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4th Year Novel

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The concept of the self-made man & the American dream in *The Great Gatsby*

The concept of the self-made man is strictly connected with the American dream. His image brought thousands of immigrants to America who hoped to win a fortune and happiness. The self-made man is an individual who is not born into privilege and wealth, and due to his own efforts manages to be successful in life. A self-made man, as Frederick Douglass has put it, was the issue of “manhood itself, and this in its broadest and most comprehensive sense” (McKay: online). According to Douglas the self-made man focuses the most significant masculine qualities: hard work, persistence, and responsibility. The story of the self-made man depicts the goal of every man: to handle his own destiny. A self-made man attains greater success than his original circumstances would have indicated. It is not external help or special connections that contributes to the self-made man’s rise. Luck is not the most important factor. However, society loved the story of a man whose success came from an opportunity dropped from the sky. It allowed unsuccessful men to excuse their failure and to reduce the success of others by combining their achievements with good luck. While there are usually many elements of success, all are subject to work, which is the . key to success

Benjamin Franklin became America’s self-made man from being the son of a candle maker to a legend among men. Abraham Lincoln captured the public attention when he started from log-cabin and finished in the White House. The concept spread in American culture after the Civil-

War, while the so-called Second Industrial Revolution developed, and new inventions quickly brought wealth and prosperity. A young man's destiny had formerly been established for him practically at birth (he usually followed his father in the family business) now he could leave home and aim at his individual success. For the young man who was willing to work hard and get ahead, the country offered innumerable .(opportunities

The concept of the self-made man was considerably weakened during the Great Depression years, when men who seemed to do all the proper things - worked hard, saved, and invested - saw their fortunes ruined . and all they had worked for wiped out. Buffeted by external