

# A review of the reluctant fundamentalist by mohsin hamid

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The Reluctant Fundamentalist: A Captivating and Thought-provoking Novel\*\*

### Overview of The Reluctant Fundamentalist

"The Reluctant Fundamentalist" is a critically acclaimed novel by Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid, first published in 2007. It follows the experiences of Changez, a Pakistani man who achieves great success in New York City after the 9/11 attacks. However, his experiences and perceptions of the United States and his own identity undergo a radical transformation.

### Main Theme and Message

The central theme of the novel is the exploration of cultural identity, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Hamid delves into the complexities of belonging and alienation as Changez navigates the clash between his Pakistani heritage and his life in America. The novel also conveys a message of understanding and empathy, highlighting the need for individuals to bridge cultural divides.

### Main Characters

**Changez:** The protagonist, a young Pakistani man who recounts his life journey in the novel. **Underwood Samson:** A wealthy American businessman who mentors Changez and becomes a symbol of American power. **Erika:** Changez's American girlfriend, representing the allure and contradictions of Western society.

### Symbols in The Reluctant Fundamentalist

- **Shoes:** Represent the journey and transformation of Changez.
- **The American Dream:** Symbolizes the hope and opportunities Changez finds in the United States, but also its eventual disillusionment.
- **The Dove:** Represents the peaceful side of Islam and contrasts with the violent imagery often associated with fundamentalism.

## Writing Style

Hamid's writing style is characterized by its lyrical and evocative prose. He uses multiple perspectives and unreliable narration to create a sense of ambiguity and to challenge the reader's assumptions.

## Is *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* a Postcolonial Novel?

Yes, the novel can be considered a postcolonial work as it explores the aftermath of colonialism and the power dynamics between East and West. It interrogates the legacies of imperialism and the ways in which they continue to shape contemporary relationships.

## The Reluctant Fundamentalist's Argument

The novel argues that fundamentalism, whether religious or political, arises from a sense of anger and injustice against the perceived injustices of the powerful. It also underscores the importance of listening to the voices of those who feel marginalized and disenfranchised.

## The Meaning of "Reluctant Fundamentalist"

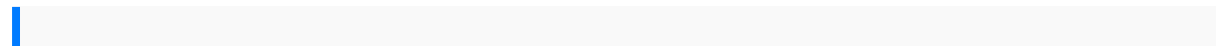
The title suggests that Changez is not a dogmatic or radical fundamentalist. Rather, he is a thoughtful and introspective individual who is reluctantly drawn towards a more orthodox interpretation of his faith due to his disillusionment with the West.

## Why Mohsin Hamid Wrote *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Hamid has stated that he wrote the novel as a response to the simplistic and often negative portrayal of Muslims in the post-9/11 world. He sought to create a nuanced and complex character who would challenge stereotypes and encourage empathy.

## Conclusion

"The Reluctant Fundamentalist" is a powerful and timely novel that explores the complexities of cultural identity, the dangers of fundamentalism, and the need for understanding between different cultures. Its compelling narrative and thought-provoking insights make it a highly recommended and worthwhile read.



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