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It is a commonplace nowadays in fallacy literature that not all instances of informal fallacies are really wrong. Reasons vary. In "Interpretative dilemmas," David Botting argues that informal fallacies of relevance (and equivocation) are not in fact genuine cases of fallacy at all. This is because in interpreting an argument, and before subjecting it to logical analysis, the analyst faces a choice: she can be uncharitable, in which case she'll accuse the arguer of incompetence or deceit (and so of not arguing); or she can be charitable, and interpret the fallacious argument as something else, such as a demand.

I do not have any serious objections to the discussion of how various instances of fallacies of relevance (section 3) can be viewed as not fallacious. It is, I think, generally true that such fallacies are over diagnosed. I do however have a quibble with the idea that charity requires us to construct the best possible iteration of someone's argument. I think it's possible, in other words, to be too charitable. Put another way, charity may not require us to be nice. From a purely *formal* perspective, nearly every inference, however stretched, has its own peculiar logic: with enough charity, no one could ever make a fallacious argument of the kind standard logic text examples mean to illustrate. One often hears criticisms of the Standard Treatment along these very lines: viz., such examples are deprived of context, the arguments could be interpreted in different and more charitable ways, or some of the arguments are not really even arguments.

Fair enough. But people do, as a matter of fact, make horrible arguments *they* mean to be interpreted as arguments. Legions of so-called climate change skeptics, for instance, meant to infer from Al Gore's electricity usage to the falsity of the thesis that human activity causes climate change. If they didn't mean to make that inference, they at least meant others to draw it at their behest.

Charity, I think, also requires that we respect a person's intentions, however inadequately realized. People who make fallacious arguments are very often trying their best to argue, just as novice violinists are trying to play. The arguers are trying to line up reasons they think, however wrongly at times, to imply some conclusion. Though we may indeed have a choice to interpret their arguments as not arguments, and so not fallacious, we may be passing on an opportunity to improve the person's skills as an arguer. More importantly, we may also be passing on a chance to evaluate the person's reasoning capabilities. If the various straw men, *ad hominems*, and *ad populums* of John Q. Firebrand evade our scrutiny, he just may get elected.

I do not mean to suggest that Botting thinks the worst instances of these kinds of relevance issues are permissible. He thinks rather that logic wastes its time on a matter beyond its borders. But that's just the challenge, I think, of informal logic: to provide a systematic, or better quasi-systematic, method for interpreting and evaluating the utterances and arguments that people tend to make.