In the present text I’m going to analyse the main features of the protagonist, Changez, of Mohsin Hamid's novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist in order to understand his role in the economy of the whole story and his change of emotions and states of mind as well as of his actions.

Changez has a specific function in the story's development. Indeed the reader is settled into the narration thanks to the single person long and dramatic monologue of the protagonist. In this way the reader can identify an interlocutor even if he can not see or hear him. However the reader recognizes his presence thanks to some clues given by the speaker. So Changez seems to speak directly to the reader himself.

Through the narration the reader can understand Changez is a young Pakistani man who moved to America, more specifically in New York, due to his brilliant results at Princeton University. The outstanding records gained lead Changez to obtain his job in collaboration with the Underwood Samson and Company, which evaluated business.

At the beginning Changez has a strong positive evaluation of America: he believes in the American dream as a parameter of success. Indeed New York is introduced by the novelist as a multicultural and cosmopolitan city, where different cultures, traditions, habits coexist. Therefore Changez gradually tries to adapt himself to his new home and to the values and the innovative ideas of America. Besides at first even his Pakistani roots do not become hindrance for his development.

Nevertheless a fact occurred and overturned the protagonist’s life and the life of all the people surrounding including Erica, an american wealthy and intelligent girl who rapresents America itself. The terrible event regards the World Trade Center attack. After the incident everything changed. First of all Changez heard about the serious conditions which affect most of Pakistani men in America, about Muslim men disappearing and the birth of new feelings. Moving on he notices also all the negative aspects of the city: America’s pride and arrogance and its hostile attitude against immigrants, above all those of Arab origins. So Changez was under suspect and seen as a possible terrorist. As a consequence he starts to take distance from American’s ideals and to revalue his own. In the meantime Erica becomes more and more detached, while Changez, after a brief return to his family in Pakistan, understands the place where he belongs to.

Changez finally realises and accepts his new condition. He has lost Erica and America as well. Both seemed a possible dream and could become part of his world. The protagonist wanted to take part of the reality as well; however he realises his dream will never come true. Changez at the end of the novel become a new man, a young Pakistani with another vision of the world and other values. He realises he cannot be accepted in America without pretending to be someone that is not.