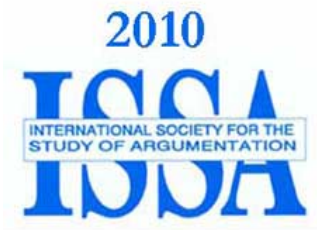# ISSA Proceedings 2010 – On 'Life Expectancy' Of Dissociated Terms

1. Introduction
This study takes as a premise the idea that dissociation (in the sense of Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca's *New Rhetoric*) relies on a semantic mechanism and a conceptual one which translate into linguistic and discursive elaboration, and has as a result the creation of a new notion, or concept. The main hypothesis of this study is that the contents of the notion created by dissociation, its structure and its existence over a specific time interval are determined by contextual (situational and co-textual, or discursive) circumstances.**[i]** This hypothesis is tested on the basis of evidence provided by various instances of discourse which are provided as empirical data borrowed from other studies on the same topic or related topics or identified as such in communicative interactions. Dissociation is seen in this study as one of the mechanisms allowing creation of new representations, notions or concepts on a discursive basis, in an argumentative context.

2. On the Concept of Dissociation
Dissociation is a discourse technique which the authors of the *New Rhetoric* (*NR*, Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958, vol. II, pp. 550-609) introduce to the field of argumentation studies as used by the speaker to suggest rearrangement and restructuring of notional information in a new way. Dissociation allows the speaker – at least for a limited time interval – to remove an incompatibility between propositions or inside a given notion N_0. Through dissociation "a more or less profound change is brought about in the conceptual basis of an argument" (van Rees 2005, p. 53): an existing, given notion N_0, displaying a certain – at least apparent – unity, is rebuilt by the speaker into two notions, one of which looks more or less like N_0, and the other one is felt or introduced as a completely new notion, N, or presumes as new for the audience a specific discourse addresses. In other words, the rational and linguistic dissociative mechanism starts from an existing notion N_0, whose content gives rise to an incompatibility, or to opposed views in the same discussion matter.

For instance, when referring in a particular context to a notional content such as that of *the truly needy*, the speaker dissociates from the given (old) notion N_0 = (THE) NEEDY**[ii]**, which is thus – explicitly or implicitly – qualified as pure appearance, a new notion N = (THE) TRULY NEEDY, the latter not being necessarily defined or elaborated, but – explicitly or implicitly – qualified as reality. The old notion is also referred to in the *NR* as the first term of the dissociation (Term I, T I, here N_0), and the new notion as the second term of the dissociation, or the dissociated term (Term II, T II, here N or N'). In Goodwin's words, "Term I, therefore is aligned with whatever is deemed, for cognitive or social purposes, merely apparent, illusory, insubstantial, irrelevant, erroneous. Term II, on the other hand, corresponds with whatever is considered to be actual, substantial, relevant, coherent, true." (1991, p. 150) While N_0 is discarded in the argumentative context, N or N' is valued argumentatively, i.e. N will serve as a new starting point of an argumentation on the same matter in which the use of N_0 proved unsuccessful or led to incompatibilities between the views of the speakers or conflicts or did not appear as stable or adequate enough for one of the parties(' purposes). The main goal of dissociation is to distinguish and contrast appearances from reality.

Another example of another type is that of the new notion N = SPIRIT OF THE LAW, built by dissociation from LAW = N_0 on the basis of a semantic process of metonymy. In this case, two new notions are created by two distinct dissociations, both based on metonymy, the second being the notion of LETTER OF THE LAW = N', forming a couple with the former. This notion is dissociated from LAW = N_0 to show, for example, that a particular situation is not covered in practice by the *letter of the law*, yet it is conceivable – from the legal point of view – through an interpretation of the law, so it is nevertheless in the *spirit of the law*. (A)**[iii]** In such cases, when two new notions are created, I suggest that the term 'double dissociation' should be used.**[iv]**

Thus, when a particular ruling in court is debatable or questionable (i.e. is a matter of incompatibility of opinions), an advocate of that ruling may argue for it by contending that it obeys or conforms to the *spirit of the law*, although it is not present as such in the text of the law. Or, on the contrary, one may argue for an application of the *letter of the law*, depending on each specific circumstance. N_0, considered as a unitary notion, and accepted as such by the community, is

referred to by a specific linguistic expression, or initial term, E_0. By dissociation, the speaker distinguishes and separates between acceptable and unacceptable aspects of N_0 and, by maintaining the former set of (acceptable) aspects, builds up discursively a new content, most often denominated in studies on dissociation a *new notion N*, by necessarily assigning it a new linguistic denominator E, more or less related or similar to E_0. The new notion N is judged able to serve local particular argumentative objectives or more general ones. (see also van Eemeren et al. 1996, Grootendorst 1999)

Dissociation can thus be used persuasively by the speaker: features of the initial notion appearing as disadvantageous to the argumentative position are qualified as mere 'appearance', while advantageous features are (usually tacitly or implicitly) declared as representing 'reality'. This is why "dissociation trades on a presumed gap between 'appearance' and 'reality'." (Olson 1996, p.197)

As Warnick and Kline underline, "The Term I (appearance) component of the pair, which is actual, obvious, and immediate, is devalued; the Term II concept, a construction that can only be known indirectly, is valued. The appearance / reality pair reflects other, similar pairs composed from pervasive and culturally bound value orderings: verbal / real (B), means / end (C), subjective / objective (D), opinion / knowledge (E)"[v] (1992, p. 12). In such cases one has to do with (two) dissociations: instead of speaking about an action, one does not speak of an action in itself, but of its means or of its end, or of both, since either seems more appropriate to discuss a particular matter from the speaker's argumentative perspective. This is also the case of the couple competence / performance (F), either of the terms replacing the term *language use*. One similar dissociation may be added to those pointed to in the *NR*: the use of the expressions *the spirit* and the *letter* of the divine law (G) at various times in the Scriptures, to which the probably later dissociation between the spirit and the letter of the law is related.

In the previous example (letter / spirit), two new notions have resulted from an old notion, and this seems to be the case in institutional settings, governed by certain rituals and functioning principles. This is also the case of scientific, technical, professional discourse or of various jargons. Many examples provided in the *NR* are usually of this type as well since the authors deal with well established cognitive domains, such as philosophical systems, in which one is not expected to speak plainly about an event, but make a distinction between the

causes and the consequences of an event. In many usual daily situations only one new notion is created, as in the prototypical cases of expressions with the adjectives *real, true*, and their derivatives, when only one new notion – such as *true love* or *the truly needy* (see Zarefsky et al. 1984) – is created and valued.

Dissociation is may give birth to new philosophical systems or scientific perspectives. For instance the notion of QUANTUM PHYSICS is dissociated from the notion of PHYSICS, and a second dissociated notion thus evolves, termed *Newtonian physics* (H). They are not opposing each other, but the couple is necessary for building a new paradigm, and dealing with physical phenomena and processes in completely different systems of reference. Like in this case, where both notions are maintained, dissociation does not always involve discarding the old notion N_0. In ordinary communication N_0 is temporarily discarded only for the very specific purpose of argumentation. In institutionalized communication (law, meetings of organizations), a particular dissociation may result in adopting a (notional) solution available also in the future (see Gata 2009, comments on *sustainable development*). This means that in some cases, the particular type of 'compromise' reached by dissociation is temporarily adopted and then the solution is forgotten, while in other cases the solution is maintained for future similar cases of incompatibility.

Two main ideas have been stressed upon in this section:
1) Dissociation allows the speaker to build a new notion in a particular discursive context. The creation of this new notional representation has an argumentative goal. In institutional settings two new notions may be created to replace – as a pair – an old notion whose content proves incompatible with the discussion upon a particular matter.
2) The new notion is either temporarily or definitely available – i.e. some new notions created by dissociations are used in common everyday conversations and some other notions are used in institutionalized contexts, re-used, and become established notional representations, giving birth to concepts to be used in theories, developing (scientific) paradigms.

In what follows the hypothesis to be tested is in connection with the second idea listed above, namely that the new notion (the dissociated term) has a shorter or a longer life, depending on the paradigm and the social setting in which it appears, on its interior makeup and dissemination force, on its author's notoriety, and on

the mediating channel. This hypothesis is also to be tested in connection with the first idea listed above, in the sense that the 'double' dissociation is characteristic of discourse taking place in institutional settings (see examples A-H above).

3. 'Life expectancy' of dissociated terms

The main starting point of this study is that dissociations may occur in more or less conventionalized and institutionalized contexts and its result(s) – namely the concepts or notional representations created – are argumentatively valued in the context.

Three different situations may be distinguished in dealing with dissociation terms as results, or products, of the dissociation mechanism, and the initial hypothesis is thus branched: 1) terms resulting from dissociations taking place in institutional settings (scientific / academic / philosophical discourse) have 'long life expectancy' and are maintained subsequently as (technical / scientific / professional) terms in a given socio-historic context – these may be considered concepts proper; 2) terms resulting from dissociations taking place in ordinary communicative activities (everyday conversations on various topics) have 'short life expectancy' and are functional only within the activity or situation in which they evolved; 3) some terms resulting from dissociations taking place in ordinary communication or in institutional settings may have 'medium life expectancy' if they are later re-used, evoked, reported, re-built as such owing to their particular suggestive force or persuasive potential.

3.1. The first sub-hypothesis is that terms resulting from dissociations taking place in institutional settings (scientific / academic / philosophical discourse) may have 'long life expectancy' and maintained subsequently as (technical / scientific / professional) terms in a given socio-historic context – these may be considered concepts proper. Such a term denotes a notion or a concept endowed with 'long life expectancy', i.e. the potential of definitely and clearly outliving the particular discourse activity under which it was proposed to an audience. Among such terms, the following will be discussed below: *sustainable development*, *the letter / spirit of the law*, *Newtonian / quantum physics*, *global warming.*

3.1.1. Sustainable development

The notion of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**[vi]** is dissociated from the notion of DEVELOPMENT since the latter refers to activities which – as practiced by some human communities – led to negative consequences for the following

generations. It is thus alleged that another kind of development is more profitable to mankind, the one that *sustains* itself or makes itself last (Fr. *développement durable*), by preserving enough resources for the future generations. This concept was first promoted on a large scale in 1987, on the occasion of the publication of the issues of an international meeting providing a historical report: *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development* known as the "Report of the Brundtland commission" or Brundtland Report (BR).

Historically, the concept of SUSTAINABILITY is reported to be used first in relation with scarcity of resources: this was related to population growth in the eighteenth century and to coal shortage in the nineteenth century.**[vii]** In 1980 the term *sustainable development* was first used with respect to creating an environment apt to ensure conservation of nature and natural resources.

The creation of the concept was supported and justified discursively in the BR not only by various strategies of definition**[viii]**, but also by the contrast established between the (old) notion of PROGRESS, as it was commonly conceived of at the time, and the newly dissociated concept of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, in favour of the latter; i.e. the latter is positively valued in two ways: firstly, in defining it by opposition to anything that might have been seen as 'progress' up to that time and, secondly, in arguing in favour of many types of (strategic) changes which should take place in order to ensure real development. An antithesis highlights the contrast in the following excerpt:
(1) The world must quickly design strategies that will allow nations to *move from their present, often destructive, processes of growth and development* onto *sustainable development paths*." (BR, art. 27) (my italics)

The need for a clear and mutually shared representation of the newly created concept is insisted upon in various documents issued at that time:
(2) Arriving at a commonly accepted definition of 'sustainable development' remains a challenge for all the actors in the development process. (*Making Common Cause,* U.S. Based Development, Environment, Population NGOs, WCED Public Hearing, Ottawa, 26-27 May 1986)

Moreover, authorities are interested in disseminating the concept and its content:
(3) How are individuals in the real world to be persuaded or made to act in the common interest? The answer lies partly in education, institutional development, and law enforcement. (BR, art. 16)

The concept created by dissociation has been largely used ever since: the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was created in 1992 as a further step forward in applying the principles established by the BR; the United Nations presently guide actions and strategies in the area of sustainable development by its Division for Sustainable Development; as a natural consequence of the use of this concept other concepts have evolved, referred to by terms such as *sustainable growth, sustainable management (of resources), sustainable consumption / production (patterns), environmental sustainability.* The concept is still widely used at present and the large choice of actions and activities performed by the international organisms previously mentioned, to which add lots of national agencies, support the idea that the dissociated concept of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT has a long life expectancy.**[ix]** The adjective *sustainable* has been associated to many other nouns yielding a profusion of specialized terms: *sustainable cities / culture / yield*.

In the cases discussed under 3.1.1.-3.1.4., as in other similar cases, I find it adequate to speak about dissociation giving birth to a 'new notion' as the following development stage of a 'dissociated term'. When the linguistic expression corresponding to a dissociated term enters a dictionary – and often in a specialized dictionary, vocabulary or glossary – or whenever there is obvious evidence that it exists in the collective memory, then it can be equated to a 'new notion'.

3.1.2. The letter and the spirit of the law
While the term *sustainable development* and its definition can be found in various glossaries or dictionaries, notions such as *the letter of the (divine) law* or *the spirit of the (divine) law* are not included in general language dictionaries; yet, they are widely used and understood, or at least acknowledged and appropriated by large communities of people.

In the following excerpt, the article author quotes a Rabbi who justifies what might be called a 'communitarian theft' after federal indictments against six members of the Hasidic community of New Square, N.Y. for misuse of government education money**[x]**:
(4) Without going into the question of whether or not they were obeying *the letter of the law, the spirit of the law* was always being complied with," declares Rabbi Mayer Schiller (…) The purpose of the law was to support education, says Schiller, and that's exactly what the money was used for, even if the studies were

not conducted in the formal manner required by the Pell Grant Program. (my italics)

http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/1/31/174956.shtml

Although referred to explicitly in the Rabbi's utterance, the notion of LAW is avoided in the justification, since it does not allow for explaining how the use of the governmental support could be viewed as legal. The two dissociated notions *spirit of the law* and *letter of the law* are mentioned and in some way opposed: in a somewhat naïve way – which he might wish for as transparent – the speaker mentions not going into details about the fellows obeying or not obeying the letter of the law, but states that the money obtained from the government was employed for study, which was in the spirit of the law, the adverb *always* being used to strategically emphasize the truthfulness of the assertion. This is also the case of the couple *langue* and *parole*, where two new notions have been dissociated from a unitary notion, LANGUAGE.

3.1.3. Quantum Physics

In a similar way, the notion of QUANTUM PHYSICS was dissociated from PHYSICS, after which a need was felt for renaming the 'initial' science of physics, and a new term has been created, *Newtonian physics*. This situation could be schematized as follows:
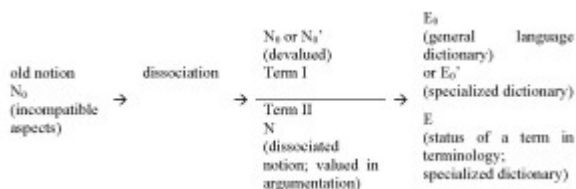
N_0 stands for the old notion not necessarily re-configured or re-defined, such as in the couple *development / sustainable development*, while N_0' corresponds T I of a double dissociation, being invertible with N as T II, depending on what member of the couple is valued in the argumentation, such as in *Newtonian physics / quantum physics*.

According to Goodwin (1991, pp. 150-151), an assertion such as *This calculation is correct* can be supported by establishing a point of reference, a principle whose application may show the assertion as true in quantum physics and false in Newtonian physics: thus, "in the presence of quantum physics, Newtonian physics only *appears* to be a solid ground for holding the initial claim." (Goodwin 1991, p.

150) On the contrary, the opponent may give Newtonian physics the status of T II, since the speaker may be interested in its economical character as opposed to the completeness of quantum physics. Or else, this can happen in other discursive circumstances, in a different setting and when a different matter is under discussion.

The result of dissociation can be used outside the particular field of science, as in the following excerpt:
(5) Action learning acknowledges what scientists proved nearly a hundred years ago, namely that *Newtonian physics does not and cannot explain reality*. Action learning recognizes that the old way of thinking and solving problems does not work, especially in today's rapidly changing environment. Action learning *therefore utilizes quantum physics, chaos theory, and systems thinking*. (Marquardt, 2004: 93)**[xi]** (my italics)

In this context, the two terms are used to distinguish between a possible old approach to action learning and the suggested innovative way of approaching such activities. Although marginal, this looks like a prototypical example of translation of the dissociated concepts to another field or referential area by means of an implicit analogy. It looks like the terms of such dissociation are – like in the case of *spirit* and *letter of the law* – powerful enough and well established in the common representation to be easily applied to and used in any situation, their rhetorical potential fully contributing to an argumentative scheme based on analogy.

3.1.4. Global warming
An interesting example of dissociation of this type is provided by the current polemic (lasting for many decades now) on global warming (GW = "rise in temperature on a large temporal scale – more than a decade"). Although the issue is being widely discussed in the media, little is known in the same environment about the actual dilemmas in the field, which are constantly dealt upon by specialists in the field. Four categories of scientists might be identified in GW study**[xii]**: 1) the skeptics – perhaps the smallest group – those who do not believe there really is any GW; 2) the GW move – the largest group – those who preach that GW is caused by increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (and this because of various human activities; in this paradigm GW has anthropogenic causes); 3) the global change (GC) move**[xiii]** – a rather small group – those who acknowledge there is a rise in temperature but attribute it to natural causes; their

opinion is that the present warming is a natural consequence of what is called "the Earth's recovery from the little ice age"; 4) a group who acknowledge the rise in temperature but attribute it to a mixture of factors. The second and the third categories are interesting for the present discussion since they oppose each other, and this on the basis of a profound difference of paradigm. Without necessarily identifying one of the two notions – GW and GC – as the 'initial' one, one may eventfully detail upon the existing dissociation by means of the following representation:

Global temperature rise (GTR) N_0 — Term I (N_0): GTR produced by natural factors (GC)
Term II (N): GW produced by anthropogenic causes

In order to defend the standpoint that the GTR can be diminished and prevented from now on, the members of the second category above dissociate a new notion N = GTR caused by anthropogenic factors (GW) from the notion including incompatibility between possible causes N_0 = GTR. GTR caused by anthropogenic factors is seen as a consequence of human activity, usually referred to by the phrase *global warming*, while discarding any other (natural) causes – the theory itself being known as *anthropogenic global warming theory* (AGW). The evolvement of this paradigm has as a consequence the fact that the programs and actions devised within this framework are meant to fight the causes, while it may well be the case that the anthropogenic factor is not the cause. In the politics realm this theory is supported by liberals and socialists. In order to defend the standpoint that the GTR cannot be fought (and that perhaps money should be invested in predicting various consequences of the GTR and ways to prevent negative ones), the members of the third category above dissociate a new notion from that of N = GTR, N' = GTR as produced by natural factors, usually referred to by the phrase *global change* or *climate change*. The notion of GC, or CLIMATE CHANGE, is more comprehensive than the notion (A)GW since it does not exclude global warming as a change and allows for the idea that global decreases in temperature may also be the case.

3.1.5. Remarks on long life expectancy dissociations
When a dissociated term has a 'long life', it is no longer part of the original argumentative context, it becomes part of a cognitive system and a social knowledge representation framework. This is the case of dissociated terms such as *letter of the law* and *spirit of the law*. They maintain their argumentative potential and, when integrated to a new context, they may have a flexible

representation, which the speaker may infuse with new notional aspects in order to make it stronger. Such a dissociated notion may be frequently inventoried in dictionaries, often pertaining to a specific field of activity.

In this way the audience by which it was initially accepted is enlarged to an audience practically indefinite in point of dimensions, i.e. as large as can be the set of individuals taking contact with that particular field or becoming members of a given community professionally, socially, culturally or historically determined. The most important element to be taken in consideration when establishing whether a dissociated term has become a new notion is its inclusion (and definition) in a dictionary or glossary, and its use within a specialized domain of activity or, at least, its presence in treatises, journal articles, institutional debates. Such terms denoting new concepts or notions are generally used by professionals, specialists in the field, who authorize and validate the term, its definition and its contextual use, which becomes the most important basis for their long life expectancy.

3.2. Dissociation may give birth to a 'new notion' improperly named so since endowed with 'short life expectancy', when it displays the potential of serving only a local purpose of resolving a difference of opinion. In this case it does not outlive the given local discursive situation and cannot be carried away from the context at all or any such attempt fails to propagate the 'new notion' with (exactly) the same meaning and potential.

The second sub-hypothesis is that terms resulting from dissociations taking place in ordinary communication (everyday conversations on various topics) have 'short life expectancy' and play an argumentative role only within the activity or situation in which they evolved. Such terms result from distinctions between notional representations which are different or incompatible for the speaker and the audience, the addressee (opponent) or some imaginary interlocutor.

3.2.1. Love of beautiful clothes is not vanity
Relying on examples provided in the literature on the topic, this could be the case with a 'dissociated term' such as LOVE OF BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES in the example discussed by van Rees (2009: 8):
(6) *She loved beautiful clothes, but was not vain.*
Love of beautiful clothes is a term dissociated from VANITY. In this case, the process is reversed, the interpretation process being something like: *Real vanity*

is something else than just love of beautiful clothes or *Love of beautiful clothes is only in appearance / looks like vanity but is something else than vanity.*

3.2.2. Virtue is political virtue

An interesting example of such a dissociation and also a meta discourse on it is to be found in the introduction (*Avertissement*) to *The Spirit of Laws***[xiv]** by Montesquieu:

(7) … what I distinguish by the name of virtue, in a republic, is the love of one's country, that is, the love of equality. It is not a moral, nor a Christian, but a political *virtue*; and it is the spring which sets the republican government in motion, as honour is the spring which gives motion to monarchy. Hence it is that I have distinguished the love of one's country, and of equality, by the appellation of political virtue. (Author's italics.)

The notion of VIRTUE evolved for Montesquieu from more general (1725, *Discours sur l'équité*) to more precise (1757, *The Spirit of Laws*)**[xv]**. In the excerpt above the author is also in search of a name for the new notion he proposes; the one he finds and he points to explicitly – by a meta discursive / linguistic reference – is *political virtue*, equated with the meaning of "love of one's country and/or of equality". Although this notion is rather ambiguous, especially that there are other notional contents which Montesquieu assigns to fr. *vertu*, the discourse will be consistent with this notion of VIRTUE defined or described by the author. The meta-linguistic comments continue and are probably meant to clearly suggest separation from other possible interpretations and also delineate the author's position more specifically against criticisms brought to his previously advanced standpoints. The text goes on as follows:

(8) My ideas are new, and therefore I have been obliged to find new words, or to give new acceptations to old terms, in order to convey my meaning. They, who are unacquainted with this particular, have made me say most strange absurdities, such as would be shocking in any part of the world, because in all countries and governments morality is requisite. […] I have set these matters in a clearer light in the present edition, by giving a more precise meaning to my expression: and in most places where I have made use of the word *virtue* I have taken care to add the term *political*.

In the two excerpts above, Montesquieu is saying neither *Virtue is …* since he does not intend to present the generally accepted definition of *virtue* – nor *True virtue is …* which would indicate a dissociation in a somewhat clearer and semi-

explicit way. In saying *what I distinguish by the name of ...* he could be pointing to a meaning clarification or to a dissociation. In both cases – by applying a strategy of maximally argumentative interpretation and the pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion – this utterance can be considered to belong to the opening stage, where starting points of the discussion are established. Normally, dissociation brings any discussion to its opening stage and, from the moment it is being deployed it allows changing the starting points or creating new ones, and consequently opens a new discussion.

Thus Montesquieu presents a dissociation which he introduced less explicitly on other occasions. This dissociation is now mentioned at the very beginning of the treatise in order to allow consistent use of the new notion POLITICAL VIRTUE throughout the work and also in line with the audience's expected interpretation. This could also be ranged in the category 3.2.c) above.

3.2.3. Legitimate economic purposes
In the context of discussions about law violation by Goldman Sachs Group Inc., Bill Clinton expresses his opinion that Goldman is not guilty since there was no economic purpose in the actions under discussion:
(9) "I don't think it is self-evident" Goldman Sachs broke the law because investors "had access to the same information" as Paulson, Clinton said at a conference in Washington focusing on the federal government's financial picture. "What is evident to me is that, whoever wins and loses in that deal, there is no larger purpose for the American economy – *nobody really benefits except the person that wins the gamble*." (..) He said "too much of this stuff has no economic purpose," while also saying he backs farmers' "fundamentally different" use of derivatives to protect themselves against poor harvests. "*Derivatives that serve a legitimate economic purpose ought to be treated differently than those that don't*, and I do not believe that there was any *legitimate economic purpose* advanced by the derivative at issue in the Goldman case," Clinton said. (my italics)
http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-04-29/ex-president-clinton-skeptical-gol dman-violated-law-update1-.html

The term *legitimate economic purpose* does not have a clear unambiguous representation and does not correspond to a notion proper. It is however used by the speaker to distinguish the action of Goldman from other actions which may be thought of as having legitimate economic purposes and could be treated as infringements of the law, while in the Goldman Sachs case the beneficiary is

thought to be only one person. In the given context, the lack of a more obviously delimited dissociated notion of LEGITIMATE ECONOMIC PURPOSE prevents Clinton from giving his assertion a heavy weight. This is a good example of the lesser (argumentative) impact of dissociated terms which are not provided with a sound definition and clearly delineated notional content. This could be one of the reasons for which Clinton is using the formula *I do not believe that there was any legitimate economic purpose...*

3.2.4. Remarks on short life expectancy dissociated terms
Such a dissociated term cannot be referred to or revived in the absence of the contextual data of its creation, i.e. it has not any potential of outliving the particular discourse activity under which it was proposed to a given audience. Another characteristic is the fact that the linguistic expression assigned to such a notional content does not have lexicalization features, i.e. the lexical items which make it up occur as a free combination. If at any time this dissociated representation is recalled or re-used, then another linguistic expression may be used and the phrase initially used in the dissociation is not necessarily maintained. Reviving such a notional content is possible only in the following situations and for:
a) the same speaker rebuilding an argumentative situation on the basis of her past experience and previous use of the dissociated term (i.e. the dissociated term has outlived the initial discursive situation as a 'new notion' only for the speaker who has a memory of that particular dissociation); however, in a new setting the dissociation may have a different turnover, and the dissociated term can be used differently;
b) the speaker's opponent or a member of the audience re-telling (narrating the argumentative situation – a reported dissociation); in this case, the functions of dissociation and of argumentation are not the same as in the initial situation;
c) the speaker's opponent or a member of the audience re-creating the same argumentative context by rhetorically mimicking for his own purpose the initial argumentative discourse (i.e. the speech situation is re-created in another environment, with this other speaker re-using a past passive experience and re-making it into his own as a current active argumentative action).

This type of dissociation can be more easily identified by means of grammatical and discursive devices, some of the 'tool-words' of a language. Such indicators could be: negation (X is not x ...), use of adversative or concessive *but*, and of

other concessive adverbials (*yet, however*), the adjectives *true* and *real* and their derivatives, prefixes such as *non-*, *pseudo-*.

3.3. A third possibility, placed somewhere among the two, is that dissociation gives birth to a 'new notion' endowed with medium life expectancy, i.e. the potential of being revived occasionally by the same speaker or by various speakers and thus outliving the particular discourse activity under which it was initially proposed to an audience. A prototypical case is that of the dissociated term *truly needy* or *true need* used by Reagan in some of his discourses trying to justify austerity measures (example largely discussed in Zarefsky et al. 1984; see also Rosner 1982). In a speech given in 1981, President Reagan said:

(10) "We will continue to fulfill the obligations that spring from our national conscience, […] *those who through no fault of their own* must depend on the rest of us, the poverty-stricken, the disabled, the elderly, all those with *true need* can rest assured that the social safety net of programs they depend on are exempt from any cuts". (quoted by Rosner 1982, p. 381; Rosner's italics; excerpted from

New York Times, March 17th, 1981)

Some of the features of this type of dissociation are the following: a) it cannot be included in the dictionary; b) it obviously serves a rhetorical purpose – not a dialectical one; c) it addresses large audiences made up of various subgroups; d) it can be easily propagated in space and time through media; e) consequently, it dwells in the public memory and can be easily used in new circumstances with the same initial potential, eventfully with changes of meaning, yet carrying part or all of the initial rhetorical and dialectical potential, especially when used by the same speaker and addressing the same audience. Two structural elements in the example above contribute to specifying the meaning of the expression *truly needy*:

(a) *those who through no fault of their own must depend on us*;
(b) *the poverty-stricken, the disabled, the elderly.*

The phrase (a) is likely to be kept as such in the collective memory, although it is relatively ambiguous: no one has a precise representation of what a *fault of one's own* is. To this vague notional content add the meanings corresponding to the elements in the enumeration (b), but it is unclear – since the sentence is syntactically ambiguous – whether the elements of this enumeration are specifications of the phrase (a) and whether the category covered by (a) extends

only to these three instances.

Since such expressions appear to display features of both the category of 'new notions' referred to under 3.1. and that of 'dissociated terms' referred to under 3.2. above, I find it adequate for the moment to name these 'value-laden notions' (I am borrowing this phrase from Rosner 1982, p. 355). In dealing with the phrase *truly needy*, Rosner points to the fact that it can be assigned several definitions: "The variety of definitions of the « truly needy » will be shown to reflect far more the different political and social interests of charity workers, hospital and dispensary trustees, and public spokesmen, than any basic philosophically consistent moral position." (1982, p. 356) In this case we are in front of a prototypical example of 'medium life expectancy' dissociated term. The more so as part of the notional content corresponding to the dissociated term is maintained throughout decades, according to Rosner: "there is a similarity of meaning and analysis in arguments over definitions of the « truly needy » over the proper eligibility criteria for a variety of health programs like Medicaid and Medicare, and for the scope of other social service programs such as food stamps and welfare." (1982, p. 381)

It is nevertheless important to point out that such dissociated terms are not introduced in dictionaries; their life mainly relies on the propagation strength of the various media and of literature – sometimes also of the hearsay practice, mainly for communities who have less access to school(ing), culture, information. Another factor contributing to the 'medium life expectancy' status of such expressions is the notoriety of the speaker introducing the dissociation and the dissociated term.

4. Final Remarks
Assessing the life expectancy of a dissociated term may indicate whether it can give birth to a paradigm or reference system or it will only live throughout the discussion which generated it or allowed for its existence. An interesting point to be further studied is the way in which the linguistic expressions assigned to dissociated terms are infused with emotional meaning, which is their predictable semantic behavior in point of audience interpretation and relationship with other expressions in the vocabulary of the language.

NOTES
[i] This study is funded by the Romanian Ministry of Education, through the

National Research Council under Project ID 1209/2007 (Ideas).

[ii] Throughout the text of this article italics stand for a linguistic expression encountered in discourse, such as *true humour*, while terms in capitals, such as HUMOUR, point to a notion, a conceptual content eventfully corresponding to a linguistic expression in a given language.

[iii] Letters between brackets point to specific cases of dissociation (examples A to H) in which two new notions may be created. The letters point to specific examples borrowed from the literature on dissociation or identified as dissociations in various instances of discourse by the author of the present article.

[iv] The definition I propose is the following: A double dissociation occurs when two new notions are created, both having argumentative potential in contrasting discursive situations; in the case of a double dissociation, the two new notions are expected to be assigned linguistic denominators different from the expression used to refer to the initial notion.

[v] The letters between brackets are mine (A.G.) to indicate, as mentioned above, the two dissociated terms on the basis of two dissociations.

[vi] In this endnote I provide definitions of the concept of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT which I find most useful in the context of the present article: 1. First (historical) definition of *sustainable development*: "Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (1986, UNESCO Commission, *Our Common Future*); 2. "a concept that has emerged in recent years, based on the premise that development must meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Glossary published on the website of the Institute for Sustainable Development); 3. "A development path along which the maximisation of human well-being for today's generations does not lead to declines in future well-being" (definition taken from the glossary published on the site of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Sustainable Development's Glossary*).

[vii] For a detailed and clear presentation of the concept of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, see, among others, Baker, Susan (2006). *Sustainable Development*. Oxon: Routledge.

[viii] The various strategies of definition used in the Brundtland Report are in themselves a very interesting research direction in terms of argumentation study.

[ix] See Baker 2006: 27 ff. for *sustainable development* as a political concept.

[x] "(…) the indictments allege, among other things, the fraudulent misuse over a 10-year period of $10 million in federal Pell grants that were earmarked for

financially needy post-secondary students. The defendants are accused of transmitting the funds through bogus schools of independent study in which no real study took place, in which students did not meet regularly with their mentors as required, and where very few degrees were awarded, even to students who had been registered in the programs for years." (article introduction, http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2001/1/31/174956.shtml)

[xi] Marquardt, Michael J. (2004). *Optimizing the power of action learning: solving problems and building leaders in real time*. Mountain View: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

[xii] The scientific data and information were provided by Mirela Voiculescu, Assistant Professor and researcher in the field of Atmospheric Physics at Dunărea de Jos University of Galaţi, Romania.

[xiii] The GC towards warming is said to be natural because there are areas where the temperature is either constant or decreases; the last ten years have witnessed a stabilization of the global temperature. There are measurements and data evidential of two major increases in global temperature: the first one in 1910-1950, followed by significant decreases in 1950-1970/5; the next increase since 1975 – up to now has a similar rate. Major reasons for claiming that global warming is a global natural change are the following: α) The first increase cannot be explained by anthropogenic factors since pollution and industry did not have so high rates at the time. β) There is no clear relation or connection between the second increase and the greenhouse gases increase. γ) The main aspect is that no one can identify a unidirectional relationship – either can influence the other.

[xiv] *The Spirit of Laws*, by Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, translated by Thomas Nugent, revised by J. V. Prichard, based on a public domain edition published in 1914 by G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., London, rendered into HTML and text by Jon Roland of the Constitution Society.

[xv] See also article *Vertu*, Dictionnaire électronique Montesquieu: http://dictionnaire-montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/

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