

Exercises for Better Philosophical Writing: Validity & Invalidity

Willie Costello

Recall the definition of validity:

an argument is valid = there is *no possible situation* in which the argument's premisses are true and its conclusion is false

What follows are five *invalid* arguments. First, state in words why the argument is invalid. Then see if you can change one of the premisses (or add an additional premiss to the argument) such that the stated conclusion validly follows.

1. If you liked it, then you woulda put a ring on it
 2. You didn't like it
 - ∴ You didn't put a ring on it
-
1. If Jay-Z is married to Beyoncé, then Beyoncé is married to Jay-Z
 2. Beyoncé is married to Jay-Z
 - ∴ Jay-Z is married to Beyoncé
-
1. Jay-Z & Beyoncé own a private island in the Bahamas
 2. People who are filthy stinking rich own private islands in the Bahamas
 - ∴ Jay-Z & Beyoncé are filthy stinking rich
-
1. All legitimately talented artists have won at least ten Grammys
 2. Beyoncé has won seventeen Grammys
 - ∴ Beyoncé is a legitimately talented artist
-
1. Nothing is better than lifelong happiness
 2. Yet another Jay-Z album is better than nothing
 - ∴ Yet another Jay-Z album is better than lifelong happiness