

### Five-Paragraph Essay on the Body-Mind Problem

I love you because you are a unique snowflake. The extent a snowflake can be unique is subject to debate. Humans share twenty-five percent of their DNA with bananas. Given two humans, fallen onto the coat-sleeve of a Brobdingnag, would it be possible to tell us apart? To tell us from bananas? The yellow bananas found in American supermarkets are genetically interchangeable.

You are pale and interesting. Blood vessels can be constricted by, among other means, infecting the subject with the tuberculosis bacillus; dehydration; blood loss; or the ingestion of large quantities of vinegar. Pallor can also be applied in the form of clown white, greasepaint, or foundation makeup. Tuberculosis patients with a hectic flush were considered attractive circa 1893; given the long incubation period before an individual infected with the tuberculosis bacillus presents symptoms of the disease, it is hard to ascertain the resultant infection rates.

The epidemiology of love in the nineteenth century can, however, be tracked through the progress of syphilis. Syphilis presents in three stages, of which only the second and third need concern us here: in the second, the joints may become inflamed, and the patient walks with a characteristic stiff gait, frequently described in the decadent spa literature of the turn of the century. In the third, the spirochetes invade the brain, and the patient suffers an increasing dementia. Cerebral syphilitic infection can be differentiated from the euphoria of love by an examination of the spinal fluid.

I love you just the way you are. Please do not bathe or change your clothes until further notice; any alteration in your current location, pose, mood, level of energy, activity, attitude, etc., will be taken as a breach of contract and grounds for legal action. To facilitate

your continued stasis I will provide you with a regular supply of bananas. Should prolonged inactivity produce a sensation of stiffness in the joints, a diagnosis of syphilis should not be ruled out, and mercury treatments should be considered. Mercury, also known as quicksilver, the deadly poison used to treat syphilis, is named after the Roman messenger of the gods. This is presumably a result of the speed at which the liquid metal moves. Mercury treatments can be fatal, but were generally considered preferable to the disease; patients may, however, regret their lost noses.

I will love you forever. Sans nose, sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything, there will nonetheless be a systematic endorphin release when I see you; there may also be a significant rise in adrenaline from sexual attraction, which when examined through a stethoscope is indistinguishable from rage. How come I can never tell what you are thinking?