

Graphic - Arch-Enemy of Determinism and Skepticism

Thomas Jefferson to John Adams

August 15, 1820 (responding to a letter Adams had previously sent to Jefferson):

It's crowd of scepticisms kept me from sleep. I read it, and laid it down: read it, and laid it down, again and again: and to give rest to my mind, I was obliged to recur ultimately to my habitual anodyne, 'I feel: therefore I exist.' I feel bodies which are not myself: there are other existencies then. I call them matter. I feel them changing place. This gives me motion. Where there is an absence of matter, I call it void, or nothing, or immaterial space. On the basis of sensation, of matter and motion, we may erect the fabric of all the certainties we can have or need.

