

RUNAWAY HOLLYWOOD: COLD MOUNTAIN, ROMANIA

With 3 figures

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Zusammenfassung: Der Film *Cold Mountain* (2003) ist im North Carolina der 1860er Jahre angesiedelt und spielt vor dem Hintergrund des amerikanischen Bürgerkriegs. Der verwundete Konföderierte Inman (Jude Law) entflieht dem Lazarett-Bett in Raleigh, um sich auf den riskanten Weg nach Hause, nach Cold Mountain, zu machen, wo er seine Liebste (Nicole Kidman) wieder sehen möchte. Der Cold Mountain, mit einer Höhe von 1.838 m, befindet sich in den Blue Ridge Mountains im westlichen North Carolina. Die literarische Vorlage des Films bezieht ihre Besonderheit vom einzigartigen *sense of place* sowie der lokalen Kultur dieser Region. Dessen scheinbar ungeachtet drehte Anthony Minghella den Film in Rumänien. Dies geschah aus zwei verschiedenen Gründen: Wirtschaftlichkeit und geographischem Realismus. Diese zwei Elemente sind auch die bestimmenden Faktoren für *runaway*-Produktionen. Der vorliegende Aufsatz untersucht, inwiefern diese Elemente den Film *Cold Mountain* berühren. Daraus werden im Weiteren die Praktiken des Hollywoodkinos in Bezug zu den reglementierenden Faktoren der *runaway*-Produktionen gesetzt. Abschließend setzt der Autor Hollywoods *runaway*-Produktionen in einen historischen Kontext und deckt auf, dass die Kinouzuschauer schon seit langer Zeit nur selten mit Bildern versorgt werden, die geographischen Realismen verpflichtet sind.

Summary: Anthony Minghella's recent movie, *Cold Mountain*, was an adaptation of CHARLES FRASIER's bestselling novel. The plot: A wounded confederate soldier leaves his hospital bed in Raleigh, North Carolina and makes a treacherous journey home to Cold Mountain. The book's narrative is so thoroughly embedded in the sense of place and regional culture of North Carolina and Appalachia that it is impossible to separate place and narrative. It therefore came as quite a shock to many that the filming of *Cold Mountain* took place primarily in Romania. In this essay I examine how just such a thing can happen; how Cold Mountain, North Carolina becomes Cold Mountain, Romania. Hollywood is now in its third wave of runaway production, or the outsourcing of feature film and television production to foreign countries. I scrutinize each of these three waves of runaway production as they relate to two key issues: economics and geographic realism. Where economics relates to keeping the cost of a production down, geographic realism plays a role in determining the suitability of a location for a narrative. All locational decisions relating to film production deal with geographic realism and economics. In the end, economics trumped geographic realism and *Cold Mountain's* locational choices were determined by Miramax's attitude that a "A Tree is a Tree."

Introduction

Cold Mountain (2003) based in North Carolina in the 1860s, is a movie about the American Civil War. Inman (Jude Law), a wounded confederate soldier, leaves his hospital bed in Raleigh to make a treacherous journey home to Cold Mountain and his sweetheart (Nicole Kidman). Cold Mountain stands 6,030 feet high in the Blue Ridge Mountain range of western North Carolina. CHARLES FRAZIER, the author of the book *Cold Mountain* (1997), drew his inspiration from this region's unique sense of place and local culture. His family has lived near Asheville for the last 200 years, the largest town near Cold Mountain. Cold Mountain, in the Pisgah National Forest, is unreachable by road and remains undeveloped. Only the serious hiker attempts to climb the secluded and unmarked dirt trail that leads to the mountain peak.

Yet for all its unique natural beauty and cultural heritage, Sydney Pollack, the film's producer, chose not to film in North Carolina. Instead they opted to film the movie in the Carpathian Mountains of Romania. For five years, Bill Arnold, Director of the North Carolina Film Commission and Mark Owen of Advantage West (the operators of the Western North Carolina Regional Film Commission) worked with the movie's location scouts. When it came time to choose a film site two items lead to the choice of Romania: economics and geographic realism. These two items dominate the discourse of runaway production.

In this essay I examine Hollywood's runaway production as it relates to economics and geographic realism. First, I engage the difference between economics and geographic realism as it relates to runaway production. Second, I put Hollywood's runaway production within a historical context. Third, I examine how

economics and geographic realism plays out in the film *Cold Mountain*.

1 Creative and economic runaway production

The SCREEN ACTOR'S GUILD (SAG) defines runaway productions as those productions "which are developed and are intended for release/exhibition or television broadcast in the U.S., but are actually filmed in another location" (MONITOR COMPANY AND SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 1999, 1). Martha Collidge, of the Director Guild, defines runaway production as any "location selection based solely on financial concerns" (TASSEL 2003, 1). Regardless of how it is defined, runaway production is experienced at different geographic scales: production leaving Los Angeles, California and the United States. The recent concern over runaway production specifically focuses on the loss of U.S. jobs and expenditures to foreign countries. The outsourcing of jobs has been of particular distress in recent years with an estimated three million U.S. jobs

lost since 2000. Within the U.S. film production industry, outsourcing lead to the SAG report on runaway production. Their report examined U.S. financed film and television shows during the period of 1990–1998. The report found a steady increase in runaway production from 29% of total production in 1990 to 37% in 1998 (Fig. 1). During this period the film production industry experienced a 50.1% growth. This growth was triggered primarily by the rise of new cable broadcasting networks (FOX, WB, UPN, Comedy Central, TNT, A&E, etc.) that began producing their own television shows (LUKINBEAL 2004; MONITOR COMPANY et al. 1994). Market growth had been expanding since the mid 1980s due to three factors: the rise of new cable broadcasting networks; the arrival of the videocassette recorder; and the globalization of film distribution (LUKINBEAL 2002). Between 1990 and 1998, U.S. based film production increased 62.8% and television production increased 10.2%. At the same time, runaway film production increased 78.1% and runaway television production increased 101.8%. The remarkable rise in runaway television production in the 1990s also

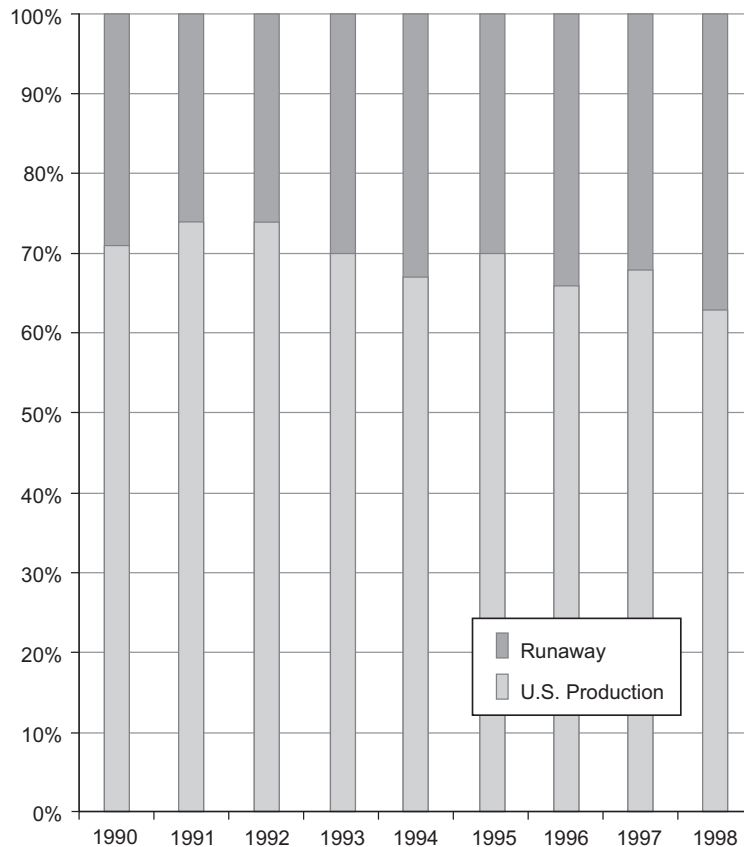


Fig. 1: U.S. Financed Film and Television Production

US-finanzierte Film- und TV-Produktionen

charts the dramatic rise of Vancouver B.C. as an alternative production center.

The SAG report makes the distinction between “creative” and “economic” runaways. They define creative runaways as those “which depart because the story takes place in a setting that can not be duplicated for other creative considerations” (MONITOR COMPANY AND SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 1999, 2). For example, consider almost any James Bond film. Bond narratives rely on a diversity of international locations to ground its production to particular places. These international locations validate the narrative as “taking place” on the world’s stage – the stage of international spying and espionage. On the other hand, economic runaways are defined as those “which depart to achieve lower production costs” (MONITOR COMPANY AND SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 1999, 2). The most common type of economic runaways are television productions. Averaging over one billion dollars in annual film production since 2000, Vancouver B.C. is the second largest producer of television shows in North America. Vancouver and Toronto substitute for “Big City U.S.A.” in many film and television productions. Toronto is known within the film industry as the “other” New York City because of its frequent portrayal of that city. Vancouver has played many different U.S. locations including Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New England. Examples of economic runaway productions to Vancouver B.C. include the romantic comedies *A Guy Thing* (2003) which portrays Seattle, and *Hope Springs* (2003) which portrays New England. Economic runaway productions were predicted to reach thirteen to fifteen billion dollars annually by 2001, however, there is no current documentation to substantiate this prediction (MONITOR COMPANY AND SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 1999). Canada captured roughly 81% of all runaway productions in 1990 to 1998, while production centers in Los Angeles, New York City, North Carolina, Texas and Chicago appear to bear the brunt of the exodus (LUKINBEAL 2004). During the same period, creative runaways only saw a 5% increase while economic runaways had an astounding 185% increase. The primary concern over the outsourcing of film production jobs and expenditures is economic runaways. Consequently, when features like *Cold Mountain* are accused of being economic runaways the producer or director often will claim that the reasons for leaving the U.S. was purely “creative”. This highlights the constant tension within the discourse of runaway production. On the one hand, there is economics, which constrains and limits the creative decisions of a production. On the other hand, there is geographic realism which is needed to make a narrative plausible to the audience.

Geographic realism can be thought of as relating to the (1) factual events and locations from which a narrative derives and/or (2) relating to the realistic quality of the geography as it is represented in a movie. These two issues are not mutually inclusive and do not have to meld at one particular location in space and/or time. Elsewhere I have defined geographic realism as an aesthetic practice which links a fictional narrative to a location’s sense of place (LUKINBEAL 1998, 2004). This definition connotes “on location” filming but does not mean that a narrative’s location has to be the location of production. For instance, the creative runaway *Apocalypse Now* portrays Vietnam and Cambodia but was filmed in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. In terms of geographic realism, these locations were chosen because they afforded a certain level of realism: they were similar enough to the original locations that they could “double” for those locations in the narrative. In terms of economics, the Philippines offered the filmmakers the military hardware to make the picture possible. In contrast, the creative runaway *Tomb Raider* portrays the U.K. and Cambodia and was also filmed at those locations. Can we say that *Tomb Raider*, a narrative based on a video game, has more geographic realism than *Apocalypse Now*? Geographic realism is subjective and fluid, not objective and factual. Realism is a cinematic style which uses techniques to create a more “real” movie-going experience; it does not mean the objective re-presentation of events or locations. With this in mind, there are three adages with regard to geographic realism: (1) narrative dominates geography in determining realism and production site; (2) economics dominates narrative practices; (3) both one and two can be subverted by the personal preference of a filmmaker. Issues concerning geographic realism and economics are not new to Hollywood, but rather date back to the beginning of the American film production industry.

2 *Runaway Hollywood: an annotated history*

Hollywood is currently in its third wave of runaway production (Fig. 2). Rather than distinct eras with abrupt beginning and ending dates, these waves are indicative of peaks in production outsourcing.

The American Film production industry began in New York City where the first commercial projection of motion pictures took place (ELLIS 1985). The earliest film production facilities where located in New York City, Fort Lee New Jersey and Chicago. By as early as 1916, a Fordist system was in place in film production, distribution, advertising and exhibition (STORPER 1989). The first wave of runaway production was the

westward migration of the film industry to Hollywood. Both geographic realism and economics played major roles in this migration (IZOD 1988; ELLIS 1985; SKLAR 1978; FELCH 1976; HAMPTON 1970). In terms of economics, early film stock required lots of light. Los Angeles, with its pleasant Mediterranean climate, offered plenty of sunshine which allowed for more outdoor shooting and less studio work. Studio work was expensive in New York City because of high real estate prices and coal rationing during World War I (FELCH 1976, 4). Geographic realism was associated with the westward movement of the film industry through its relation to the “western” film genre. The release of *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) marked the beginning of the immensely popular “western” film genre in America. The industry’s westward diffusion was in part a search for realistic “western” scenery to provide the backdrop for countless action adventures. By 1921, the bulk of the industry had moved east in search of new outdoor locations and to be a part of the agglomeration process occurring in Los Angeles. It was Los Angeles’ Mediterranean climate, topographic and cultural diversity that fused with the process of industrial agglomeration to establish it as the industrial core of film production.

2.1 Second wave of runaway production

The second wave of runaway production followed the demise of the Studio System and Fordist practices in film production. Two developments lead to the demise of the Studio System. The first was the Para-

mount Decision of 1948 in which the Supreme Court ruled that the major motion picture companies (or the “Majors”) could no longer own their own cinemas. With the removal of this fixed distribution network, gross profits fluctuated by how many people liked a product. Because of this, studios had to reduce their output. The second development affecting film production was the arrival of television which fragmented the visual entertainment market and decentralized consumption sites (LUKINBEAL 2002). From 1946 to 1956, cinema saw a 50% decline in the audience (SPIGEL 1992). Television not only effectively promoted a redistribution of consumption sites but it also redistributed sites of production. New York and Chicago arose once again as production centers which catered to regional and national television markets. At this time, most metropolitan areas began to establish small television markets that catered to local viewers.

With the dissolution of the Studio System, the film production industry was slowly forced to shift its mode of production to a system based on flexible specialization. Flexible specialization is a system based on regional networks of production companies and their associated subcontractors (COE 2000a, 2000b; STORPER a. CHRISTOPHERSON 1985, 1987). STORPER (1989) posits that flexible specialization has three characteristics: vertical disintegration of the organizational structure; product differentiation which removes the deep division of labor characterized by Fordism; and, a balance of competition and cooperation between studios and independent producers. In essence, backlot production became too expensive which forced production activity to become closely associated with flexible specialization. Gradual change produced regional markets on the global scale; yet, the nexus, or core remained in Los Angeles with the Majors. Nonetheless, due to the demise of the Studio System, there was a rise in production outside Los Angeles.

One of the most prominent aspects of vertical disintegration was the rise of independent production companies. Encouraged by the independent film producers, the Majors experimented with new technologies, European cinematic styles and returned to a wider use of on location filming. The use of regional markets outside Los Angeles continued to fluctuate depending on where a product could be made cheaply and where a narrative could functionally “take place”. According to STORPER “location shooting [...] began as a direct consequence of vertical disintegration, like many such practices; it seems to have reinforced itself in circular and cumulative fashion with the result that the studios can no longer control its use. The initial increase encouraged technological innovation designed to make

	<u>When</u>	<u>Geographic Realism</u>	<u>Economics</u>
1st Wave	1909-1920s <u>Where</u> California	1. Westerns 2. Landscape Diversity	1. Fordism 2. Outdoor Shooting 3. Real Estate
2nd Wave	1950-1970s <u>Where</u> Western Europe	1. Spectacle 2. "Event"	1. Flexible Specialisation 2. Production Differentiation 3. Mobile Technologies
3rd Wave	1990-Present <u>Where</u> Regional, International	Creative Runaways	1. Horizontal Integration 2. Outsourcing of "below the line" costs

Fig. 2: Three Waves of Runaway Production
Drei Wellen der runaway-Produktionen

location work easier. The Cinemobile (a mobile studio) and the panflex camera (hand-held, but very quiet), make it possible to achieve technical quality on location equal to the studio or backlot. Location shooting is now a genuine alternative to the studio in most situations" (STORPER 1989, 285).

The second wave of runaway production expanded through the 1960s climaxing in 1968 with 47% of production starts occurring abroad. From 1950–1973 only 60% of productions were in the United States. International growth in the 1960s reflected an increase in the scale of production and distribution. As STORPER (1989, 283) explains, "The market for privatized entertainment products such as television had developed much more slowly in Europe than in the U.S. during the 1950s, so the market for cinema films continued to grow there. The major studios bought cinema chains in Europe and even in Africa, attempting to replace the loss of their domestic market."

The second wave of runaway production was primarily driven by economics – international locations and locations outside Los Angeles offered a cheaper forum for making motion pictures. Also, on location filming offered a means to escape the realm of the local unions in Los Angeles. Blocked earnings were partially responsible for the second wave of runaway production (GUBACK 1969). Pre-production was the first to vertically disintegrate and with this the film production workers could no longer count on steady employment. However, labor still constrained the second wave of runaway productions because the Majors needed trained personnel to create their products.

The second wave of runaway production was equally split between aesthetic concerns over geographic realism and economic concerns over production costs. International markets encouraged film production activity by providing subsidies for productions to relocate to their area. In 1949, international film production accounted for only nineteen Hollywood films. By 1969, 183 films were produced outside the United States. Similar to the early diffusion of film producers to the West Coast in the 1910s, the increased use of on location filming in the 1950s and 1960s was brought about by producers seeking out new sites.

Geographic realism helped promote the movie-going experience through the use of a wider array of places and spectacles. While geographic realism increased the depiction of different locales, this geography was a selective reproduction of a Western world in miniature. Even though the Majors increased on location filming activity, the sites they choose were typically in developed production centers where skilled labor was present (STORPER a. CHRISTOPHERSON 1987).

2.2 *Third wave of runaway production*

The third wave of runaway production followed the dramatic rise in film production and profits in the 1980s and 1990s. By the mid 1980s, the film industry had completely transformed itself from simply making motion pictures to multi-national conglomerates involved in the "entertainment industry". Rather than a vertical re-integration of production, distribution and consumption in a Fordist model, the new entertainment corporations have horizontally integrated to subsume multiple markets of entertainment. Such markets include film, television, magazines, books, video, video games, merchandise and theme parks (BAGDIKIAN 2000; CHRISTOPHERSON 1996).

Production increases in economic runaways were lead by television productions (series, sitcoms, and movies-of-the-week). Economic runaways began by first leaving Los Angeles for underdeveloped regional production facilities within the United States and Canada (LUKINBEAL 2004). Economic runaways focused on centers that had little or no location fees and had a skilled labor pool with lower "below the line" costs than those found in Los Angeles. "Above the line" costs refer to the director, star actors and actresses. These costs are often predetermined by the financiers of the production because it can predetermine the financial return on an investment. "Below the line" refers to costs related to supporting actors and the production crew. By going to Canada producers can recoup up to 17–20% in direct savings through government subsidies and favorable exchange rates. Roughly 60% of the direct savings comes from cheaper "below the line" labor costs (MONITOR COMPANY AND SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 1999, 23).

For a regional and international production center to capture and attempt to retain a portion of Hollywood's "variable flow of production" they must have available studio space and a skilled "below the line" labor pool. Variable flow of production refers to the "shifting locational usage in filmmaking outside the developed production centers" of Los Angeles and New York City (LUKINBEAL 2004). There are only a set number of film and television productions made each year and over half of these are made in developed production centers. For a creative runaway, choosing where to film is largely determined by narration and geographic realism. Economic runaways have a much lower standard of geographic realism and thus locational decisions can be driven by costs. With the rise of regional film production centers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, film producers increasingly had more choices where to film in North American. Regional production centers that

hosted television series were able to capture a stable ongoing production base that allowed for infrastructural development and development of a skilled labor pool.

For regional or international markets to capture and perpetuate film production the development of infrastructure does not always guarantee steady growth. Locational filming is typically evaluated in terms of "competing and alternative production sites" (GASHER 1995, 236). While regional centers in North America continue to play a large role in television production, feature films are increasingly seeking out international markets partially because their shorter duration makes production more flexible. Whereas television provide a year around production schedule (with series filmed in the fall, winter and spring and made-for-television movies made in the summer), feature films have a finite duration. International production centers are also able to compete because they have the two main economic ingredients for productions to runaway: a skilled labor pool and studio space.

Geographic realism plays a role in both economic and creative runaways. The ability of a production center to "double" for other locations around the world can predetermine what productions can occur at that location. Many economic runaways have narratives that are set in generic U.S. cities and towns. For a location to be able to host these productions it must be able to establish a certain level of geographic realism. Thus, many international locations are unsuitable for production based solely on geographic realism. Cape Town, South Africa has recently become a viable center for economic runaways that "play" U.S. locations. For instance, *Double Skin* (2000) which "plays" Morro Bay, California and Cleveland, Ohio and *Pavement* (2002) which "plays" San Francisco and Alaska were both filmed in Cape Town. Vancouver and Toronto can easily "double" for a generic U.S. city and as a result they have been able to capture many economic runaways. Both cities also have the advantage of proximity to Los Angeles and New York City. Television series, which are typically set in generic U.S. towns or cities, have long production schedules which can restrict how far they can runaway from Los Angeles. Locations outside the U.S. and Canada primarily compete for the variable flow of production that does not play current U.S. cities and towns.

3 *Geographic realism and Cold Mountain*

U.S. film critics speculated that *Cold Mountain* may have been slighted during the 2004 Oscars, because its

narrative featured the American Civil War but it did stay "true" to the geographic location of the historical events. However, trying to locate the "real" is more difficult than it might first seem. The movie's geographic realism has been filtered through a series a representations. Tracing realism in *Cold Mountain* requires us to examine its intertextuality and image legacy through different forms of communication: film, text and oral history.

The movie derives from CHARLES FRAZIER's award winning novel, *Cold Mountain* (1997). FRAZIER's father had told him the story of his great-great uncle W. P. Inman who had been wounded in a battle at Petersburg, Virginia and was sent to the hospital in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1864 Inman undertook the arduous journey of walking home to the southern Blue Ridge Mountains. FRAZIER took this brief account and created an epic American version of Homer's *Odyssey*. United Artists bought the film rights for the novel and Oscar winning director Anthony Minghella signed on to adapt the novel into a screenplay. The geographic realism of *Cold Mountain* is complicated by the diverse geographic background of the author and director. Whereas FRAZIER is a native North Carolinian, Minghella is an Englishman of Italian heritage with no 'sense of place' related to North Carolina or the southern Appalachian Mountains. Minghella, who adapted and directed *The English Patient*, toured North Carolina with FRAZIER to develop some sense of place before adapting the novel.

In terms of geographic realism, the movie's narrative is thrice removed from the actual events and time period. The original oral narrative has been passed down through FRAZIER's family to his father, possibly changing with each subjective telling. Some of the key locations from the narrative are based on factual events and a "real" person, but the intimate details of the journey and the geography around the "real" *Cold Mountain* as written in the novel do not derive from the original story of W. P. Inman. As FRAZIER (1997) notes in the acknowledgements of the book, "I would like to offer apologies for the liberties I have taken with W. P. Inman's life and with the geography surrounding *Cold Mountain*." FRAZIER, an ardent connoisseur of Southern Appalachian culture and professor of American literature at North Carolina State University, adapted the short story into a lengthy fictional work which highlights the cultural heritage of North Carolina. Whereas the oral history and original events provide some factual geographic realism, FRAZIER's story enlists a different type of realism: one that relies on an intimate, subjective understanding of a place and its culture. Minghella's reworking of the story relies on stereotyp-

ing of social and culture geographies (Blacks working in cotton fields, Hillbillies making moonshine) and brings to the forefront the love story between Inman and Ada. Rather than representing the intimate geographic realism portrayed in FRAZIER's book, Minghella's version relies less on geographic realism and more on an "unrequited love" narrative formula.

In an interview Minghella claims that landscape is central to the story: "It's got enormous scale. It's about landscape and it's the biggest film I've attempted" (ENCORE 2004). In the movie, landscape is featured as a stage upon which the action takes place (AITKEN a. ZONN 1993, 1994). With landscape as theater, the camera position, angle and view accentuates events and dialogue (LUKINBEAL 2005). Rather than portraying "enormous scale" the viewer is confined to the intimate scale of a love story: close ups of people, medium shots of events and quick pans of the countryside which seem almost an afterthought. Just following the film's release the producer, Sydney Pollack, argued on ABC's television show *20/20*, that North Carolina could not provide the geographic characteristics needed to make the film because the movie's narrative needed locations that "had not been touched by the twentieth and twenty-first centuries." Anyone familiar with this region of the United States would find this claim preposterous. *The Patriot* (2000) which starred Mel Gibson was filmed entirely in South Carolina. This film portrayed the American revolutionary war in the South and found plenty of location suitable for its narrative. *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) which starred Daniel Day-Lewis portrays the French and Indian War of the 18th century. It was filmed entirely in the region around Cold Mountain and the Southern Appalachians. Sydney Pollack also claimed that the Southern Appalachians were not suitable for the film because there was no guarantee it would snow which was required for the film's climatic scene. Mark Owen of Advantage West (the operators of the Western North Carolina Regional Film Commission), however, saw no reason why they could not use snow machines if needed (JOHNSON 2002). As it turns out, the weather in Romania was quite harsh throughout the production. The final climatic snow scenes that made it into the movie consisted of a light dusting on the ground.

4 Economics and Cold Mountain

If geographic realism was not the reason why *Cold Mountain* left North Carolina for Romania, then what was the reason? Bill Arnold, North Carolina's Film Commissioner, puts it best when he states, "they told us

quite frankly that shooting in Romania would save them \$12 million" (FELLERATH 2003, 3). How can a filmmaker justify the additional twelve million dollars in production cost knowing full well that the success of the movie depends on its economic return? The U.K. government trade and investment website (<http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk>) estimates that the average monthly Romanian salary is one hundred and thirty Euros. By going to Romania a majority of the cost savings would come from the "below the line" labor cost. The producers were able to hire the Romanian army for the scenes dealing with the Petersburg battle. Romanian extras were paid around ten dollars a day which is roughly one-tenth the cost of extras in the U.S. (JOHNSON 2002). Bill Arnold, the North Carolina Film Commissioner, claims that economics began dominating the discussion over where to film when Miramax won the U.S. distribution rights (JOHNSON 2002). It was at this point that *Cold Mountain's* location scouts began looking in Canada and the U.K. for potential film locations. "Romania seemed almost an afterthought," Arnold said. "We were all kind of floored by it" (JOHNSON 2002). The producer of the film, at one point, claimed that shooting in Canada could save them millions through incentive packages. They wanted to know if North Carolina and other surrounding States could match these incentive packages. Like most States in the U.S., there is no incentive package in place to offer filmmakers. However, in December 2001, the Golden LEAF Foundation, announced that it would offer *Cold Mountain* a \$75,000 grant if it were to be filmed in western North Carolina. The Golden LEAF foundation is a non-profit corporation in charge of dispensing the state's \$2.3 billion national tobacco settlement. Its purpose is to improve the social and economic conditions of the people in North Carolina (<http://www.goldenleaf.org/>). The North Carolina Partnership added an additional \$25,000, the Blue Ridge Motion Pictures (an Asheville-based studio) offered in-kind services and Asheville area hotels threw in special arrangements. This was the first time in North Carolina's film history that a large monetary incentive was offered to a film (JOHNSON 2002). Yet, it was all for not: North Carolina simply could not compete with the cheap cost offered by Romania. In the end, Bill Arnold was told that Miramax's attitude was "A Tree is a Tree" (JOHNSON 2002).

5 Conclusion

While many American journalists have criticized *Cold Mountain*, a closer examination reveals that Holly-

wood productions have been running away for years. Recent U.S. media attention on the outsourcing of American jobs, combined with the overall increase in film production has made runaway production a major economic and emotional issue for many Americans. Economics and geographic realism are central to the discourse of runaway production and the filming of *Cold Mountain*. *Cold Mountain's* producer sought to shift the focus away from economics and onto geographic realism as a means to justify their decision for filming in Romania. By making such an argument, the producers engaged in a cultural politic that seeks to privilege film as an artistic work over film as an economic product. Hollywood filmmaking is inseparably linked to both the economics of a production and the artistic creation of a cultural product for consumption. This type of rhetoric valorizes the artistic components of filmmaking; it seeks to position film production as art rather than an economic enterprise. By doing this, *Cold Mountain* producers perpetuate the myth that filmmaking is first and foremost an artistic rather than economic endeavor.

Hollywood film production is first and foremost an economic practice and production decisions involving where to film frequently reflect this fact. North Carolina may have lost the fight over *Cold Mountain*, but as Bill

Arnold points out, 90% of the 600 feature films and television productions shot in the State “play” somewhere else. For instance, *The Last of the Mohicans* plays New York and Canada, *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* plays Louisiana, and the long running television show *Dawson's Creek* plays Massachusetts (FELLERATH 2003). North Carolina witnessed a remarkable rise in film production activity in the mid 1980s and became a regular alternative production center for Hollywood production in the 1990s (Fig. 3). The agglomeration process began in North Carolina when Dino De Laurentis opened a film studio in Wilmington in the early 1980s. The state now hosts approximately 29 soundstages with a residential crew base of over 1,500 technicians and craftspeople.

North Carolina may once have just competed against alternative production centers in the U.S. in the 1980s and with Canada in the 1990s. North Carolina now competes with other international locations for economic feature runaways. International locations that have become “offshore” centers for feature film production include Australia, the U.K., New Zealand, South Africa, Romania and the Czech Republic. Just as with other industries that are outsourcing production, Hollywood continues to seek out the cheapest labor costs in centers that have viable production facilities. As

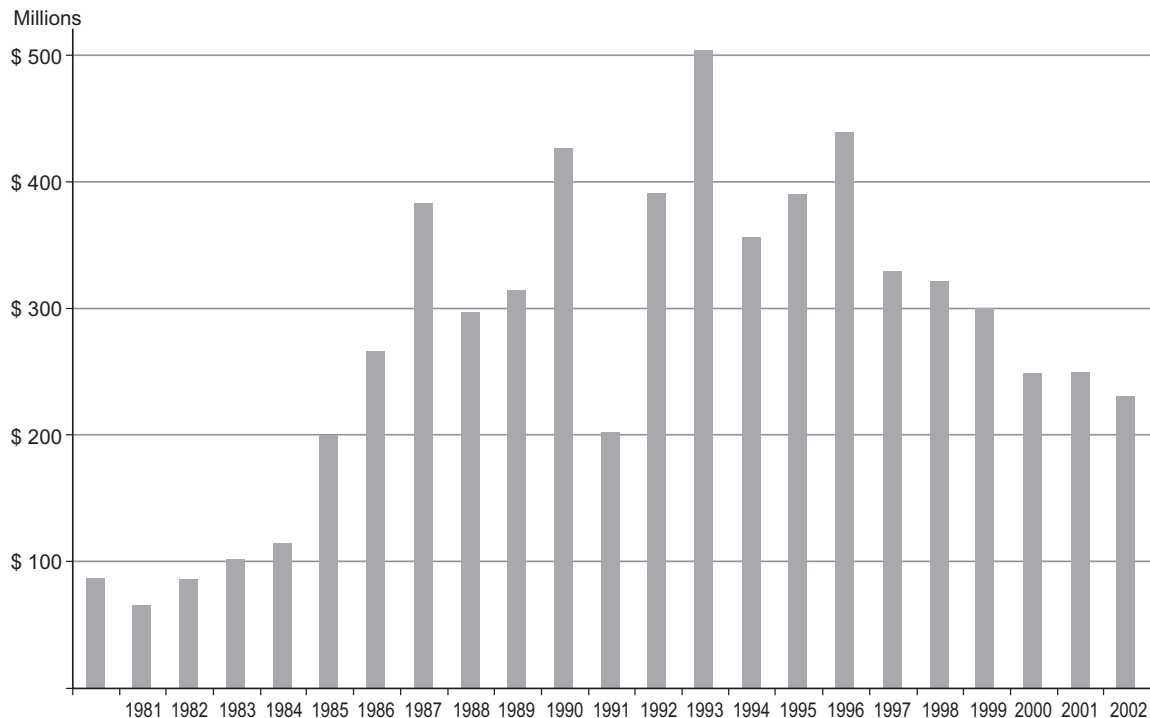


Fig. 3: North Carolina Film Production Expenditures
Filmproduktionsausgaben North Carolina

STORPER and CHRISTOPHERSON (1985) noted success in one year does not mean continued growth in years to come. New Zealand may find that the *Lord of the Rings* was an anomaly rather than the beginning of regular Hollywood funding. Romania, on the other hand, may find that *Cold Mountain* is just the beginning of regular Hollywood productions. *Cold Mountain* was the biggest

Hollywood film ever made in Romania. Romania and the Czech Republic are currently enjoying a rise in Hollywood feature film production expenditures; however, these locations will someday soon be passed over for a new underdeveloped production facility that offers the right mixture of economic incentives and geographic realism.

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