**Where the Cultured Things Are**

Stephen Roney

**General**

The one best source is the *Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/index.php>[)](https://archive.org/index.php)--motto), with over five million out-of-copyright texts to download, almost two million videos, old web pages (the *Wayback Machine*), recorded concerts (heavy on the Grateful Dead), even superannuated computer games. It is a great one-stop shopping destination.

Also good is the *Library of Congress Digital Collections* (<http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>). They have an appealing collection of visual stills; sound recordings, archived web pages, and newspapers. The Australian equivalent, *Trove* (trove.nla.gov.au), is also surprisingly extensive.

**Cinema**

Which medium is most motivating? Next to interactive games, we suppose it would be cinema. Great gobs of movies and trailers are available on *YouTube*. *Reddit* has a list, continually crowd-curated: <http://www.reddit.com/r/fullmoviesonyoutube/>. Downloading from *YouTube* is problematic; but you can always embed in a class web page or in an HTML page hosted by your learning management system.

Although not all vintage, *MovieClips* ([movieclips.com](file:///C:\Users\roney_s\Pictures\pop%20materials\movieclips.com)) is worth mention for its convenience. It hosts short clips from movies, pre-sorted by prop, action, mood, theme, or setting. This makes it ideal for finding specific dialogue situations: talking on the telephone, apologizing, booking a room, and so forth. Short clips are also ideal for illustrating vocabulary for emotions or actions. For listening exercises, they show facial expression and body language. Scan the results for black and white clips if, like us, you prefer vintage.

Clips cannot be downloaded, but can be trimmed and embedded in a web page or a hosted HTML page.

*Open Culture* hosts, in addition to many other attractions, a list of the most culturally interesting free films online, with links (<http://www.openculture.com/freemoviesonline>). This is cult film nirvana. Sadly, there is no search function; they are simply listed by genre. Students caught up in the current zombie craze will be well served by viewing *Night of the Living Dead*. Those who prefer vampires should be sucked in, pardon the expression, by *Nosferatu* or Bela Lugosi's *Dracula*. An old silent makes a good writing exercise: we have had success with *The Great Train Robbery*. The list includes such rough diamonds as *Cannibal! The Musical* and *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. Pre-viewing is your wisest option.

*Classic Cinema Online* features old movie serials, grandparents of today's TV serials (<http://www.classiccinemaonline.com/serials>). Nothing like them to build anticipation for next class. All are downloadable from the *Internet Archive*.

Find a model for the area of discourse being practiced, perhaps with the help of *MovieClips*, then head for *SimplyScripts* (<http://www.simplyscripts.com/>) for the original screenplay. Print, photocopy, hand out, play the clip as a model, and have students re-enact the dialogue—with the fun of imagining they are in a movie. *SimplyScripts* also has old radio scripts, TV scripts, plays—even musicals.

**TV**

*YouTube* is again the obvious source, with the help of a *Reddit* crowd-sourced index (<http://www.reddit.com/r/fulltvshowsonyoutube>). For Cancon, try the *CBC* archives (<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/)--also> a source for old radio shows.

**Advertising**

Do not overlook the might of vintage advertising. Here especially, all stops have been pulled out to grab attention and motivate. *Duke University* has the state-of-the-Internet collection of both video (<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adviews/>) and print (<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess/>) ads, searchable by product, company, era, subject, medium, or audience. The *Vintage Ad Browser* (<http://www.vintageadbrowser.com/>) is good for print. Most useful at *VintaScope* (<http://www.vintascope.com/>) is a search of their blog. They also feature product labels. For Cancon, there's the *Canadian Advertising Museum* (<http://www.canadianadvertisingmuseum.com/>). These ads are good for vocabulary acquisition: for example, an ad for a watch can “sell” the vocabulary item “watch.”

Old mail order catalogues warrant special mention—for widest selection of items and as an essential element of Canadian culture. The old Eaton's catalogue sold everything, including kitchen sinks; it is a simple matter, even without a search function, to look up a vocabulary item and find a picture calculated to be motivating and memorable. The *Canadian Museum of History* has a fine collection (<http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/cpm/catalog/cat0000e.shtml>). The *Kingston Frontenac Public Library* has a world-beating set of links (<http://reads.kfpl.ca/2013/06/26/a-present-from-the-past-store-catalogues/>). *Wishbook* is an American equivalent (<http://192.185.93.157/~wishbook/>).

**Images**

Kalev Leetaru has been scanning books in the *Internet Archive*, pulling illustrations, and putting them on *Flickr* (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/internetarchivebookimages/with/14784850762/>). He has 2.6 million up at last report; all searchable. The target is 14 million.

**Audio**

For listening exercises, the *Old Time Radio Network* has12,000 old radio shows (<http://www.otr.net/>). *Dumb* has another good collection (<http://www.dumb.com/oldtimeradio/>). Nobody has made these searchable; this is a well into which time can disappear without trace. Our best strategy: work backwards from a script found at *SimplyScripts*, where you can do a word search, then find the audio here. *Mercury Theater on the Air* preserves, among other Orson Welles projects, the notorious *War of the Worlds* broadcast that caused panic just before WWII (<http://www.mercurytheatre.info/>).

For old comic books—fantastic for reading or writing exercises, or to illustrate--there is *Comic Book Plus* (<http://comicbookplus.com/>). It also features old Sunday strips, pulp fiction, even some British story weeklies. Phrases like “We have met the enemy, and they is us,” or “Happiness is …,” came from this fountain. *Digital Comics Museum* is an alternative (<http://digitalcomicmuseum.com/>). *Catspaw* has vintage Canadian comics (<http://www.catspawdynamics.com/golden-age-canadian-comics/>); you will be surprised how many there were.

For pop print, the place to go is *Munsey's* (<http://www.munseys.com/site/home>): old pulp novels, science fiction, westerns, detective, horror. Common tags are “top-notch” and “snappy stories.” Short and easy to read. For an entertaining exercise, how can you miss? Warning, however: pulp magazines had no censor board. More of the same at the Pulp Magazines Project (<http://www.pulpmags.org/>).

Google's magazine digitization project (<http://books.google.com/books/magazines/language/en?sa=N%20&start=0&rview=1>) is the best source of magazine content. The collection includes the original *Munsey's*, the first American popular magazine, *Boys’ Life*, publication of the American Boy Scouts, and *Life*. For discussions in class, nothing is better than the clinically insane *Weekly World News*, home of “bat boy” and incessant alien attacks.

Popular music is its own vast galaxy, although classroom applications are more limited. *YouTube* has many music videos, of course. There is also the searchable *Open Music Archive* (<http://www.openmusicarchive.org/index.php>). Tracks are freely downloadable in .mp3 format. *Library and Archives Canada* offers the “Virtual Gramophone” (<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/gramophone/028011-9000-e.html>) a wide collection of old wax. There is a similar “National Jukebox” at the *Library of Congress*. The *Association for Cultural Equity* ([http://www.culturalequity.org](http://www.culturalequity.org/))hosts the complete Alan Lomax collection of street music from everywhere--17,000 files. For old song lyrics, try *Mudcat Cafe* ([http://mudcat.org/](http://mudcat.org/" \t "_top)).

With so much now available, and with the new technology in our classrooms, there is no reason for students to feel bored in English class. Leave that for math and science.