📚 WSPS: Sub-Topic Bibliography

🚪 Liminal Spaces, Non-Places, and The Backrooms

I. Theoretical Frameworks (The "Why")

Essential reading for understanding the psychological mechanisms behind the survey data.

- **Augé, Marc.** *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity.*
    - **Relevance:** This is the origin of the term "non-place" (airports, waiting rooms, supermarkets) cited in the ArchDaily article. It explains the sociological emptiness that makes the Backrooms feel "familiar but wrong."
- **Freud, Sigmund.** "The Uncanny" (*Das Unheimliche*).
    - **Relevance:** The foundational text for horror studies. It defines the uncanny not as something new, but as something "familiar yet repressed." This perfectly explains the nostalgic dread of Liminal Spaces.
- **Turner, Victor.** "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage."
    - **Relevance:** The anthropological origin of "liminality." Turner describes it as a state of disorientation and possibility, which modern internet folklore has darkened into a state of permanent entrapment.

II. Academic Analysis of the Phenomenon

Scholarly work analyzing the specific trend.

- **Cho, Day & Underberg-Goode, Natalie.** "Lost in Liminal Space: The Internet Legend of the Backrooms." *Contemporary Legend*, Vol. 3.

- **Relevance:** The definitive academic text on the subject. It analyzes the phenomenon through the lens of "virtual legend-tripping" and collective grief during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Tietjen, Jill.** "Lost in The Backrooms [or How I Learned to Love the Liminal]." *Electronic Book Review*.

  - **Relevance:** Provides a socio-economic critique, arguing that the Backrooms represent the "consumerist wasteland" of late-stage capitalism—endless office corridors with no work to be done.

- **Wiggins, Bradley Earl.** "The Backrooms and Liminal Spaces: Explorations of a Digital Urban Legend." New Media & Society (2024). The Backrooms and the aesthetic of the empty." *Journal of Digital Culture*.

  - **Relevance:** This is currently the most robust peer-reviewed study on the phenomenon. It analyzes the Backrooms as a form of digital folklore and explores how "low-fidelity" (lo-fi) aesthetics contribute to its believability and viral spread.

- **Tanner, Grafton.** The Circle of the Snake: Nostalgia and Utopia in the Age of Big Tech. Winchester: Zero Books, 2020.

  - **Relevance:** While pre-dating the peak of Backrooms mania, Tanner is the leading theorist on **"vaporwave"** and **"lo-fi"** aesthetics. He argues that low-definition media (VHS grain, glitch) creates a "cursed" realism that disrupts the high-definition perfection of modern Silicon Valley tech.

III. Primary Digital Artifacts (The "Lore")

These are the raw materials of the folklore. In your study, these serve as the "canonical texts" against which respondent narratives are measured.

- **Anonymous.** "The Original Backrooms Thread." *4chan /x/ (Paranormal)*, May 12, 2019.

  - **Relevance:** The "ur-text." The specific phrasing ("600 million square miles," "mono-yellow") provides the linguistic markers you will look for in your survey responses to check for **Cultural Priming**.

- **The Backrooms Wiki (Wikidot).**

  - **Relevance:** Represents **Collaborative Ostension**. It documents the community's shift from a singular "eerie feeling" to a "gamified" universe with levels, entities, and survival guides.

- **Pixles, Kane.** "The Backrooms (Found Footage)." *YouTube*.

  - **Relevance:** The primary driver of the "Found Footage" revival. This video single-handedly shifted the folklore from static images to video narrative, influencing how younger respondents visualize the space.

IV. Vernacular Theory & Commentary

Journalism and essays that articulate the community's own understanding of the fear.

- **Yalcinkaya, Günseli.** "Why Are Liminal Spaces Eerie? The Case of The Backrooms." *ArchDaily*.

  - **Relevance:** A critical bridge between architectural theory and internet aesthetics. It legitimizes the feeling of "wrongness" in built environments.

- **Stanton, Rich.** "Noclipping is no joke: the strange world of The Backrooms explained." *PC Gamer*.

  - **Relevance:** Documents the "Gamification" of the lore. Useful for differentiating between respondents who fear the *space* vs. respondents who fear the *monsters* (a key distinction in your Coding Schema).

- **Koebler, Jason.** "Backrooms Horror Works Best When You're Alone With Your Thoughts." *VICE*.

  - **Relevance:** Represents the "Purist" faction of the folk group. This article argues against the "monster-ification" of the lore, favoring the psychological dread of isolation.

- **Nail Bite.** "What Is Liminal Space? Weirdcore, The Backrooms, and Nostalgia."

  - **Relevance:** Links the phenomenon to **Hauntology** and "Anemoia" (nostalgia for a time you never known). This is a crucial psychological marker for your "Interpretation" section.