Explain how the psychodynamic approach has been applied to dream analysis

Psychodynamic Theory is based on the premise that human behaviour and relationships are shaped by conscious and unconscious influences and include factors such as internal processes, personality, motivation and drives, and the importance of childhood experiences. In free association, the client is invited to relate whatever comes into their minds and not to censor their thoughts. This technique is intended to help the client learn more about what he or she thinks and feels, in an atmosphere of non-judgmental curiosity and acceptance. Over time, the counsellor will draw associations between the many trains of uncensored speech of the client. This can lead the client to insight into their unconscious thoughts or repressed memories, and the accomplishment of their ultimate goal of "freedom from the oppression of the unconscious" The aim of dream analysis is to make unconscious material conscious. It is used to treat mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and provide an explanation for it. It links back to the assumptions of the psychodynamic approach as it says that our mind and behaviour is controlled mostly by our unconscious, and if a traumatic event is experienced, memories can be repressed into the unconscious, possibly leading to mental health problems. Dream analysis is a form of therapy that enables the unconscious material accessible in order to deal with painful repressed memories and explain an individual's depression.

Dream analysis works by a patient visiting a therapist whose job it is to listen to them and provide an explanation or theory for what they are dreaming about. The manifest content is what is remembered as soon as you wake up and is irrelevant, but the latent content is what is important because this is what is used to explain what is going on. Freud described dreams as ‘the royal road to knowledge of the activities of the unconscious mind’. There are four dream work components; symbolisation, condensation, displacement and secondary elaboration that are used as part of the explanation. Symbolisation is associating an object with someone/something else, secondary elaboration is piecing things together and sequencing them, displacement is dreaming of one person even though it really means someone similar to them, and condensation is combining two things together.