

## CONCLUSION

Traumatic colonial and post-independent autocratic histories in Kenya serve as an easy staple for abuse to delegitimise authority figures. To subvert patriarchy, the *Mother-in-Law* television drama critiqued in this chapter, and feminist literary works such as Kabira's *A Letter to Mariama Ba* (2005), link male authority figures to colonialists; but there is also an ingenious subversion to delegitimise authority figures—portrayals of their hollow assumed piety. Despite admitting the effectiveness of this approach as used by film scriptwriters and directors as well as literary authors, this chapter nevertheless contests the stereotypical representations of authority figures such as the mother-in-law figure in citizen TV Kenya's *Mother-in-Law* soap opera.

In this chapter, I set out to explore stereotypical representations of the mother-in-law figure in the popular television series *Mother-in-Law*. My aim was to suggest and demonstrate the harmful nature inherent in the telling and retelling of stereotypes, and also to suggest transformative ways of embracing mothers-in-law in society through representation of redemptive, ideal figures. The analyses reiterated that the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law tension, in part, has its roots in the monstrous constructions of the relationship through folklore, stories, and television dramas such as *Mother-in-Law*; this would seem to suggest that positive portrayals of the mother-in-law figure in works of popular culture could inculcate presumptions of a better mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship. In this chapter I also interrogated other texts for representations of in-laws, especially the mother of the wife and the father of the husband, and concluded that hostilities from such figures are normally treated by the authors with exceptional kindness: I found that this is because such figures fall outside the traditional script of the monstrous mother-in-law. As well, critical evaluation of these works suggested double-standard representations of the two mothers-in-law; that is, the mother of the husband and the mother of the wife. Importantly, what I discovered is that these works show that the mother-in-law figure is far more complex than most representations can grasp.

I also found that the further implication here is: when works in the popular culture category of arts and entertainment are put together and examined as a whole in a chapter about representations of the mother-in-law figure, they serve to show that popularly held views and beliefs that are common to a culture eventually seep through to influence the ideas and perceptions of the wider society, and hence signify change.