Fred D'Aguiar's *The Longest Memory* and Tom Wright's *Black Diggers* explore the dominant social order and corrupt hierarchies within both 19th century Virginia and 20th century Australia. It becomes obvious through both texts that the presence of unethical governing bodies, which prioritize patriotism and white hegemony over morality, leads to the unjust treatment of black minorities. Whilst the majority of characters ignobly agree with these prejudiced views, there are a select few who are willing to question the status quo and in turn advocate for shifts in the social hierarchy. It is made apparent through both texts that the dominance of a white society can instill fear within certain characters into a state of non-resistance, with older individuals resigning themselves to the reality of a racist world. D'Aguiar and Wright ultimately explore that the immoral hierarchies existing within the text frame are insuperable, and consequently, lead to a denial of power to black minorities.

Within both *The Longest Memory* and *Black Diggers* it becomes obvious that the "gross injustice" experienced by black minorities, and the consequential lack of power for these individuals, stems from corrupt governing bodies with ingrained racially prejudiced views. Through a series of editorials from *The Virginian*, D'Aguiar explores common societal beliefs and highlights that slavery was a government-sanctioned practice and "industry." Ignorant observation which suggests that slaves are in a positive environment with a "general air of good cheer" reflect that overtly racist
and prejudiced procedures are overlooked simply as the status quo. The rationalising of “200 lashes and further restrictions of diet” as a “just and fair” punishment further exemplifies this ignorance within society and highlights that African-Americans were left oppressed and powerless, a result of the corrupt nature of white superiority. Similarly, in Black Piggery, the blatant government sanctioned racism in the Sentinel Act illustrates the way in which unethical hierarchies exploit and utilise to exploit the divide between those in power and their inferiors. Although the government control and oppression is more severe in The Longest Memory, the Public Servant in this vignette reflects the white hegemony present in post-war Australia. There is an inability and often reluctance to recognise the deep racism which is embedded within society, his lack of compassion and agreeing demeanour tiring Nurse to come to the realisation that for his people, the war is “never going to end”. D’Aguerre and Wright ultimately explore that the presence of corrupt governing bodies, which prioritise patriotism and supremacy over morality, create a society in which hierarchy can exploit the colour and skin of an individual’s skin in order to gain dominance and power.

There are example of characters across both texts who attempt to shift prejudiced hierarchical views, rather than ignorantly succumbing to the pressures of a dominant social order. D’Aguerre explore this willingness to disagree with racist morals through the character of Mr Whitechaple, a plantation owner who views his responsibilities through the prism of his Christian beliefs. His humane approach suggests that slaves should be treated “as first and foremost as subjects of God” and he is prevailed to endure the mockery of other plantation owners.
to defend his belief that "slaves are as equal". It is through Mr Whitechapel's strength of character and resolve to conform to expected behaviour that it becomes apparent there are individuals who are willing to question and advocate for those who have been left powerless as a result of white society.

Unlike Mr Whitechapel, Archie is the direct target of discrimination from controlling white superstructure and he believes it is his duty to act as a voice for his own people. The reality of racism experienced during the war makes the lack of control he has over his life back in Australia even more challenging and he rallies for equality between the races. Archie's willingness to accept the status quo leaves him targeted and labelled as "the worst kind of black" and Mr Whitechapel he has to endure the condemnation of his own people. Both Mr Whitechapel and Archie recognise the injustice that is associated with the dominant social order and are willing to question those morals on a public front. It is through their inability to bring change to their respective communities that both O'Higgins and Wright highlight the Archies can corrupt by creating a difficult, if not insurmountable, barrier to altering who is powerful and who is powerless.

Whilst the hegemony of white culture constantly forces older characters into a state of non-resistance, others attempt to strive to obtain power and control over their lives despite their oppression. In "The Longest Memory" it becomes obvious that Whitechapel has been institutionalised by years of repression, amounting to his total compliance as a slave. For him, the plantation "run as far as the eye can see", symbolically suggesting that his entire world is encapsulated within the plantation walls, anything beyond its
harbour simply an unattainable illusion. Whilst Whitechapel is given in to the sinethetical domination of white society and is willing to conform to his enslavement, Chapel can not understand his father's non-resistance, and continues to dream of a 'paradise on earth' where he can be the 'master of his own destiny'. It is the same youthfulness and naivety which fed both Chapel's dreams and Bertie's vision of a "bigger world" in Black Diggers. Bertie has a romanticised view of what society is like and optimistically believes he will be able to avoid the subjugation commonly experienced by Indigenous people. Mum and Grandicket however, comparable to Whitechapel, have a more cynical view of society and are willing to accept their powerless position within it. Through the hierarchy of the show ground, Mum's poignant reminder that "they could never get in", it becomes apparent that she recognises that there is "no fairy land at the end" and that they will continue to be excluded as a result of their Indigenous heritage.

D’Aguiar and Wright make it obvious that dreams for a better world, where you can escape the oppression of corrupt hierarchies, are dreams only for the youth. Older characters who have experienced the extents of white dominance and have lost their sense of hope are forced to resign themselves to the reality that their lives will continue to be controlled by immoral superior figures.

Through the polyphonic structure of both Black Diggers and The Longest Memory, playwright Tom Wright and author Fred D’Aguiar explore the corrupt ways in which hierarchies exploit their power in order to oppress both Indigenous Australians and African Americans. This exploitation of power is seen through the racist and unjust treatment of black minorities, which is ignorantly viewed as reasonable as a result of governning bodies which sanction their behavior. Whilst there are a select few individuals who
attempt to advocate for shifts in the power system or dream of a "better world", others are forced to resign themselves to the reality of a racist society and the inescapable nature of oppression from dominating and racist views which are engrafted within both white cultures and uncompromising, and consequently, lead to the presence of corrupt hierarchical systems.

Excellent!
Well chosen examples + a sustained and insightful comparison.