

Abductive Reasoning

Douglas Walton



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This book examines three areas in which abductive reasoning is especially important: medicine, science, and law. The reader is introduced to abduction and shown how it has evolved historically into the framework of conventional wisdom in logic. Discussions draw upon recent techniques used in artificial intelligence, particularly in the areas of multi-agent systems and plan recognition, to develop a dialogue model of explanation. Cases of causal explanations in law are analyzed using abductive reasoning, and all the components are finally brought together to build a new account of abductive reasoning.

By clarifying the notion of abduction as a common and significant type of reasoning in everyday argumentation, *Abductive Reasoning* will be useful to scholars and students in many fields, including argumentation, computing and artificial intelligence, psychology and cognitive science, law, philosophy, linguistics, and speech communication and rhetoric.



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