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## The diachronic development of modal *ergens*

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### 6.1 Introduction

#### 6.1.1 Research questions, theoretical assumptions and hypotheses

The goal of this chapter is to find out which processes may have played a role in the development of modal *ergens* and during which period of time these interpretations came into existence. In order to do so, I have studied a diachronic corpus of Dutch texts in search for indications of how the change from locative to modal may have come about.

In the literature, several processes are mentioned that have been found to underlie semantic changes. The most common and the most concrete processes are *metaphor*, *metonymy* and *invited inferencing* (Traugott and Dasher, 2002). *Metaphor* is an analogical process which, as it is phrased by Sweetser (1990, 19) operates *between* domains [emphasis original]. For instance, in the case of *someone stumbling upon an idea* the mind is conceived as a space in which ideas can be present unexpectedly. Concepts and words from the spacial domain (the source domain) have been used to express relationships in the mental domain (the target domain).

*Metonymy* takes a word from one domain to use it for something closely related in the same domain, like saying *finger* when someone means the whole *hand*.

*Invited inferencing* (Traugott and Dasher, 2002, 29) is the process whereby a form becomes pragmatically polysemous and eventually semantically polysemous (i.e. completely conventionalized and uncancelable). An example is the temporal interpretation of *as/so long as* in English, which became conditional by means of the inference that if something is done as long as it is needed, it is done *provided that* it is needed.

As we saw in the synchronic study of *ergens*, all three processes (*metaphor*, *metonymy* and *invited inferencing*) are at work in the interpretations of *ergens*. We found metaphors that caused *ergens* to be interpreted in the scalar domain (e.g. *somewhere between three and five*) or the mental domain (*somewhere inside myself*). There were also cases in which *ergens* was metonymically used to denote a company or even a working field (e.g. *I work somewhere where they don't have collective bargaining.*).

Part of the processes that allow for invited inferencing are the Gricean maxims of quantity as formulated in Traugott and Dasher (2002, 80) 'Say no more than you must and mean more thereby' and relevance (Grice, 1989). This works as follows. A form is sometimes used in contexts in which certain implicatures arise. These implicatures are often said to arise because of the Gricean maxim of quantity.

When these implicatures arise regularly in specific linguistic contexts they tend to be attributed to that particular combination of forms, especially when this new implicature is more relevant (maxim of relevance) than the original interpretation. This is sometimes the case because a form does not add much to the overall interpretation of the sentence (e.g. *I found it* versus *I found it somewhere*). Over time, the new interpretation of this particular combination of forms becomes entrenched and it may be that either speakers use the combination for its new properties, or addressees think they do so. This means that one of the driving factors behind semantic change is the common habit of people to read more into a statement than is actually said, especially if forms do not contribute very much to the overall interpretation of the sentence (Traugott and Dasher, 2002, 80; Croft, 2000, 126-7).

There has been a long debate about the question of which process is more important, *metaphor* or *metonymy* and whether they should be seen as one phenomenon or separate phenomena. Since in the case of *ergens* the metaphorical uses are clear and concrete, there seems no reason not to use these terms in the conventional way. This means that I will not use the term *metonymy* for processes like *invited inferencing*, *subjectification* or *intersubjectification*, as Traugott and Dasher (2002, 34) sometimes do. I agree with Heine et al. (1991b) that *metaphor*, *metonymy* and *invited inferencing* all play an important role in semantic changes.

In the following chapter, I will argue that two of the processes mentioned above, *metaphor* and *invited inferencing* may have played a role in the development of the modal interpretations of *ergens*. Possibly, there have been several separate developments, that may have influenced each other at a later stage. In other words, we may not be dealing with a change from locative *ergens* to modal *ergens*, but with several separate changes such as the following:

- a. locative *ergens* > *feelings/point of view* (metaphorical change)
- b. locative *ergens* > *marker of imprecision* (invited inferencing)

In these changes, the knowledge that *ergens* does not always need to refer to a place in a base space may have influenced the acceptability of other modal interpretations like the *point of view*, *somehow* or *marker of imprecision* options. However, development b. above into a marker of imprecision seems to have been a separate

development from the other modal interpretations. The other modal interpretations may have developed separately as well, but there is no unambiguous evidence.

As I will argue below, the use of metaphorical *ergens* can be expressed both explicitly (i.e. with an explicit metaphor as in *somewhere at the back of my mind I felt it was a special moment*<sup>1</sup>) and implicitly (i.e. semanticized)<sup>2</sup> in the diachronic corpus (e.g. *Ergens voelde ik dat dit mijn redding was* ‘Ergens I felt this was my salvation’<sup>3</sup>).

There are also cases that seem to be ambiguous as to whether a locative reading or a *somehow* reading are intended. The marker of imprecision with an indefinite article and a noun (*ergens ne prof* ‘some professor’), which seems to be confined to Flanders, shows both cases that are ambiguous as to whether a locative reading or an imprecision-reading is meant and cases that are unambiguously expressing imprecision.

In the literature, the process of semantic change (and grammaticalization) has been divided in several steps: 1. The use of a form in its original way (the source), 2. The (frequent) use of a form in a context which implies another interpretation (*critical contexts* Dieward (2002) or *bridging contexts* Heine (2002)) 3. The use of the form in a context in which it is impossible to interpret the form in its source interpretation (*isolating contexts* Dieward (2002) or *switch contexts* Heine (2002)). 4. A possible last step is the extension of this use once again to other contexts, which is probably facilitated by the high degree of conventionalization of the new interpretation.

Some of the ambiguous examples may represent bridging contexts, that is, the type of context that triggered a change in interpretation, others may simply have been atypical contexts without playing a direct role in the semantic change of *ergens*. It is hard to determine whether an ambiguous example has played a role in the semantic development of *ergens*, since the diachronic developments of various interpretations of *ergens* cannot always be followed very precisely. However, when *ergens* is still interpreted as locative in comparable contexts in modern Dutch, it will be assumed that this type of context did not play a major role in the development of modal *ergens*.

### 6.1.2 The diachronic corpus and its limitations

One of the hazards of a historical study is that we cannot ask for grammaticality judgements and therefore we do not have negative evidence. As is argued in Fischer (2007b, 12-14), the fact that a particular form or construction is not present in a diachronic corpus cannot always be taken as proof that it did not exist at that time. One of the reasons that the absence of a form or construction does not provide us with negative evidence is that, generally, the further we go back in time, the more biased our corpus is in terms of number of words, genres and types of texts. To give an example, only 0.002% of the 8,916,272 words in the CGN is a case of modal *ergens*

<sup>1</sup>Taken from: [http://www.powerplantmall.com/archive\\_article.php?id=24](http://www.powerplantmall.com/archive_article.php?id=24).

<sup>2</sup>Because (some of) the metaphoric features are also present in cases in which the metaphor is not explicitly mentioned, that is, because the metaphoric features have become part of the semantics of *ergens* itself, I have chosen to call this an implicit metaphor.

<sup>3</sup>Taken from: <http://www.paryos.be/paraneoplastisch%20syndroom.pdf>.

(139).<sup>4</sup> This means that the chance of finding an example of modal *ergens* within a more limited corpus is relatively small. In addition, in 4 of the 15 genres covered in the CGN, modal *ergens* does not occur at all (i.e. in reportage, news, commentaries, columns, reviews, ceremonious speeches and sermons) and 113 of the 139 modal instances of *ergens* in the CGN (81%) occur in the spontaneous speech sections of the CGN, whereas these sections contain only 59 % of the total number of words in the corpus. This distribution of modal *ergens* suggests that it occurs mainly in subjective, informal language. Subjective and informal language is often spoken language and this may explain why modal *ergens* is almost completely absent from more formal or objective texts. These last categories are often written language. This means that a corpus of literary and scientific texts is less likely to contain examples of modal *ergens*. However, it is typically these types of texts which make up historical corpora.

Our earliest Dutch texts tend to consist of narrative, poetic texts, which can be subjective from time to time, but are not of a type in which we would expect a high instance of modal *ergens*. This means that the absence of instances of modal *ergens* in our diachronic corpus cannot be taken as direct evidence for the absence of modal *ergens* in the language.

Another problem, discussed elaborately by Fischer (2007b, 14-25), is that modern speakers of a language run the risk of interpreting older structures anachronistically. Forms or constructions that seem to be the same as in present day language might in fact have been interpreted differently in earlier stages of the language. A careful study of the context of a form may reveal such mistakes. However, since we cannot distinguish between locative and modal forms automatically, checking the larger context of each instance of *ergens* is simply too laborious. To restrict the mistakes that result from a limited amount of context to a minimum, I have studied the larger context of each example that even vaguely seemed as if it could be interpreted as modal. Frequently, this context showed that the correct interpretation was locative or might have been locative, although at first sight the example seemed a perfect case of modal *ergens*. I will discuss two examples in which it is very hard to decide which interpretation was the correct one. The first example in which it is not very clear is found in (1).

- (1) (Zijn kindsheid was vervuld geweest met de smeekende stemmen der kerkmuziek;)

vóór het altaar had hij gebeefd van een verrukking, gemengd met een  
 Before the altar had he trembled of a thrill, combined with an  
 onuitsprekelijken angst voor dat groote geheime Wezen dat hij ergens  
 unspeakable fear for that huge secret Entity which he ERGENS  
 voelde, en dat zweefde in zijn kinderverbeelding met stralen van zon  
 felt, and which floated in his childish imagination with beams of sun  
 omhuld en in de heerlijkste houdingen...  
 surrounded and in the most magnificent postures...

<sup>4</sup>To compare: the word *boek* 'book' occurs 4282 times in the CGN, which is 0.05%.

(Ja, naar zijn jeugd moest hij terug om dat alles weer volledig te voelen, toen geen bewustzijn, geen onderzoek de kinderlijke overgave gekrenkt had - en een werk moest hij scheppen met dezelfde aandacht en dezelfde ontheffing als hij toenmaals gevoeld had, wanneer hij vóór dat altaar neergebogen lag en in een wolk God-zelf had meenen te ontwaren, terwijl het orgel dreunende rhythmten door den tempel stroomde...)

(His childhood had been filled with the begging voices of church music;)

Before the altar, he had trembled with a thrill combined with an unspeakable fear of that huge secret Being that he *ergens* felt and which floated in his childish imagination surrounded with beams of sunlight and in the most magnificent postures...

(Yes, he had to go back to his youth to completely feel everything again, when no consciousness, no investigation had infringed on his childish devotion - and he had to create work with the same attention and the same relief as he had felt back then, when he had lain down before the altar and had thought to recognize God himself in a cloud, while the rhythms of the organ droned through the temple.)<sup>5</sup>

In this sentence, *ergens* can be interpreted as referring to a metaphorical place in the feelings of the speaker or as referring to a place in which the Entity was actually felt to be. The addition of *en dat zweefde* 'and that floated' suggests that the person speaking may have felt that the Entity was somewhere, whereas the *ergens* clause itself can also be read as modal as in *he felt somewhere (in his feelings)*. In this case, knowledge of the present day language may be misleading in suggesting that this may be interpreted as modal, whereas for speakers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this may have been not even an option.

Another example is example (2).

- (2) De school, bruikbaar voor de gezindten, door de kleine minderheid  
The school, useful for the denominations, by the small minority  
begeerd, wordt eene Protestantsche school genoemd. Eene algemeene,  
adhered to, is a Protestant school called. A general,  
generieke benaming, omvattende onderscheidene gezindten, en dus  
generic name, including various denominations, and thus  
in zooverre *ergens* teregt ook eene gemengde school genoemd.  
in some sense *ERGENS* rightly also a mixed school called.

The school, which was acceptable for all denominations that were adhered to by small minorities, was called a Protestant school. A general, generic name, including various denominations and, thus, in some sense *ergens* rightly is called a mixed school.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Van Nu en Straks. Nieuwe reeks. Jaargang 1. Antwerpen 1896.

<sup>6</sup>From: Handelingen der algemeene vergadering van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde

In this example, it seems that *ergens* is modal, modifying the subjective form *terecht* ‘rightly, justly’. However, in this period and in this type of text, it is very common to refer to places in texts by means of *ergens*. Therefore, it may well be that the speaker meant a place in some text in which this term was used.

The corpus used in this chapter consists of all texts from the *digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren* ‘the digital library for Dutch literature’.<sup>7</sup> This is a digital collection of texts dating from the Middle Ages until modern times. It includes both literary works and literary and linguistic journals and commentaries. This corpus also contains some correspondence and novels/stories. However, the DBNL site does not allow easy access to the corpus as a whole, which made it impossible to get word counts of the whole corpus and of the various historical periods. By means of an estimation of the number of titles per period in combination with the total number of instances of *ergens* in a certain period, it was possible to make a very rough guess as to the size of subparts of the corpus, which allowed me to get an impression of the size of the earlier parts of the corpus. The historical corpus in total contained 20593 instances of *ergens*, of which 533 came from the Middle Ages, 1840 from the 17th century, 3060 from the 18th century and 15160 from the 19th century. There may be some double instances in these counts or texts that were not written in the said time period, because editors comments could not be filtered out, but they are not very frequent. On the basis of the synchronic corpus, we may assume that we have the best chance of finding instances of modal *ergens* in the correspondence and novels. As I will show below, this certainly proves to be true. However, the further we go back in time, the fewer texts we have of these genres. The more we go back in time, the more it was normal for stories to be written down in the form of poetry and letters did not always survive or were very formal. This means that we would expect the frequency of modal *ergens* to decline when going back in time purely on the basis of these features of the corpus alone. Consequently, we need to be very careful in positing a starting point for the development of modal *ergens*.

## 6.2 The secondary literature and the development of *ergens* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century

The large academic dictionary of Dutch, the *Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal* (WNT) does not mention a modal use for *ergens* in its 1917 lemma on *ergens*. The first time modal *ergens* is mentioned is in the *Van Dale* dictionary of Dutch in 1961. In this edition, the *Van Dale* dictionary calls the modal use of *ergens* a *neologism*, which is continued until the 1974 edition. In later editions it is called *colloquial language*.

However, in the fifties and sixties there was already some scholarly debate in the journal *De nieuwe Taalgids* as to whether modal *ergens* really was a *neologism*. This

te Leiden, gehouden aldaar den 16den Juni 1870, in het gebouw der Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen. E.J. Brill, Leiden 1870.

<sup>7</sup>The corpus can be found at [www.dbnl.org](http://www.dbnl.org). This site was used to build this corpus from December 2011-March 2012.

discussion started with an article by Japin (1956) about this (in his view) new use of *ergens*. According to Japin, the new modal *ergens* was found mainly among journalists and artists and he wondered whether it would disappear again. Two other scholars, Van 't Veld (1967) and Van Eeten (1968), reacted to Japin's article, showing that modal *ergens* was in fact already in use in the early thirties of the 20th century.

The question as to whether *ergens* would disappear again remained an issue, especially because (older) Dutch speakers tend to connect the modal use of *ergens* to the 1960s. In this period, the *flower power* movement was very popular in the Netherlands and all kinds of spiritual movements directed focus onto people's personal feelings. Older Dutch speakers therefore often think the use of modal *ergens* developed in this period and they sometimes feel it was only used in the spiritual settings of the 1960s. Since these movements have for a large part disappeared, they assume modal *ergens* has disappeared as well. It has been suggested in the literature several times that the modal use of *ergens* was declining or even disappearing (e.g. Van den Toorn, 1997; Van der Wouden, 2002). However, it can be found in the current editions of newspapers, on twitter and it is used in spoken language regularly. Therefore, there is little support in the data for the claim that modal *ergens* is disappearing. A decline since the sixties is of course possible.

As can be seen from table 6.1, there is also no evidence in our recent corpora that modal *ergens* is disappearing. It is found in the corpus of recent novels (355,792 words) and in the CGN (8.916.272 words) as well. In order to see if there is any reason to believe that there is a decline, I have compared the Eindhoven corpus (768,000 words), which is from the sixties and seventies, with the CGN (1998-2004) and the novels, which are for the largest part from 2003.

As is clear from table 6.1, the percentage of modal interpretations of *ergens* with respect to the total number of instances of *ergens* in the older Eindhoven corpus is higher than in the other corpora, which would point in the direction of a decline. However, the percentage of modal instances of *ergens* in the two other corpora, which cover the exact same period (the novels and the CGN) is not the same. In the CGN, which is by far the largest of the three corpora, the percentage of modal instances of *ergens* is much smaller than in the corpus of novels, even though they are from the exact same period. The difference between the percentage of modal *ergens* in the Eindhoven corpus and the novels (2.6) is the same as the difference between the percentage of modal *ergens* in the CGN and the novels (2.6). This means that the variation between the corpora from the same period is so large that we cannot simply compare them with another corpus from an earlier period. As was already noted above, *ergens* is most frequently used in informal, subjective contexts. This may be an indication that there is a large effect of genre or register on the frequency of *ergens*, which could be an explanation for the large differences between two contemporary corpora. Such a large effect of the genre implies that one has to be very careful in comparing corpora that have not been assembled in the same way. Therefore, we cannot draw a firm conclusion with respect to the supposed decline from the 1960s onwards. There is simply too much variation in the data.

The early use of modal *ergens* which was mentioned by Van Eeten (1968) is found



	Novels (2003)		Eindhoven Corpus (1960-70)		CGN (1998-2004)	
	freq. modal <i>ergens</i>	% modal of total <i>ergens</i> in novels	freq. mod.	% modal of total <i>ergens</i> in Eindh. corpus	freq. mod.	% modal of total <i>ergens</i> in CGN
Total inst. of <i>ergens</i>	92	100%	117	100%	2757	100%
Modal	7	7.6 %	12	10.2%	139	5.0%
<i>Feelings</i>	5	5.4%	4	3.4%	51	1.8%
<i>Point of view</i>	2	2.2%	2	1.7%	37	1.3%
<i>Somehow</i>	0	0%	6	7.3%	51	1.8%

Table 6.1: The frequencies of the modal interpretations of *ergens* in three corpora. The percentages express the frequency of the modal instances of *ergens* with respect to the total number of instances of *ergens* in that respective corpus. The numbers in the subcategories of modal add up to the total number of instances of modal *ergens*.

in personal letters between E. du Perron and Menno ter Braak, two Dutch writers who lived in the first half of the 20th century. Modal *ergens* is regularly found in these letters, both on its own as in example (3) and in an explicitly metaphorical context as in (4).

- (3) Zeg gerust als je er niet voor voelt, want *ergens* heb ik toch nog een  
Say feel free if you there not for feel, for ERGENS have I PTCL still a  
  
zwakje voor die 6 dln. Louijs, en ik kan je natuurlijk  
little tender spot for those 6 volumes Louijs, and I can you of course  
  
later eens best wat anders geven.  
later PTCL easily something else give.  
  
Feel free to say that you don't want it, for *ergens* I still have a weak spot for  
those 6 volumes Louijes and I can always give you something else later on.<sup>8</sup>
- (4) Ik heb *ergens* achterin mijn hoofd het idee om een erg goed  
I have ERGENS at the back my head the idea to a very good  
  
stuk te maken,  
piece of work to make  
  
*Ergens* at the back of my head I have the idea to make a very good piece of  
work.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>E. du Perron, 3 December 1932.

<sup>9</sup>E. du Perron, 23 April 1934.

The explicitly metaphorical cases of modal *ergens* and the instances without a metaphorical context are found almost equally frequently in this letter collection (respectively 9 and 11 times). This is interesting, since the explicitly metaphorical examples are much less frequent in the CGN (about 5 instances in total). This may point in the direction of a metaphorical origin of this use, but first we need to find out whether the modal use of *ergens* really evolved in the beginning of the 20th century.

### 6.3 The 19<sup>th</sup> century

In the previous section, we made a distinction between explicitly metaphorical uses of modal *ergens* and implicitly metaphorical uses. Strictly speaking, only the last group provides evidence of the existence of a modal use of *ergens*, since the other instances are metaphorically locative. However, the frequent occurrence of the explicitly metaphorical use may be seen as an indication for the way the implicit use developed.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, I have been able to find very few cases of implicitly metaphorical modal *ergens*, although explicitly metaphorical *ergens* is relatively frequent. The implicitly metaphorical instances can be found in the following examples.

- (5) Zonder zoo vele volken gezien te hebben als de Heer Bowring,  
Without so many peoples seen to have as the mister Bowring,  
  
twijfelen wij echter, of het ergens wijsheid is, iets te  
doubt we however, whether it ERGENS wisdom is, something to  
  
ondernemen, waarvoor men niet berekend is, of dengd [deugd EK], met  
do, for which one not fitted is, or virtue with  
  
denzelfden mond uitbundigen lof en grievende onwaarheden over  
the same mouth exuberant praise and grieving falsehoods about  
  
een volk uit te brengen, dat meer dan eenig ander jaloersch op zijne  
a people out to bring, which more than any other jealous on his  
  
eer is.  
honor is.

Without having seen as many peoples as Mister Bowring, we doubt whether it is *ergens* wise to do something for which one is not equipped, or whether it is a virtue to lavish praise with the same mouth with which you also express grieving falsehoods about a people, which is more than any jealous of his honor.<sup>10</sup>

In example (5), *ergens* is used in a copular construction. In addition, the question of whether something is wisdom (wise) is subjective. As we have seen in the synchronic

<sup>10</sup>From: *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*. G.S. Leeneman van der Kroe en J.W. IJntema, Amsterdam 1829.

description of modal *ergens*, these are the prototypical characteristics of the *point of view* interpretation. However, a locative interpretation would also be possible if the speaker means ‘at some place in which a people lives, no matter which people/place’. This last interpretation seems less likely, but in order to avoid anachronistic interpretations, I will consider this example as ambiguous, because theoretically a locative interpretation would be possible.

Another example, which is more difficult to interpret than the previous one is found in (6).

- (6) (En, als gij nu uwen eed ligtvaardig schenden zoudt, als uw mond de logen zoude spreken, als gij uwe dienaren en vertegenwoordigers zoudt bezigen om dezelve te doen zegevieren over het belang van den staat, ô! gevoelt dan het gewigt van de afbreuk, welke gij hem doen zoudt, en hoe uwe laagheid, uwe ondankbaarheid, uw voorbeeld eenen afgrond zoude openen voor de zekerheid van den staat, die door geenen dwang, noch door de opofferingen der edelsten, kan hersteld of gesloten worden.)

En waant *ergens* de vermetelheid zich daarmede te verschoonen,  
And imagines *ERGENS* the boldness himself with this to excuse,

dat het de zaak is van den staat, om den ongehoorzamen burger  
that it the concern is of the state, to the disobedient citizen

te achterhalen?  
to catch up?

(Waant gij, ô burger! dat de zaak van den staat niet de uwe is, maar dat gij aan hem, als aan eenen vijand, alles moogt onttrekken, wat gij kunt?)

(And if you would violate your oath, if your mouth would speak out the lie, if you would order your servants and representatives to make yourself triumph over the interest of the state, O feel the burden of the damage, you would do to it and how your baseness, your ungratefulness, your example would open an abyss for the security of the state, which by no force, nor by the sacrifices of the most noble could be recovered or closed.)

And does the boldness *ergens* think to excuse himself with the statement that it is the business of the state to catch up with the disobedient citizen?

(Do you think, O citizen, that the concern of the state is not yours, but that you are allowed to withdraw from it everything you can, like from an enemy?)<sup>11</sup>

In example (6), we find a personification of boldness in a rhetorical question. This makes it unlikely that *ergens* is referring to something written in a text. It may be that *ergens* is used to express *wherever (the person displaying) the boldness is*, i.e. anyone, especially when this is read with a pitch accent on *ergens*.

However, the mental state predicate *waant* ‘thinks’ and the fact that the view that is attributed to the *boldness* seems not very accepted, comply very well with a

<sup>11</sup>From: *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*. G.S. Leeneman van der Kroe en J.W. IJntema, Amsterdam 1814.

split-self construction, in which the bold person would tell himself (secretly) that he is allowed to do what he, in some other part of himself, knows to be bad things, because it is the job of the state to catch a disobedient citizen. The interpretation of this sentence would then be: *And do you, bold person, in some part of yourself think you are excused because it is the job of the state to track the disobedient citizen?*. The first interpretation seems the most likely here, but the second one is in my view not impossible. This means that we cannot say with certainty whether a modal interpretation was already present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the possible explanations for the development of a modal interpretation is a conventionalization of the metaphor *somewhere in someone's mind*. This hypothesis is supported by the presence of these metaphors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of these explicit metaphors are given below.

- (7) Immers, het is mogelijk, dat ik *ergens* in mijn geest het oordeel A = B  
For it is possible that I *ERGENS* in my mind the judgement A = B

opgeborgen heb, en later op een andere plaats, ver van de eerste,  
put away have, and later at an other place, far from the first,

het oordeel B = C, en er niet toe kom deze twee oordeelen  
the judgement B = C, and there not towards come those two judgements

tegelijk te denken;  
at the same time to think;

For it is possible that I have put away *ergens* in my mind the judgement A = B and later at another place, far from the first, the judgement B = C, and that I never arrive at the point where I think those two judgements at the same time.<sup>12</sup>

In example (7), we find an almost perfect description of the split-self metaphor. There are two views which together may lead to a certain conclusion. Both views can be found in a different but unspecified place within the mind of the speaker. This example shows an active use of the metaphor, since apart from the use of *ergens*, we find all kinds of other locative expressions which are used to refer to places in the persons mind, like *opbergen* 'put away', *op een andere plaats* 'at another place', *ver van* 'far from'.

An older example is the following.

- (8) Spreekt men veel over den wil, het vermogen van den wil enz.,  
Speaks one frequently about the will, the ability of the will etc.,

allengs sluipt het gevoel binnen, dat de wil *ergens* in ons  
soon sneaks the feeling inside, that the will *ERGENS* in ourselves

aanwezig is, even als de lever of het hart, en dan gaat men over dien  
present is, just like the liver or the heart, and then goes one about this

<sup>12</sup>De Gids. P.N. van Kampen & zoon, Amsterdam 1896.

wil redeneren, afgescheiden van het individu dat willend is.  
will reason, separated from the individual that willing is.

If one speaks frequently about the will, the ability of the will etc., soon the feeling will sneak inside that the will is present *ergens* inside us, just like the liver or the heart and then one will start to reason about the will separately of the individual that is wanting.<sup>13</sup>

In example (8), the speaker criticizes the metaphor of the will which is somewhere within a human being. The speaker tries to force a locative interpretation by means of the phrase *even als de lever of het hart* ‘just like the liver or the heart’. However, the speaker himself uses the same kind of metaphor in *allengs sluipt het gevoel binnen* ‘soon the feeling sneaks inside’, showing that it is completely conventionalized to think about the human mind in locative terms.

There is also another category of modal *ergens* present in these data, which was only discussed in passing in the synchronic chapter. The use of *ergens* as a modifier with an indefinite article and a noun, which was in the synchronic corpus only found in the Flemish data, is already present in the same geographic region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both examples below are written by authors from Flanders. I haven’t been able to find examples from the Netherlands.

- (9) Het vrome meisje moest deze op ergens eene wijze uitdrukken: het gebed  
The pious girl had to these at ERGENS a way express: the prayer

was hare toevlucht.  
was her escape.

The pious girl had to express them in *ergens* one way or another: prayer was her escape.<sup>14</sup>

- (10) (Hoe zoo heerlijk een lot versmaden voor de onzekere terugkomst van eenen armen drommel, die het misschien nimmer verder zoude brengen dan tot een paar ellendige honderd duizend frank,)

die welligt ginder in Amerika lang het oog had laten vallen op de  
who possibly out there in America lang the eye had let fall upon the

dochter van ergens eenen yankeeschen groot- of kleinhandelaar?  
daughter of ERGENS a yankee wholesaler or retailer?

How can you let go such a good fate in favor of the uncertain return of a poor bastard, who would perhaps never get any further than a few damned hundred thousand frank,) who possibly already has his eye on the daughter

<sup>13</sup>De Gids. P.N. van Kampen & zoon, Amsterdam 1858.

<sup>14</sup>Virginie Loveling, *Sophie*. P.N. van Kampen & Zoon, Amsterdam 1885.

of *ergens* a yankee wholesaler or retailer?<sup>15</sup>

Another type of examples is ambiguous between a modal reading and a locative reading. It may be that some of these examples were the critical contexts in which the shift from locative to modal took place. An ambiguous example can be found in example (11) below. In this example, which was already discussed above, it is possible that the speaker refers to some place in a text in which the school is called mixed, but one can also read *ergens* as modifying *teregt* 'rightly', creating an *point of view* reading.

- (11) De school, bruikbaar voor de gezindten, door de kleine minderheid  
The school, useful for the denominations, by the small minority  
  
begeerd, wordt eene Protestantsche school genoemd. Eene algemeene,  
adhered to, is a Protestant school called. A general,  
  
generieke benaming, omvattende onderscheidene gezindten, en  
generic name, including various denominations, and  
  
dus in zooverre *ergens* teregt ook eene gemengde school genoemd.  
thus in some sense ERGENS rightly also a mixed school called.

The school, which was acceptable for all denominations that were adhered to by small minorities, was called a Protestant school. A general, generic name, including various denominations and, thus, in some sense *ergens* rightly called a mixed school.<sup>16</sup>

There are many examples of *ergens* that refer to a place in a text in the corpus from this period. Generally, these examples are completely transparent. This type of example is also still in use in modern times. The possibility of interpreting *ergens* as modal in example (11) in modern times would be triggered by the subjective adjective *teregt* as we saw from the surveys. The fact that this may also be a reference to a place in a text does not seem to play a role in the decision to interpret this instance as modal. For this reason, I will not consider expressions that refer to a place in a text to be bridging contexts.

Another type of ambiguous examples is still ambiguous in modern times as well. These cases are characterized by the fact that *ergens* does not fulfill a very important role syntactically and semantically if it is interpreted as locative. This creates the possibility to interpret *ergens* as *somehow*, which changes the focus from a description of the base space to an evaluation of the speaker. In example (12), for instance, one can read *ergens* as a metaphorical point in a concatenation of arguments, but one can also read it as *somehow*, that is, as *in some way* or *from some perspective*. This

<sup>15</sup>Domien Sleenckx, *Op 't Eksterlaar. Herinneringen van afgestorven en van nog levende vrienden.*, W. Rogghé, Gent 1863.

<sup>16</sup>From: *Handelingen der algemeene vergadering van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden, gehouden aldaar den 16den Juni 1870, in het gebouw der Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen.* E.J. Brill, Leiden 1870.

last interpretation is possibly triggered by the expression *het vage besef* ‘the vague understanding’, which already moves the focus to the mental space of the subject. Which interpretation was chosen by the speakers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we don’t know.

- (12) De tegenzin van Hippias tegen Sokrates’ redeneering ontspruit uit  
The aversion of Hippias against Sokrates’ argument is based from

het vage besef, dat zij ergens niet in orde moet wezen; gedwongen  
the vague sense, that it ERGENS not in order must be; forced

echter om zooveel toe te stemmen, kan hij het gebrek niet ontdekken,  
however to so much to agree, can he the mistake not find,

en hij heeft niet veel lust het gesprek voort te zetten.  
and he has not much desire the conversation to continue.

The aversion of Hippias against Sokrates’ argument is based on the vague sense that *ergens* it is not correct; However, since he is forced to agree so frequently, he can’t find the mistake, and he does not have much desire to continue the conversation.<sup>17</sup>

Example (12), which may be interpreted both as locative and as modal shows that the choice of the interpretation of a sentence is in an important part dependent on the options one has stored. This type of sentence may have been a critical context for the *somehow* interpretation, but since a *feelings/point of view* interpretation is also possible, it may also be just an atypical example of this last category. What does seem clear, though, is that the possibility of a modal interpretation is a clear example of inferencing, that is, reading a more subjective value into a form that can be left out without changing the syntactic or semantic structure of the sentence.

In example (13), the expression *raakt aan* ‘touches upon’ can be taken as the point in which the metaphorical areas of the *kleinigheid* and life touch each other. This interpretation is supported by the metaphorical use of *zijde* ‘side’, which is also locative. However, *ergens* can also be interpreted as *from some point of view* or *somehow*. Especially the fact that this is about someone’s views paves the way for a modal interpretation. However, a metaphorical locative interpretation is also possible.

- (13) Wie onzen Geulincx kent, weet dat er voor hem in het menschelijk  
Who our Geulincx knows, knows that there for him in the human

leven geene kleinigheid zoo gering is, of zij heeft hare ernstige zijde,  
life no trifle so small is, or she has her serious side,

omdat zij ergens raakt aan het zedelijk beleid van dat leven.  
because she ERGENS touches on the moral guidance of that life.

<sup>17</sup>De Nieuwe Gids. Jaargang 8. W. Versluys, Amsterdam 1893.

Who knows our Geulincx, knows that for him there is no trifle in human life small enough not to have its serious side, because *ergens* it touches upon the moral guidance of that life.<sup>18</sup>

These types of examples may have played a role in the development of modal *ergens* as a critical context, especially for the development of the *somehow* interpretation. However, it is hard to link these examples to a specific development directly.

In conclusion, we can say that we have found that modal *ergens* may have already been in use in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although we do not have completely unambiguous cases. The use of explicit metaphors supports the hypothesis that this was the way the *feelings* interpretation came about, although it is hard to show a direct connection. Some examples were discussed that may have been critical contexts for the development of the *somehow* interpretation, but this remains somewhat speculative. The Flemish use of *ergens* with an indefinite article and a noun as a marker of imprecision was already found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Flanders. Examples of this type from the Netherlands were not found. This makes it likely that this development was confined to Flanders in this period also.

## 6.4 The 18<sup>th</sup> century

The 18<sup>th</sup> century part of the corpus is much smaller than the 19<sup>th</sup> century part. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we find only one fifth (respectively 3060 vs 15160) of the instances of *ergens* found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are no implicitly modal instances of *ergens* in this part of the corpus, which may be due to the change in the characteristics of the corpus, but it may also be that in earlier periods modal *ergens* was used less frequently. However, the metaphorical use of *ergens* was already present, since there is an explicitly metaphorical example.

In this example, a weakness is said to be secretly in some place in someone's heart.

- (14) (Hy, die van sterke Gevoeligheid omtrent zyne Medemenschen hoog opgeeft, en nogthans geene aandoeningen heeft ten opzigte van de verheevene voorwerpen, welke de Godsdienst hem aanbiedt, geen hart, geschikt om den grooten Vader des Heelals te bewonderen en te aanbidden, mag met alle reden de egtheid en kieschheid zyner Aandoenlykheid verdagt houden.)

Hy heeft grond, om te vermoeden, dat 'er *ergens* in zyn hart eene  
He has reason, to to expect, that there *ERGENS* in his heart a

heimlyke verkeerdheid schuile, die zyn Character bederft. Dat wy  
secret badness hides, which spoils his character. That we

ons, derhalven, benaarstigen, om alle de deelen van een deugdzaam  
ourselves, therefore, exalt, to all the parts of a virtuous

<sup>18</sup>De Gids. P.N. van Kampen & zoon, Amsterdam 1892.



Character, gelyk 't behoort, te vereenigen;  
 character, like it is proper, to combine;

(He, who speaks highly of a strong sensitivity with respect to his fellow human beings and yet has no emotions with respect to the holy things, which the religion him offers, he has no heart suited to admire and worship the holy Father of the universe and has good reason to question the sincerity and the delicacy of his emotions.) He has reason to suspect that *ergens* in his heart is a secret badness, which spoils his character. That is why we should make the effort to combine all parts of a virtuous character.<sup>19</sup>

The example above suggests that potentially modal *ergens* already existed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but there was only one explicitly metaphorical example and no implicitly metaphorical examples, so we can't be sure.

## 6.5 The 17<sup>th</sup> century

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, we find several examples that may be interpreted as modal, but other interpretations are generally also possible. There is also one explicitly metaphorical example.

The metaphor of the heart as a house or space in which different views can be present is already found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen from example (15).

(15) (Wat sullen wy hier dan van Chymon segghen?)

Voorwaer anders niet dan dat de hooghe Hemelsche crachten, die in  
 Verily, other not than that the high heavenly powers, which in

zijn edel herte ghestordt waren, door eenrehande nijdich ongheluck vast  
 his noble heart poured were, by some bad misfortune fast

ghebonden ende besloten moesten zijn gheweest erghens binnen een  
 bound and enclosed must have been ERGENS within a

cleyne hoecxken van sijn herte:  
 small small corner of his heart:

What then shall we say here about Chymon? Nothing but that the high heavenly powers, that were poured in his noble heart, by means of some bad misfortune were bound fast and must have been enclosed *ergens* within a small corner of his heart.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen*. A. van der Kroe en J. Yntema, Amsterdam 1790.

<sup>20</sup> D.V. Coornhert, *Vijftigh lustighe historien oft nieuwigheden* Joannis Boccatij. Broer Jansz, Amsterdam z.j. [ca. 1644].

The following example may be interpreted as modal, although the context allows for two other options as well.

- (16) Want de Engel duydelyck seyt, dat Christus niet en sal midden  
 For the Angel clearly said, that Christ not NEG will in the middle of  
 in de laetste weke (gelijck wy *ergens* gedacht hebben) maer nae de 62  
 in the last week (like we *ERGENS* thought have) but after the 62  
 weken gedoodt worden, dat is, in ,”t eerste jaer van de laetste weke, oft  
 weeks killed be, that is, in the first year of the last week or  
 in ’t begin van de laetste weke: in dewelcke Hy (seyt hy) het  
 in the beginning of the last week: in which he (said he) the  
 verbondt velen sal bevestigen.  
 covenant to many will confirm

For the Angel clearly said that Christ would not be cut off in the middle of the last week (like we *ergens* thought) but after 62 weeks, that is, in the first year of the last week, or in the beginning of the last week: in which he (said he) will confirm the covenant.<sup>21</sup>

The first option is very conservative. It would assume that the speaker uses a locative reference to refer to the results of a thinking-process which are written down in another text. However, the use of *ergens* to refer to passages in a text is in this period only attested with the verb *zeggen* ‘to say’. In other periods, we also found other predicates with this function, but we do not find mental state predicates with this function. Mental state predicates do not generally refer to written thoughts outside of the subject himself.

The second option is a temporal interpretation ‘What we thought at some point’. The third option is modal ‘somehow/for some reason/in some part of our mind’, as in the modern example from Google in (17). It is hard to decide which interpretation was chosen by the contemporary speakers.

- (17) Zoals wij *ergens* hadden verwacht is er niets afwijkends op de  
 Like we *ERGENS* had expected is there nothing exceptional on the  
 scan te zien, er valt dus ook niet te opereren.  
 scan to see, there is thus also not to operate.

Like we *ergens* expected, there is nothing exceptional on the scan, so there is nothing to operate on.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Lutherse bijbel 1648, eds. N. van der Sijs, H. Beelen.

<sup>22</sup>([http://www.rick-en-jelte.nl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=116&Itemid=88888990](http://www.rick-en-jelte.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=116&Itemid=88888990)).

The following example is difficult to interpret.

- (18) Wijders, geen Koning kan ergens aan zich zelf groter zekerheit  
 Furthermore, no king can ERGENS to hem self more security  
 beloven, dan die in dusdanige Burgerschap heerscht.  
 promise, than the one who in such citizenship rules.  
 Furthermore, no King can *ergens* promise to himself more security than the  
 one who rules in such citizenship.<sup>23</sup>

At first sight, example (18) has the structure of a frequent construction *if anywhere (X is the case), than it is here/ in this case*, in which *ergens* generally receives a pitch accent. However, in example (18) the *than*-clause cannot be read as (metonymically) locative in any way, although normally that is the case in this construction. The reason this is impossible is that the *than*-clause is constructed as an action of the king himself, rather than as a situation. Normally, *ergens* is used metonymically in this construction. A situation is described by means of its place. If this metonymy breaks down, the construction does not function anymore. This forces the reader to either reinterpret the construction or to reinterpret *ergens* as non-locative.

The first option would be to interpret *ergens* as a marker of an indefinite place (*anywhere*) which has the effect of broadening the scope of the statement. This is comparable to an expression of the type 'no king in the world can ...', in which 'in the world' expresses the overall generalizing function of *ergens*. This option seems to get support from the data up to this point, since there are other examples in which *ergens* seems to be used in a comparable way, as in examples (19) and (21).

- (19) (Wat vreucht, o Godt! wat ruste  
 Wort ons nu aenghedient,  
 En alle menschen?  
 Wat troost, wat soete luste,)  
 Wat isser ergens meer by ons te wenschen?  
 What is there ERGENS more by us to wish?  
 (Hier duysent jaer  
 Die zijn nu daer Dat Godt ons sprack van dese:  
 S'is nu ghesproten  
 De bloem van Iessels loten  
 Wie sal vreesen?) (What joy, o God, what rest  
 is offered to us now  
 And all humans?  
 What comfort, what sweet joys)  
 What is there *ergens* more to wish for us?  
 (Here thousand years

<sup>23</sup>Baruch de Spinoza, *Nagelate schriften*. z.p., 1677.

They are there now  
 That God spoke to us of these  
 She has now sprouted  
 The flower of Iessel's shoots  
 Who will fear?)<sup>24</sup>

In example (19) *ergens* is used in a rhetorical question of which could be interpreted as equivalent to the expression in example (20) from the 19th century. The expression *ter wereld* 'in the world' in example (20) is used to strengthen the rhetorical question by suggesting that it does not matter how large the pool of things to choose from is, even if it were the whole world, nothing would be more satisfying than to be his wife.

(20) Doch wat ter wereld kon ik meer wenschen ter voldoening van  
 But what in the world could I more wish for the satisfaction of  
  
 mijnen trots dan om zijn vrouw te zijn?  
 my pride than to his wife to be?

But what in the world could fulfill my pride more than to be his wife?<sup>25</sup>

(21) Waar vind men *ergens* in de wereld uw's gelijk?  
 Where finds one *ERGENS* in the world your equal?  
 Where does one find *ergens* in the world your equal?<sup>26</sup>

This type of strengthening is also found for *ergens* in example (21), which is from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This suggests that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century this way of strengthening by means of generalization may have existed for *ergens* as well.

If we now return to example (18), we see that the statement may be strengthened by adding *ergens* in the same way as we would do in modern times by saying *no king in the world*. A paraphrase would be: *No king, no matter where (in the world) he is from, can promise himself more security than the one who reigns in such a citizenship*. Basically, this is a locative use of *ergens*, although some conventionalization of the strengthening function may be required for speakers to understand it.

The second option to interpret this sentence was to interpret *ergens* as non-locative. In this case, this means that we may read *ergens* as 'somehow'. A paraphrase of this interpretation would be *No king can in any way promise himself more security than the one that rules in such citizenship*. Therefore, this may have been a critical context for the development the *somehow* interpretation.

In the following example, *ergens* seems to have lost its locative meaning to become a marker of imprecision, like it did in Flemish and German. Since the Lutheran bible is a translation from German, and the Dutch community of Lutherans consisted

<sup>24</sup>Christianus Vermeulen, *'t Ronde jaer, of den schat der geestelijcke lofsangen*. Weduwe van Jan Knobbaert, Antwerpen 1644.

<sup>25</sup>From: *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis*, 1895: 206.

<sup>26</sup>Maria de Wilde, *Abradates en Panthea*. Pieter van den Berge, Amsterdam 1710.

of many Lutherans from Flanders who had fled the religious oppression, both language varieties may have played a role in the following example. I haven't found any other examples that show this kind of characteristic in this period.

- (22) Spreeckt met de kinderen Israëls, seggende: Wanneer eene ziele sondigt  
 Speak with the children of Israel, saying: when a soul sins

uyt onwetenheyt, aen ergens een gebodt des HEEREN, dat  
 out of ignorance, to ERGENS a commandment of the Lord, that

sy niet doen en soude:  
 she not do and should:

Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally in any of the LORD's commandments about things not to be done.<sup>27</sup>

We can conclude that although there are no unambiguous cases of modal *ergens* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there are indications that some modal interpretations, like the *feelings* interpretation and the Flemish use as a marker of imprecision may have existed already, although the latter use may also be due to a literal translation from German. There are also instances of locative *ergens* in which *ergens* seems to be used mainly to express general applicability (i.e. *anyone anywhere*, it does not matter who or where). These uses may have been critical contexts for either the imprecision marker *ergens* or the *somehow* interpretation.

## 6.6 The Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages there were many morphological variants of *ergens* in use. That is, the parts which together were the basis of *ergens* could still be combined more freely in the Middle Ages than in later periods. The word *ergens* is, according to the etymological dictionary of Dutch of Philippa et al. (2003) derived from Proto-Germanic *\*io-hwar-gin* in which *io* is the indefinite pronoun from Germanic *\*aiwa*, the next part *hwar* 'where' was both a question word and a relative pronoun and *gin*, which is built on the Proto-Indoeuropean root *k<sup>w</sup>e -ne*, is again an indefinite. In Dutch from the Middle Ages, we find both combinations of *io-hwar* without *gin* like *iewers* and instances in which *gin* is present. However, according to the commentaries on the earliest texts, they are both used like *ergens*. Around 1900 there are, according to the WNT, still dialects that use the form without *gin* with this meaning, in for instance the north of the province Noord-Holland. In the standard language, the forms without *gin* do not exist anymore. Since the variants of *ergens* may have merged in later Dutch, it might be useful to see how the variants of *ergens* were used as well. In addition, there were all kinds of spelling variants, which were taken into account.

<sup>27</sup>Lutherse bijbel, Lev. 4.2 1648.

According to the early middle Dutch dictionary, the first occurrence of *irgen* is found around 1240 in the south of the Netherlands. This first instance is found in example (23) below.

- (23) ic (i.e. Tristan EK) vare na hiele Of ic dien iergen vunde di mí  
 I (i.e. Tristan EK) ride to happiness if I him ERGENS would find who me  
 gehelpen kunde Weder míner amyen. dor dien wold ic vertien  
 help could again my love. Because of him would I renounce  
 Muoder vnde vader.  
 mother and father.

I (i.e. Tristan) will be looking for my welfare; if I could find a person *iergen* who could help me to get my love back, I would for him renounce my father and my mother.<sup>28</sup>

Although in example (23) a locative reading is fine, it is interesting to see that in this type of example there is already the possibility of reading *irgen* as ‘somehow’. This possibility is present because the place is already implied by *vunde* ‘find’ and instead of referring back to *irgen* with the statement that he would go and see this person no matter where he had to go, Tristan adds what he would be prepared to do in order to reach his goal. However, in modern times we would still interpret examples like this as locative, which makes it less likely that this is the source of the change to modal.

In the following, comparable example from the story of Mariken van Nieumeghen, from about 1518, the modern editor, Dirk Coigneau, translates *yewers* as *ergens*, *op een of andere manier* ‘somewhere, somehow’. The reason this is possible, is that the sentence is about a situation that may occur in the future. The main point of the statement is to show that no matter where and when the situation might occur, they will defend Emmeken. This makes both temporal and more modal interpretations like ‘somehow’ possible. However, I would not consider example (24) as evidence for a conventionalized modal reading in the Middle Ages, since a locative reading is also unproblematic and would even be a fine reading today. It may be though, that the inference *somehow* was already present in this period.

- (24) Ende, biden rebben, wilt u yemant hinderen oft vercorten,  
 whenever, by the ribs, want you someone disturb or do harm  
 Wi willen ons bloet voer u storten,  
 We want our blood for you shed  
 Ende ghi yewers aen onghenoechte gheraectet.  
 whenever you ERGENS at sorrow get into

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<sup>28</sup>Tristant, 1250.

If, by God, someone bothers you or does you harm  
 We want to shed our blood for you  
 If you *ergens* get into trouble.<sup>29</sup>

We can conclude that although there are some examples that allow for more modal inferences, there is no reason to believe that the modal interpretations were already on their way to conventionalization in the Middle Ages.

## 6.7 Conclusion

In the introduction, two goals were given for this chapter. The first goal was to see what processes may have led to the development of modal *ergens*, the second goal was to find out when modal *ergens* developed. We will start with the second goal.

Modal *ergens* was definitely already in use in the beginning of the 20th century. In the 19th century there are several examples which seem to be modal, but which can also be interpreted as locative. In the 18th century the corpus becomes much smaller and only one explicitly metaphorical example can be found. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there are several examples which may be interpreted as modal *ergens*, although they are not completely unambiguous. In this period, there is one example that may be read as the Flemish imprecision marking interpretation. In the Middle Ages there are no cases of modal *ergens*, although it is interesting to see that some of the contexts in which *ergens* was used already allowed for a *somehow* reading. However, these readings were probably not conventionalized and were meant to be interpreted as locative.

In order to find out what processes may have played a role in the development of modal *ergens*, I have looked for two types of phenomena. On the one hand I have tried to find ambiguous examples, which may have functioned as bridging contexts, on the other hand I have investigated whether the metaphors that play a role in modal *ergens* were already in use explicitly in the earliest texts. The explicit metaphors were found in the texts from the 19<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Only in the texts from the Middle Ages was this type of metaphor absent. Although this only means that the metaphor THE MIND IS A SPACE OR HOUSE was commonly used at least from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there are also examples in which the metaphor is explicitly used to create a split-self, which reminds us strongly of the uses of implicitly modal *ergens*. Since the only step between an explicit use of the metaphor and an implicit one is the degree of conventionalization, this suggests that the source of at least one type of modal *ergens*, the *feelings*-interpretation, may be a conventionalization of the metaphor.

The *point of view* interpretation may have arisen in two ways. The first option is that it has arisen from instances in which the location of some event was not essential for the content of the clause, but which did contain subjective elements like subjective adjectives. There are several examples in which both interpretations, locative

<sup>29</sup>Mariken van Nieumeghen ed. D. Coigneau, vs 501, 1518.

and *point of view* were possible. In some of these cases, a *somehow* interpretation is also possible, but not in all of them. It may be that the fact that *ergens* was already used in the metaphorical instances, made it easier to change the interpretation of *ergens* from a base space to the mental space of the subject of consciousness, after which both interpretations influenced each other.

The second option is that the *point of view* interpretation is only an extension of the *feelings* interpretation. If this is the case, the examples that are ambiguous between a locative interpretation and the *point of view* interpretation may only have been extensions of an already conventionalized interpretation. The data do not allow us to determine which development really took place.

In the case of the *somehow* interpretation, it is very hard to decide when and how this interpretation came about, because even in modern times many of these examples also allow for locative or *point of view* interpretations. Outside of the 20<sup>th</sup> century I have not been able to find unambiguous cases. However, the contexts in which this interpretation would not be excluded are already found in the Middle Ages. Therefore, this interpretation may be a 20<sup>th</sup> century development, but it may also be a very early development.

Most of the developments described above, are directly linked to a locative interpretation of *ergens*. There are several ways this situation may have come about. Apart from the original context in which some interpretation arose, there is often also an extension to other uses when an interpretation becomes really conventionalized. Therefore, it may be that the *point of view* interpretation originally was a pragmatic shade of the *feelings* interpretation, which became semanticized only when its use was extended to cases that were ambiguous between a locative reading and a modal reading. However, the development of the *point of view* interpretation may also be more independent of the *feelings* interpretation in the sense that the ambiguous cases developed through ambiguity of the context (invited inferencing). In that case, the *feelings* interpretation may have played a role only with respect to the basic idea that one could also interpret *ergens* within the mental space of the subject of consciousness.

The development of the Flemish imprecision marker seems to be a completely separate development from the *feelings* interpretation, because the contexts in which this development is found are fundamentally different from the contexts in which the other modal interpretations were found. It may be influenced by the German use of *irgend* though. The only link between the *imprecision* interpretation and the modal interpretations that theoretically may have played a role is the link between the imprecision use of *ergens* and the interpretation *somehow*. However, there is only one example in which both interpretations seemed possible, so this does not seem very likely.

Generally, the imprecision use of *ergens* seems to be a classical example of invited inferencing. In many examples, also in modern times, one may read *ergens* as locative, but the only relevance of the use of *ergens* in the context is to describe that the speaker does not know much about the person or thing he is talking about or does not think more information is relevant. This has become conventionalized in



Flanders, where it can be used of entities of which the location is completely clear.

This means that both metaphorization and invited inferencing may have played an important role in the development of modal *ergens*. In some cases the developments may have been completely unrelated, in other cases the developments may have influenced each other, although the degree of influence is unclear.