

I-III cannot contend with IV-V

Jenna Johnk

The Clackamas Print

It's finally here—the beginning of the end. 2005 marks the end of a legacy—the final Star Wars movie, “Episode III: The Revenge of the Sith.” I am as diehard as any other Star Wars fan; I must say that, though very good, this second trilogy in no way touches the monumental, primo, phantasmagoric nature of the original.

Why? Well, where do I begin? Yes, it is wonderful that Star Wars creator George Lucas decided to continue on with his vision, but where's the effort? There is no doubt that the new movies are beautiful and mind-boggling in appearance, but there is a lack of decent acting to go with it. And “Attack of the Clones”—ugh! Please tell me that was a joke. Between Hayden Christensen and the ridiculous dialogue, I could barely stomach it. What did Lucas do, sit on the john and scribble the script of a piece of toilet paper (and then use “Attack of the Clones” to wipe)?

“Episode I” was decent enough, with a little lagging and

emphasis on the pod-racing. The story was okay, but really only had one purpose—to introduce Anakin. That's all fine and dandy, but the rest seemed less focused on Anakin and more focused on other things, like the Gungans (what the hell?).

The original trilogy had a strong story, with well-placed plot twists and a non-stop account of the next generation of Jedi. “The Empire Strikes Back” is probably the most shocking of the three, moving away from the first Star Wars' happy-go-lucky attitude where good triumphs over evil and becoming bleak and desperate, traveling on to the darker side of the story. In



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“Empire,” the heroic trio is cut short with the freezing of Han Solo, the revealing of a surprising back story (“Luke, I am your father”), and the loss of a hand (an appendage-loss tradition carried on to Episodes I-III). And, of course, no scene could beat the last minutes of “Return of the Jedi,” when the Emperor, Luke and Vader face

off. It is still one of the greatest scenes of all time when Vader defeats the Emperor and saves the day.

In the original three Star Wars episodes, the occasional lack of special effects was always paid back with the

superb acting of the cast. Still, what they did with the special effects was phenomenal for the time. The plot is supported by incredible visuals and acting scenery. In the new trilogy, it's almost too much to take. Though Episodes I-III are really stunning and amazingly realistic, the full effect of the special effects can be a little distracting, that distraction can sometimes be welcome.

Star Wars IV-VI was filled with a great cast, who, with their characters and provided an awesome chemistry was smooth, making their screen relationships believable. In the new Star Wars, the important relationship, between Padme and Anakin, seems a little flat and maybe even cold. As they supposed to be in love. Of course, in “Attack of the Clones,” the love story is played out more—far too much, in my opinion. And what can be said about the Harlequin Romance-style dialogue and dreamy little romance? I gagged.

Of course, if I wanted to know the true reason why the original trilogy is supremely superior, it would have to be these words: no Jar Jar Binks.

‘Shotgun’ speaks to generations

Ben Maras

The Clackamas Print

“CITIZENS,” the soliloquy begins. “Children of the night, bearers of the day torch, scorched and burned — BURN NOT. The damn is broken, the curse is fled, once muddled and still, the river runs RED!”

This first paragraph in writer/musician Saul Williams' epic poem “Said the Shotgun to the Head” is enough to either hook the reader instantly, or completely scare them off. Regardless, they're usually curious enough to go onto the next few pages, where they are confronted with a 182-page parable written in poetic form, breaking many rules of “classical” poetry.

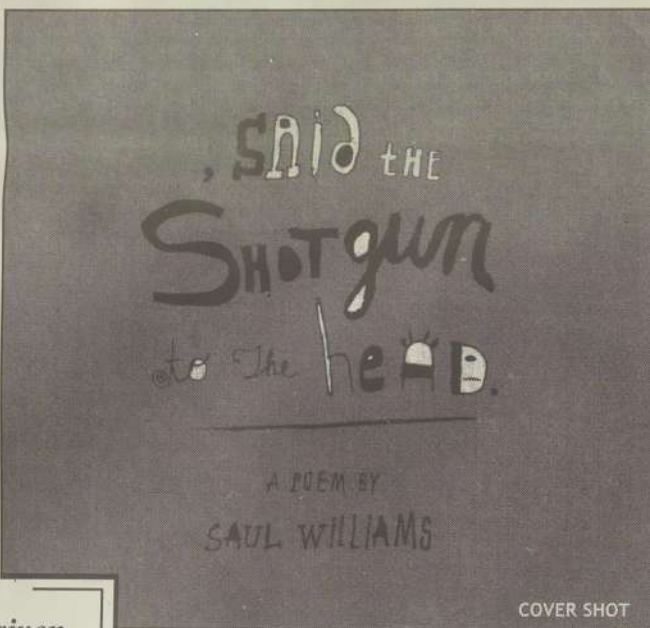
Williams uses every technique necessary to portray his tone, even changing spacing and font sizes (hence the capitalization in quotations, which may seem out of place). The words are often cutting and to the point, sometimes ironic, and sometimes painfully true.

In the introduction, it is explained as a narration about a modern-day John the Baptist, preaching the tale of a female messiah who he has known intimately — the babbling sort who one might cross the street to avoid, while he rambles on about phallic weapons and the womb.

Throughout the book, the broken tale is told, making little to no sense at times, but the meaning being, paradoxically, perfectly clear—it is a tale of social commentary;

**“Angst driven
insecure/
a country in
puberty/
a country at
war.../
your weapons/
are phallic/
all of them”**

Saul Williams
Said the Shotgun
to the Head



COVER SHOT

not politics, the story of “a truth that mushrooms its darkened cloud over the rest of us so that we, too, bear witness to the short-lived fate of a civilization that worships a male god.”

Anyone expecting conventional poetry from this book will be sadly mistaken; there's little conventional about it. Yet as babbling and bizarre as it may sound at times, each line has a hidden meaning, as I was lucky enough to hear Williams explain at a reading. For example:

“She had eyes like two turntables; mix(h)er in between my dreams and reality, blended in ancient themes. The bass is of Isis (basis) cross-faded to ankh, the beat drops like a cliff overlooking my heart.” The beat dropping is (simply put) representative of the way

that any culture moves as one, to a combination of idealism and reality, while in progression clinging to the past.

Williams is also an acclaimed musician, putting his poems (including many excerpts from “Shotgun”) to music, which merely complements his talent with the written word. While Williams may not be the first to do what he is doing, he is making his art available to an entire generation of people who wouldn't go to a poetry reading if their lives depended on it.

His books and music are available at his website, www.saulwilliams.com, or at many local book and record stores (including Powell's Books in Portland).

Zach de la-Rocha of Rage Against the Machine fame once described the piece as “An invitation to live and die in the moment, a confrontation of the politics of an empire, a dare to transform oneself in the face of fear and a post-9/11 love song all in one.”

Sounds about right.

Sam Krause presents...

The Top 10 horrible things to do this summer

10. Take that long-awaited trip to Baghdad.
9. Attempt to build multi-winged flying machine.
8. Get an unpaid internship with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.
7. Become pen-pals with a person from North Korea, then see what the United States government does.
6. Wait in line three months for the new Harry Potter book.
5. Spend a week in purgatory.
4. Register friends as sex offenders in Benton County.
3. Challenge Kirstie Alley and Sally Struthers to a pie eating contest.
2. Petition to bring back Adult Swim's Super Milk Chan “or else.”
1. Spend entire paychecks going to indie rock shows.