



The psychiatric discipline has often been a battlefield of contrasting opinions about the essence of the human mind and the ways to treat mental disorder. Universities are the place where new members of the profession are initiated and are therefore the pre-eminent arena to fight out these conflicts. In Dutch academic psychiatry such clashes easily escalated into public rows.

This sharpness was not only caused by the intensity of these differences of opinion but also by the wish of the professors of psychiatry to present their discipline as a set of serious medical concepts and effective therapeutic directions.

These views were however closely tied up with cultural developments of a more general nature, as a result of which their professional quarrels tended to get out of hand. Despite all these theoretical differences there was much continuity on the clinical shop-floor.

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His other publications concern irregular medicine, the belief in witchcraft and demonic possessions.

Photo: M.F. de Waardt