

Does the philosophy change you?

Post by "Cassius" of June 16, 2023 at 7:44 AM

It has been pointed out to me that my "other than that Mrs. Lincoln how was the play" joke might be misunderstood. I used the smile icon, but I better be more clear:

And I do indeed see in looking it up places like [here](#) that it is now being given a different meaning than what I understood. This is absolutely NOT the meaning of the phrase as I have grown up understanding it:

"A sarcastic phrase meant to downplay the complaint or misfortune of another person, similar to playing the world's tiniest violin with one's fingers."

As I grew up understanding it, the phrase was meant to be a joke which emphasizes that something huge (usually bad) has been mentioned, and that everything else (such as "how was the play") pales in comparison to that big event. So it's actually an inverted expression of agreement in how bad the event referenced really was.

For example, the use here in reference to a particularly bad day on Wall Street with few redeeming good things happening: <https://www.pensford.com/industry-news/...lay-mrs-lincoln>

Or here, where it is said jokingly that "on top of that..." nuclear war would be a climate problem: <https://www.mikesmithenterprisesblog.com/2022/03/other-...rs-lincoln.html>

Or this, which references the phrase as a "droll understatement" - <https://www.nickharvillibraries.com/blog/-other-th...lay-mrs-lincoln>

So in this case, "other than that Mrs. Lincoln how was the play?" was not a sarcastic reference to what was stated in the previous post, but an agreement that the issue of alienating friends and family can be so important that it would be tempting to say that any offsetting benefits would be minimal.

I hope no one misconstrued the reference! I did not intend to write so much about this but I am surprised to find the "sick" joke references on the internet which seem to change the meaning completely.