TIFF: Colonialism

Colonialism in the Americas: A Critical Look

This game, which can be played in 2 class blocks or in one 2-hour session, is designed to give participants a sense of the emotional, cultural and economic effects of being colonized. It can be played with 8 to 30 people.

**MATERIALS for a Class of 30**
- 30 “neckbands” — strips of heavy paper
- 10 large sheets of newsprint
- 5 felt pens
- 1 copy of *Notes About Tiffs* and *Tiffplan* for Tiffs; 4 copies of *Earthplan* for Earthlings
- scrap paper for secret messages
- 5 sets of 6 nametags in different colours, one for each group: Wheatville, Kneebone, Metropolis, Riotown, Tiff, and a matching sign to stand on a desk with the name in large letters
- 5 copies of page 50, *the Development Graph and Questions for Discussion*

**TIME REQUIREMENTS**

1. Understanding Culture: .25 min.
2. Meeting 1: 10 min.
3. Strategy Session 1: 10 min.
4. Meeting 2: 10 min.
5. Strategy Session 2: 10 min.
6. Meeting 3: 10 min.
7. Strategy Session 3: 10 min.
8. Final Meeting & Discussion (Small Group/Full Group): 30 min.

**TOTAL: 1 hour 55 minutes**

(NOTE: This time frame is for groups with a minimum of time; the game can easily be stretched to 3 hours. Teachers may want to follow up with another period in which students write about some of the things they felt and learned about colonialism during the game.)

**ROOM SET-UP**

5 desks are across the front of the room for the Mayors and Great Tiffing. On each desk is the large coloured sign indicating the name of the group. The rest of the desks or chairs are arranged in groups suitable for strategizing.

**GROUPS**

Participants should be divided into groups: 1 group of Tiffs and 1 to 4 groups of Earthlings (Town Councils). A class of 30 should be divided into 5 groups of 6 students.

**Tiffs:**
Extra-terrestrial beings who have landed on earth with an eye to major zucchini production (See *Notes about Tiffs*). The Tiffs will wear neckbands, and will have extra neckbands to distribute if they wish to.

**Earthlings** (Town Councils of Metropolis, Riotown, Wheatville and Kneebone): You are members of a typical town council. Many of you have families, and they are like most earth families, earning money to live and to enjoy doing the things they like doing. Your towns are in an agricultural area, and so you are concerned with maintaining healthy, productive farms, and also maintaining factories and businesses in your community so that your young people can find jobs.
NOTES ABOUT TIFFS

Why They Came to Earth:

- Tiffs come from the planet Tiff, which is now so covered with factories and homes that there is no longer enough land to grow food. And the favorite food of the Tiffs is . . . you guessed it . . . zucchini. Their economic purpose on Earth is to produce huge quantities of this delicacy, process it by drying, salting, or pickling it, and send it back to Tiff. It is important to realize that the Tiffs don’t intend to fit into the Earth economy and pay for zucchini; in fact, they don’t have any Earth money. They have to think of other methods.

The Tiffs are very proud of the Tiff culture and social organization, and their social purpose on Earth is to “civilize” the Earthlings to become more like Tiffs.

Tiff Culture:

- In Tiff culture, necks are considered very private parts of the body, and it is considered extremely indecent to appear in public without wearing a neckband.

- Tiffs have little patience with celebrations and gift-giving occasions which they observe on earth; these seem to them a great waste of time and resources and they feel that earthlings would be far better off without them. They are also amazed at the time Earthlings spend on sports when they could be better employed working.

- Tiffs pride themselves on their music, which is entirely based upon two notes sung in a variety of different rhythms.

They also dance to this music, in the distinctive Tiffdance, which consists of standing still and letting their arms rise and fall in time to the 2-note rhythms.

Tiff Social Organization:

- Tiffs follow their emperor Great Tiff, who, they feel, is responsible for the maintenance of all order in the Galaxy. Each sentence in their language begins with the words: “In obedience to Great Tiff . . . .”

- On each planet where the Tiffs land, they install a representative of the Great Tiff to maintain Tiff law and order. This person — Great Tiffing — is responsible (with advice from his council of Tiffs) for maintaining a system of justice on the outer planets, of which Earth is one.

- Tiff society is organized around the State-Unit. At birth, children are put in groups of 8, each group supervised by a Tiff Leader. Children are instructed in the ways of Great Tiff and in Tiff language, sciences, music, and responsibilities. The Tiffs who land on earth are surprised to observe that earth children live with their birth families. They consider this a very unhealthy emotional and educational situation.

Tiff Technology:

- Tiffs are very scientifically advanced, and have recently developed two inventions which give them great power: — the Tiffship, which allows them to travel almost instantaneously between their home planet of Tiff and other planets; — the Tiffgun, which allows them to immobilize large segments of population.

THE GAME

Understanding Culture (25 min.)

- Divide into groups (see above). In this Time-Block, the task of each group will be to try to understand the culture that they represent.

Tiffplan

— Read over the Notes About Tiffs.

— Choose roles:

- Great Tiffing: will make laws and administer justice, with the advice of your fellow Tiffs;

- Agricultural Representative: will figure out laws and methods of getting farmers to switch from growing grain and other crops to growing zucchini to be sent back to Tiff. (You may want to consider land takeover, taxes to be paid in Tiffdollars — which are only paid for things like zucchini, changing the laws, etc.)

- Industrial Representative: will consider how to change many of the Earth factories into zucchini-processing plants, to get the zucchini ready to be shipped back to Tiff. You may want to talk to the Agricultural Representative about methods.

- Morality Representative: will try to get these Earthlings into decent moral shape, i.e. get them to cover their necks with neckbands and make sure they preface each sentence with the words “In obedience to Great Tiff . . . .”

- Cultural Representative: will try to replace all this crazy, disorganized Earth music with proper Tiff music and dance. Also, you
are very upset about the wasteful festivals of the Earthlings such as birthdays and Christmas; you will try to think of ways to wipe out these festivals so that the Earthlings will have more time and energy to produce zucchini products.
- **Educational Representative**: will work on replacing the inefficient Earth system of families with State-Units, ensuring that babies are removed from their parents and brought up by a good Tiff leader.

One of your members will also need to be a recorder, to record major laws and announcements on newprint, and also to fill in the "development graph."

**Your Tasks:**
- Decide what Great Tiffing will say (in a maximum of 1 minute) at the First Meeting with Earthlings. **REMEMBER**: You have enormous power. If the earthlings don't do what you want, you can immobilize them with your Tiffgun. HOWEVER, if you do this with too many earthlings, you won't have anybody left to do all the work of growing the zucchini, processing them, and loading them on to the Tiffships. Not many Tiffs want to come to earth, so you are dependent on Earthlings to provide labour. You must try to introduce change slowly, or win over their leaders, or pit one group against the other, to keep the earthlings from mass revolt. THEREFORE, YOU MAY ONLY MAKE 2 CHANGES — ONE ECONOMIC CHANGE AND ONE SOCIAL CHANGE — AT THIS MEETING AND AT ANY SUBSEQUENT MEETING.

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**Part 1 Earthplan**
For the Town Councils of Metropolis, Riotown, Wheatville and Kneebone

Select a Mayor, Recorder, and Messenger
- **Mayor**: will announce city by-laws, after receiving advice from his/her councillors
- **Recorder**: will record major decisions and announcements on newprint, using felt pens. The recorder will also fill in the Development Graph at the end of each Strategy Session
- **Messenger**: will carry secret messages to the Tiffs and other Town Councils

The entire council is concerned about 2 major areas:
- **Economic**
  You want a good variety of different industries and businesses in the town and a good variety of crops and good crop prices in the surrounding countryside. You also want the fruit and vegetables from the farms to come to the town to provide food for the townspeople, and to be canned and frozen in the town factories. This way, young people will be able to get jobs in the town or on the farms, and your community will be prosperous.

  - **Social/Cultural**
  You want the people in your community to be happy, well-fed, secure in their families, and participating in a variety of musical and educational events.

All of you, since you are Earthlings, are used to certain things about Earth Culture. Spend the first time-block developing your Town Plan, outlining the most important things about your culture that you wouldn't want to change. Use these headings:

**Economic**: What kind of industries and businesses do you want to have in your town? What services (grain storage, roads and transportation, etc.) do you think are necessary to help the farmers?

**Social/Cultural**:
- **Cultural**: What kind of celebrations do you want to support (e.g. Christmas, birthdays, special events)? What kind of musical or sports facilities?
- **Social Organization**: What is important to you about families? How should people be elected to make decisions?
- **Education**: What kind of education do you think your citizens need?
- **Rights and Freedoms**: What kind of human rights and freedoms do you support in your community?

On one or two large sheets of newprint, draw up a Town Plan using the headings above. Make sure your plan includes the main things that you think are important for a healthy community.
Part 3 First Strategy Session (10 minutes)

The Tiffs and the Community Councils meet in their groups to record on the Development Graph the effects of the 2 changes and to plan their future strategies.

- Development Graph
As a group, decide what effect the 2 changes announced by the Tiffs will have on your economic future and your social future. Record these decisions on the Development Graph. (Do not show your Development Graph to other groups until requested to do so by the Facilitator.)

- Plan Strategies
The Tiffs — Plan your next 2 required changes. The Earthlings — Survey your options:
  - resistance
  - banding together with the other communities
  - revolt
  - negotiation with the Tiffs for future economic and social guarantees (You could do this together with other communities, or you could try to get better terms by negotiating separately.)

Plan your strategy. You may meet with other groups at this time, or send secret messages by messenger.

Part 8 The Final Meeting (30 minutes)

It is important to link the experience of the game with the realities of colonization.

In small groups (10 minutes)
Staying in their groups, participants try to stand back from the experience of the game and examine some of the question raised by it. Discuss the Questions for Discussion (the recorder should take brief notes).

In the whole group (20 minutes)
- Go over each of the Questions for Discussion, making sure that each group has a chance to respond.
- It might be useful to extend the time-line: Ask the group what would have happened had the game gone on for several more sessions? What would the final outcome have been?
Development Graph
Using as your starting point your general situation at the the beginning of the game, map the up or down progress of your town (if you are Earthlings) or Tiff group (if you are Tiffs). Is the economic health of your community getting worse or better? How about the social and cultural aspects of your lives — things like family life, music, traditions, etc.

Questions for Discussion
- How did the people in your group feel as the game progressed?
- What happened to the economic and sociocultural health of your community as recorded on the Development Graph?
- What important points from your Town Plan were lost because of changes imposed by the Tiffs?
- Using most of the land to grow zucchini for export might have some environmental effects. What are they?
- How is what happened in the game like what happened to the Arawak people or the other indigenous people of the Americas?

The Facilitator
Your role is to keep everything going smoothly and within a strict time-frame, and also to stir up and challenge the players.

1. Make suggestions to keep things moving e.g. Urge the Tiffs to think more about how they will force farmers to grow zucchinis for nothing, and businesspeople to convert their factories into zucchini processing plants. What laws can they make? How might they win cooperation from the mayors?

   Move through the room during strategy sessions, urging town councils to send secret messages to the Tiffs and to each other with suggestions of joint actions, etc.

2. Point out Consequences e.g. When more land is used for zucchini growing, what will that do to the local food supply?

3. Disaster Flashes Halfway through the game it might be a good idea to produce a “disaster flash” e.g. Tifflon, a disease fatal to humans, strikes. One-third of your town dies.

   Message from Tiff: We’re not getting enough zucchini! Grow more!

4. Link with the Real World in final discussion, help the students make as many links as possible to the real colonization process.

The idea for TIFF came from an article by Stephen Hume, “We are all the proud purveyors of Klingon justice.” — Vancouver Sun, February 11, 1991.

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