

# Dialogues between Psychoanalysis and Historical-Cultural Psychology on mental illness: an integrative review

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**Abstract:** Recent studies indicate a significant increase in psychological distress in contemporaneity; therefore, it is essential to discuss and deepen dialogues on mental health, aiming for more humanized practices. In this context, interdisciplinary studies can provide broader understandings of the factors contributing to psychological suffering. Considering this, between the months of August and November 2022, researches on mental illness were sought, incorporating the theoretical frameworks of the Psychoanalysis and Cultural-Historical Psychology. The goal was to conduct an integrative review, mapping existing studies on the subject and proposing new avenues for investigation through the dialogue between these two theoretical foundations. A total of 21 studies were selected and categorized into three thematic groups: Historical-Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis; Cultural-Historical Psychology and Psychoanalysis; and psychological distress in contemporary society. The analysis of the scientific literature reveals that, although Psychoanalysis and Cultural-Historical Psychology are based on distinct premises, they converge in the understanding of the roots of suffering. The material conditions of individuals' realities, shaped in contemporary times by neoliberal logic, create an environment conducive to psychological distress. The precarization of labor, the weakening of social bonds, and the culture of performance exacerbate emotional overload, ultimately intensifying the presence of symptoms. Thus, the dialogue between Psychoanalysis and Cultural-Historical Psychology fosters the development of more integrated analyses of psychological distress, considering multiple factors (social, cultural, historical, political, unconscious, and symbolic). Rather than blaming individuals for their conditions, this theoretical approach contributes to a critical perspective on adversity and the constructions of more humanized ways of existing.

**Keywords:** mental health; interdisciplinarity; historical-dialectical materialism; psychoanalysis.

## 1 Introduction

Mental illness is one of the most challenging and pressing health issues of our time. Studies have shown a significant increase in the rates of suffering among the population, as



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well as in the use of psychoactive drugs. For example, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) (Brasil, 2022) found that 33.1% of students in the 9th grade of elementary school reported feeling constant sadness; 28.5% expressed irritation, nervousness and bad mood; and 24.1% reported that life was not worth living.

The Ministry of Health (Brasil, 2021) describes a steady increase in the number of suicides in recent years. Between 2010 and 2019, 112,230 deaths were recorded in Brazil, representing a 43% increase in the annual number of deaths, from 9,454 in 2010 to 13,523 in 2019. Adjusted mortality rates during this period show an increase in suicide in all regions of the country. At the same time, Oliveira *et al.* (2021) note that in São Paulo, the use of psychoactive substances has increased at a higher rate than the population growth.

In this context, mental illness has emerged as a problem that affects society, due to the cultural forms of a society characterized by individualism, consumerism and the fragmentation of the subject (Soares *et al.*, 2023). About the subject, it is believed that interdisciplinary studies of mental illness can provide more comprehensive views of the factors related to malaise, allowing the analysis of its multiple determinants and promoting a more humanized understanding of the subject.

There are two schools of thought that provide theoretical and methodological support for understanding the human psyche and the process of becoming ill in its totality and complexity: the historical-cultural psychology of Lev Semionovitch Vigotski (1896-1934), with contributions by Alexander Romanovich Luria (1902-1977) and Alexis Nikolaevich Leontiev (1903-1979), and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Schlomo Freud (1856-1939) and Jacques-Marie Émile Lacan (1901-1981).

Historical-cultural psychology proposes that typical human traits develop out of social and cultural contexts. This means that the developmental process of the human psyche is deeply linked to the historical, social, and cultural context in which the subject lives. Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, does not hold the individual responsible for his or her illness, since forms of suffering are not seen as simple ways of being. Psychic conflict therefore arises not as a personal choice, but as a response to the symbolic field, which often proves to be pathogenic.

However, it is recognized that the two theories have opposing epistemological bases and different perspectives on the human condition. Considering this, the purpose of this study is to explore the possibilities for dialogue between the theories by reviewing the state of the art of studies that use them together to analyze mental illness. It assumes that, according to Santos *et al.* (2020) and Vasconcelos, Silva and Souza (2020), an integrative literature review favors interaction with other researchers, highlighting the richness of the data generated in their respective investigations.

Based on a search of scientific databases, 21 studies on this topic were selected. The analysis of these studies reveals the research on mental illness from the perspective of psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology. It was found that although they start from different assumptions, both approaches come close to understanding the origins of suffering and highlight the need to analyze mental illness in terms of its multiple determinants - social, cultural, historical, political, unconscious and symbolic. In addition, they point to the importance of approaching human pain through listening processes, broadening the analysis of the factors involved in the problem, and thus relieving individuals of responsibility for their suffering.

An integrative literature review was conducted with the aim of mapping the existing academic work on mental health and mental illness based on psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology, as well as identifying new avenues of research. Dantas *et al.* (2022) describe this type of review as a research method that synthesizes and critically analyzes theoretical and empirical studies on a given topic, allowing for a comprehensive view of the topic and the existing gaps in knowledge.

In this context, a search was carried out between August and November 2022 for studies published in Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Psychology Electronic Journals (PePSIC), Journals of the *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – CAPES, acronym in Portuguese), Google Scholar, Sucupira Platform and *Biblioteca Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações* (Brazilian Library of Theses and Dissertations – BDTD, acronym in Portuguese) databases between 2013 and 2022.

The search used the descriptors: “psychoanalysis”, “historical-cultural psychology”, “mental health” and “mental illness”, combined with the Boolean operator “AND”. The “all fields” option was selected in the search, without restricting the descriptors to the title, abstract or subject. The search included productions registered in the broad field of Human Sciences and in the field of Psychology, in Portuguese, English and Spanish.

This search resulted in 428 studies, of which 40 came from CAPES journals, 367 from Google Scholar, three from the Sucupira platform and 18 from BDTD. No studies were found in SciELO or PePSIC. After reading the title, keywords and abstract, the search results were refined, resulting in a total of 21 studies. Exclusion criteria were: productions that were not characterized as scientific studies (interviews, reviews, etc.); were duplicated; and/or were not related to the topic.

After reading the studies in their entirety, they were divided into categories defined based on the thematic analysis of the works, following the information provided by Marques and Graeff (2022). First, the studies were read in their entirety to identify their central points and establish relationships between the works. In this way, the following categories were de-

financed Historical-Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis, with five of the studies (23.8%); Historical-Cultural Psychology and Psychoanalysis, with eight of the studies (38.1%); and Mental Illness in Contemporary Times, with eight of the studies (38.1%).

Of the selected studies, 42.9% were dissertations, 23.9% were theses, 19% were articles, 9.5% were books, and 4.7% were term papers. In terms of time distribution, 2015 stands out as the year with the highest number of studies, with 19.1% of the total. The years 2017, 2020 and 2021 follow with 14.3% each, followed by 2016, 2018 and 2022 with 9.5% each. There were also no productions in any modality in 2013 and 2019.

A total of 28.5% of the studies came from Postgraduate Programs (PPG) in Psychology, 28.5% from PPG in Education, 14.3% from PPG in Educational Psychology, 9.5% from PPG in Collective Health, 4.8% from PPG in History, 4.8% from PPG in Linguistics, 4.8% from undergraduate programs in Psychology, and 4.8% from undergraduate programs in Philosophy. About the categories created for the qualitative analysis, each one is presented below by describing the main points identified in the studies.

## 2 Historical-Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis

The first study in this category is Mexko's (2017) dissertation entitled *Psicologia e Assistência Social: contribuições da Psicanálise de Freud e Lacan e do Materialismo Histórico (Psychology and Social Assistance: contributions from Freud's and Lacan's Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism)*, which sought to explore the role of the psychologist in social assistance based on psychoanalysis and historical materialism. The research investigated listening to subjects in spaces outside of the traditional clinic, such as conversation circles and workshops, using a practical and theoretical methodology to analyze institutional practices and individual experiences in the work environment.

Mexko (2017) explored the realities of people supported by welfare policies from a historical materialist perspective, identifying them in a marginalized position where many lack even identity documents, which limits their access to formal employment. The author suggests that the work of social welfare psychologists should go beyond the provision of benefits and include spaces for listening that allow individuals to reflect on their symptoms. The effect of this listening is to promote greater subjective and socio-cultural engagement, which helps to strengthen citizenship.

The second study, Shimoguirí's dissertation (2016), *Contribuições da Psicanálise de Freud e Lacan e do materialismo histórico para a terapia ocupacional: uma clínica do desejo e do carência na Saúde Coletiva (Contributions of Freud's and Lacan's Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism to Occupational Therapy: a Clinic of Desire and Need in Collective Health)* proposes to rethink the practice of occupational therapy under the psychosocial

paradigm that drives the Brazilian psychiatric reform. Based on the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan and on historical-dialectical materialism, the author establishes an approach to psychosocial care in collective health, criticizing traditional therapies anchored in the hospital-centered and medicalizing psychiatric model, in line with capitalism (Shimoguirí, 2016).

Shimoguirí (2016) proposes a psychosocial occupational therapy that sees the subject as a being of the unconscious, in which “human doing” is the main working resource. In this approach, the activities performed function as a means of subjectivation, with the aim of recovering what is essential to the human being: his vital activity, present in the symbolic, creative and desired dimension of actions. The therapeutic focus is on the subject as a producer of the self, building and defining its own existential territories, free from the demands of alienation, consumption or practical utility, in a genuine process of self-construction and expression of desire.

The third study, Almeida’s (2018) dissertation, *A Formação Social dos Transtornos de Humor (The Social Formation of Mood Disorders)*, aimed to analyze the social processes involved in the formation of mood disorders, drawing on collective health and historical-cultural psychology. The research combined theoretical investigation and field research, including participant observation, focus groups, and interviews with fifteen people diagnosed with depression and bipolar disorder. The study provides relevant reflections on the relationship between Historical-Cultural Psychology, Historical-Dialectical Materialism, and Psychoanalysis.

In tracing the historical evolution of mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, in the scientific literature, Almeida (2018) highlights psychoanalysis as one of the fields that has contributed most to the understanding of mental illness. The transition from the 19th to the 20th century was marked by a double movement in psychiatry: on the one hand, Sigmund Freud defended the psychological origin of mental disorders, while on the other hand, Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) adopted a biomedical approach, focusing on the analysis of symptoms to classify different pathologies (Almeida, 2018). Almeida’s (2018) proposal is to promote a new interpretation of psychopathologies, emphasizing their relationship with the social dimension.

The fourth study is Jovanovic’s (2015) article entitled *Psychoanalysis, Marxism: once and again*, which analyzes the relationship between psychoanalysis and Marxism based on examples from the Soviet Union and Germany in the early 20th century. The author points out that this interaction became a topic of intellectual and political interest in the 1920s and 1930s, giving rise to two opposing positions: one that denied the possibility of a connection between the theories, and another that defended the need for a dialogue between them, given their common features, such as dialectical thinking and a focus on the individual and

society. Jovanovic (2015) argues that only by uniting psychoanalysis and Marxism can an adequate explanation of socio-historical human development be offered.

The interest in establishing a relationship between Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism arose under very specific socio-historical conditions in Europe, especially in Germany. From a Marxist point of view, these conditions were characterized by a blatant mismatch between the subjective attitude/consciousness on the one hand and the social structure on the other. The difficult social conditions in which the working class lived justified revolutionary action; not only did this movement fail, but there was also the rise of Nazi fascism. This led psychoanalysts and Marxists to theorize about the harsh events of the time.

Finally, the fifth study is the thesis by Kawamura (2020), entitled *Capacidade de Ação e Emancipação Política: fundamentos da emancipação humana (Capacity for Action and Political Emancipation: the Foundations of Human Emancipation)*, which aimed to discuss, on the basis of some contributions from counter-hegemonic psychology and historical-dialectical materialism, the possibilities of real human emancipation. The author sought to rescue the protagonism of subjects in the radical transformation of the world, renewing the dialogue between Marxist social theory and psychology (Kawamura, 2020). Through the analysis and discussion of higher psychological functions, especially agency, personality, and affectivity, the viability of revolutionary subjectivity is debated.

Kawamura (2020) analyzes the relationship between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology in the context of Marxism in the Soviet Union, emphasizing that psychoanalysis crossed clinical boundaries with Russian patients such as the Wolf Man. Freud appreciated Dostoevsky and Marxist theory, while influencing psychologists such as Vygotsky, who explored emotions and translated psychoanalytic texts into the 1930s (Kawamura, 2020). In the 1920s, attempts to unite Freudism and Marxism led to the creation of the Moscow Institute of Psychoanalysis in 1922. With the emergence of historical-cultural psychology, Vygotsky emphasized that man is a social and historical being, allowing an approach that, like Marx, seeks the full exercise of humanity, while Freud evolved from a deterministic view to an understanding of the complex relationship between the social and the biological in human development.

### **3 Historical-Cultural Psychology and Psychoanalysis**

The first study in this category is the dissertation by Périco (2014), *Contribuições da Psicanálise de Freud e Lacan a uma Psicoterapia Outra: a clínica do sujeito na Saúde Coletiva (Contributions of Freud's and Lacan's Psychoanalysis to an Other Psychotherapy: the clinic of the subject in Collective Health)*. The author's aim is to rethink the clinic of psychosocial care based on psychoanalytic and Marxian references, highlighting the psychosocial

paradigm as an advance of the Brazilian psychiatric reform. Périco (2014) proposes an ‘other psychotherapy’, a term that differentiates his approach from traditional psychotherapies, and seeks to confront authoritarian and alienating practices. This clinic encompasses both the dimension of human suffering and the production of new meanings, emphasizing the subject of the unconscious and the signifier.

Périco (2014) argues that it is possible and ethically necessary to include psychoanalysis in public institutions, through both Freud’s idealizations and Lacan’s theoretical, technical and ethical developments. If psychotherapies in general are based on an active cure, in which imaginative-tautological meaning is grafted on in an attempt to saturate the cracks opened by the anxiety, in order to readapt the patient to the social establishment, Psychotherapy Other is based on the ethical orientation of psychoanalysis, the suspension of the power of knowledge to cure, which produces the opening of the dimension of the subject of the unconscious. This process takes place through the insertion of the individual into the symbolic field, which favors the production of new meanings for the various injunctions and impasses that occur in everyday life.

The second study is the dissertation of Lima Junior (2020), *Adolescência Contemporânea e Ensino-aprendizagem através de Role-playing Game Digital: apropriação de conhecimentos e identificação na escola (Contemporary Adolescence and Teaching-Learning through Digital Role-playing Games: appropriation of knowledge and identification at school)*, which aims to understand the appropriation of knowledge and identification in the teaching-learning process of adolescents using digital role-playing games. The study is based on the epistemological foundations of historical-cultural psychology, which focuses on understanding the cognitive development of man and his higher psychological functions, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, which focuses on the subjective expressions of the subject of the unconscious, thinking about the human constitution in relation to the other (symbolic place) and the others of the social bond, that is, among the peers of the culture.

For Lima Junior (2020, p. 32), “[...] in both theoretical currents, language plays a crucial role that is not limited to its communicative factor. With due distinction, Vygotsky and Lacan understood it as a great agent that enables the subject’s own humanization in and through culture”. The author points out that the interlocution between Vygotsky and Lacan, although he believes it is possible, is not so evident in the construction carried out due to the epistemological differences between the two theories. He argues that only through a systematized and in-depth study of the subject would it be possible to reflect more on a possible interlocution between the aforementioned theories (Lima Junior, 2020).

The third study is Andrade Filho’s dissertation (2022), entitled *A Produção Social dos Transtornos de Ansiedade: reflexões a partir da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural (The Social Production of Anxiety Disorders: Reflections from Historical-Cultural Psychology)*, which

aimed to problematize the hegemonic conceptions - and their possible consequences - regarding anxiety, specified in subtypes of disorders. To this end, the author constructed a chronological and comparative overview between the first and last editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The first (1952) and second (1968) editions of the DSM were clearly influenced by psychoanalysis, while the later versions brought about a scientific revolution by linking mental disorders to changes in the brain. Andrade Filho's (2022) intention was to discuss the social determination of the health-disease process based on historical-cultural psychology.

Unlike the first editions, which used psychoanalytic terms, mainly neuroses (hysterical, neurasthenic, hypochondriacal, obsessive-compulsive, etc.), to classify mental illnesses, the current version of the DSM distances itself from the concepts of psychoanalysis or any other theoretical reference. Andrade Filho's thesis (2022) is in line with the need to understand mental illness in a social context, i.e. the search for the genesis of mental illness in the concrete evidence of the mediations through which the closer relationship between the phenomena to which the population is exposed occurs. "Whether in research or in direct interventions (such as clinical care), we must understand the individual as a biopsychic entity in relation to the social totality" (Andrade Filho, 2022, p. 145).

The fourth study is the dissertation of Sena (2017), *Referência Subjetiva, Significativa e Adolescente em Cumprimento de Medida Socioeducativa: uma escuta clínica (Subjective, Significant Reference and Adolescents in Compliance with a Socio-Educational Measure: a clinical listening)*, which aimed to analyze the effects of the participation or absence of significant subjective references for adolescents in compliance with the socio-educational measure, through a bet of clinical listening to adolescents in an institution of social assistance policy. This research was carried out through individual consultations, groups and medical records. Psychoanalytic concepts were used to understand the experiences of adolescents in conflict with the law, considering the socio-historical-cultural context.

In her research, Sena (2017) realized the need to consider the socio-historical context in which the families of adolescents in conflict with the law are inserted. Despite the changes that have occurred historically in family organizations, the family has played a fundamental role in the development of relationships of attachment, affection, security, and subjectivity itself. However, the context of contemporary society is permeated by the logic of the imperative of pleasure, stimulated by the other, which exceeds all prohibitions and limits of repression. This has led to an emptying of the representation of the law, which means that many adolescents live on the margins of the rules of conduct.

The fifth study is Silva's (2022) book, *Inconsciente e Adoecimento Psíquico na Psicologia Soviética (Unconscious and Psychic Illness in Soviet Psychology)*, which explores the relationship between the unconscious and the constitution of pathopsychological in Soviet

psychology. The author examines how the unconscious is related to psychic illness and analyzes studies on the subject. Silva (2022) concludes that the psyche is not necessarily defined by an antagonistic relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, as many psychological theories suggest. Instead, conscious and unconscious processes coexist in a state of multi-determination and can be synergistic or antagonistic but not limited to the categories of positive and negative.

By considering contradiction as the driving force of movement, according to historical dialectical materialism, development must be seen as something that is not harmonious and linear, but full of ruptures and revolutions. This means that at each stage of development the individual has opportunities for self-consciousness. The constitution of the psyche involves different processes: the conscious ones, which allow it to recognize the multiple determinations of its reality; the unconscious ones, which involve involuntary aspects; and the unconscious ones, which correspond to contents that are not yet conscious, either because of the stage of development or because of objective limitations (Silva, 2022).

The sixth study is the article by Gonzalez (2015) titled *Inconsciente: es posible un diálogo entre Freud y Viggotsky? (Unconscious: is a dialogue between Freud and Vygotsky possible?)*, which aimed to propose an intersection between historical-cultural psychology and psychoanalysis. Through his research, the author realized that what makes the difference between humans and other species is language, which delimits the entire environment of the subject's reality from its first moments in the world. In this context, Freud, Lacan, and Vygotsky considered this issue in different ways and with different objectives (Gonzalez, 2015).

According to Gonzalez (2015), the relationship between the unconscious and the word or the repression of the word is present in the Freudian theory. From this perspective, conflicts are only resolved through individual mechanisms, mainly censorship, in which words are repressed from their unconscious representations. For Vygotsky, it is the social environment that provides the meanings that make up the conscious thought process. For Lacan, on the other hand, the unconscious is constituted as language, a language that does not operate individually, but "[...] is mainly a complication added to the sensory world that produces modifications in thinking" (Gonzalez, 2015, p. 25).

The seventh study is Salazar's (2014) dissertation entitled *Acercamiento al Enfoque Historicocultural en el Contexto de la Psicología en Colombia (Approach to the Historical-Cultural Approach in the Context of Psychology in Colombia)*, which aims to broaden the understanding of Historical-Cultural Psychology in the context of psychology in Colombia. According to the author, Historical-Cultural Psychology does not have a significant presence among psychological currents of thought, compared to psychoanalysis and behaviorism, for example. However, the ideas of the theory have influenced different fields due to its broad and comprehensive understanding of the human being.

According to Salazar (2014), Vygotsky identified a methodological division in psychology: on the one hand, the idealists, with psychoanalysis as their main representative, and on the other, the materialists. In Colombia, between 1966 and 1968, the “Consciousness and Unconsciousness” movement took place, debating which scientific tradition was more coherent: the biological currents or the human and social sciences. Until then, personality had been classified as normal or abnormal according to psychoanalytic parameters. However, historical-cultural psychology brought a new understanding, with Vygotsky arguing that the theory of development should not be seen as static, but as a dialectical conception of the psyche that allows for multiple possibilities of understanding the human being (Salazar, 2014).

Finally, the eighth study is the article by González Rey (2017), entitled *The Topic of Subjectivity in Psychology: contradictions, paths and new alternatives*, which aims to paint a picture of how topics related to subjectivity have appeared in different theories, such as Gestalt and psychoanalysis, in order to discuss in depth a specific proposition from a historical-cultural point of view. The author argues that most psychological theories have used the term “subjectivity” only to refer to specific processes and phenomena, without advancing more specific knowledge about the concept. In this way, he highlights a new proposal of subjectivity defined by units of emotions and symbolic processes generated throughout the experiences of human life.

According to González Rey (2017), throughout the historical development of psychology - and psychoanalysis - subjectivity has been treated as a peripheral concept. However, some theorists of historical-cultural psychology, especially Vygotsky, have developed ideas that promote the concept of subjectivity, especially its integrating function in the taxonomy of arguments traditionally used by psychology. The definition of the concept defended by González Rey (2017) understands individual subjective processes as part of the cultural and social reality, configured in a reciprocal way.

#### **4 Psychic illness in contemporary times**

The first study in this category is the article by Vectore *et al.* (2018), entitled ‘*Ele foi orçado, mas não planejado!': a infância na contemporaneidade* (‘*It was budgeted, but not planned!': childhood in contemporaneity*), which aims to make notes ranging from the pedagogical proposals developed throughout history for childhood to aspects related to the presence of children in the media, consumption and the pathologization of children’s lives. The study was developed through a review of the literature, including psychoanalytic and socio-historical works, and covers the concept of childhood, the activity of play and the contemporary movement to disregard this activity. Finally, it focuses on the pathologization of childhood.

Vectore *et al.* (2018) describe the contemporary period as characterized by an increasingly sedentary behavior of children, in which play is organized mainly using technology (mobile phones, electronic devices, etc.). This means that there is no interaction through contact or exchange with peers. The immobility of the body due to the excess of technology has repercussions in the form of symptoms of irritation, restlessness, impulsiveness, and inattention. This is no small change, according to the authors, since the activity of play is considered in cultural-historical theory as the child's main language, an activity that allows the child to express itself and develop higher psychological functions.

The second study is the dissertation by Rocha (2021), *Saúde Mental e Pandemia: um estudo com os professores do Ensino Fundamental - Anos Iniciais do Município de Cascavel/PR* (*Mental Health and Pandemic: a Study with Elementary School Teachers - Early Years in the Municipality of Cascavel/PR*), which aimed to understand how the covid-19 pandemic affected the mental health of Elementary School Teachers in the Municipality of Cascavel - PR. For this purpose, the author carried out a study using three methodological procedures: a theoretical-bibliographical review based on historical-cultural psychology and psychoanalysis; a documentary review of the main legislative acts related to distance education in Cascavel - PR; and a field study carried out through a questionnaire answered by elementary school teachers.

To analyze the data collected, Rocha (2021, p. 23) used both psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology: "We justify the use of these two psychological currents as a theoretical contribution because we do not consider them to be contradictory, especially with regard to the role of culture and interrelationships in the constitution of the subject". The use of these approaches to understand the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of teachers has led to some important considerations. First, the author has identified the mechanism of mental illness in contemporary times, in which the various diseases find support in the socio-economic system for their emergence and maintenance, not isolated to the individual pathological components of the subjects.

The third study is Toledo's dissertation (2015) entitled *Adolescentes em Situação de Analfabetismo Funcional: contribuições da psicanálise* (*Adolescents in a situation of functional illiteracy: contributions from psychoanalysis*), which aimed to investigate functional illiteracy among adolescents as one of the symptoms of "educational malaise". The study was based on the assumptions of historical-cultural psychology and psychoanalysis about language, culture, and the subject. The focus of the research was to listen to what the adolescents themselves had to say about themselves and their conditions of exclusion within the school environment. To this end, different spaces for written expression and speech were proposed.

Throughout his work, Toledo (2015) discusses how the postulates of modern education - present in Vygotsky's historical-cultural psychology and in the very model of education discussed and criticized by Freud - seem to have failed in postmodernity. This proposal for education, for the consolidation of a stable world based on intellectual and moral formation, has not been realized today. In Brazil, the scenario is bleak, especially in the education of adolescents, due to the history of low investment in public policies, educational projects and teacher training. This has repercussions on the learning of children and adolescents in terms of the rates of students who fail in school, most of the time because they have not adequately developed their literacy skills.

The fourth study is Gideoni's dissertation (2015) entitled *Trajetória de uma Criança em Relação à Apropriação da Escrita: o que ela não pode saber?* (*A Child's Journey towards the Appropriation of Writing: what he can't know?*), which aimed to understand the educational journey of a child from a Federal Public School in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, throughout his literacy cycle, from 2006 to 2008. The research adopts the ontological and epistemological foundations of Historical-Cultural Psychology in dialogue with Interactional Ethnography, as well as in dialogue with Psychoanalysis, to elucidate new components, present in the research.

The results of Gideoni's (2015) research show that unplanned school trajectories, often labeled as school failure, should be analyzed in a way that goes beyond the traditional blaming of the student. The study critiques the medical discourse that sees students' trajectories as fixed based on diagnoses such as dyslexia, an increasingly common understanding. In Samuel's case, for example, a symptom was identified that prevents him from enjoying learning, resulting in suffering (Gideoni, 2015). He feels that he has "something stuck in his throat", which hinders his ability to express himself and the school content as required by social norms. This analysis opens a space for action that goes beyond pathologization and medicalization.

The fifth study is the thesis by Silveira (2021), *Prática Discursiva de Professores e de Alunos do Ensino Fundamental: constituição humana, sociedade e mal-estar na escola* (*Discursive practice of primary school teachers and students: Human constitution, society and malaise at school*), which aimed to understand the meaning processes of teachers and students about their ways of relating at school, how they conceive of school, the teaching function, adolescence and the relationships between the meanings constructed in their narratives, in order to investigate the occurrence of psychological malaise in the school context. Due to the specific nature of the research object, the author chose an interdisciplinary theoretical base in the fields of linguistic pragmatics, psychoanalysis, Vygotsky's historical-cultural psychology and Paulo Freire's theory.

According to Silveira (2021), school reality is plural and complex, marked by socio-cultural experiences that position subjects in the face of different knowledge, histories, emotional ties, dreams and utopias. In some schools, the relationships established have generated emotional tensions that, when intense, pose constant risks to health and psychological well-being. With regard to the role of the teacher, the author has identified conceptions that isolate it not only from teaching, but also from working with the affective-emotional issues of the students and their perspectives for their future lives. As a result, the issue of teachers' work overload (teaching, tutoring students, participating in events, carrying out assessment processes, etc.) is frequently raised.

The sixth study is the dissertation by Zanluchi (2020), *Desenvolvimento da Criança e Educação Infantil: simbolização, gênese e produção subjetiva (Child development and early childhood education: symbolization, genesis and subjective production)*, which aimed to investigate the way in which the symbolic and emotional interactions and links offered to children have the potential to be developmental situations or not, as well as the impact of the practices organized in these environments on the experience of young children. The study was exploring and qualitative. Data were collected from two groups of children between two and three years of age and their teacher (videotaped material) (Zanluchi, 2020).

Zanluchi (2020) noted that there is a duality that runs through the field of interactions and the organization of practices in early childhood education. On the one hand, there are obstacles related to the objectification of the child and the inhibition of space-time and the exercise of play; on the other hand, there is the production of an interactional field with responsive capacity and emotional and symbolic sensitivity. The author also proposed an interlocution between psychoanalysis and the theory of cultural-historical subjectivity. The intention was not to eliminate the epistemological bases of the theories, but to establish a dialogue between the two concepts (Zanluchi, 2020). The author uses the concepts of González Rey (2017) for her discussions.

The seventh study is the book organized by Silva and Castanho (2016), entitled *Subjetividade e Aprendizagem: contribuições da Psicanálise e da Psicologia Histórico-Cultural (Subjectivity and learning: contributions from psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology)*. The book contains a series of chapters, written by different authors, based on either psychoanalysis or historical-cultural psychology, i.e. the intention was not to interrelate the two theories, but to use one or the other. For this reason, we will highlight the parts of the book in which Silva and Castanho (2016) justify the use of the two theoretical perspectives.

Psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology emphasize the value of subjectivation processes that are organized in and through intersubjective relations, as well as through instances of mediation by the significant other in the subject's life. Each of these theories, however, configures the processes of subjectivation differently: Psychoanalysis

emphasizes the object relations experienced by the child with the parents for the constitution of the personality; historical-cultural psychology emphasizes the instrumental and symbolic mediations that affect the subject's zone of imminent development, which is the basis for the development of higher psychological functions (Silva; Castanho, 2016).

Finally, the eighth study is Blanco Pinto's (2021) thesis entitled *Problemas Comportamentales en la Infancia: conceptualización, desarrollo, impacto y evaluación (Behavioral Problems in Childhood: Conceptualization, Development, Impact and Evaluation)*, which analyzes the concept of behavioral problems, specifically in children, with the aim of producing a synthesis in the form of a state of the art on the subject. To achieve this, the author has examined what different psychological currents mean by behavioral problems - systemic, cognitive-behavioral, nosography manuals and psychoanalysis. About the latter, emphasis is placed on understanding the unconscious processes involved in the phenomenon.

Disruptive behavior is understood in psychoanalysis as a maladaptive act, the consequence of an alteration or even absence of the individual's ability to reflect on his or her own experiences. The psychoanalyst will try to increase the child's capacity for mentalization, allowing him to express his feelings without sanctioning them. Historical-cultural psychology, on the other hand, allows progression in the understanding of behavioral problems, since it is based on the idea that subjectivity is a construct located in the socio-historical context of everyone (Blanco Pinto, 2021).

The studies found through the systematic literature review reveal the existence of academic productions on mental health, using both psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology as guiding references. Authors such as Silva and Castanho (2016), Blanco Pinto (2021), and Silveira (2021) defend the adoption of these theories in an interdisciplinary way, considering it an effective strategy to carry out a more comprehensive analysis of the phenomena under study. According to them, the dialogue between different theoretical currents makes it possible to avoid reducing the objects of study to simple psychic causality, as well as helping to grasp the subjective aspects that permeate the phenomena, a relevant aspect when dealing with complex issues such as mental illness.

Authors such as Salazar (2014) and Silva (2022) take the position of distancing psychoanalysis from historical-cultural psychology, arguing that the theory developed by Vygotsky brought a new understanding of the human psyche that is not encompassed by the psychoanalytic approach. Salazar (2014) argues that the Vygotskian perspective emphasizes the social and cultural as central elements in the analysis of mental illness, an approach that differs from psychoanalysis, which privileges subjective aspects. Silva (2022) reinterprets classical Freudian concepts, such as the conscious and the unconscious, from a social perspective, emphasizing the role of interrelationships in healthy or pathological development.

In contrast, Zanluchi (2020) argues that the dialogue between theories does not seek to eliminate their differences or suppress the conflicts and contradictions that characterize them, but rather to identify points of convergence and create space for theoretical constructions based on an integrated approach. This movement, according to Kawamura (2020), can be seen in the writings of Vygotsky himself, who used psychoanalysis to carry out broad studies of human phenomena such as art and personality. In this context, Rocha (2021) argues that the dialogue between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology allows for a more complex understanding of mental illness, considering social, cultural, political, symbolic, economic, and unconscious factors in an integrated way.

Studies by Jovanovic (2015), Sena (2017), Vectore *et al.* (2018), and Andrade Filho (2022) highlight the importance of social and cultural contexts in the development of mental illness. These studies show that socio-cultural factors contribute to the manifestation of pathological ways of perceiving and living life, indicating that suffering results from cultural and social elements. The research also reveals a convergence between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology in their critique of the capitalist system, which has been identified as one of the main causes of mental illness. In this context, contemporary illnesses reflect the functioning of society, which tends to marginalize those who don't conform to established standards of productivity.

Périco (2014), Shimoguirí (2016), and Mexko (2017) emphasize the importance of listening to people affected by mental suffering and illness. These authors point to a progressive silence of the population, which is evidenced by excessive medicalization and the production of diagnoses to the detriment of a deeper understanding of the symptom, contemplating its meaning, role and origin. The practice of listening, based on psychoanalytic foundations, allows subjects to rediscover their desire, understood as a form of freedom from the impositions of the capitalist system, characterized by production, standardization and consumption.

Gonzalez (2015) and González Rey (2017) argue that mental illness does not occur due to the sole occurrence of cultural factors or the isolated action of individual components. For them, suffering is derived from a wide range of factors that, if not understood together, will not allow for the establishment of healthier ways of living. Gideoni (2015) illustrates this issue by pointing out the social and cultural aspects present in cases of learning disabilities and, at the same time, the symbolic factors that influence the subjectivity of the individual. This movement is carried out by the author through a dialogue between different theories.

In terms of conceptual proximity, the studies highlight the agreement between the theories on the importance of language, culture, and the relationship with the other for human constitution. For example, Shimoguirí (2016) says that there is a homology between Marx's theory and psychoanalytic postulates: subjectivation through language and culture.

Similarly, Lima Junior (2020) reports that in both theories, language plays a crucial role in the human constitution and is not limited to the communicative aspect. With their due distinctions, Vygotsky and Lacan understand language as the great agent of humanization of the subject in and through culture, organizing its symbolic relations (Lima Junior, 2020).

In conclusion, in the studies analyzed, there is a predominance of the defense of the possibility of dialogue between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology. The productions that distance the theories show that they start from the impossibilities that surround this movement, without analyzing the interrelationship between them in an impartial way. Some studies, for example, use the theories, directly or indirectly, to criticize and/or position one against the other, which ends up distancing them. On the other hand, the studies that set out to analyze the points of convergence between historical-cultural psychology and psychoanalysis stand out for presenting more impartial and well-founded analyses.

Contrary to what one might think, studies that advocate dialogue between theories do not limit themselves to exploring only the points of convergence between them, even if these are the most debated aspects. There is a concern in research to avoid constructing mixed perspectives that lack a methodological foundation. Some of them, such as Lima Junior (2020), suggest in their concluding reflections that new studies and research should be carried out aimed at a more in-depth analysis of the epistemological and conceptual bases of psychoanalysis and historical-cultural.

## **5 Final considerations**

By carrying out an integrative review of scientific productions between 2013 and 2022 on the use of psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology in the analysis of mental illness, this study revealed the presence of multiple perspectives in the dialogue between them, given their epistemological differences and different conceptions of the human being. In this context, several authors defend the use of theories to broaden the understanding of mental illness, considering it in its complexity.

Since the information available in scientific literature, it appears that the dialogue between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology has moved towards identifying the points at which theories converge and help each other to produce comprehensive analyses of human phenomena. In other words, rather than emphasizing differences, this movement has prioritized an interdisciplinary approach to contribute more effectively to debates on contemporary issues.

Dialogue between theories allows us to understand mental illness as a complex phenomenon caused by social, cultural and historical factors that produce different forms of suffering based on the contextual and individual resources of each person. If these factors

are not listened to or treated, they can lead to illness. Thus, mental health is not limited to identifying signs of pathology, although these are also relevant. Human beings, as social beings marked by language, experience their pain symbolically, in other words, their suffering is the result of concrete factors experienced subjectively.

Therefore, the dialogue between psychoanalysis and historical-cultural psychology makes it possible to understand them from a more complex perspective, which considers the concrete reality of the population, but also integrates the subjective experience involved in these relationships - the unconscious dimension. In this approach, people are no longer blamed for the adverse conditions they face but are listened to. It also aims to change the living conditions of the population. It is a movement that opens space for humanized and comprehensive interventions that promote healthier lifestyles.

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