"This seminar will not be the usual systematic seminar one could conduct. I will discuss along with you on many subjects. Any concrete theme will be a pretext for us to become more general.
For Saturday prepare a small composition entitled WHAT IS BEAUTY. Don't look for an aesthetic definition of the word write about it as you see it. It will be a stepping stone toward other discussions.
ARTAUD: THE THEATRE AND ITS DOUBLE will be the book we will all be obliged to read. Artaud will be our trampolin.

TEXT

We talk of text in the theatre. Text doesn't have one direction. It has many. What can we say about the text;
- Text is words spoken by actors.
- Text is situation.
- Text is character
- Text is sometimes a vision of the theatre.
- Text indicates theatrical interpretation.

When we say that the THEATRE treats the text as a pretext we must ask what in the text do we not use—what do we throw away.
For example in Grotowski's production of AKROPOLIS there was no intervention with the text. Wyspianski's words were kept as written. Nothing was written by us although we did add other texts as needed. This of course means the drama was not played as written. The words were kept but an original montage was created. Always remember the text allows for broad possibilities of interpretation. When you create your montage your THEATRE PIECE is more concrete than the written text.

A HAMLET SPEECH

(Here he quoted two lines which I cannot interpret since he spoke in Polish and I couldn't catch or place the lines.)
What does the speech I just quoted mean? Is Hamlet making himself believe that he did something or is he saying I am GOING to do it? What ever you believe to be happening here will determine your choice and thus the actor will speak it differently in each case. All this comes from the text... What is not concrete in the text is did he say it to himself, to the king, to the audience. So these two lines of Shakespeare can present infinite roads!
The text alone never underlines the specific... But all I have said are within the bounds of normal theatre- the theatre which claims to seek the interpretation of the author.

BUT

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT SHAKESPEARE HAD ON HIS MIND?
We don't. If we saw a production done by Shakespeare himself we might know. So it is a little hypocritical to say that "Shakespeare meant this—etc."
A THEATRE THAT HAS NOTHING TO SAY ITSELF, ALWAYS IS SAYING THAT THE AUTHOR SAID THIS— OR— THAT!

What is meant to be fidelity to the author is mostly related to old theatrical traditions and NOT the author.

Example:
Chekhov and Stanislavski
Today we think of Chekhov according to the way he was produced by Stanislavski! We play him full of sadness etc. We even read him that way...All this comes from Stanislavski's influence. Chekhov protested against this but it didn't help him. "I write a vaudeville and you make a heavy drama of it!"

But Stanislavsky won. We now do Chekhov according to the Stanislavsky tradition...In Poland, a parody of Chekhov was criticized as disrespect to the author.

Every author is played according to a tradition that our great grandfather remember. Now it is not necessarily close to the way it was done in the authors time, but rather closer to actual remembrance by our forfathers.

The GLOBE & Shakespeare:
The GLOBE was Shakespeare's theatre. He thought of as a working place—subconsciously. He wrote consciously for the convention of the GLOBE. If we were to be true to Shakespeare we would have to reconstruct the Globe—but my feeling is that this would not be enough....FOR EVERY VISION OF THE THEATRE HAS DEEP MODERN ASSOCIATIONS

Different people meet at the Globe. It was a crossroads—a good place to have a theatre. You confront many different kinds of people. So if we wanted to do Shakespeare properly we would have to reproduce the GLOBE AND Renaissance England...We might be able to do both these things, that is we might be able to recreate the GLOBE but we CANT recreate the people.

What "being true to Shakespeare" really is.

Being true to Shakespeare is being true really to the tradition of the 2nd half of the 19th century. They play the closest epoch to Shakespeare— the closest remembered one= that is what passes for "being true to Shakespeare". Do you know the the exterior of Hamlet is always played romantic= that is he is young, thin and a brunette. When Olivier made him a blonde he broke tradition. Imagine a fat and bald Hamlet. Scholars say Shakespeare wrote for concrete actors and the one for whom Hamlet was written was fat and bald. So being true to Shakespeare is being true to our "grandfathers" traditions.

CONVENTIONAL LITERARY THEATRE: This is a place where they play dramatic works. The DRAMATIC WORK is more important than the THEATRE. The theatre only helps underlined the drama.....Early in the 19th century no "spine" tied the theatre together. The Duke of Sax Meiningham began to break the tradition prevalent at his time (theatrical effects, tricks, mellowdrama) by integrating all the elements in relation to the text—he brought order to the theatre....The literary theatre is the seeds of the autonomous theatre.

CRAIG (Symbolic)---Stanislavski (Literary)
Although Stanislavski wanted to be "true to the author" it was paradoxical that he really wasn't—he was rather autonomous.

GREAT EPICS IN THE THEATRE WERE NEVER FAITHFUL TO THE AUTHORS

In many theatres writers wrote scenarios. Shakespeare considered himself a writer of poems and sonnets. The theatre work wasn't that important to him. His ambitions as a poet were fulfilled. He presented scenarios...He too old plays and rewrote them—probably helped by the acting ensemble. One had to write a play a week. Everyone said that
the order of scenes were set and then each one went home to write a scene or two. This causes scholarship problems. How many other pens are in Shakespeare?

All Elizabethan, the great ones served the THEATRE and not LITERATURE...It was only later they were considered literary giants.

I feel if Shakespeare would have seen Grotowski's HAMLET he would understand. God knows he did this with others work...Grotowski's elaborated Hamlet brought more protests from todays audiences than it would have from Shakespeare himself. Shakespeare was used to this.

Many great epochs were without dramatic literature: Commedia Del Art Oriental Drama...The text is not important here—they have scenarios with words, that is all.

We are caught in the vortex of "fidelity"...We are caught because we are looking through the traditions of the literary theater. So we feel theatre is a place where one plays drama—dramatic literature. But in the great epochs it was different. THEATRE WAS THEATRE AND NOT DRAMATIC LITERATURE! We are too tied to the historic image of literary theatre.

What we do in the Lab theatre is not exceptional. It is not "a bastard" in theatre history for it is natural in theatre history! Even conventional theatres do it—those who claim they are true to the author. But we do it more intensely and more consciously. It is only a matter of degree.

Those who complained that we were not true to the author when we did THE CONSTANT PRINCE follow the romantic approach to the play.

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ON MOVEMENT:

When a man wants something—he speaks.
When that doesn't get him what he wants—he sings.
When that doesn't work—he adds a choir behind him.
When all this doesn't help, he begins to move his hands and feet—he dances!