essay, he explores about the important of individuality and how people should avoid the temptation to conform society of their true selves. There are some statements of Emerson in “*Self-Reliance*” to practice through non-conformity:

“A man must consider what a blindman's-bluff is this game of conformity”

“the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude”

“The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps”.

Self-reliance and an emphasis on the individual over community is a core belief of transcendentalism. Transcendentalists believe in self-reliance, they believe that human being is naturally good but the society that corrupting them, the society the comprised of organized institution of religion is corrupting the purity of individual, so they insisted men to rely on himself (Carbone, Steven A;2010)

#### 1.7.1.3 Nature

From the journal by Brasler, Leo (1962), *Nature* is Emerson's essay in 1836. *Nature* is divided into an introduction and eight chapters. In the Introduction, Emerson asserts that all our questions about the order of the universe relationships between God, man, and nature might be answered

by our experience of life and by the world around us. Each individual is a manifestation of creation and as such holds the key to unlocking the mysteries of the universe. The goal of science is to provide a theory of nature, but man has not yet attained a truth broad enough to comprehend all of nature's forms and phenomena. Emerson identifies nature and spirit as the components of the universe.

*"All science has one aim, namely, to find a theory of nature."*

By "science," Emerson refers to both the natural and humanistic sciences, which he does not view as distinct from one another, but rather joined in their mutual interest in understanding nature. Such a proposition grounds his philosophy centered on nature, as delineated in *Nature*. Nature works together with the spiritual element in man to enhance the nobility of virtuous and human action. There is a particular affinity between the processes of nature and the capabilities of man. Nature provides a suitably large and impressive background against which man's higher actions are dramatically outlined.

Emerson also points out the capacity of natural beauty to stimulate the human intellect, which uses nature to grasp the divine order of the universe. Because action follows upon reflection, nature's beauty is visualized in the mind, and expressed through creative action. The poet, painter, sculptor, musician, and architect are all inspired by natural beauty and offer a unified vision in their work. Art thus represents nature as distilled by man. Unlike the uses of nature described in "Commodity," the

role of nature in satisfying man's desire for beauty is an end in itself. Beauty, like truth and goodness, is an expression of God.

#### **1.7.1.4 Intuition**

(Waldon;1962) In "Nature," and then more elaborately in "The Divinity School Address," he formulates many arguments that support intuition. He maintains that, similar to the direct and secondhand types of knowledge inherent in the material world, there exist two different ways of apprehending Reality. As recognized by philosophy and religion, we can attain a certain knowledge of reality through metaphysical speculation or religious revelation, it is called intuition.

However, Emerson advocates the existence of a direct and experimental way of having access to universal reality, which is named intuition.

Intuition and reason usually refer to two distinct dimensions of the human mind. In addition, these two mental attitudes are physiologically ingrained in every human being, as the brain is divided into a right-hand hemisphere that controls the intuitive aspect and a left-hand hemisphere that deals with rational operations. In his essays, Emerson refers to rational thinking as understanding, and to intuitive comprehension as Reason: *"The understanding adds, divides, combines, measures, and finds nutriment and room for its activity in this worthy scene. Meanwhile, Reason transfers all these lessons into its own world of thought, by perceiving the analogy that marry Matter and Mind"*

So, they basically valued intuition over intellect. The knowledge comes from within relied on intuition for all the answers. Transcendentalist wants to transcend or to go beyond the limitation of senses.

### **1.7.2 Hendry David Thoreau Concept of Transcendentalism as Comparison**

As in comparison, another thinker in this philosophy is Hendry David Thoreau. Based on Asseirsson, Egill Arnaldul "*Spirit in The Pond*" (2011) He wrote a first draft of *Walden*, which eventually appeared in 1854. Nature comes to even more prominence in *Walden* than in Emerson's *Nature*, which it followed by eighteen years. Nature now becomes particular: this tree, this bird, this state of the pond on a summer evening or winter morning become Thoreau's subjects. Thoreau is receptive. He finds himself "suddenly neighbor to" rather than a hunter of birds and he learns to dwell in a house that is no more and no less than a place where he can properly sit. From the right perspective, Thoreau finds, he can possess and use a farm with more satisfaction than the farmer, who is preoccupied with feeding his family and expanding his operations.

In *Walden's* opening chapter, "Economy," Thoreau considers the trade-offs we make in life, and he asks, as Plato did in *The Republic*, what are life's real necessities. Like the Roman philosophers Marcus Porcius Cato and Marcus Varro he seeks a "life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust". Considering his contemporaries, he finds that "the



mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation". Thoreau's "experiment" at Walden shows that a life of simplicity and independence can be achieved today.

Thoreau maintains in *Walden* that writing is "the work of art closest to life itself". In his search for such closeness, he began to reconceive the nature of his journal. Both he and Emerson kept journals from which their published works were derived. But in the early 1850s, Thoreau began to conceive of the journal as a work in itself. With its chapters on "Reading," "Solitude," "Economy," "Winter," and "Spring," *Walden* is more "worked up" than the journal; in this sense, Thoreau came to feel, it is less close to nature than the journal.

### **1.7.3 The Influenced Factors of Transcendentalism**

#### **1.7.3.1 Family Factors of Mother's Depression and Adolescent Development Outcomes**

In a journal Saul McLeod (2015) "*Psychological Theories of Depression*" Depression is a mood disorder which prevents individuals from leading a normal life, at work socially or within their family. Seligman (1973) referred to depression as the 'common cold' of psychiatry because of its frequency of diagnosis. One major cognitive theorist Aaron Beck. He studied people suffering from depression and found that they appraised events in a negative way.

To be more clear about how depression can impact to people around us especially children, the study of Paediatr Child Health (2004)

explained about various studies have shown that school-age children of depressed mothers exhibit impaired adaptive functioning, including internalizing and externalizing problems. Although the study reviewed by Beardslee et al was an uncontrolled study, the more recent review by Downey and Coyne included studies using a control group (matched for parental age, employment status, ethnicity, marital status, and gender). number and age of children), standard diagnostic criteria for identifying parental depression and a valid measure of psychological functioning in children. Billings and Moos show that family stress and low support add to the prediction of child disorders beyond those caused by depressed parents.

Children of depressed parents are also at higher risk for psychopathology, including affective (particularly depression), anxiety, and behavioral disorders. Hammen et al compared children from four groups of mothers (mothers with unipolar disorder, bipolar disorder and chronic medical illness, and normal mothers) without differences in ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, or education level. They showed that, even with statistically controlled effects of chronic stress, there were still differences in the psychosocial outcome variables between groups, and there were certain disorders in children of unipolar mothers. Other studies, in which there were no demographic differences (age, marital status and socioeconomic level) between depressed and non-depressed parents, have confirmed an increased risk of psychopathology in children of

depressed parents. It appears that the onset of major depressive disorder before age 30 in parents increases the risk of their children developing depression quite early during childhood. It is somewhat difficult to describe which behavior disorders are caused by maternal depression and other environmental factors, and which are caused by genetic susceptibility.

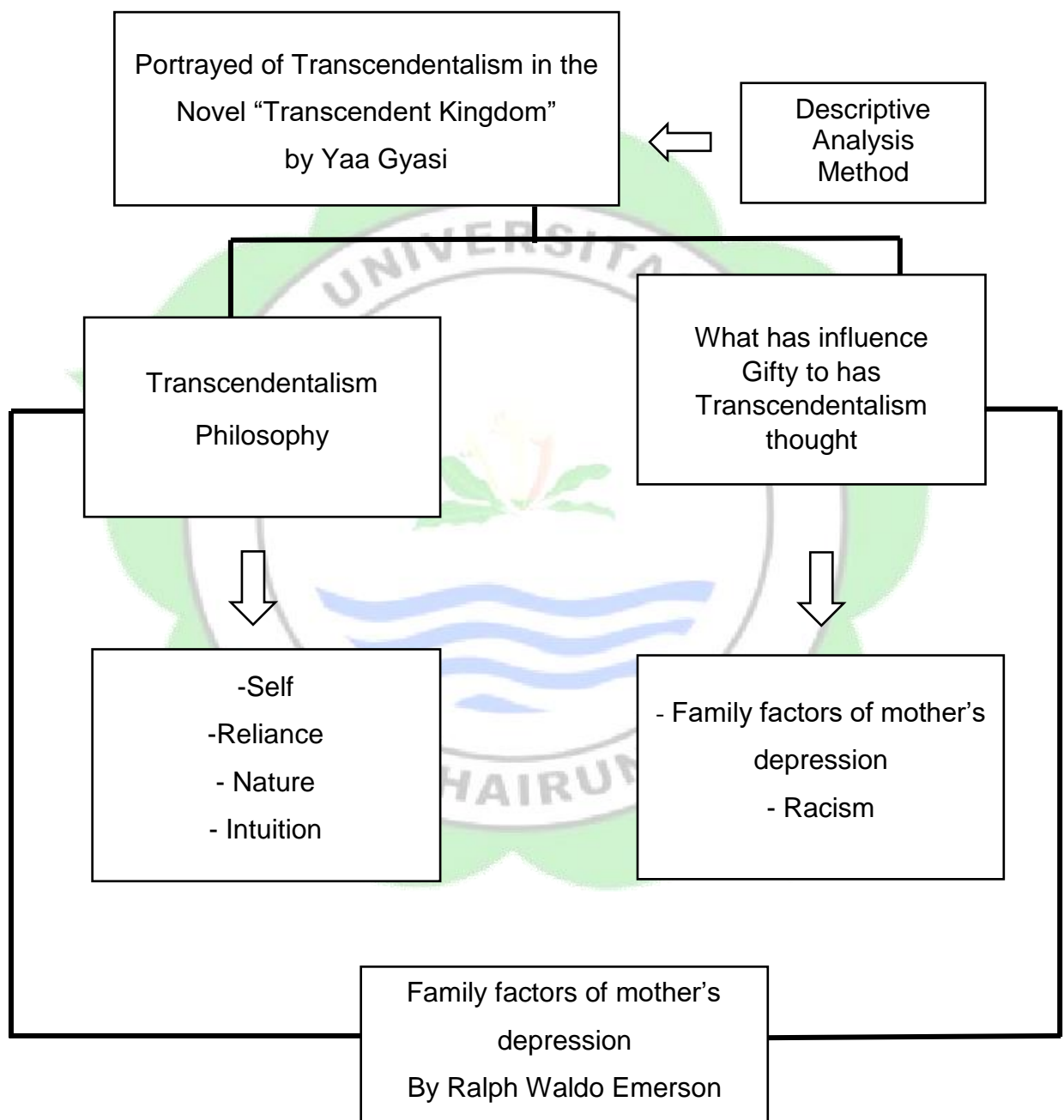
Generally, adolescence is a vulnerable period for affective illness and major depressive disorder, which is observed twice as often in girls as in boys. Two cross-sectional studies showed that adolescents with depressed parents suffered from psychosocial dissonance and had significantly higher rates of affective disorder than adolescents of nonaffective psychiatric control parents.

#### **1.7.3.2 Racism**

According to general strain theory in the journal "*Perceptions of Racism and Depressive Symptoms in African American Adolescents: The Role of Perceived Academic and Social Control*" (2009), racial generates distress, which increases the likelihood of offending. Two studies show that emotional distress partially explains the effects of racial discrimination on conduct problems) and violence. Although general strain theory emphasizes the role of anger as a mediator, the theory also proposes that other negative emotions play a mediating role in the strain–offending link. This examines the mediating role of depression, which can lead to crime in several ways. For example, depression increases impatience and irritability and reduces inhibitions and self-regulation, and it augments

selfabsorption while decreasing empathy. In addition, the hopelessness and disinterest in long-term goals concomitant to depressive symptoms reduce individuals stakes in conformity.

### 1.8 Conceptual Scheme



The scheme above, it illustrates the concept of the researcher. The researcher is going to analyze the transcendentalism elements by Ralph Waldo Emerson and analyze what makes the protagonist's problem that makes her having a transcendentalism thoughts using descriptive analysis method.

### **1.9 Method of The Research**

This research is qualitative research that analyze about the "Transcendent Kingdom" Novel by Yaa Gyasi. The method used in this research is descriptive analysis method. This descriptive analysis method is used by describing all the facts in that novel and then analyzing it through those facts.

By used this method, the researcher wants to know about the structures of the novel and suit with the perspective of the theory that the researcher will analyze. The steps of this method are collecting data, classifying, describing and then interpretation.

### **1.10 Data Sources**

#### **1.10.1 Primary Data Source**

The primary data is the main data that the researcher got from all the words, dialogue, and sentences of the "Transcendent Kingdom" novel by Yaa Gyasi.



### **1.10.2 Secondary Data Source**

The secondary data is valid supporting data taken from the related dialogues and sentences with Transcendentalism theory in the “Transcendent Kingdom” novel by Yaa Gyasi and.

### **1.11 Techniques of Collecting Data**

The technique of collecting data in this research is by literature review, which the researcher tries to understand all the literature that related to the novel and also the theory as well and it could come from any books or journals. In the other hand, the researcher also reviewing the novel, understanding and underlying all the data to take as the material of the research into notes.

### **1.12 Techniques of Analyzing Data**

In analyzing the data from the “Transcendent Kingdom” novel by Yaa Gyasi, the researcher tries some techniques below:

#### **1.12.1 Reading comprehension**

In this first technique is the very fundamental technique, because the research is about literary work, so the one and only first way is reading, but not only read once, the researcher need to read repeatedly about the novel “Transcendent Kingdom” by Yaa Gyasi.

#### **1.12.2 Classifying**

After reads the novel, the researcher classifies the content of the novel that relate with the approach that the researcher uses which Transcendentalism theory.

### **1.12.3 Describing**

The researcher describes all the data to know all the classifying data has connection with the title or not.

### **1.12.4 Interpretation and Drawing Conclusion**

This step is the most important step, the researcher needs to interpret all the data with the approach and then make it into conclusion that all the explanation and the evidence contained.

