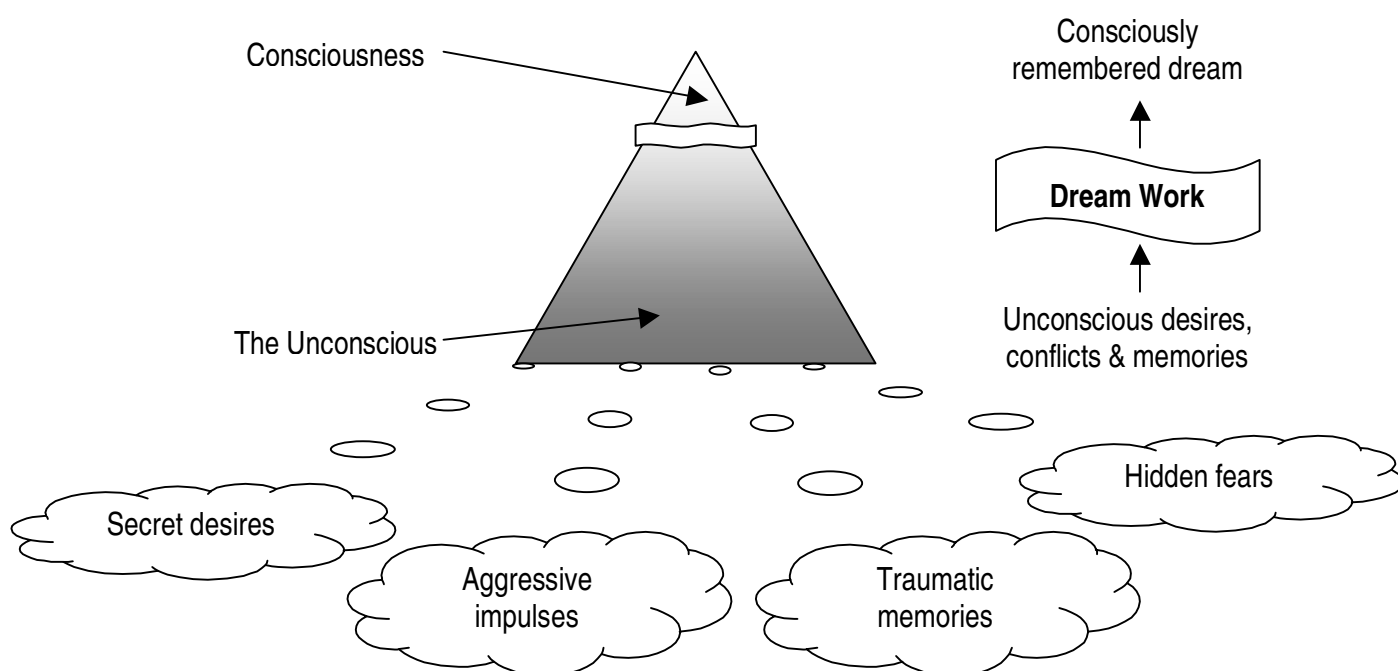


# Psychoanalytical Theories of Dreaming



Freud (1909) called dreams 'the royal road to the unconscious'. He believed that, during sleep, the contents of the unconscious drift into the conscious mind. Because we would usually find these things unacceptable or painful (which is why they were repressed into the unconscious in the first place) the ego does **dream work** in which the contents of the unconscious are disguised in various ways.

Freudians believe that many dreams represent some sort of wish fulfilment. In other words, dreams allow us to do the things we really want to do without actually doing them (if you see what I mean). Most of the desires assumed to be represented in dreams are sexual and hence, most of the things or people that appear in dreams have some form of sexual significance. For example, pretty much anything that is longer than it is wide is assumed to represent a penis (i.e. it is a **phallic symbol**) whilst pretty much anything you can put something else into is assumed to represent a vagina. Other commonly occurring symbols include authority figures (parents), water (birth) and vermin (brothers and sisters).