I have tried in this volume to contribute to a cultural theory of dreaming. Toward this end, the preceding chapters advance four related propositions. First dreams must be understood as part of what, in Chapter 2, I called a culture’s narrative spectrum: a continuum that runs from very public tales to those more private and disordered narratives we dream. All of these stories concern cultural models but dreams are closest to personal experience and through memory bring it to bear on mastering or adapting models. Contradictions within or among models, or between models and experience, I argued in Chapter 3, stimulate dreaming about a model. Dreamers register contradictions, Chapter 4 proposed, as incomplete figures whose missing pieces evoke memories with the potential to provide a connection or transition useful for resolving those contradictions. Dreamers seek these missing pieces through a process of repetition-with-variation, where successive figures are symbolic kin to their immediate predecessor in the sense that some (but not all) of their meanings are the same. Each new figure offers an original metaphor that summons additional memories to supply what is missing in a model. Major dream figures, recurrent in a large set of dreams, Chapter 5 showed, shed light on typical versions of a salient cultural model along with its probable directions of change.

This chapter forwards one last proposition integral to a cultural theory of the dream. I have demonstrated that dreaming is a way of remembering one’s past through socially shared figures that represent models and their attendant problems. It follows that dreaming can be usefully understood as a form of cultural memory.¹ There are what I (2001a) have called two genres of cultural memory: intercultural memory and intracultural memory. Intercultural memories are those likely to be shared between cultural groups. Intracultural memories are those more likely shared among cultural members. In what follows, I do not suggest that these types are essential opposites but rather possible directions that remembering can take.
Grand chronicles and official commentaries that those in authority and those who desire authority incant exemplify *intercultural memory*. Such memories feature cultural models with which groups publicly identify—as Samoans celebrate hospitality and U.S. Americans valorize individual liberty. Intercultural memories employ those tried and true models that shape perduring social sentiments and inspire the confidence that people need to get on with the business of living. They provide something reliable that elders can teach children, be it in grammar school history books or the bush school instruction of boys undergoing initiation.

Through tales that rehearse and celebrate a group’s canon of models, intercultural memory seeks to justify or extend social and legal boundaries. U.S. Americans, for example, tell tales that tout freedom and equality before the law as universal human rights, stories that serve as justification for campaigns on billboards and battlefields that seek to extend these rights to people in faraway places. When intercultural memory is weak, models lose their power, boundaries soften and decay, and then a group cannot prevail in disputes with other groups. I think of Clifford’s (1988) study of the Mashpee, their social boundaries so diluted by foreign mixings of blood and custom that they lose legal rights to tribal real estate. Indeed, there are so many cases where tidal waves of foreign cultures swamp indigenous ways—ways that people may then abandon, repudiate, or forget (see, for example, Dening 1980, Dureau 2001).

Ambiguous tales that elicit doubt and suggest unsettling complexities exemplify *intracultural memory*. In featuring feelings of failure, subtle or strong, this kind of memory erodes deeply internalized models along with their associated practices and strategies. Dreams are a form intracultural memory. In Chapter 3, for example, Monroe’s memories of his girlfriend erode his Supermasculinity model, erosion dramatized by the dream Viking whose jetpack is out of fuel. Dave’s memories likewise undermine his masculinity model, depicted in the dream by his dog losing a fight with a supercat. Betsy’s difficulty succeeding in college (Chapter 4) challenges her Bad Boy model—a challenge that her crash configures.

Intracultural memories focus on a situation from people’s lives when an experience passed through their models as through a sieve. In dreams, an absence first represents this experience. This absence, we saw in Chapter 4, points to what a model is lacking for the dreamer. Bigfoot is precisely what Clark cannot find and his Bigfoot memories (hunting with his dad) point to his problem with the Supermasculinity model: its incompatibility with sustaining a