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You write to me about *Saved*. Its staging in 2011 at the Lyric was good in parts. Early in 2012 Methuen published *The Chair Plays*. You should read the introduction. (But ignore the last three or so pages. I had to write them hurriedly.) I wrote the introduction after another student wrote to me about *Saved*. His letter assumed my approval. I was disturbed at what he had been taught as morality and interpretation.

You could also read the papers in the "Comment" section of my web site. "The Third Crisis" is particularly relevant to your situation. Finally you should read David Davis's introduction to his student edition of *Saved* (Methuendrama). It's the most useful introduction to the play and my work.

To understand *Saved* you would also need to read the plays in *The Paris Pentad*. They close the core problem I raised in my first series of plays, *The Pope's Wedding to The Sea*. I expand on the problem in the plays I've written for Big Brum. The RNT, RSC and the Royal Court have no creative means to stage any of these plays. And I could not have written them if I had been restricted to working in the theatre you are now entering. The core problem is the nature of drama and its role in society.

Recently UK theatre has lurched deeper into what may be its terminal vacuity. Its a consequence of the recent economic collapse and of years of opportunistic trading in the human image. It can no longer put a human being on stage because it cant stage the problems and paradoxes that make us human. Its destroyed the acting and directorial means of doing this. In its place it puts a human simulacrum, jaunty or pathetic or -- it hopes, commercially -- both. No British actor can now create Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, Oedipus, Antigone, Hecuba, Electra. . . Yet probably there are now more good British actors than there often were in the past. Its remarkable that no UK director has any international standing or is able to rise above celebrity culture -- and outside this country they are not even celebrated. They try to hide the emptiness of their productions under the gift-wrapping appropriate to a consumer product.

I write this because you are a young director and so it concerns you. If as a director you follow the pattern that has been set by your professional seniors you will waste your life. And though of course your future is important, the problem is even larger than that. We are the species of drama -- drama not as an embellishment of the market but at the core of our humanness. Yet we cant put a human being on the stage . . . ? We live in one of the few times of fundamental historical change. Always in such times in the past a new drama was created. This has given us our profound heritage. It came not just from theatres but also (remember this whenever you enter a theatre) from the actual prisons, asylums, governments, schools of learning, suffering and despair that are drama's subjects. To have squandered that inheritance on shallow misinterpretations of the problem and gaudy cheap evasions of responsibility for resolving it, is shameful.

You have entered a wretched wasteland. Perhaps you and your generation might turn it even into the promised land. But fortunately you have also trained to be a dentist.

Best wishes