



Diving into Stage writing: Dialogue and Drama with KIA CORTHRON

Many prose writers (and some playwrights) feel confident in their narrative skills but intimidated by the use of dialogue. Is it natural? Does it need to be? How does “natural” in real life differ from that in literature? What are the ethical concerns in writing dialect? In a similar vein, writers sometimes avoid the dramatic—building tension—out of fear of committing the “sin” of *melodrama*.

In this workshop, participants will be given exercises to help facilitate their undertaking of expressive speech and action inherent to the characters they’ve created.

Kia Corthron was born and raised in Cumberland, Maryland, earned her B.A. from the University of Maryland in College Park, and is a playwright and novelist living in Harlem, New York City. Her work has addressed the public school system, the death penalty, incarcerated women, girl gangs, abortion, the NYPD and the black community, the war on drugs and its effect on the black community, homophobia, workers’ rights, water rights, environmental racism, Palestinian rights, Deaf culture, tort law, historical and current Liberia, and other issues. In June of 2018, she co-produced *IMAGINE: YEMEN*, an evening of short plays addressing the crisis in Yemen and U.S. responsibility for it, including her short musical *Charade*, following up the evening with an animated video of *Charade*’s signature song.

Her debut novel *The Castle Cross the Magnet Carter* was the winner of the 2016 Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, and she was the 2017 Bread Loaf Shane Stevens Fellow in the Novel. In 2017 she was the resident playwright of Chicago’s Eclipse Theatre, which produced three of her plays. For her body of work, she has been honored with the Windham Campbell Prize for Drama, the USArtists Jane Addams Fellowship, the Simon Great Plains Playwright Award (Honored Playwright), McKnight National Residency, and others. Baltimore productions of her plays include *Splash Hatch on the E Going Down* at Center Stage and *Force Continuum* at Cohesion Theatre Company. Other plays have premiered in New York at Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company, Manhattan Theatre Club, Ensemble Studio Theatre, American Place Theatre, New York Stage and Film, Brooklyn Academy of Music; regionally at Yale Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Hartford Stage Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville/Humana, New York Stage and Film, Mark Taper Forum, Minneapolis’ Children’s Theatre, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Delaware Theatre Company; and in London at the Royal Court Theatre and Donmar Warehouse. In television she has written for *The Jury* and *The Wire*. She serves on the Council of the Dramatists Guild, is a New Dramatists alumnus, and is a member of the Authors Guild.

<https://lithub.com/making-the-jump-from-stage-to-page/>

Her play *Force Continuum* was done recently in Baltimore (and other places) because of the issues of police misconduct.

<https://www.broadwayworld.com/seattle/article/UW-Drama-to-Confront-Police-Brutality-with-Kia-Corthrons-FORCE-CONTINUUM>

UW Drama to Confront Police Brutality with Kia Corthron's FORCE CONTINUUM
[by BWW News Desk Apr. 29, 2016](#)

“The University of Washington School of Drama continues their 75th Anniversary Season with playwright and novelist [Kia Corthron](#)'s explosive socio-political drama, *FORCE CONTINUUM*. Second-year MFA directing candidate Malika Oyetimein will helm the project, which she chose for very personal reasons. “Since the acquittal of [Michael Brown](#)'s murderer I have been full of rage, confusion, passion, and heartbreak,” states Oyetimein. “I have vacillated between being hopeful for this country and full of despair. I knew I wanted to DO something, make something, but lacked the proper outlet. I felt impotent and that’s why I knew my next production needed to address how I was feeling. Though *FORCE CONTINUUM* is 14-years-old, it is accurate, relevant, and important. This play makes us question why we are in this

seemingly helpless cycle of police brutality in America. And, most importantly, it humanizes the people that are being affected by this systemic violence."

FORCE CONTINUUM revolves around three generations of African American police officers torn apart by the very organization to which they have dedicated their loyalty and working lives. It is an unflinching and deeply felt story of tragically flawed human beings trying to do the right thing in difficult circumstances and getting it very, very wrong.

As timely now as it was when first produced in 2001, FORCE CONTINUUM stands as a potent theatrical criticism of modern-day police brutality and the relationship between police and the black community."

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1997-11-09-1997313059-story.html>

<https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2019/02/21/arena-stage-power-plays-initiative/>

<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/contemporaryplaywrightsofcolor/kia-corthron>

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