As a serious drama set in an ordinary middle-class home, Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* established a new politics of the interior that was to have a lasting impact upon twentieth-century drama. In this innovative study, Nicholas Grene traces the changing forms of the home on the stage through nine of the greatest of modern plays and playwrights. From Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* through to Williams’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*, domestic spaces and personal crises have been employed to express wider social conditions and themes of class, gender and family. In the later twentieth century and beyond, the most radically experimental dramatists created their own challenging theatrical interiors, including Beckett in *Endgame*, Pinter in *The Homecoming* and Parks in *Topdog/Underdog*. Grene analyses the full significance of these versions of domestic spaces to offer fresh insights into the portrayal of the naturalistic environment in modern drama.

Nicholas Grene is Professor of English literature at Trinity College Dublin, a Senior Fellow of the College, a Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge. He has published widely on Shakespeare, drama and Irish literature, and his books include *Bernard Shaw: a Critical View* (1984), *Shakespeare’s Tragic Imagination* (1992), *The Politics of Irish Drama* (Cambridge, 1999) and *Shakespeare’s Serial History Plays* (Cambridge, 2002). Among his most recent books are *Yeats’s Poetic Codes* (2008), the New Mermaids edition of *Major Barbara* (2008), *Synge and Edwardian Ireland* (coedited with Brian Cliff, 2011) and a memoir, *Nothing Quite Like It: An American-Irish Childhood* (2011). He has been a visiting professor at the University of New South Wales, Dartmouth College and the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne).
HOME ON THE STAGE

*Domestic Spaces in Modern Drama*

NICHOLAS GRENE
In memory of Andrew Grene (1965–2010)
Contents

List of illustrations page viii
Acknowledgements x

Introduction: Ibsen and after 1
1 A Doll’s House: the drama of the interior 14
2 The Cherry Orchard: all Russia 37
3 Heartbreak House: waiting for the Zeppelin 61
4 Long Day’s Journey into Night: the Tyrones at home in America 82
5 A Streetcar Named Desire: see-through representation 104
6 Endgame: in the refuge 127
7 The Homecoming: men’s room 145
8 Arcadia: seeing double 166
9 Topdog/Underdog: welcome to the family 185

Conclusion: home base 202

Notes 207
Bibliography 228
Index 237
Illustrations

The author and publishers acknowledge the following sources of copyright material and are grateful for the permissions granted. While every effort has been made, it has not always been possible to identify the sources of all material used, or to trace all copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include the appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting.

1.1 Diagram of floor plan of A Doll’s House, reproduced from Egil Törnqvist, Ibsen: A Doll’s House (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), by permission of the author. page 18

1.2 Photo of Nora (Mai Zetterling) and Torvald (Mogans Wieth) in A Doll’s House, Act 111, directed by Peter Ashmore, London, 1951. Angus McBean Photograph (MS Thr 581). © Harvard Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University. 30

2.1 Scene from The Cherry Orchard, Act 1, directed by K.S. Stanislavski, Moscow, 1904. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden foundations. 48

2.2 Scene from The Cherry Orchard, Act 11, directed by Andrei Serban, New York, 1977. Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden foundations. 57

3.1 Sketch by G.B. Shaw of set design for Heartbreak House, c. 1920. British Library, Ashley A 1521, 111, by permission of the Society of Authors on behalf of the Bernard Shaw Estate. 70

4.1 O’Neill family home, 325 Pequot Ave, New London. Photo by the author. 89

4.2 Ronald Pickup (Edmund) and Laurence Olivier (Tyrone) in Long Day’s Journey into Night, Act 11, National Theatre, London, 1971. © Zoe Dominic. 95
Illustrations


6.1 Patrick Magee (Hamm) and Stephen Rea (Clov) in *Endgame*, Royal Court Theatre, London, 1976. By permission of Lebrecht Music and Arts Photo Library.

7.1 Michael Jayston (Teddy), Ian Holm (Lenny), Cyril Cusack (Sam) and Paul Rogers (Max) in *The Homecoming*, film directed by Peter Hall, American Film Theatre, 1973. © Michael Kantor, Ghost Light Films.


9.1 Eric Berryman (Booth) and KenYatta Rogers (Lincoln) in *Topdog/Underdog*, Everyman Theatre (Baltimore, MD, USA), 2013. Photo by Stan Barouh.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge a term’s leave of absence from Trinity College Dublin in the autumn of 2012 and to Clare Hall, Cambridge once again for providing a congenial place to write during that time. I wish to acknowledge a grant from the Trinity Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Benefaction Fund for support towards the funding of research visits to the United States and the United Kingdom. I would like to thank the following for their help in sourcing illustrations for the book: Erin Lee of the National Theatre in London, Michael Kantor of Ghostlight Films, Jeremy Megraw of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Judith Seeff of Sydney Theatre Company, and Dale Stincomb of Harvard University Library. A part of Chapter 4 first appeared as an essay in the Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies and I am grateful for the opportunity to redeploy it here.

I have benefited from the help and advice of a number of friends and relations. Lucy McDiarmid, always stimulating, commissioned an essay from me which, though it is not part of this book, gave me the idea for writing it. Adrian Frazier was once again enormously helpful, with much-needed encouragement and marvellously shrewd, detailed editing suggestions on the early chapters he read in draft. Jean Chothia kindly gave me the benefit of her Eugene O’Neill expertise and saved me from several gaffes in her comments on Chapter 4. I had help in tracking down sources from both Lisa Coen and Sophia Grene: thanks to both of them. To the groups of students in the Trinity School of English with whom I debated the ideas in this book in classes over the period 2011–13, I am collectively grateful.

Vicki Cooper at Cambridge University Press has been a helpful and supportive editor and I have benefited from the anonymous readers’ reports she commissioned. I am also very grateful to Fleur Jones for her prompt and efficient help in the final stages of preparing the manuscript.

The book is dedicated to the memory of my dear brother Andrew, much loved and much missed.