De España, Rafael. *De la Mancha a la pantalla*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona 2007.

*De la Mancha a la pantalla* is the latest book written by Spanish Film historian Rafael de España. In *De la Mancha*... De España approaches the majority of the film production which has adapted the storyline of Cervantes’
masterpiece.

Rafael de España is a renowned professor in Medicine and Modern History. For the past two decades he has combined his duties as a medical professor in Universidad Autónoma in Barcelona and his work as a film researcher. For fifteen years his research production has focused on the analysis and cataloguing of most of the historical film genre from different countries in Europe and Latin America, giving special emphasis to Spanish cinema. In his works de España has successfully underlined the relationship between politics and cinema, providing a deep analysis of the historical context and the films through deep archival research. His first work, Las sombras del encuentro, represented the first study on historical films set in the conquest of America. Having been invited to attend several congresses all over Europe, America and Asia, Rafael de España has become one of the Spanish leading figures in the historical study of cinema.

De la Mancha a la pantalla is De España’s latest contribution to the field. This book is a complete and detailed compendium of films which in different degrees have been set in Don Quixote’s universe. The book starts with a profound reflection by author on the different direction that cinema has taken when adapting classical pieces of Spanish literature. In this introduction, De España states that, unlike other national cinemas such as French or British, Spanish national cinema has been traditionally reluctant to use the works of Cervantes, Lope Vega and other literary figures of Spanish Golden Age for cinematic purposes. One of the few exceptions in this sense is Don Quixote. The main part of De España’s study consists of reviews of all the films, beginning with the early Les Aventures de don Quichotte by Pathé Productions in 1903, and concluding with Donky Xote (2007) by Spanish filmmaker Julio Fernández. De España’s survey embraces all the stages of cinema history, from the silent era to twenty-first century animation films, and also includes documentaries, short and long feature films, TV serials, and unfinished projects, such as Orson Welles’ Don Quijote. One of the important aspects about the film reviews that must be mentioned is the fact that, in writing this book, De España had access to watch most all of the films; as he personally spent years collecting them from all around the world, obtaining copies from such distant countries as Lithuania.

This present initiative by De España is part of general interest producing an ample production of articles, exhibits, projects, and research that have
been manifest, mainly in Spain, due to the 500th anniversary of Don Quixote. Thus de España’s work coincides with other cultural events from 2005 such as the exhibit Don Quijote y el cine hosted by Filmoteca Española, or the interdisciplinary congress “El cine y el Quijote”, organized by the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

In conclusion, with De la Mancha a la pantalla, De España has gone beyond the mere compilation of a film catalogue. His movie analyses provide both the film reader and researcher, not only with a useful tool, but also with a full insight into the subject. Last but not least, this book reminds all of us that cinema is part of our history.

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