Evaluate the concept of the journey in Patrick White’s ‘Voss’ and Phillip Noyce’s ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’.

Patrick White’s ‘Voss’ and Phillip Noyce’s ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ both tackle existential questions through the Journeys concept, seeking to uncover the truth behind mankind’s nature. The high modernist novel ‘Voss’ is a pioneering epic about a man's Journey into the heart of the Australian desert and subsequently the heart of his own mind, an allegory of self-investigation. The eponymous protagonist compulsive desire to explore the primitive landscape of Australia and his quest for humility both catalyse his individual struggle. Noyce’s domestic drama ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ follows three sisters, as they embark on their Journey to freedom. The protagonist, Molly’s, determination across the harsh, barren geography, catalyses her transition from childhood to adulthood. Behind the epic grandeur narrated in symbolic style, both White and Noyce carefully depict alternative modes of human existence. Through the discussion of moral purpose, the texts explore both physical and metaphysical notions, embodying the fundamental duality of Journeys concept.

Both ‘Voss’ and ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ embody the Journey as a physical and metaphysical expedition into the unknown, the purpose not merely to voyage into the interior of the continent, but rather to quest into the inner being of one’s own self. Voss’ fascination with the land originates from the desire to fulfill his own nature, "he is obsessed by this country," and more specifically the numinous landscape of the desert
interior. White presents the land as parallel to the human mind, a blank landscape in which Voss’v aspirations to divinity are brought to attention. His expedition results in a personal battle of hardship with the vast continent: “I will cross the continent from one end to the other. I have every intention to know it with my heart.” The imperative mood of the verb highlights, that through this titanic quest for autonomy, Voss seeks to identify himself with the unfamiliar Australian landscape, in order to prove not just his independence, but his superiority, highlighting the annihilating truth of human subjection to divine power. Similarly, Noyce utilizes Molly’s connection to the changing Aboriginal terrain in order to represent the battle for internal freedom. The responder becomes privy to the sisters strong compulsion to travel the land, through the older Molly’s voiceover “our people, the Jigalong mob, desert people, walking all over our land,” combined with the wide and daunting aerial shot of the landscape. The shot of the desolate wastelands is heightened with authentic Aboriginal music and ethereal diegetic sounds. The reminiscent tone in conjunction with the extreme conditions represent the boundless oppression that marks the beginning of their tiresome voyage. The use of personal pronouns sheds light on the older Molly’s self-analysis, as she acknowledges her inner-Journey to independence. The exploration of both Voss’ and Molly’s purpose to endure their Journey as a deep psychological portrait exposes the veracity of the human condition, allowing responders to comprehend that through self-analysis, redemption is reached.
Both ‘Voss’ and ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ discuss the concept of Journey through the inevitability of existence. However, while White depicts the ambiguity of existence, through the psychological Journey of the Prussian explorer, Noyce defines existence as cultural and personal. Voss’ exploration of the vast, untravelled landscape is an allegoric investigation into the extremities preconditioned in the 'human space'. White conceives human experience as treacherous, a battle with the outside world and the inevitable isolation of the inside world: “To make yourself, it is also necessary to destroy yourself,” setting the premise of the novel. Through the use of synecdoche, the reader becomes aware of Voss as a figure of contradiction, a personality at war within himself. His suffering within the desert, amounts to the suffering he faces in the country of his own mind. During the course of the Journey, Voss’s pride is humbled and his deepest truths are revealed, and “at times his arrogance did resolve itself into simplicity.” White utilises omniscient narration to present inner-Journeys as enlightening. Voss’s loss of his egocentricity and ‘Satanic presumption’, emphasises the epic nature of his spiritual quest, elevating him to the stature of a Christ figure. In contrast, Noyce’s ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’ delves into human weakness as the result of absence of external encouragement. Shot from Molly’s subjective point of view, the importance of belief is highlighted through her strong connection with the totem bird, a symbol of hope. This is evident in the low angle shot of the totem roaming in the blue sky, overlaid with Molly’s mother voice “he will always look after you.” The intimate familial connection, as well as the emphasis placed on the totem’s freedom foreshadows the sisters imprisonment. The totem is a motif, later reappearing through sound at Molly’s emotional peak, where
she loses all purpose to continue. The diegetic sound of the chirping bird revitalises Molly with personal strength, resulting in her Journey from childhood to adulthood. Noyce comments on the nature of existence as reliant on external forces providing motivation, a fatal human flaw. Both text serve as cautionary tales allowing responders to grasp the essence of human weakness as a catalyst for inner-journey.

Through the exploration of the extensive Australian landscape, Patrick White’s ‘Voss’ and Phillip Noyce’s ‘Rabbit Proof Fence’, highlight the essence of the human condition. While Voss’s pilgrimage ‘per aspera ad astra’ (to the stars through adversities) is one of internal examination, Molly’s Journey allows responder to grasp the essential need for familial ties and belonging to place in the human psyche. Both texts, when studied together uncover the truth behind mankind’s nature, addressing existential questions related to the Journey’s concept.