

Name.....

Faculty No: .....

FROM VICTORIANISM TO MODERNISM  
Mock state exam – May 2015

Wemmick was out, and though he had been at his desk he could have done nothing for me. I went straight back to the Temple, where I found the terrible Provis drinking rum and water and smoking negro-head\*, in safety.

Next day the clothes I had ordered all came home, and he put them on. Whatever he put on, became him less (it dismally seemed to me) than what he had worn before. To my thinking, there was something in him that made it hopeless to attempt to disguise him. The more I dressed him and the better I dressed him, the more he looked like the slouching fugitive on the marshes. This effect on my anxious fancy was partly referable, no doubt, to his old face and manner growing more familiar to me; but I believe too that he dragged one of his legs as if there were still a weight of iron on it, and that from head to foot there was Convict in the very grain of the man.

The influences of his solitary hut-life were upon him besides, and gave him a savage air that no dress could tame; added to these were the influences of his subsequent branded life among men, and, crowning all, his consciousness that he was dodging and hiding now. In all his ways of sitting and standing, and eating and drinking, — of brooding about in a high-shouldered reluctant style, — of taking out his great horn-handled jack knife and wiping it on his legs and cutting his food, — of lifting light glasses and cups to his lips, as if they were clumsy pannikins\*, — of chopping a wedge off his bread, and soaking up with it the last fragments of gravy round and round his plate, as if to make the most of an allowance, and then drying his finger-ends on it, and then swallowing it, — in these ways and a thousand other small nameless instances arising every minute in the day, there was Prisoner, Felon, Bondsman, plain as plain could be.

negro-head – a dark kind of loose tobacco

pannikins – metal drinking cups

felon – one who has been convicted of a serious crime

bondsman = a euphemistic term meaning “convict”

1. Identify the place the passage within the story and the plot of *Great Expectations*. To what extent does the description of Provis contribute to the creation of suspense in the novel?
2. Discuss the way Pip’s attitude to Magwitch as expressed in this passage is thematically related to the typical Victorian Bildungsroman. What social and moral issues typical of mid-Victorian fiction does *Great Expectations* deal with? Point to some evidence in this passage and elsewhere in the novel.
3. How does the passage reveal Dickens complicated use of retrospective first-person narration?
4. Point to at least 2 features of the style in the passage which are typical of Dickens’s artistic method.
5. Compare Dickens’s representation of crime and the criminal in *Great Expectation* with that of Hardy in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*.