Jonathan Tropper, creator. *Warrior*. Cinemax, 2019.

Jonathan Tropper is a best-selling novelist, producer, and screenwriter. He created both the *Banshee* and *Warrior* series. Tropper collaborated with actress, writer, and martial artist Shannon Lee (daughter of Bruce Lee) and director/producer Justin Lin to bring to fruition Bruce Lee's vision for a series about a Chinese immigrant wandering the American Old West.

Warrior is a fictional action-drama series, with the backdrop of late 1870s San Francisco, that showcases the lives of Chinese immigrants arriving to the United States where they encounter prejudice, racism, and exclusion from American culture and life. This time period is significant in American history because the series explicates daily lives of Chinese immigrants in the years that preceded the Exclusion Act of 1882, which was the first time the United States created federal legislation to prevent immigration into the country. As a historical drama, *Warrior* focuses on Chinese nationals' arrival to the Pacific frontier while under development. The California Gold Rush (1840s-1850s), end of the Civil War (1865), and completion of the first transcontinental railroad (1869) persuaded scores of people from the U.S. interior to move westward seeking better opportunities. The massive population increase also brought lawlessness and ruthless competition for jobs. In 1854 the California Supreme Court ruled in *People v. Hall* that Chinese people – like Native Americans and African Americans – could not testify against their White assailants, denying them justice for crimes committed against them, unless another White person testified on the aggression. Along the Pacific frontier, White Americans began to blame Chinese immigrants for lower wages and economic strife, thus creating an anti-Chinese sentiment throughout the West as other Americans were competing for the same employment. This led to 1882 federal legislation, passed by Congress and approved by President Chester A. Arthur, exclusively limiting immigration from China. *Warrior* enlightens viewers about this unjust era. The series also focuses on Irish Americans – who considered themselves White – and Chinese Americans clashing in San Francisco preceding the Exclusion Act.

The series begins with the arrival of the main character, Ah Sahm (Andrew Koji), to 1878 San Francisco where he is immediately met with anti-Chinese sentiment. Bruce Lee initially created Ah Sahm for himself to star, so the producers kept Ah Sahm's appearance and fighting style to reflect that of the martial arts icon. Andrew Koji impressively immolates Bruce Lee in appearance and fighting style throughout the series. Ah Sahm is a great fighter and is fluent in Chinese and English, which is advantageous as he finds his way in the American West. Another main character, Wang Chao (Hoon Lee), is a weapons dealer who navigates racial lines through language. Chao recruits Ah Sahm as a "scrapper" for the Hop Wei to solicit a finder's fee. The son of the Hop Wei leader, Young Jun (Jason Tobin), and Ah Sahm become friends and build a strong bond that is important throughout their many battles. Ah Sahm's primary motive for traveling to the United States is the search for his sister Xiaojing. Eventually he discovers that she is now the wife of the rival tong leader, Long Zii, of the Long Zii Tong and has reinvented herself as Mai Ling (Dianne Doan). Ah Sahm keeps this secret from the Hop Wei because of the tongs' rivalry. Mai Ling is now an ambitious ruthless gang leader who wants control of all the tongs and eventually Chinatown and is willing to do anything to achieve it. She has no interest in returning to China nor being reminded of the life she fled from – which includes her brother, Ah Sahm. The siblings quickly realize they are strangers instead of kin and pursue their own paths while crossing one another as the tongs fight for dominance of Chinatown. Ah Sahm's criminal activities and own ambitions take him throughout the American West where he finds romance and more fighting.

Ah Sahm's fighting rival is the leader of the Irish American working men, Dylan Leary (Dean Jagger), who hates the Chinese because he blames them for lowering wages and taking Irish workers' jobs. Leary is feared and respected amongst the Irish because he proves his physical dominance with backstreet boxing matches and organizes the Irish men under the Working Man's Party. Leary quickly resorts to violence to resolve his quarrels with anyone and while he owns a tavern, he also does business outside of the law with loan sharking, extortion, and murder. He uses his influence to deal companies on behalf of the

Irish American workers and at times resorts to punishing their businesses. Ah Sahm and Dylan Leary are the top fighters who represent their respective groups and it becomes apparent they will have to square off. But before they finally meet, there are numerous other action-packed fight scenes in which these two display impressive fighting abilities. Martial arts and fighting are the foundation of the show, but the injustices of racism are prevalent throughout the series. It allows viewers to see the U.S. as it was, meant for White Protestant men.

Racism is clearly present in 1878 San Francisco, and most aggressions from Whites towards Chinese go unpunished. But there is a surprise character who enforces their own form of justice by means of a sword. This character looks to punish those who attacked Chinese Americans and escaped punishment from the law or any who are abusive toward defenseless Chinese Americans. Finding this vigilante becomes a priority for the police department to solve because Whites are dying at the hands of a Chinese person which rattles White dominance. These crimes also become a political weapon and are manipulated by government leaders who use it to solve the "Chinese Problem", the solution being the Exclusion Act. There are many unexpected dynamics displayed in an era that is usually thought of as solely violent and rugged. *Warrior* is worth watching for fans of martial arts on screen, historical pieces, and dramatic action series. The series also touches on other unjust issues that are relevant to us today: sexuality, gender, and class.

Raul Teodoro