Compare how two texts you have studied conform to, challenge or adapt the conventions of their particular genre.

Profound writers always work to manipulate conventions of a genre to leave a standing impact. This is true of Ray Bradbury’s 1950 text ‘there will come soft rains’, which follows a house which has been abandoned after an atomic bomb kills the family along with the rest of humanity. This is also true of Octavia Butler’s ‘Speech Sounds’, which follows life after a plague has destroyed all forms of verbal and written communication. Both texts adhere to the science fiction genre, however both challenge and conform the conventions of science fiction in different ways. Both texts follow the use of characterisation, however, Bradbury challenges the usual human characters while butler Challenges the male protagonist convention to convey meaning. Additionally, while Bradbury creates fear for the reader in the resolution, Butler challenges the expectation of the genre by creating hope.

First and foremost, Bradbury manipulates characterisation in ‘There Will Come Soft Rains’ to leave a fearful effect on the audience. It is expected of the science fiction genre to feature human characters, however, Bradbury completely challenges this convention expectation by making the house and fire the only two ‘characters’ in the text. Bradbury does this by personifying the house and the for instance, “the stove started to make pancakes”, usually it is a human quality to make or cook something, however Bradbury has used personification to make the house representative of technology so the readers can view the repercussions of technology on humanity by looking through the lens of technology. Another example is “the fire was clever”, the house is not the only element in the text which represents humanity. Fire here is representative of nature, this quote shows how the fire is given the human quality of ‘clever’ when there is a conflict between ‘Nature and Technology’, by the human quality being given to fire, makes the reader feel scared as fire is dangerous and can destroy things in a number of seconds, making the reader feel this way is not done so in the usual way of science fiction texts. Thus, Bradbury challenges the expected convention of human characters in the science fiction genre by having no humans in the text, leaving the impact of fear on the reader about societies choices about technology.

Butler on the other hand, sticks to having human characters in her text ‘Speech Sounds’. However instead of the expected male protagonist, the text features a female. By having a female protagonist this can make readers, especially female, feel empowered in comparison to ‘There Will Come Soft Rains’ where readers are positioned to feel fear. “she stood her ground”, this demonstrates how the main female character, Rye, stands up for herself and acts extremely independently, completely challenging that science fiction genres feature strong male protagonists.