through the mall and bumping into various strangers has become an all too familiar phenomenon when everyone has their noses buried in their iPhones, a frightening phenomenon for a culture completely infatuated with the apocalypse.

Kim Paffenroth (an expert on the insight of the expertise of George Romero and a source in Moreland's paper) argues in her article "Zombies as Internal Fear or Threat" that "Romero's most potent contribution to the zombie mythos is to portray both living and undead as inveterate, unstoppable consumers" (20). Paffenroth believes that consumerism is one of the main flaws in humans and zombies, best illustrated at the end of *Dawn of the Dead* where the zombies are shown as "shoppers" in the mall. She also thinks that it is important to note that the mall was a designated "survivor stronghold" whose incredibly well designed defenses were not destroyed by zombies, but rather by greedy humans who broke in simply to loot the mall. The consumer greed is an important feature, but the reason that the humans went to the mall in the first place is what should be carefully examined from this section of the film. The television broadcasts in the film are consciously relaying false information and telling survivors to go to certain points which have been already decimated by the zombie infestation. The humans' reliance on news from sources that are shown on television or the internet is an incredibly crippling force that has left many people in the nation short-sighted of the complete truth. People put entirely too much faith in something that is published or relayed electronically, and this film exemplifies that by showing that those who are reliant on the television will meet their unsightly end.

The previously outlined articles by Ahmad, Moreland, and Paffenroth show how zombies are related to ideas like race, evolution, and consumerism. These articles examine mainly classic George A. Romero films, which is reasonable since his films constitute much of the zombie cannon. However, this scholarship predates the most recent zombie movies, which can be important when discussing recent societal issues. One area that has been relatively untouched by many zombie scholars is the concept of increasing political disinterest and disengagement in a country built upon citizen participation. Since this problem has really come to fruition in the last 20 years, it is nearly impossible to find it referenced in zombie films made prior to the 1990s. This article thus proposes to update the scholarship of Paffenroth and others by

analyzing the 2009 film *Zombieland* as the focal point for a meditation on the relationship between political disengagement and zombies.

Before drawing connections between the film and political disengagement, this article will first review some of the data regarding civic participation, particularly in elections where political scientist find decreasing lengths of sound bites in ads, voting participation, and general political knowledge. These statistics have been gathered from as early as the 1960s and regularly updated through the early 2000s, proving that these issues have been brewing for decades. Robert Putnam's seminal argument about the multifaceted nature of American's growing political disengagement will also be reviewed. Finally, Michael Oakeshott's and Nancy Love's observations about political ideology will be used to analyze the main characters and their politics.

Zombieland was a blockbuster comedy/action film released in 2009 starring Jesse Eisenberg (Columbus), Woody Harrelson (Tallahassee), Emma Stone (Wichita), and Abigail Breslin (Little Rock) as survivors of the zombie apocalypse in America. The four main characters in the group of survivors are incredibly different people who manage to meet up in the ruins of America in the not-so-distant future. The movie actually makes only two explicit political references. Most important are the "32 Rules of Surviving Zombieland" described by Columbus throughout the movie. In the chaos, regular laws would not be relevant to anyone, so like the Founding Fathers, Columbus creates a set of laws that acts as a "survivors'" constitution. The second is the opening scene which shows the Capitol Building's dome burning and destruction on the streets of Washington, D.C., which can be used as a type of foreshadowing for real world issues. The movie provides excellent examples for the lawlessness that would ensue after a structural breakdown of a country when the survivors are able to take whatever they want from stores, break into any building, and, most importantly, not wear seatbelts while driving (shown humorously throughout the film).

The film is primarily a comedy but presents a great metaphor for the future of American politics. The title of the film hints at the relationship between modern day citizens and zombies, when we consider its origin from the 1994 film *Natural Born Killers* (also starring Woody Harrelson). In that film Wayne Gale (Robert Downey Jr.) exclaims, "Repetition works: do you think the morons out there in zombie land actually remember anything?" accusing the television audiences of