



All the Plays of Charles Mee In Your Pocket

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How many songs do you have in your iPod? How about play scripts by contemporary American authors? A few weeks ago playwright Charles Mee released his [entire collection of plays as a free app](#) for the iPhone/Pod/Pad.

Using an app to promote and distribute one's play scripts is a fascinating response to the current state of publishing, and to a greater extent the ecology of media/technology and the arts. I would love to know from Mr. Mee himself how the App is doing in terms of downloads, or if it has led to any interesting performances of his texts. Stranded at the airport? Why not do an impromptu reading of *Iphigenia 2.0*? The only other playwright that I have come across to do this is (or have it done to them) is [Shakespeare](#). The Shakespeare app also contains that author's entire library, but includes helpful features like world search.



Another innovation happening under the hood is Mee's progressive philosophy about copyright and fair use of his texts. His policies are more similar to [Creative Commons](#) in that he expects and allows for usage of his texts as source material for future texts.

From Mee's website, titled "[the \(re\)making project](#)":

Please feel free to take the plays from this website and use them freely as a resource for your own work: that is to say, don't just make some cuts or rewrite a few passages or re-arrange them or put in a few texts that you like better, but pillage the plays as I have pillaged the structures and contents of the plays of Euripides and Brecht and stuff out of Soap Opera Digest and the evening news and

the internet, and build your own, entirely new, piece--and then, please, put your own name to the work that results.

But, if you would like to perform the plays essentially or substantially as I have composed them, they are protected by copyright in the versions you read here, and you need to clear performance rights...

He continues to contextualize his view on the unoriginal nature of cultural production:

Sometimes playwrights steal stories and conversations and dreams and intimate revelations from their friends and lovers and call this original.

And sometimes some of us write about our own innermost lives, believing that, then, we have written something truly original and unique. But, of course, the culture writes us first, and then we write our stories. When we look at a painting of the virgin and child by Botticelli, we recognize at once that it is a Renaissance painting?that is it a product of its time and place. We may not know or recognize at once that it was painted by Botticelli, but we do see that it is a Renaissance painting. We see that it has been derived from, and authored by, the culture that produced it.

To read more, check out [Charles Mee's website](#) or [download his app](#).

Have other tips about plays or playwriting that we should know about? Send them to us at npac.artists@gmail.com