

What changes the main characters to do what they ultimately decide to do? what affected their final decisions?
How do they react to their ~~choices~~ ^{choices}?

The Reluctant Fundamentalist & the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

As we venture through life, we go through phases that sculpt the ultimate product of who we really are and what we stand for. For Stephen and Changez, whether it is completely submitting to religion or trying to blend into another world, their decisions result in unveiling who they thought they were and revealing the truth of their beliefs. Stephen and Changez both have a self-revelation that drives them to what they believe in, and both characters react to them in different manners.

Stephen Dedalus ventures through several stages before he finally realizes that he can see a beautiful girl as art as opposed to his perceptions of the prostitutes he encountered. This revelation, along with the message the girl gives him, leads him to proceed in life with a mentality of an artist, a thinker, and a risk-taker. It liberates him from religion and his family while allowing him to follow the path of his choosing. For Stephen, it is rewarding because he finally knows he can do it.

Changez is rather judgemental about his surroundings and his decisions rely on such judgements. After the September 11th attacks, his views on America change. He sees the United States as a vulnerable country and it pleases him to think so. He realizes that he is different

and chooses to move back to Pakistan to become a low-paid teacher. Changez evolves from a devoted Princeton graduate to an unmotivated stranger who feels isolated in America. His reaction to the situation results in his decision to move.

Stephen and Changez have turning points in their lives, but they treat the outcomes of the changes in different ways. For Stephen, his revelation results in a more optimistic path as opposed to Changez who initially feels lonely and isolated before he decides to leave America.