

the likely disease the patient is experiencing. Debaters also, on occasion, attempt to diagnose symptoms. How, for example, would a debater prove that globalization produces economic stagnation in developing countries? This is a hypothesis advanced to support a group of facts: globalization is proceeding at a rapid pace; developed countries are getting richer as globalization proceeds; and developing countries are getting poorer as globalization proceeds. The debater arguing this case claims that stopping the spread of globalization will be the solution to improving economic growth in developing countries.

The three primary tests of abduction are as follows:

- Are the facts (or symptoms) accurately described?
- Are other facts ignored that would contradict the hypothesis?
- Are other hypotheses available to explain the same set of facts?

Facts are sometimes slippery things. For example, the statement that “globalization is proceeding at a rapid pace” may be true in some places but not in others. An opposing debater might be able to prove that globalization is rapidly advancing in precisely those countries where economic growth is highest. Accordingly, developing countries might need more globalization rather than less. A key way to defeat argument by abduction is to show that the facts are incorrect or improperly interpreted.

A second problem with abduction is that an arguer may conveniently leave out certain facts. A physician is likely to misdiagnose a patient if a few symptoms are considered but others are ignored. Similarly, a debater might improperly choose a hypothesis because too few facts are considered. In our globalization example, an opposing debater might succeed in identifying some developing countries that have embraced globalization and have experienced outstanding economic growth as a result.

A final method of defeating abduction is the support of alternative hypotheses. A debater responding to the attack on globalization might be able to support several other explanations:

- Economic stagnation in developing countries results from a failure to embrace globalization.
- Economic stagnation in developing countries results from rampant government corruption in these countries.
- Economic stagnation in developing countries results from the dependency-effects of too much foreign assistance.

CAUSE-EFFECT REASONING