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## Internet Memes as Crowdsourced Movie Review of *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

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**Abstract:**

Internet memes — recurring images with different captions — are a relatively new form of entertainment, emerging in the last decade. It is therefore interesting and perhaps a bit surprising that the works of Tolkien are referenced more frequently in memes than newer works that are also the subject of contemporary film or television adaptation such as *Harry Potter*, the *Game of Thrones*, or *Twilight*. There are many purposes driving the production and consumption of internet memes. For instance, humor, one-upmanship, and in-group identification and validation. Among these elements, I have argued elsewhere, is crowdsourced literary criticism. This paper examines memes focusing upon the film, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. These memes, I argue, do function as crowdsourced criticism. But while the critique inherent in LOTR memes tends towards comparative analysis of book and movies, Hobbit memes serve as in-depth movie review, focusing upon specific moments and elements of the movie that engender strong reactions, either positive or negative. “I am going on an adventure” and “Bilbo’s contract” are both moments from the movie that appear repeatedly in memes. But arguably the most popular meme from *An Unexpected Journey* is “Never have I been so wrong.” Consequently it will be the main site of this paper’s attention. What does the focus upon and treatment of this moment from the movie suggest about audience reaction to and evaluation of both the moment itself and *An Unexpected Journey* as a whole?

The full-text of this paper will be available in *The Hobbit and Tolkien's Legendarium: Revisions and Influences*, edited by Brad Eden, forthcoming from McFarland.

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