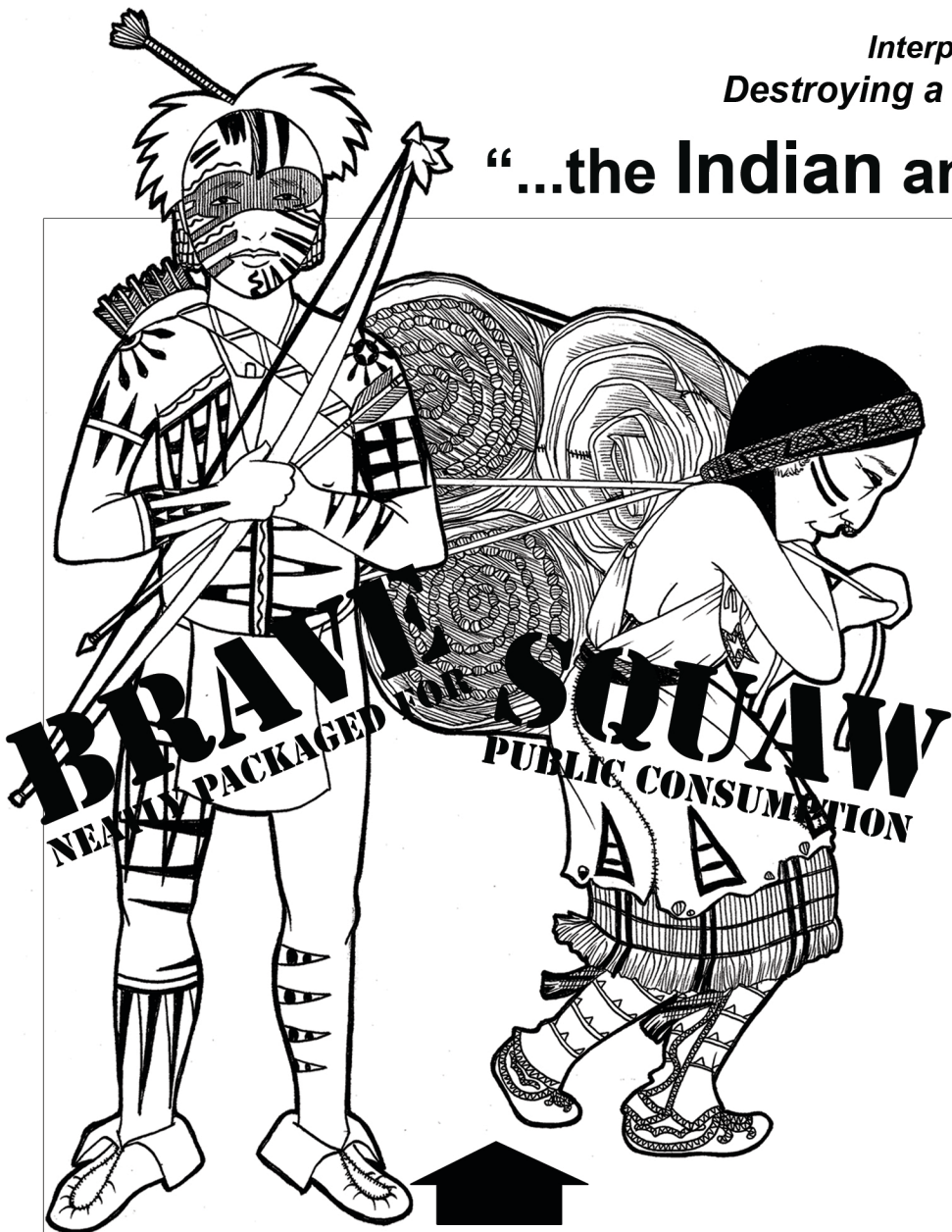


## “...the Indian and *his* Squaw...”

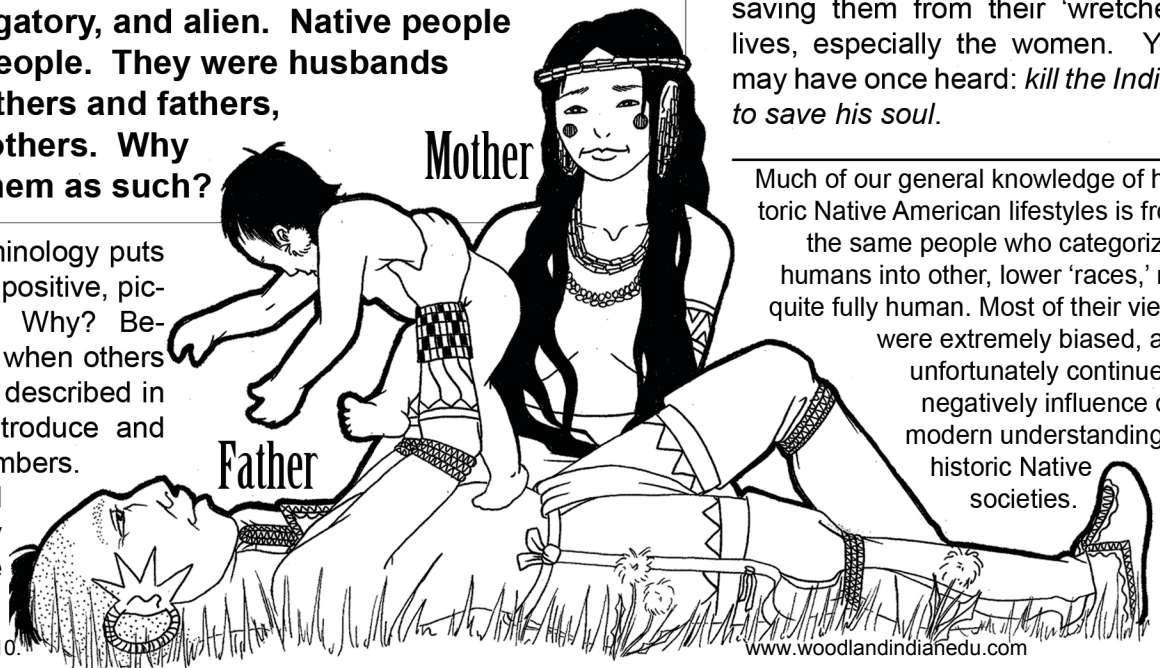


So many times in historical writings these words have been uttered. This statement says so much about European views of the time. Translated, an Indian is a man and a squaw is a woman. Of course neither are called such because that would classify the 'others' as the same - in other words, human. Terms like Indian, brave, squaw, and papoose became popular terminology among white society, and served to describe Native American people as a separate, lower 'race.'

The sentence also assumes Native women are owned or answer to the men folk. This assumption is not born of just bad observations but of familiar territory. Why would they not have assumed so when this was usual practice in Euro-American societies? Propaganda accused Native People of employing these false gender relations in the hopes of disgusting colonists and early Americans. In one example, whites were fed the idea that taking Native lives and lands was Christian in many ways. They would be doing Native Americans a favor by saving them from their 'wretched' lives, especially the women. You may have once heard: *kill the Indian to save his soul.*

These terms drum up images that are false, scary, negative, derogatory, and alien. Native people are just that, people. They were husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. Why not describe them as such?

Using different terminology puts different, and more positive, pictures in our heads. Why? Because we feel akin when others are introduced and described in ways we would introduce and describe family members. This respect should be extended to any human culture we may interpret.



Much of our general knowledge of historic Native American lifestyles is from the same people who categorized humans into other, lower 'races,' not quite fully human. Most of their views were extremely biased, and unfortunately continue to negatively influence our modern understanding of historic Native societies.