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|  | **Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra** |  |
| **Module: Literature (British)** | **Faculty of Letters and Languages** | **Level: Third Year (L 3)** |
| **Lecturer: Mr A. Boulegroune** | **Dept. of English Language & Literature**  | **Semester: One** |
| **Tutorial № 05: British Romanticism: The Historical Novel** **Critical Analysis of an Extract from Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe***  |

Read the Text carefully. Then, answer the questions below.

**The Text:**

[...] for, except perhaps the flying fish, there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or the waters, who were the object of such an unintermitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period. Upon the slightest and most unreasonable pretences, as well as upon accusations the most absurd and groundless, their persons and property were exposed to every turn of popular fury; for Norman, Saxon, Dane, and Briton, however adverse these races were to each other, contended which should look with greatest detestation upon a people, whom it was accounted a point of religion to hate, to revile, to despise, to plunder, and to persecute. The kings of the Norman race, and the independent nobles, who followed their example in all acts of tyranny, maintained against this devoted people a persecution of a more regular, calculated, and self-interested kind. It is a well-known story of King John, that he confined a wealthy Jew in one of the royal castles, and daily caused one of his teeth to be torn out, until, when the jaw of the unhappy Israelite was half disfurnished, he consented to pay a large sum, which it was the tyrant’s object to extort from him. The little ready money which was in the country was chiefly in possession of this persecuted people, and the nobility hesitated not to follow the example of their sovereign, in wringing it from them by every species of oppression, and even personal torture. Yet the passive courage inspired by the love of gain, induced the Jews to dare the various evils to which they were subjected, in consideration of the immense profits which they were enabled to realize in a country naturally so wealthy as England. In spite of every kind of discouragement, and even of the special court of taxations already mentioned, called the Jews’ Exchequer, erected for the very purpose of despoiling and distressing them, the Jews increased, multiplied, and accumulated huge sums, which they transferred from one hand to another by means of bills of exchange—an invention for which commerce is said to be indebted to them, and which enabled them to transfer their wealth from land to land, that when threatened with oppression in one country, their treasure might be secured in another.

The obstinacy and avarice of the Jews being thus in a measure placed in opposition to the fanaticism that tyranny of those under whom they lived, seemed to increase in proportion to the persecution with which they were visited; and the immense wealth they usually acquired in commerce, while it frequently placed them in danger, was at other times used to extend their influence, and to secure to them a certain degree of protection. On these terms they lived; and their character, influenced accordingly, was watchful, suspicious, and timid—yet obstinate, uncomplying, and skilful in evading the dangers to which they were exposed. (Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*)

**Short Biography of Sir Walter Scott**

Sir Walter Scott was bornon August 15, 1771 in[Edinburgh](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Edinburgh). He was an influential [Scottish](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Scotland) [novelist](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Novelist), [poet](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Poet), and critic. Scott was among the first to draw upon history as source material for his fiction and is generally cited as the father of the historical novel. His novels of Scottish history, such as *Waverley* (1814) and *Rob Roy* (1818) awakened pride among Scots, while *Ivanhoe* (1820) was influential in renewing interest in the [Middle Ages](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Middle_Ages) and medieval traditions of chivalry. Many of his works are classics of both English and, specifically, Scottish literature. She died on September 21, 1832.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why were the Jews the object of persecution?
2. Many peoples were subjected to persecution. Why was the persecution of Jews so special?
3. Was the persecution of the Jews justified?
4. Does the author completely victimize the Jews? Justify your answer.
5. In what way was Jews’ accumulation of huge fortunes an advantage and disadvantage for them?
6. According to you, why does Sir Walter Scott sympathize with the plight of the Jews?