Bonjour's chapter 3 and 4.

Let's begin with the following belief condition.

A. If I know that p, then I believe that p.

B's counterexample to A. is that I know that I am a human being at time t, while I do not have it explicitly in mind and I do not consciously accept it at time t. This counterexample presupposes that A. is equivalent to the following:

B. If I know that p at time t, then I explicitly have p in mind at t and consciously accept it at time t.

B. has the virtue of making explicit what is meant by belief. However, the belief condition can be saved by the following addition.

C. If I know that p at time t, then either (a) I explicitly have p in mind at t and consciously accept it at time t, or (b) I would consciously accept it at t2, if I were to explicitly have it in mind at t2.

Clause (a) concerns occurrent belief, while clause (b) concerns dispositional belief. B's second counterexample is a case where I do not believe that my roof leaks at time t, but I do satisfy clause (b) because I would accept it at time t2, if it was proposed to me or if I happen to think of it at t2, but I have never explicitly considered or accepted it at any time. This is a case where I do not believe it but am predisposed to believe it given the right prompting. He then proposes a rewording of clause (b) – see p. 30 - to take care of this counterexample. What is this rewording?

The last point on belief concerns what degree of acceptance is needed for knowledge. One can accept a claim as certain or with some lesser degree of confidence. B. believes that if we use certainty, then there are "commonsense" counterexamples which can be used. B also makes a note on his "methodology."

Let's turn now to the truth condition.

D. If I know that p, then p is true.

B considers a possible counterexample of people in Columbus' time knowing that the world is flat; while we know, of course that this is false. This makes the antecedent true and the consequent false. B's reply to this is to claim that people in Columbus' time did not know that the world is flat. Despite the fact that all the evidence possessed at the time was very persuasive, B says that they only seemed to know. He claims that from a more objective standpoint, they did not know. (We'll skip the section on the correspondence, coherence, pragmatic, and redundancy theories of truth.)

Let's finally turn to the justification condition.

E. If I know that p, then I have evidence for believing that p is true.

B's first counterexample is a case where Susan knows where I am hiding with no reason to know this. This is a context, e.g., in paying a game of hide and seek, where simply being correct is all that matters, no reasons are needed. B. claims that most other cases of knowledge are different and that E. is required to distinguish knowledge from cases of lucky guesses.

B's second counterexample is I know that 2+3=5, I see a tree outside the window, I remember eating Grape Nuts this morning. These are cases of knowledge where my evidence is not an independent reason. This counterexample fails if we do not require that evidence for believing p to be true to be independent of p or my belief that p. (We'll skip the Gettier problem.)

B's third counterexample concerns the strength of the evidence needed for knowledge. Requiring evidence which gives 100% support seems too much with respect to a wide range of knowledge claims. However, allowing less than 100% gives rise to four issues. What are these issues? Which does Bonjour believe to be more important and which do you believe to be most important?

Induction

B begins with two examples of inductive reasoning (sugar dissolving and an air gun shot). He claims that these and all other cases of inductive reasoning are instances of the following argument form:

I. 1. There is a correlation between two or more sets, e.g., A and B, of observations where all observed A's are B's.

2. Hence, a % of all A's are B's (where "all" covers all past, present, future, and possible instances of A and B.)

One way of supporting this inference is to add a premise called the principle of induction that claims that the past cases, as specified in premise 1, will relevantly resemble all unobserved and possible cases.

Hume argues against the reasonableness of induction as follows:

1. If induction is justified, then it is justified by either deduction or experience.
2. Induction cannot be justified by deduction.
3. Induction cannot be justified by experience.
4. Hence, Induction is not justified.

Hume supports premises 2 and 3 in interesting ways.

If I. is a deductive argument, then the truth of the premise implies the truth of the conclusion. This means that you should not be able to find a counterexample where the premise is true and the conclusion false. As a deductive argument provides “necessary” support, we can look for counterexamples not just in actual cases, but in possible ones as well. Possible ones are easy to construct if we allow “the course of nature” to change, so the “laws” which govern sugar dissolving and a pellet’s path can change, then certainly their behaviors can change as well, so that the conclusion is false. (Another way to state this is that if there is information stated in the conclusion, e.g. concerning the behavior of all possible instances of A’s and B’s, that is not stated in the premises, which concern only past observed instances, then the deductive argument is invalid.)

If I. is supported by experience, than B. claims that experience can play a role in two ways: either the connection between the premise and conclusion can be directly observed, or that connection was observed in the past. Both are impossible because since the conclusion concerns possible cases which cannot be observed presently or in the past. Experience just cannot verify any kind of connection to something that is merely possible.

A more basic problem is that using experience to verify I. is circular. The task is to verify that at time t1, *we can infer something about possible and future cases from observed past cases*. The reply that we have done so successfully at time t-1 supports this inference at t1 only if *we can infer something about possible and future cases from observed past cases*. This is clearly circular: the reply supports the inference only if the inference is correct!