

# Annotation

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Your full February 23, Annotation- " The Ant of the Self" The short story, " The Ant of the Self" by Z. Z. Packer, is an account of a young boy, Spurgeon, who is in continuous conflict with his father, Ray, who is inappreciative and indifferent toward the physical and emotional needs of his son. Spurgeon is a college student, and is a debate champion. He bails him out of the jail using the money that he earns through winning a debate. Ray does not appreciate it, and tells him that investment brings opportunities. Spurgeon does not want to go on the Million Man March that Ray insists upon going because going there will cancel the debate that Spurgeon wants to attend. Ray has to sell his Black Panthers on the March, so Spurgeon accompanies him against his will. There, he listens to a boy speaking about freedom. He learns that he should have to shed the ant of his self, that blind, crumb-seeking part of himself that is keeping him from achieving his dreams. But, he is confused because he has the burden of his father on his shoulders which he cannot throw away because of his dreams.

The author has used remarkable descriptive language to describe the conflict the father and son. There are metaphors in a myriad of places.

Consider these lines: " Freedom is attained only when the ant of the self – that small, blind, crumb-seeking part of ourselves – casts off slavery and its legacy, becoming a huge brave ox" (Packer). The ant of the self personifies the self of the man, which keeps him a slave unless he sheds all his fears.

We can also take it like this: Spurgeon, like an ant, keeps on trying to pick up the crumbs of appreciation and likeness from his father who is void of all these things. The reader comes across a tension in the relationship between Ray and Spurgeon. They differ in their class attitudes, as they seem to be

belonging to invisible, mind-created, different economic backgrounds. These lines are a proof of this: “ When most people talk about investing, they mean stocks and bonds and mutual funds. What my father means is his friend Splo’s cockfighting arena...” (Packer). The language used is ironic, and uses insulting words like “ pussy” when the author wants to describe how the father talks to his son.

It was very exciting for me to come across the tension that was there between the father and son. Generally, this bond is based on love, respect and support. But here, I read about the contrasting personalities. The most threatening issue that tore the relationship apart was that both of them had totally contrasting psyches. They did not get along with each other very well because of the difference in sophistication, modernity, style, education, and language. Perhaps, the novel raises an important concern that our society should consider, that is the growing generation gap between parents and their children. Both the parties do not understand each other’s physical and emotional needs, and thus, they are going far apart from each other not physically but emotionally.

#### Works Cited

I do not have the book at hand, so cannot cite the book and the page number. It is also not available online.