

## ENGL 215 Live Chat 4b



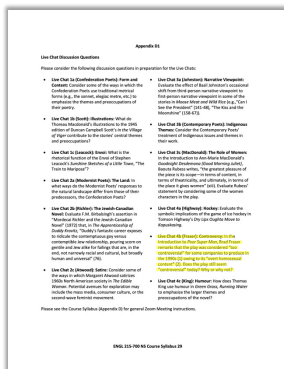
### Zoom Meeting Information

- Zoom Meetings are about 60 minutes in length.
- Zoom Meetings are recorded.
- Recordings and PowerPoint presentations are posted on onQ (under “Activities” > “Zoom Meetings”).
- Participate in the discussion by using the “Chat” window or by raising your hand in “Reactions.”
- Your camera may be on or off.

## ENGL 215 Zoom Meetings

Weeks	1-3	Live Chat 1a Confederation Poets	Live Chat 1b Duncan Campbell Scott	Live Chat 1c Stephen Leacock
Weeks	4-6	Live Chat 2a Modernist Poets	Live Chat 2b Mordecai Richler	Live Chat 2c Margaret Atwood
Weeks	7-9	Live Chat 3a Basil Johnston	Live Chat 3b Contemporary Poets	Live Chat 3c Ann-Marie MacDonald
Weeks	10-12	Live Chat 4a Tomson Highway	Live Chat 4b Brad Fraser	Live Chat 4c Thomas King

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### Appendix D1

- **Controversy:** In the Introduction to *Poor Super Man*, Brad Fraser remarks that the play was considered “too controversial” for some companies to produce in the 1990s (1) owing to its “overt homosexual content” (2). Does the play still seem “controversial” today? Why or why not?

## Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

Postponed? What did that mean? My agent had been given some vague line about “a possible future date.” Essentially, the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati—which bills itself as Cincinnati’s “alternate” theatre—felt the content of the play was too controversial for them to produce. They had decided to cancel the show in order not to alienate their subscription audience or jeopardize future funding possibilities. Translation: they were cancelling the show—despite the fact contracts had already been signed and my guarantee had been paid. (1)

**Brad Fraser. Introduction. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

## The Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati



the.urbanophile, CC BY-ND 2.0, via Flickr

## Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989)



Daniel Arrhakis, CC BY 2.0, via Flickr

- American artist and photographer, born in New York
- majored in graphic arts, but did not take a degree
- met curator Sam Wagstaff in 1972, became mentor and lover
- was official photographer of the Mineshaft, a gay BDSM club in NY
- a sexually explicit exhibition in 1989 aroused great controversy
- died at 42 of complications from HIV-AIDS infection (*Wikipedia*)

## Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

I am aware that many people are uncomfortable with sexual behaviour, particularly homosexual behaviour. Especially in America where straight white men prefer to keep all gay content in the dark where they can indulge without their wives finding out about it. This fear is clearly seen in the military debate that proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that straight men are afraid of natural interaction with homosexuals because of the sexual tension that might be aroused. Sexual tension cannot exist with only one party contemplating the act.... I also know many straight people are threatened by the gay community and the inevitable juggernaut the gay movement for equal rights has become.... Of course they want to shut us up and hide us away (2-3).

**Brad Fraser. Introduction. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

## Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws and Policies of the 1990s in the United States

### “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”

- policy instituted by the Clinton administration in 1993
- prohibited discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in the military
- barred openly LGBTQ+ people from military service
- repealed by the Obama administration in 2011

### The Defence of Marriage Act

- law instituted by the Clinton administration in 1996
- widely known by its acronym “DOMA”
- denied federal benefits to same-sex couples in the United States
- repealed by the Obama administration in 2013

### Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

Why do theatres—and particularly boards of directors of theatres—react so strongly to [my] work? The most obvious answer is, of course, HOMOPHOBIA.

Being a homosexual, my work quite naturally includes a great deal of overt homosexual content. Men fall in love and have sex with other men. Women get involved with other women. . . . People have sex. All kinds of sex. I find it impossible to write about relationships without including sex. It seems unrealistic and irresponsible. (2)

**Brad Fraser. Introduction. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

### Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

*David moves to Matt and runs his hands up the sides of Matt's body.*

**DAVID** You're warm. Smooth.

*David moves behind Matt and puts his arms around him, pulling Matt in tight to his body.*

**DAVID** Hard.

**MATT** Ohhh.

*David slides Matt's shorts down from behind. They stop at Matt's knees.*

**DAVID** I love you.

**MATT** You'd never show those paintings would you? I mean to the public

**DAVID** Not if you didn't want me to.

**MATT** I love you too.

*David handles Matt's cock and balls from behind. They kiss passionately.*  
(135-36)

**Brad Fraser. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

### Fraser, *Poor Super Man*



*Poor Super Man* was reinstated in its [original] allotted seasonal slot in Cincinnati. The threat of legal action and public embarrassment as well as the unwavering support of the artists at the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati caused the board to reconsider their decision to cancel the show. It opened as planned. (5)

**Brad Fraser. Introduction. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

### Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

The Cincinnati vice squad showed up along with the opening-night audience for *Poor Super Man*, the latest ultra-explicit drama by Canadian scribe Brad Fraser. Most of the buzz in Ohio has centred on the nudity and explicit sexual content in the five-character drama. . . . [Fraser's] signature style is highly cinematic—scenes are usually short, dialogue is often clipped, and naked bodies are never far offstage. The dramatic action cross-cuts from locale to locale, typically whizzing the audience from one bedroom to another.

**Jones, Chris. "Review: *Poor Super Man*." *Variety*, 16 May 1994.**

### 📖 Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

Hamilton County sheriff's officers and city police said they have received citizen complaints about the play, which includes male nudity and themes of heterosexual and homosexual love. Police have monitored the play.... Authorities said they have consulted with prosecutors about *Poor Super Man*. Police left open the possibility that a grand jury could view the play to judge whether it might violate community obscenity standards. "We feel there may be a violation," Police Chief Michael Snowden said Tuesday. "However, that call needs to be made by a grand jury. We need to get normal citizens in there who can look at it and determine whether or not this meets community standards."

**"Cincy Officials Mull Action Against Play *Poor Super Man*, Has Nudity, Erotica." *Dayton Daily News*, 5 May 1994.**

### 📖 Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

City and county prosecutors said ... they would not prosecute a play that includes frontal male nudity ... depicts a love affair between a gay artist and a heterosexual man... [and] tells the story of a transsexual dying of AIDS.... Prosecutor Joseph Deters said ... he would not pursue a case because the most likely charge, pandering obscenity, would not be a felony. Following Deters's announcement, City Solicitor Fay Dupuis said the city had reviewed evidence obtained by police and would not prosecute. "The review did not disclose evidence of obscene material in the presentation of the play and, accordingly, the city solicitor has determined that no prosecution or further legal action is warranted," Ms Dupuis said .... The City Council voted 7-2 ... to approve a resolution promoting artistic freedom and urging Deters not to prosecute *Poor Super Man*.

**"Cincinnati Won't Prosecute Homosexual Play." *Dayton Daily News*, 7 May 1994.**

### 📖 Fraser, *Poor Super Man*



City officials are still smarting from [the] nationwide [negative] publicity Cincinnati received in 1990 when an art gallery director was indicted on obscenity charges. Contemporary Arts Centre director Dennis Barrie was acquitted of charges stemming from a display of the late Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs.

**"Cincy Officials Mull Action Against Play *Poor Super Man*, Has Nudity, Erotica." *Dayton Daily News*, 5 May 1994.**

### 📖 Fraser, *Poor Super Man*

At that point, I will start the battle that I've had to fight every time a show [of mine] is produced. I will charge homophobia. I will threaten legal action. I will enlist the support of my fellow artists. I will pull out reviews and box office reports for all my other plays in order to justify their existence. I will do everything within my power to be granted the same rights and considerations as anyone else. I will, as I have in the past, expend huge amounts of time and energy working to convince the very people who are supposed to be sympathetic to what I am attempting to do, not to censor and silence me. And I will fight the same battle each and every time. Because it's a battle worth fighting. (5-6)

**Brad Fraser. Introduction. *Poor Super Man*. NeWest, 1995, pp. 1-6.**

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