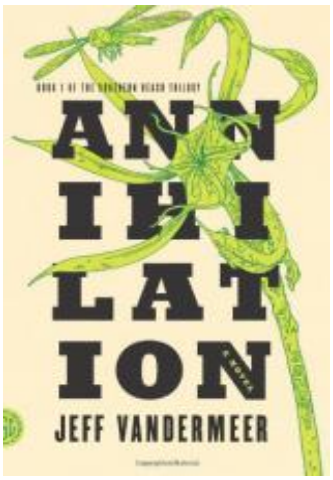
ReadingGroupGuides
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Annihilation (Southern Reach Trilogy #1)

by Jeff VanderMeer



About the Book

In ANNIHILATION, Jeff VanderMeer introduced the mysteries of Area X --- a remote and lush terrain mysteriously sequestered from civilization. It was the first volume of a projected trilogy; well in advance of publication, translation rights had sold all around the world and a major movie deal had been struck.

Just months later, the second volume is here. For thirty years, the only human engagement with Area X has taken the form of a series of expeditions monitored by a secret agency called the Southern Reach. After the disastrous twelfth expedition chronicled in ANNIHILATION, the Southern Reach is in disarray, and John Rodriguez (aka ?Control?) is the team?s newly appointed head. From a series of interrogations, a cache of hidden notes, and hours of profoundly troubling video footage, the secrets of Area X begin to reveal themselves --- and what they expose pushes Control to confront disturbing truths about both himself and the agency he?s promised to serve. And the consequences will reach much farther than that.

Discussion Guide

1. What were your initial theories about the psychologist?s motives and the whereabouts of the anthropologist? How did the ways they approached the expedition compare to the approaches of the surveyor and the biologist?

2. Did you envision the core of Area X as a tower or a tunnel? In your mind, is it a living creature or a product of engineering?

3. How did you interpret the phrases that emerged in Area X? Did you read them as prophecies? Poetry? Delusions?

4. Was the biologist?s introverted, analytical temperament an asset or a hindrance on the expedition? How did the experiences of her youth --- particularly her study of the neglected, dazzling swimming pool --- prepare her for this

fieldwork?

5. As the biologist recalled her husband and his role in the eleventh expedition as a medic, what did you discover about her vulnerabilities and about the strength of their relationship?

6. Are there any real-world figures today who take on a role like the Crawler?s --- a producer of words who controls an audience? What is the source of the Crawler?s power?

7. What do you predict for book two, AUTHORITY?

Author Bio

Jeff VanderMeer is the author of HUMMINGBIRD SALAMANDER, the Borne novels (BORNE, THE STRANGE BIRD and DEAD ASTRONAUTS), and the *Southern Reach* series (ANNIHILATION, AUTHORITY, ACCEPTANCE and ABSOLUTION), the first volume of which won the Nebula Award and the Shirley Jackson Award and was adapted into a movie by Alex Garland. He speaks and writes frequently about issues relating to climate change as well as urban rewilding.

Critical Praise

?Original and beautiful, maddening and magnificent.?

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