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### October 3, 2012: The Perks of Being a Wallflower

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Title: The Perks of Being a Wallflower

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10/3/2012—I admit I went to see if Emma Watson could really act. Yes, she can. This is one beautiful movie. And it reminds me of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in its ability to conjure a time in our lives and help us relive it. But the reason I mention the movie here is Stephen Chbosky's view of religion. Charlie, the main character, has a normal religious upbringing. The movie only makes fun of it once. But the love of God and Christ is absolutely no help to Charlie. None. Religion is so far away from anything real that the movie does not even bother to explore its emptiness. Instead, art is the only portal to the real. And the only thing real is the integrity of my own feelings. If you want to see the consequences of secularism, this is the movie to see. These are good people. But they are really all on their own. Even art is not given any content larger than human self-expression. Charlie does say toward the end of the movie that his pain is the pain of the world. But the viewer knows this is just a dodge to avoid confronting Charlie's own pain. Even Charlie's love for Sam is a reflection of himself—he says they are just alike. In contrast, religion finds salvation in embracing the pain of others. Not watching it. Embracing it.