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The Fate of Our Empire

Our destiny as a people is a malleable element, something that is being formed as we speak, and not one that can be predetermined. Aristotle once said, "All who have meditated on the art of governing humankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." This is a powerful statement even in modern times, but still one that I think he might have proclaimed with less security if he saw the state of education today. The priority it holds with students, parents and even government is in a sad state of affairs right now. For the masses, school is seen as a burden to youth but remains a beacon of hope for our past generations. For those who still believe that a furthering your education is necessary to achieve your greatest potential, I commend you.

As an upperclassman you start to think about what you want to become and what kind of mark you want to leave on this world. This is our time, our chance to decide what kind of legacy we'll leave in the history books, and how our generation will be remembered. Each generation has a chance to reinvent the way we're labeled and seen in our own lives, and to the rest of the world. From a million Donna Reed mothers, to the hippies to the baby boomers, our image has always reflected our key interests and shown what matters to our generation the most. So what do we want our legacy to be? What do you see been written about our lives, and if you have a clear picture in your mind, would you want to change it?

Aristotle is correct in his proclamation that the youth of today hold our world's destiny in their hands. What they chose to do with it we will see in the unfolding time, but for now our highest priority should be providing every single child with the best education available to them. Before I stated that Aristotle would have found some students priority of school to be disappointing. This is of course a generalization but I think that he held the education of his peers to a higher standard because public education wasn't available to the public in his time. To our generation receiving an education isn't considered a luxury, but rather a societal guideline that you're meant to follow. Conformity has never been high on the priorities of youth, and so most reactions would be to pull away from it.

What people don't realize is that by obtaining your education, you're not only benefiting yourself, but also your society as a whole. If you look at education across the world, the countries with better, easily accessible education systems are the one that are thriving. Because by giving them a chance to see you build their potential for greatness and success. This greatly demonstrates the power of education.

The philosophers of Aristotle's caliber were far ahead of their time, and their messages still apply to our lives today. He has another quote pertaining to education that states, "The roots to education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet." I think that by this he means that the education process in itself is not always an enjoyable one, and can be taxing and difficult at times, but the creation we produce more than justifies the effort. Even for the people who have lost sight in why we should be interested in menial facts that are thrown at us from textbooks, when our destiny arrives it will be clear. Lee Edward Riddle, a professor at University of Michigan said, "I genuinely believe that

many students in our education system have lost interest in what is being offered to them. Students are not interested in learning a set of facts about the founding fathers, or the meaning of the book the *Great Gatsby*. Many people just do not understand how learning about such things will benefit them in a real world application. Indeed, education is many times the bitter root of which Aristotle spoke.” I agree with him, in the course of my high school years I’ve heard, “When am I ever going to use this,” hundred of times. Our schools teach us the myriads of facts to open possibilities to us, instead of predetermining our future; education is possibility, and the potential for greatness.

In my mind there is no higher achievement than that of a teacher, because they are providing us with a future that is our to create and take whichever way we desire. I’d like to end with hope; it’s the simplest of words but has the most complex of meanings. But in the end it is all we need. Hope drives us, and gives us belief that we still can someday attain a better future, no matter what we encounter along the way.