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Henry W. Sullivan

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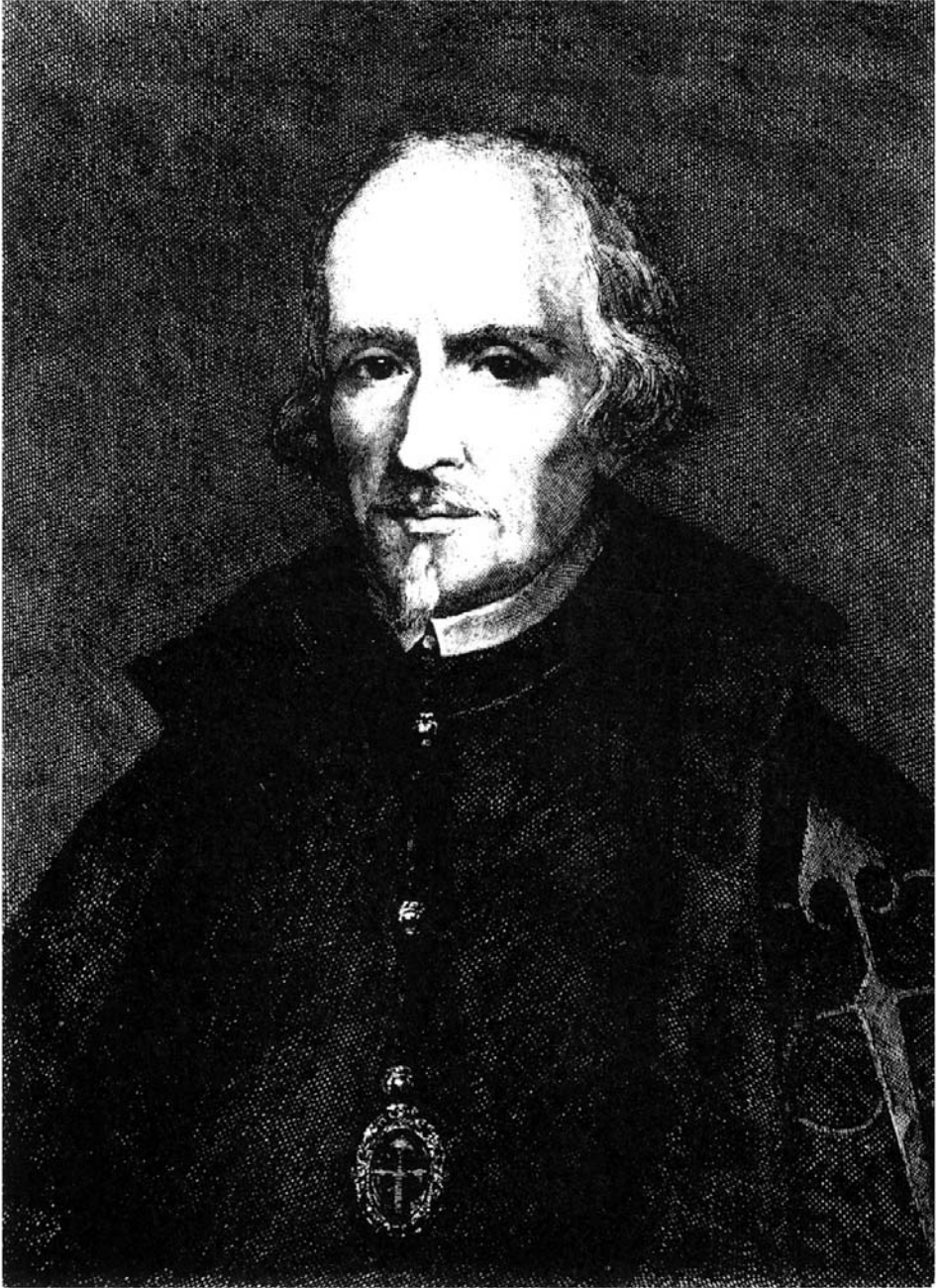
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Calderón in the robes of the Order of Santiago,  
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Calderón in the German lands and  
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HENRY W. SULLIVAN

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Dedicated to the  
Reverend Terry Porter Ragland  
and  
Lucile Stowe Ragland  
with  
respect and gratitude

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Frontispiece. An engraving based on the portrait of Calderón in the robes of the Order of Santiago, by Juan Alfaro y Gómez (oil on canvas), in the Iglesia S. Pedro de los Naturales, Madrid. By permission of Texas Tech University.

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## Preface and acknowledgments

Neo-Positivist research on the Spanish seventeenth-century playwright, Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–81), can be valuable in establishing details of his life, the accuracy of his texts, the dates of his plays, and similar matters. Modern studies of the aesthetics of Calderón's plays – using the approaches of the New Criticism, semiotics, structuralism, psychocriticism, and so on – can also shed light on their meaning. The Positivist's methods are historically anchored in the seventeenth century, and the aesthetician's in the twentieth. A third, surprisingly fruitful, line of inquiry is to examine the critical reception of Calderón across the intervening centuries, and his actual performance on the stage. This relatively novel critical method (*Rezeptionsästhetik*), applied to Calderón, dispels the myth that his plays cannot hold the audiences of a modern theater. It also yields critical results in the most unexpected variety. Since no nation has lavished more interest and attention on Calderón than Germany and German-speaking Europe, his reception there, from the middle of the seventeenth century till the present, offers the richest body of evidence – in both quantity and quality – on which to reach substantial judgments regarding the survival-power, value and importance of his dramas.

The aim of this book is to document the reception and influence of Calderón's theater in Germany from 1654 to 1980. From this history emerges a wider and more impressive picture of Calderón than we are accustomed to carry away with us from the university classroom. Few people suspect the magnitude of Calderón's influence on European drama, or the diversity of forms which his influence has assumed (opera, music, cultural politics, ideological propaganda). The scale of Calderón's achievement and its constant reverberation across the centuries place him among the few world dramatists whose work is ever alive and ever new. And study of the stage history and the criticism and scholarship associated with Calderón is a key to general movements of European

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thought about literature as a whole. Cervantes and Calderón, like Shakespeare and Racine, have been the touchstones used by critics and historians in their long disputes about neo-Classicism and Romanticism, the theory and practice of dramatic poetry, or the significance of the theater in its political and cultural dimensions. But because so much still remains to be told about his posthumous fortunes, the need for a comprehensive account of Calderón's reception and influence in the rest of Europe, and especially Germany, has become urgent.

In 1654, according to a well-documented tradition, an itinerant troupe led from the Netherlands by Jan Baptista von Fornenbergh acted Calderón's *La vida es sueño* at Hamburg in a Flemish translation by Schouwenbergh. This production must have been the first representation of any of Calderón's works anywhere in German-speaking Europe. It marks the beginning of a long and uninterrupted series of performances, extending from the repertoires of the seventeenth-century *Wandertruppen* (strolling companies of actors) to Goethe's Weimar, and beyond them to the present day. Outside the limited circle of academic Germanists and Hispanists, however, the existence of this long and lively reception is scarcely known.

Calderón was translated into five foreign languages before his death (French, Italian, Dutch, English and German) and has been translated into Polish, Russian, and a host of others from the nineteenth century onwards. For our purposes, only seven matter: Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, German, Latin and, of course, English. Few readers will know all seven, and I have adopted the following methods with regard to foreign titles and quotations. All translations are my own, except where a standard English edition of a given source exists (e.g. John Black's translation of A. W. Schlegel's *Viennese Lectures*; F. P. B. Osmaston's translations of Hegel). Calderón's titles are given in Spanish in the body of the text, and alphabetically by the first significant word in the Index, under 'Calderón de la Barca, Pedro, WORKS – DRAMA'. Italian, Dutch, German and Latin titles are translated immediately after their first appearance in the main text, but then left in the original unless divided by very many pages from the previous mention. I have assumed that anyone reading this book will have little difficulty with brief titles in French, but quotations from French sources, plays, and critics have been translated.

Some apology should be offered for statements that will strike certain readers as self-evident. The indispensable overview of German literature must appear elementary to the Germanist, but the Hispanist will

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require a framework against which to plot the course of Calderón's afterlife through the three hundred years of German literature being examined here. Equally, the basic facts of seventeenth-century Spanish literature will be well known to the Hispanist, but perhaps unfamiliar to the Germanist. A comparatist with a background in English or American literature (or French, Italian or Dutch) might be grateful for information on both literatures.

Considerations of space have necessarily limited the discussion of certain figures (Eichendorff, Karl Marx, Franz Mehring) and virtually excluded others. More remains to be said, for example, on the links between Friedrich, Freiherr de la Motte Fouqué and Calderón; and on the extensive diary jottings and Spanish studies of Franz Grillparzer. The diary entries of Platen are a mine of opinions and judgments on Calderón based on Platen's close reading of the originals. The diaries of Cosima Wagner and her letters to her daughter Daniela von Bülow, and to Prince Ernst zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, convey a vivid impression of the Wagner household and their readings of Calderón in translation. Nonetheless, the main lines of Calderón's reception and influence in Germany will, I hope, emerge clearly enough.

I should here like to express my gratitude to the foundations and individuals who have made this study possible. The generous support of the United States National Endowment for the Humanities allowed me during the calendar year 1976 to trace Calderón's diffusion in Holland and Flemish Belgium. The generosity of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of the West German government permitted me to spend almost two years in Germany collecting material for this study and writing the final draft. My publishers join me in thanking the Foundation for its substantial contribution towards the production cost of this book, and also join me in thanking the Graduate Dean's Humanities Research Fund of the University of Ottawa for another generous subsidy. I should also like to thank Professor A. A. Parker for his early encouragement of this project, and my academic sponsor during the Humboldt period, the distinguished German *calderonista* Professor Dr Hans Flasche, for his constant support. My thanks also go to Professor Dr Klaus Meier-Minnemann and Frau Maria von Wevell of the Iberoamerikanisches Forschungsinstitut in Hamburg, where the research was principally carried out. I am grateful to the following individuals: to Professor Dr Heinrich Bihler (Göttingen), Professors Frank P. Casa and Ingo Seidler (Michigan), Professor Stephen Gilman

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H. W. S.

*University of Ottawa, Ontario  
December 1980*