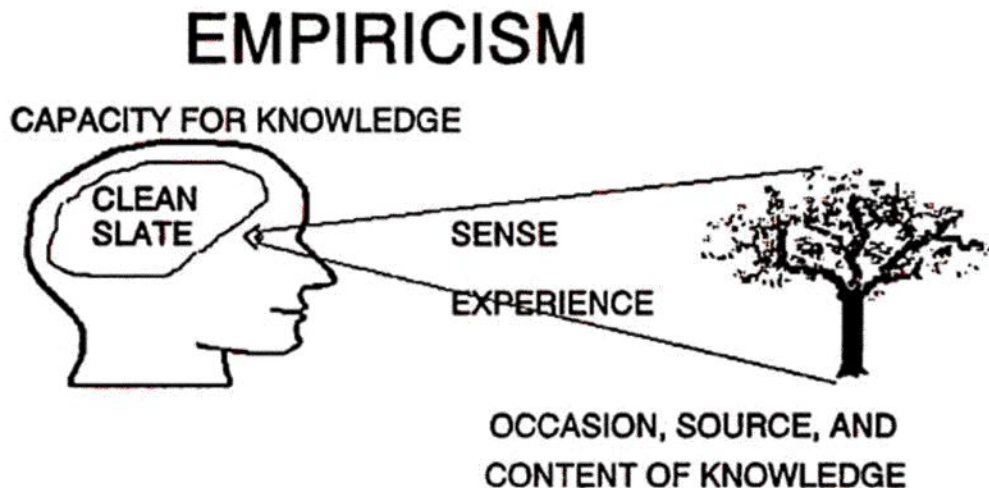


We experience only our own perceptions. Hume concluded that, since when we experience and observe, we are experiencing and observing nothing more than our own perceptions, we can never learn anything from experience and observation. Thus, by developing empiricism to its logical conclusion, Hume arrived at pure skepticism. And, since we can never learn anything, there can be no such thing as a belief based upon true knowledge, i.e., a rational belief. Any belief that we hold must be held irrationally, i.e., without benefit of knowledge or of truth.

Empiricism may be diagrammed as follows:



(6) Rational Empiricism

This view embodies the belief that knowledge derives from a combination of reason and experience.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was the intellectual heir both of rational metaphysics and theology, and of empirical science. He attempted a synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, and a reconciliation of religion and science. Kant believed that all knowledge derives from both experience and the mind, a view sometimes referred to as "rational empiricism." In this conception, experience provides the occasion and content of knowledge, and the mind contributes form. But in the end, all that we can know is our own perceptions (phenomena). We can never know the things-in-themselves (noumena). In this respect Kant endorsed and confirmed Hume's phenomenalism. However, Kant said, although we know only our own perceptions, yet it is necessary to assume a mind-in-itself that does the perceiving, and objects-in-themselves which are the sources of our sensations. Thus we know that things-in-themselves exist; but beyond this bare fact, we know nothing. That is, we know the existence, the that, but cannot know the nature, the what, of things-in-themselves. It can