

GALAXY BLACK



*Galaxy Black III Star travel and the
Sub-ether*

Dreaming Gynoid studio

COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

GALAXY BLACK

Space fantasy adventure in the Collapsing Universe

Galaxy Black III. Star travel and the secrets of the Sub-ether



This is the second volume of Galaxy Black. It is not a complete game in itself, and requires the DCC RPG rulebook to play.

Forthcoming

Galaxy Black I Characters and Classes

Galaxy Black II Metaphysics, Magic, and Psi powers

Galaxy Black III Star travel and the secrets of the Sub-ether.

Galaxy Black IV Space Trader Nick's Coreworld Consultant and Frontier Survival Supply Catalog

Galaxy Black V Imperial Book of Common Prayer

Galaxy Black VI the Judges Guide to the Collapsing Universe

Galaxy Black VII The Space Girl's Guide to the Galaxy

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This product is compatible with the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game

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Galaxy Black contains what a 21st century nascent info-democracy would consider mature themes. It has psychic powers, drugs, needle guns, gods, demons, and lots of extremely cruel, well dressed people. The universe is lethal but there are lots of work arounds. In short, exactly what you would expect from fantasy SF inspired by reading LOTS of Lovecraft, Moorcock, Vance, Brackett, Burroughs (both Edgar Rice and William S.), Carter, Leiber, Ellison, Le Guin, Varley, Blish, Spinrad, Kafka, and Zelazny.

In short, this is appendix N as all hell. **PLAY IT LOUD**

This is a galaxy of either/or options. Use what you like and discard the rest, as always. But also, always add whatever you like. At the minimum I would grab your copies of Crawljammer and MCC (you have those right?) and the nearest pile of old comics, the old EC's, a stack of Epic Illustrated, Heavy Metal, or Metal Hurlant, or the underground commix of the early 70s, put on some prog rock, settle in, and let your imagination take you where you wish to go.

Dreaming Gynoid
love our patrons! You keep us flying!
Super special thanks to
Beckett Warren, Tore' Nielsen, and PialaMode
ya'll Rock!

Galaxy Black

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Louis S. Glanzman images taken from the Public Domain;

Danger in Deep Space, the Revolt on Venus, the Space Pioneers (a Tom Corbett book).

mac'l

Gwendolyn Harper and her fabulous stock art review

Stop here before reading.

This is the third part of Galaxy Black, and itself requires the DCC RPG rules for play. It will benefit from the use of the first two parts (**Galaxy Black I Characters and Classes** & **Galaxy Black II Metaphysics, Magic, and Psi powers**) as well as the rest of the series but much of the contents herein are relatively self-contained. Judges seeking to use this book in their DCC RPG game may find benefit in the Judges Guide, which will include a bestiary detailing many of the creatures and infectious or hostile phenomena herein, and the Imperial Book of Common Prayer, especially the latter as it details the Noosphere in greater detail than does this volume.)

Certainly, if an earlier variety of these rules, or other rules better suit, by all means use them. Everything works together but the various sub-systems have been kept as self-contained and 'modular' as possible.

This does not represent the sum total of all possibilities inherent in Galaxy Black, far from it! Blah blah harumph As said in the similar forward to book one, If it pleases you and your group then it belongs at your table and thereby, has a place somewhere in the galaxy.

Use these rules as the basis for a funnel or whole Galaxy Black campaign, to supplement your DCC game, or in any other way you see fit. These stars are yours.

Hail the Empress,

Dreaming Gynoid studio

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The Wind and the Stars

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“Gravity and Light: the many generations of space gods and their effects upon-”

(Taken from the introduction)

- Dr. G.J. Haber, visiting lecturer on experimental alchemy and paratypical psychiatry)

The mariners of old had the wind and the stars to guide them, for those whose desire to expand, to know, to explore, exceeded their technology. It is ultimately from these people the Imperium hails its foundations and continuations. Without them, we have no civilization.

In the pre-stellar era, a given technological civilization has few opportunities to leave their world and fewer still to do so under their own means. For those who brave this, most final of void-oceans, only the gravity keys between the worlds of their solar system and the positions of the great celestials themselves, the bright stars, the galactic medium itself, and other, distant but visible galaxies and phenomena.

It is the wind and the stars all over again.

While the stars have not changed, for the most part, the wind is now the interlocking forces of gravity within a solar system, at least until gravity is recognized as the enemy.

The common mytho-historical image of the cosmonaut struggling against the universe is not our best guide to these people. No, those first explorers who lack even fusion technology, are more akin to those who sail the currents of island chains in canoes made of local vegetation, fashioned with their bare hands. They who in the span of years will colonize an area over a thousand times vaster.

To those first, those earliest of star sailors to emerge from the home worlds of our ancestors, there were always the lord of light and mother space, the goddess of gravity. The gender roles are not important but among many clades those are the tendencies. There is of course a third force underlying all of this but only many thousands of generations selection bring that particular need about.

But it is the holy dance of light and gravity of which I now speak. Sometimes twins, or siblings. Often lovers, many times enemies. It is only through a logical understanding of the fundamentals of both and how they intersect that makes those first voyages possible...for the survivors. For these are the Gods of the Lucky Ones, of the hundreds that lived when millions were sent out. Those who survived, made more, thrived, and then kept going. Those who forgot the truths of light and gravity stopped expanding, and likely died out but their epic voyages of expansion were over.

Those who persisted those are the spacers. Those who gave up, those are the Ketraxians, the Maenads, the Friggians, the Saurids, the Vroids.

It may help to remember that that selection process goes on today. All of you are from worlds, member worlds of the imperium yes but now you are in imperial service. You are among those selected to later return to the stars and the process begins anew, if you thrive in imperial service then the imperium thrives, and your descendants will challenge the stars anew, raising up their own gods.

In these later generations perhaps, we should find a psychopomp to raise up, to remind us the lessons of entropy.

Light, gravity and entropy, so still like the stars, the wind, and salt.



Planes of the Sub-ether.

“Superspace is....an unlimited, huge, timeless region in which our 3-dimensional space is contained, along with innumerable other three dimensional universes. Superspace is eternal. Time stands still, billions of years of developments are compressed into a split second.”

- Jesco von Puttkamer

'Remember juves, in the Sub-ether, the walls may bleed and then try to drown you.'
– Space Trader Nick, episode 122

"You want some Scream tea before we drop to warp? It can ease it in."

"What's scream tea?"

She leaned in conspiratorially

"You know we have ghost screens, right? They keep the dead out while we churn through their black seas. We also, as of two sidereals ago, have a thing installed called a Ghost Scoop – this sucks up all the big fat ones we encounter and grind them up with the gravity drive into primordial constituents. You can make Slimes out of them if you have the rig and set up. So, the Petty Engineer runs an Off the books illegal slime, still right? But it's inefficient and drips; the fluid solidifies when it hits the ship's air. But you can brew a mean tea out of it." She looked on with horror as the teacup was placed in front of her. There was a surge in the ship's hull.

"Best drink up. We'll be dropping into Sub-ether soon. This batch should be mild because it's your first time and all, but you never can tell. Either way you are in for ten thousand hells of a kick."

The Sub-ether is what makes practical interstellar travel possible. Without it there is no empire. Aboard all imperial spacecraft there are highly trained and highly conditioned gravitational engineers, who work in close contact with the ship's gravity drive.

That drive, slaved to the will of a navigator, advanced AI God-intellect, or one of the Million Little Gods, there to direct a safe and acceptable passage through increasingly dangerous sub-etheric depths.

Without part of this whole process, it – travel and so civilization – does not function, at least not in recognizable ways.

Without such space travel there is no empire. All the empire does can be assumed to work outward from this principle no matter what else, what political forces, what social forces, push, pull and tear away it it's ever changing fabric. THAT must remain constant, or all will fail. Efforts are thus concentrated on improving those conditions, rather than finding alternatives. For good or ill the modern imperium is also based on this principle and primary understanding.

What is the Sub-ether?

The short answer is that it is an invisible element to the visible universe through which superluminal travel is both possible and easily achieved. It is also, to some degree, a realm that resembles – or is – in some way the classical underworld.

A Sub-ether voyage

is, even with the appropriate preparation, blessings and technologies, a dangerous affair. Each voyage involves becoming untethered to conventional space and time for the duration and not often in predictable ways. Shipboard time can take days or weeks, months or (sometimes) years. Because all transit through the etheric medium is dangerous defenses are needed. A variety of ghost screens, psychic shields, and the like are part and parcel of every functional starship. But all of it useless without someone or

something to oversee it all (the Ship's God, Navigator etc.) and the crew to utilize it. It requires someone or something at the Helm.

What does helming mean?

Piloting but here it means far more than that. Supernatural insight – or something that works identically – is required to successfully navigate through the supernatural medium of the Sub-ether, relative to the physical universe, at velocities hundreds of thousands the times the speed of light. In particular they need a particular combination of preternatural foresight factors to be able to accurately predict/plot a safe or relatively safe course that will take the vessel to its destination and not to any number of a million other places or destroy the vessel entirely. Without a helmsman, be they Navigator, AI God, or Ship's God to plot a successful course and guide them to it Sub-ether travel is limited to one's nearer stars; any lengthier voyages are simply not possible without becoming very very lost in the Sub-ether.

In the modern era, three means exist to achieve this – a trained member of the Navigator families, a Seer rated AI (part of a class of super advanced AI known as the AI Gods), or a pact with a spirit of the Otherworlds, be it god or demon, ghost or memory, like one of the Little Gods of the Ten Thousand Free Tribes of Space.

This is the fate of (most) Private and (limited) Commercial Star vessels - they have Ship Gods. Rarely they will have Navigators instead. Military vessels utilize super advanced AI, Navigators, and (very rarely) Ship Gods

Ghost drives, Ship's Gods, AI Minds, and Navigators

Enormous imperial starships require screens and shields to keep the screams of the dead, the disembodied, silent within the ship as it travels fast enough for the gaseous medium to become like unto a liquid, spirits, elementals, the dead, and the lost being mashed together by the tremendous pressure of the coming starship before being sucked into a vast psychically charged ram scoop that gathers and processes the various spirit entities into raw plasm for use by industrial process.

Inside the vessel, crew and passengers conduct service to their Ship's God - a manifest aetheric entity that has bonded with the vessel. Charged with the devotion of its followers, the God safely guides the ship's way to their destination, protecting it from the surrounding media with its own divine ferocity.

Sometimes by circumstance or preference, an extraordinarily advanced AI mind will serve in this capacity. By far the least efficient at navigating subspace they are nonetheless a viable alternative and far more commonly encountered than Navigator driven ships.

In the rarest of vessels, a Navigator - the product of over 50,000 years of gengenineering and adaptation can safely pilot the vessel's way through the medium, avoiding the worst with a combination of skill and prescience, guiding the ship as though an extension of themselves, to their destination.

*A **very** short history of Navigation*

For many thousands of years, the only means of reliably doing so involved using psychokinetic, clairvoyant 'navigators' augment their perceptions with computer and later neural enhancement to plot courses through the shallows of the Sub-ether. Later

genetics trade and even later eugenics ensured the navigators were organized into political houses by the time of the Second Empire.

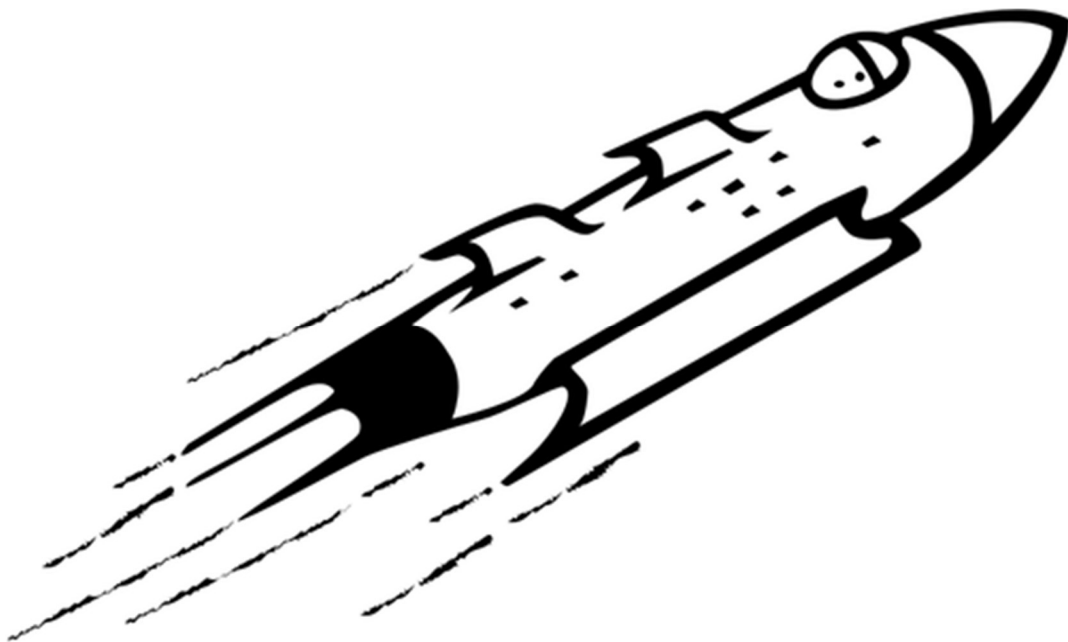
It has always been desirous to find other ways to plot such courses, but the solutions proved long elusive. The Ten Thousand Free Tribes of Space have long found their own solution in any number of Little Gods – Sub-ether sprits, Idea Gods from the noosphere, or stranger things from the deeps of space and the Otherworlds. But this has never proven an orthodox solution – and much of the search for alternatives by the Second Imperium were very much increasingly orthodox solutions. When the Navigators fled the Second Empire en masse, research into a particular varieties of Seer AI to manage the navigation of spacecraft through the Sub-ether was brought to almost brute force success, but too late. Even today, the seed AI capable of developing such abilities, even with all tremendous advantageous seldom develop the necessary neural pathing, and those who do, who show inclination toward acting upon it, only 1 in 100 come through the experience capable of stability of both transit and self (personality fragmentation was the largest single issue the prior Seer Engines faced).

How does it happen?

After the captain and the navigator (or whomever is helming the vessel) agree on destination, the helm plots a course; when the Gravity drive is spun up by the proper Engineers it is given over (slaved) to the Helm's use. The Helm will use a variety of means to achieve a drop and jump plot but ultimately the Helm finds and chooses a course and locks the vessel into that course before initiating the drop.

Everything moves on the Helm's time and at the Helm's speed or not at all. In such a circumstance, disharmony between Captain, Helm, and Gravity Control can be quite fatal.

Once the Sub-etheric Drop has taken place the Starship is now locked into a course through the Sub-ether toward their destination. Deviation from this course is the stuff of adventure but very dangerous.



Definitions

The Mega-Flows— A series of constant and unending pulsating currents, that ebb and warp the Otherworlds, in particular the Sub-ether, in its passing. Has a million names across the worlds of the Imperium; the old Saurids call it the Great Possibility River, others “Pandemoneum’s Heartbeat,” or the Limbo Winds, the Phlogiston, Pandora’s Womb, etc. many thousands of other names for the source of magic.

The Noosphere – It is the realm of both thought and ideas, both memory and dream. Psychic powers draw from, and partially exist within, this plane of reality. In the nomenclature of the Imperial Science Academy; Inner Space according to most practicing psychics, also called the Sphere of Information, and (origin obscure) the Record of Akahsa.

The Otherworlds – A collective term for the Sub-ether, the Noosphere, the Splinters, the Fundament, the Dooms, and all of the other Higher and Lower Worlds. In usage it refers to those worlds, planes of existence, or alternate realities that can be reached from the Sub-ether, the Noosphere, or the interaction thereof, with or without the material world.

The Sub-ether – The Sub-Ether is a conceptual space extent between the material and immaterial aspects of the collapsing universe. The *Primatarium* is the observable physical universe, while the *Aetherium* is the other side of the universe; the spirit world, divided by the **Toum-Var**, a naturally occurring barrier between the two. The parascientific technology of the Gravity Drive allows this barrier to be breached, tunneled through, and breached again, allowing it to be used as a transport medium for objects and information that must be moved faster than the speed of light.

The Sub-ether is an endless sea of otherworldly energies, overlapping and connecting to every point in the material universe – this and all of its parallels and alternates. The souls of the dead are alleged to travel along long established ‘soul roads’ within it, that lead to doorways to the Far Dooms.

Imperial parascience uses gravity control technology to facilitate entrance to, passage through, and then exit out of this medium though it is a perilous undertaking, requiring an exotic host of super science technologies applied through Imperial Parascience.

Sub-ether Drop or sub-ether jump - fairly interchangeable terms for the insertion of a craft into the Sub-ether or back into the material from the Sub-ether. Spacer crews however use the term Drop specifically for Sub-ether insertion and Jump for emergence back into the material world. (See rising and diving pp)

Aspects of Sub-ether travel

“To their senses, there was a constant just not quite audible, scream coming from just outside the hull of the ship. Just enough so that most can’t quite hear it over the engines. But you can. IT’s just different enough that you can’t tune it out.

You may have months of this ahead of you. Feeling stable?”

- Origin of the spacer expression “The Scream” for the Sub-ether.

Travel through the Sub-ether is inherently hazardous. Aside from the constant danger of the dead and other threats of an etheric or spectral nature, those objects (and creatures) traversing the Sub-ether must contend with strange radiations, intrusive alternate realities and of course raw exposure to the Phlogiston Winds, which are unhindered in this realm by the existence of matter. A variety of screens, force fields, and particle shields are used to protect each vessel and its contents.

The Scream - Many on their first Sub-ether voyage are put off by it for some reason. One of those reasons is the Scream. Usually only called the Scream by non-spacers, it is “a perceived constant sub-audial hum.” This is due to the sound of the plasmic remnants of the dead being splattered against the ship’s ghost screens, at speed. A constant sound during voyage. Spacers are used to it, aware of it, fully cognizant of what it is, and find its absence disturbing¹.

For this reason, many non-spacers euphemistically call the Sub-ether the Scream. (Spacers know that all dirt farmers have a different word or six for everything but don’t get too riled about it. Many of them were there once.)

Interaction with Conventional Matter

“*m* is *m*” – once Sub-etheric transit occurs, anything living from the Collapsing Universe becomes equally solid to one another; thus exotic (ghost) matter creatures and conventional-matter organics can interact fully in transit.

Gaseous Liquid When a material mass is inserted or transposed into the Sub-ether, at slow or minimal speed, the surrounding plasm is observed to behave, mostly, like a gas. HOWEVER, once a mass is moving at speed, especially the speeds permitted only in the Sub-ether, then this medium, like all plasmic “matter” behaves like a liquid.

At these speeds, wraiths, spectral entities, and etheric aliens all will splat against the ship and its hull and multiple ghost fields as it plunges through the Sub-ether, or be flung far distant in the ship’s wake. *Judge’s take note* - In all matters of ship maneuvering, this should be so – gaseous at low / non-ship speeds, and high speed liquid otherwise.

¹ The apparent laissez faire attitude toward almost certain doom, madness and death that many spacers seem to cultivate is perhaps best represented by the renowned Llhyor Phy’zhaile canvas work, “Diving into the Scream” which with bold uses of colour (mostly blues and reds) renders the Sub-ether itself as an enormous, cosmic scale serpent’s mouth, slowly eating all of existence...and a space vessel cheerfully diving right in, making apparently right for the gullet.

It is perhaps easier to think of the Sub-ether as a fluidic medium, like an ocean or other liquid mass body. Pressure is exerted by the native material to that place and so force must be applied to achieve motion. But even at superluminal velocities, a vessel is limited by depth. The shallows of the Sub-ether only allow a speed better than that of the speed of light within the material universe.

Only vessels with greater drive ratings can achieve lower depths. At lower depths, both faster speeds and greater dangers are possible as the ship is now that much further removed from the material side of the Collapsing Universe.

In practice this means regardless of drive rating, to dive into lower sub-etheric depths, one must pass through the intervening layers. If your vessel has a drive rating of 4 it can achieve the fourth sub-etheric layer, first by entering the sub-ether and then diving, first into second, second into third, and then finally descending into the fourth layer. At arriving near destination point, the ship must again rise through the depths one at a time.

Inside the Sub-ether – plasm and resonance

The medium through which vessels move and maneuver in the Sub-ether is a form of highly charged psychically active spiritual goo. The proper name for this matter is Plasm. Plasm is very empathically and mystically pliant; it is reactive and absorbent of such to a certain extent. Plasm can be used (though it is not generally) as a method of energy storage.

Retained or stored energy that is slowly bled off is called Resonance; itself almost always the result of empathically charged magical discharge; Plasm itself has value, as a partial basis for imperial ghost tech and the whole basis of the imperial slimes industry. (See Appendix S)

Things accumulate on the vessel

Flow barnacles –tiny calcium spiracles that attach to passing ships via pseudo-magnetic drag; once attached they accumulate until large bone like growths appear to be branching off the ship's actual structure. At this stage they begin altering the ship's flow-profile and must be dealt with

Mood Slime (Plasm) - Slimes accumulate (see Appendix S) but most commonly, this takes the form of Empathic aethergel; mood slime; accumulates on large vessels especially during long voyages eventually growing and glowing with the dominant moods aboard ship. Can sometimes backfire and influence the moods of the ship instead creating a feedback loop. Usually good for the slime, bad for the passengers.

Ghosts and Hauntings too accumulate, as much arising, spontaneously at times, from raw plasm stores as being caught in the ship's ghost tech.

Depths of the Sub-ether the deeper one gets into the Sub-ether, the more one exposes oneself to the turbulent psychic winds of the Mega-flows. Spell casters take note. Especially in the seventh and deeper Sub-ether the phlogiston winds, constant throughout creation, blow without the offered protection of material reality. Spell casters exposed to such winds, even in an environment suit, may find their spells....altered after extended forays into the deep flow of the Sub-ether.

Ship outfitting –the practical considerations of Sub-ether travel place restrictions upon its use. Despite their great size, most Imperial vessels are still outfitted for shorter hops between nearer stars, despite intentions on longer journeys. The simple fact that only the best armed, most well equipped, most courageous starship crews with the utmost faith in their (presumably very powerful) Ship Gods travel on long distances directly through the Sub-ether.

Historically, at various points, such vessels had up to a 50% disappearance rate; despite what the holos will tell you, a long form straight voyages from one side of the empire to another is the stuff of epic journeys. Of course, certain space vessels are specifically designed for this purpose, though they are rare. Almost all of them are military or imperial though of course a few do eventually tend to wind up in ‘civilian’ hands.

Navigation –

In the Sub-ether, mundane direction becomes both meaningless and by intent; calculating movement and trajectory here uses a calculus derived from the laws of sympathy and contagion, which dictate distance and spatial laws in the Sub-ether. Calculating movement involves incorporating fourth and fifth spatial dimensions, and the primary navigational axis turn out to be the Possibility axis or the splinter axis - it cannot be derived from simple mathematics. As much instinct as plot, to successfully find one’s way through this medium, one requires an edge, a combination of exceptional skill, deep insight, and great understanding the Sub-ether.

Once, this was the purview of the Navigator families and there was not an imperial vessel that did not fly with one of their number at the helm. But their glory days have passed, and they number few. Those that remain do so largely in imperial service but not exclusively. There they are joined by a limited number of deep learning AI Gods, who even more than the Navigators are one with their vessel. They both arrive at the same ability from very different conceptual places but complement one another.

For the rest of the galaxy, there are the Million Little Gods; any of a vast number of cosmic and paradimensional entities which are housed within vast shrines aboard spacecraft of the ten thousand tribes. Each one crewed by a cult dedicated to that god’s service and capable of satiating its appetites to secure safe passage through void and heaven.

Spacer legends – The six universes theory

An obscure but increasingly common ‘theory’ espoused by spacers of the Thousand Tribes is that the reality we know is not one contiguous universe but approximately six. Six Splinters, each but very discrete analogs of one another, through which the Gravity Drive commonly travels. Given the vagaries of Splinter slippage, various Sub-etheric phenomena, and the known signal noise issues of the Ansible network, it seems quite conceivable to many spacer that ‘common reality’ might be six or seven near splinters, all now increasingly interlinked thanks to the gravity drive, slowly stitching them into a nearly cohesive whole.

Sub-etheric cosmology

The Sub-ether is presently compressed between the material universe and the Noosphere. Psychics regularly breach it's barriers simply by performing their disciplines and sciences, drawing the noosphere closer to the material and compressing the local Sub-ether further. Otherwise, the Gravity Drive is a necessity for breaching this barrier on a material scale. Imperial parascience uses gravity control technology to facilitate entrance to, passage through, and then exit out of this medium though it is a perilous undertaking, requiring an exotic host of super science technologies applied through Imperial Parascience. More advanced ships with better gravity drives can dive deeper into six (or more) sub-layers within that are both more dangerous and allow for much faster travel. Time for a vessel in the Sub-ether is contextual and wholly unmoored by the passing of time in the material world, doubly so in the presence of an active Gravity Drive.

A (very brief) History

That which is today called the Sub-ether was discovered during the ancient prehistory of the first empire's golden age. Using extremely primitive gravity drives, the First Empire was able to carve out a small but stable domain in space for many thousands of years. In the time of the First Empire, its nature was not at all understood. Terms such as 'superspace' or 'hyperspace' date from this period. The ancients of the first empire believed that their shallow penetration into the First Sub-ether to be the qualitative fourth spatial dimension.

Archaically, in the Second Empire era, it was poorly understood by most and called the Gray or gray-space. The Navigators of the early second empire called it the *OverSanguinary MetaPrim* - an invisible energy field that permeates all of the universe, and all of its possibilities and parallels. A classic Navigator over-explanation. "Sub-ether" is the nomenclature of the Third Empire Navigator houses who charted and explored it's psychedelic waters.

High Cosmology: The Fundamental Aether and the Sub-ether

The Sub-Ether is a conceptual space extent between the material and immaterial aspects of the collapsing universe, an endless sea of otherworldly energies, overlapping and connecting to every point in the material universe – this and all of its parallels and alternates. The souls of the dead are alleged to travel along long established 'soul roads' within it, that lead to doorways to the Far Dooms.

The *Primatarium* is the observable physical universe, while the *Aetherium* is the other side of the universe; the spirit world, divided by the **Toum-Var**, a naturally occurring barrier between the two. The parascientific technology of the Gravity Drive allows this barrier to be breached, tunneled through, and breached again, allowing it to be used as a transport medium for objects and information that must be moved faster than the speed of light.

The **Fundamental Aether (Aetheric Foam)** is the pan-cosmic medium” that which surrounds, encompasses, connects, and binds the Collapsing Universe and all of its alternates and Splinters. The Sub-ether thus should be thought of as a series of fractures that riddle the Toum-var, linking and separating these possibilities, worlds and alternates from and with one another.

The Noosphere

The Noosphere is among the nearest of these higher planes of existence; the realm of thought, memory, knowledge, and information, especially as it is known by thoughts and as ideas. It is the primary medium through which psychic powers operate in the Collapsing Universe. The ‘near’ Noosphere overlaps conterminously with the Empire itself on the far side of the Sub-ether.

Think of the Noosphere as a sea of information on the far side of the Sub-ether, its tides put pressure on the medium, but it is a separate place.

– the Idea realm and the realm of Thought, often best thought of as a parallel to the real world, located across the Sub-etheric “sea.” Psychic powers, psionics, and some magic call the Noosphere closer to the real world, and the degree to which the Noosphere and the Sub-ether between are being compressed against or into the real world is relational to how much of it is being invoked. Noospheric Ideas, memes, and stray notions are often infused with the psychic energy currents of the Sub-ether to become spirits or stranger things

Beyond the Noosphere, vast interstitial pressures are constantly oozing down from the higher worlds, creating whorls, eddies, and currents, tangling in and around the interlaced bonds of positive and negative material, matter, and anti-matter, energy and entropy. An overweening pancosmic force, forever pushing downward, outward, to areas of lesser pressure. The result is an almost organic flow – the inner pulse of the multiverse, as though the osmotic force within an incomprehensibly scaled living thing. The Navigator Houses train extensively in advanced prana-yoga techniques to align themselves to this ‘infinite pulse.’

What about dirtside? The local Sub-ether on, in, and around Worlds.

The Sub-ether, on actual moons or planets, looks interesting. In addition to your basic near ethereal nonsense, planets and moons etc. (well those that are or could be life bearing) wind up accumulating all of these weird shaped base ether life floating things (very much akin to the near sea floor actually) lots of base accumulative life, or “life” and much of it essentially ether krill that subsist on the orgones, for example. (Many orders of such microbes or tiny life eats and then shits orgone but with new and different resonances and frequencies thus of course. This is actually part of the natural way that background count or whatever slowly bleeds off in the Sub-ether ecology. Though often over thousands of years. Like a reverse of the half-life process of fallout etc. .

This could actually be a major factor in various worlds’ (magic energy) magic cycles; some orgonephages actually break the amount of free orgone down enough over time that the magical energy goes down with it, and so on. Also, all that orgone is stuff that has been eaten digested and shat by tiny little orgonephageous ether worms millions of times. Really.

Interstellar / Sub-ether voyage procedure

Determine origin point & destination

Crew (Captain, Navigator) determine course and depth/ speed

Depart system,

Judge resolves any in-system matters,

Ship travels to safe point beyond local gravity well to drop into the Sub-ether.

Sub-ether drop

Vessel spins up its gravity drive, guided by the ship's Navigator, AI, or Ship's God and visualizes/finds/creates a pathway through the Sub-ether.

Ship drops into the first Sub-ether.

Navigation check is made – chance of misjump

If desired, Judge checks for encounters immediately post-jump.

Judge resolves any immediate post-jump matters.

Vessel underway

Vessel remains in the first Sub-ether or drops to the Second Sub-ether. Vessels dropping to the Second Sub-ether check for encounters immediately afterward.

Vessel may if capable drop to the third and subsequent Sub-ethrae, provided the depth is equal to or less than, their Ship's Rating.

After each drop the judge checks for encounters².

Judge may check for passenger events

Voyage proceeds per determined encounters and actions of the players.

(optional) Judge checks for Encounters any time a ship rises or dives between Sub-etheric 'levels.'

Near (within 1d5 lights) pre-determined/ pre-visualized arrival point

Judge resolves any misjump events

(optional) Judge checks for one final encounter before the ship transits back to real space

Judge checks for elapsed time v. elapsed ship time.

If time keeping records are being kept for ships, update those time records now.

Vessel discharges it's gravity drive and arrives at its destination.

Resolve any lingering Misjump events or results.

Vessel enters conventional space (or equivalent after misjump)

Vessel moves toward final destination in conventional space

Judge checks for/resolves any system encounters.

Vessel arrives at final destination

Shore leave - After long voyages, let the PCs loose in the Starport to stretch their legs and raise some hell.

² If checking randomly in play the Judge may find it efficacious to have anywhere from 5 – 12 encounters selected or predetermined prior to a given jump to speed play and concentrate on play time at the table.

Common side effects of a Sub-ether jump

“It’s a Scream” Gravity Drop conditions

Roll d3 incidences whenever a starship makes a normal unremarkable jump into the Sub-ether from material space.

1. Walls bleed
2. Voices emanate from vents
3. Tools in storage reorganize themselves – could include the Ship’s locker.
4. 1d5 individuals aboard ship hear music from the walls
5. 1d2 aboard ship experience intense jump hallucinations
6. 1d3 aboard wearing algae or other organic compound clothings find their clothings turned
 - a. Pink 2. Blue 3. Red 4. Black 5. Neon orange 6. growing sickly drab green tendrils at the rate of an inch every half hour.
7. 1d20 crew and passengers experience 1d24 months of hair and nail growth.
8. *Lord Jasseus Voll*, tyrant of the Second Imperium, appears on all screens and holos for 30 seconds ranting about impurities in the imperial population...again. He’s awfully Persistent for someone who has been dead for over 20 thousand years though.
9. Non-spacers experience temporary metabolic speedup for duration of voyage. Eating, excreting, healing, and aging all occur at three times the normal rate. To them everyone seems to be moving super slowly.

Grave sickness – also called Jump haze or jump funk; Typically, it includes nausea, disorientation headache etc. (which is both a motion displacement issue and, bluntly, psychological nonspecific /placebo worthy phenomena) but Grave Sickness proper (as spacers understand it) is that feeling when you jump into the Sub-ether and your old scars itch, old wounds ache, and old injuries flare up. Those with absent limbs may find them experiencing a phantom limb...and one hopes anyone who has lost children decanted them from a vat like a normal person.

Spacers are of course innured to this phenomenon; but passengers have it the worst; After about 50 jumps a new would be spacer finds that certain things simply no longer bother them. Jump sickness, disorientation, etc. Why? spacers have over the generations adapted to their environment particularly well, become native to their home “environment” which here is defined as the void and the ether. Even dirt farmers will (presumably with character levels) slowly adapt as well.

Jump haze & hallucinations - Thanks (it is believed) to structures in the brains of many organic (and inorganic) imperial subjects, the intense 4d gravitational jump and the subsequent transit into the immaterial and it’s resultant psychic shockwave create ideal circumstances for hallucination.

Neurotypical people unused to Sub-etheric travel tend to enter a faintly to moderate disassociate state post jump; it’s almost a reflex. Many are the spacer traditions that exist to aid (or at least contain) the new voyagers among them who are making trouble and quite possibly interacting with hallucinations. *Ghost tea* is an awareness spectrum narcotic that aids those with exceptionally violent or unwanted cases.

Experienced or born Spacers, many Variants, those with combat or life trauma, or those with an unusual relationship to life, death, shock, and trauma infamously do not have this problem. They experience a twinge, easily ignored or indulged as suits the individual. A moment of hyperawareness, not an undesirable trait in space, and then the jump surge. In short, the hypervigilant and the acutely aware tend to fare better in the Sub-ether.

Acute Jump Sickness

Some (1%) of organics have a rougher time with the conditions of a Sub-ether jump than others. (Roll at character's first S-e voyage)

Those who do will experience jump disorientation, asynchronous memory, and of course nausea and dizziness. On subsequent voyages roll this again. IF the roll comes up a second time the character's brain structures are subtly altered.

1. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
2. Neatness, order
3. Cleanliness
4. Extremely rarely, some dirtscrubbers seem prone to an aneurism or other "cardiovascular neurological event" on their first Sub-ether voyage. Probably not fair to inflict on the PCs but should a roll ever for some reason be called for, have all 'virgin passengers' roll 1d20 at the outset of their journey. Anyone who dices a one has a DC 14 Fortitude save in their future or they'll spend much of the voyage in the green walled ward of the medical unit.

Passenger bearing starships, given the theoretical terrors of the Sub-ether find it often easy to give their passengers access to drugs.

Only certain drugs of course, some will...make the trip worse. Much worse.

In a pinch, there is ghost tea.

Ghost White and Ghost Black

So, about those slimes (move to later on in chapter)

It's not as simple as that. And more terrifying. Some spacers shoot the goop up.

They...change. Slowly assimilating death-stuff into their orgone pattern.

(ghoulish? Ghastish?)

The still produces spirits (ahem) and there's a table – if not distilled properly can lead to partial possession

If refined and reduced over and over eventually you get either ghost white or ghost black

Ghost white is a slippery milk white fluid of considerable chemical density, it can be injected or droppered into the eye or other transitive membrane.

Ghost black is a tarry substance that can be injected, smoked, or – if reduced to an ashen powder – snorted

Possibly the children of those who do this will be stronger psychics, mediums, and necromancers

Speed, distance, depth, and Power - Rising and Diving

Note that at the time of jump, the particular Sub-ether 'dive' is set. These time frames are relational.

Moving, or diving, into a deeper Sub-ether can reduce these transit times, though each further level can call for an encounter check and, in all cases, represents new challenges that come with the changed conditions (see navigation) . Dangerous as it is, some Captains risk diving further into the Sub Ether than they would often like if it means a bigger pay day for a valuable cargo, or if the situation is sufficiently dire.

It is a Spiritual medium – ghosts, hauntings, and the like would be far more commonplace if ships did not have a Navigator keeping them safe or were under the auspices of their Ship's God.

Causality - at greater distances and of course depth/speeds, it grows increasingly easy to disregard causality completely (Indeed, such is the meat and drink of the Navigator Houses.) A great many spacer legends surround this, and the use of a Navigator or other seer to "peek" ahead at the start of their journey.

IS there a risk of seeing or initiating a predestination paradox? Maybe. But by the time such events have overtaken those involved it is of course too late to do much about it, generally.

The legendary example of course is the one where the imperial commander notes a planet and then makes arrangements to take an excursion vessel to see that planet. Checking the instrumentation on departure and consulting with a seer, the captain is treated to an image of the planet absent but a large collision of super-heated rocks colliding in its place.

Later on, of course, the subsequent voyage led to that world's utter destruction.

In the Empire and elsewhere in the Collapsing Universe, Sub-ether ships regularly warp into system prior to their departure, or centuries after the fact. The potential asynchronous nature of any given spacer crew or vessel is an accepted fact. What it is not is any kind of existential threat. No universal force will erase those who have made minor changes to their local timeline....especially if there is no contradiction of information. Sometimes there is no disruption at all. (The Judge is encouraged to lean into this as much or as little as they wish. With this style of FTL movement, the difference between minor changes to the timeline and slipping into a splinter are largely academic.

Ultimately the Imperial control over the Ansible network allows them near perfect info control between star systems. This is by design. (History shall not be changed save by imperial writ.) Not so much for the reliable nature of Ansible technology (which it isn't) but for all points of communication to be under imperial control. Indeed, unreliable Ansible messages may protect against – or derive from – such minor micro changes. All starships track carefully both elapsed ship time and official imperial time in their voyages.

Navigating through the Sub-ether

The Navigators claim that the Imperial Noosphere, a conceptual realm of pure thought, presses against the fabric of the Sub-ether, forming these pathways. If true, this 'flow map' would from a distance resemble the expansion of galactic civilization from its inception points.

Those who 'sail' the gaseous ocean that is the near Sub-ether know better than to speculate on such irrelevancies. Especially when massive energy, gravitational, psychic or magical occur in the material universe, there is a corresponding disruption in the near Sub-ether, and sometimes seemingly of far greater impact there. Other splinters, and other planes and realities entirely, press upon a ship voyaging through the Sub-ether

Distances in time and space – anyone who takes even a single Sub-etheric journey risks permanent spatial-temporal displacement. Full stop. Entering Sub-ether, crossing it (including means, encountered anomalies, and 'conditions'), and flipping back out all create discontinuities; From the standpoint of crew and passengers, Time and space are altered. Any cruising Sub-ether vessel keeps a close watch on elapsed and estimated ship time v. "real time" (Imperial time, as set by the relevant nav beacons).

While it is not a hard defined limit or border floating in space, the nearer parts of the imperial 'frontier' (from the core) is about a two and a half year journey. However, at this particular moment the empire is expanding so rapidly and in every possible direction that this is easily overtaking the ability of actual ships to keep up. (And the Navigator houses see their opportunities.....)

Contributing Pressures, including means, encountered anomalies, and 'conditions', affecting transit conditions within the Sub-ether

1. The collapsing universe – coruscating waves of space, gravity, and spiritual turbulence are starting to create a low level peristalsis within the Sub-ether. Perhaps in time this will have an effect on the Sub-ether itself.
2. The phlogiston – the limbo winds blow constantly from the Higher Worlds, mixing particles, changing things from one into another, and steering the omniverse in its current direction.
3. Gravitational disturbances. (more like Mass disturbances)
4. The increasing pressure of the Noosphere against the Sub-ether and the Toum-var; the overall effect is one of waves and tides, crashing against the Toum-var, and the waveforms send cascading back, almost always a bit weaker, however.
5. Pressures from the Noosphere - The Noosphere overlaps with much of the Sub-ether, and its dominant memes become flow channels within it in areas of high stability (such as the empire, for example)

Making a Navigation check

- Misjumps, quirks and complications

Important factors –

Sub-ether depth (1-7+)

Navigator skill (1 to 10) – most commonly 1 to 5

Optional or only occasional modifiers -

Crew rating

(**1 to 4** or very optionally one to six?)

Modifier used cannot exceed Navigator skill

Drive rating (1 to 6; possibly higher in military craft)

Roll 1d20

Making a Navigation check & plotting a Sub-ether journey (optional)

Check is made once at the beginning of a journey.

Who makes the check?

At the outset of a sub-etheric journey this check is made when the Sub-ether drop (or jump) is successful. This check is made by the Captain of the vessel, the Navigator, or an attendant of the ship's God.

- *Why*

What purpose does it serve?

higher end results involve higher power and lower Sub-ether depths, while lower results involve shallower Sub-etheric depths and entropy.

So, a range of d20 plus up to 20 (total, ever, modifiers)?

- Lower sub-ether depths HIGHER
- Greater navigational feats HIGHER

-

The judge is encouraged to modify the roll up to +/-3 to reflect relative Sub-etheric conditions.

The die roll is added to the

Add the max sub-ether depth plotted

The Navigator, Ship's god / AI God (or whatever is Helming) adds the vessel's intended max. Sub-ether depth³ (cannot exceed the ship's drive rating, obviously) their navigation rating (if any), and roll a

³ In the absence of this information the Judge should just use the ship's drive rating.

Basic Navigation Table

1 or lower	Misjump
2	Splinter slip
3	Sub-ether follows you home / first Sub-ether encounters
4	Graze the Toum-var / first sub-ether
5--11	Cavitation / second sub ether encounters
12-13	noosphere contacts / consult second Sub ether encounters
14-17	Visions/ third
18-19	Echoes / fourth
20	Ferryman visitation / fifth
21-23	Cavitation / Sixth
24-25	Spotting / Seventh
26-28	Psychic Contact
29-33	Energy Curve
34-35	Pan dimensional rift
36-37	Dance along the edge
38-39	Splinter slip
40+	Misjump

Results - Formal encounters are given first; many of these can only occur a single time on a Sub-ether voyage, others can and will recur. To the right of the slash indicates a normal Sub-etheric journey plus an encounter rolled on that level/table of the Sub-ether.

Misjumps – are bad. See **Misjumps p 197**

Splinter slip – this is a ship encounter from an alternate continua

The first Sub-ether follows you home / first Sub-ether encounters

-Voyage occurs without incident; At arrival however, those on ship are (and remain) entangled with supernal phenomenon taking the form of a constant monotonous chanting. It is apparently in their own accent but no known language. IT loops every 3.14 minutes and remains persistent for 3d20 hours...unless another etheric voyage is undertaken in that time after which it does not further persist. .

Graze the Toum-var / first sub-ether

- Ship's energy screens or the like graze the outer edge of the bleed; 1d7+12 dimensional analogs spawn near or replace local versions immediately.

Cavitation / second sub ether encounters

- backwash turbulence in the aether generated by the ship's gravitic turbine creates a series of pings and knocks in the hull and the space of the ship; off putting to passengers but those used to it can tell the sounds apart from something genuinely threatening. However, telling passengers that the sounds they are hearing are literally space expanding and contracting *inside the ship while in motion* is always worth the look they get.

noosphere contacts / consult second Sub ether encounters

see noosphere contacts sub table

Visions/ third

- 1D5 aboard ships simultaneously experience a vision; Any with Seer abilities may share it to others.

Vision Thing table (D8)

- 1) Ship's destruction
- 2) Something occurring at destination
- 3) A quest object
- 4) A danger in the nearby or oncoming sub-ether
- 5) A premonition of warning or disaster from long dead civilization
- 6) The death of billions on a world as it is destroyed, thousands of lights away.
- 7) The Death Sun gazes into you

Endless dead bleeding bodies or other terrible scene- Pick from Plague, Revolution, Racial Purity, Law, Chaos, or Undead Fun.

Echoes / fourth

- a curious but common Noosphere phenomenon encountered within the Sub-ether. Known traditionally amongst older spacer as "Travelers," they are often classed as ghosts dismissively. Certainly, they seem to display certain ghost like traits - they appear as archaic beings, they speak unintelligibly if they speak, and they seem not to realize that they are dead (or in this case, seem not to realize that they are not people but a Noosphere phenomenon). Like a haunting though, they appear/ manifest and the moment anyone or anything interacts with them, a sort of curse effect blankets the area. After a set of strange conditions are imposed which range from the annoying to the very hazardous, the effects seem to end and then the consciousness? Are on their way.

It is thought that such creatures are seeming more common as they are also drawn into spirals by the gravity drive and ghost scoops of passing starships, but in the latter case, are not subject to them.

See Echoes sub table

Ferryman visitation / fifth

Spotting / Seventh

- uncontrolled matter duplication. Sometimes, a gravity jump (most commonly at the outset of a journey) will result in the sudden, absolutely subtle, precise but inexact duplication of 1d16 items aboard ship, as though they had always been there. . Almost always unessential non-complex items (no moving parts but could make a glass and water in it though less water than present in source) Ofttimes it *seems* to have some purpose or serve some higher order however.

Psychic Contact with a Vast and Mighty Intelligence

- a. Noosphere intelligence
- b. Space God
- c. Not an intelligence but a Cozmik Awareness Field

This contact may be brief or long lasting, it may only be the being becoming aware of psychic and ship, or it may be a long extended chat between minds. Cozmik awareness fields allow psychics, sorcerers, and others 'touched by beyond' to ask one question of the vast infinite wisdom of the collective universe and intuit or be led to an answer. Answers must be yes, no, or very simple. Overly complex or elaborate questions receive no reply.

Adjacent Energy Curve

- vessel momentarily passes alongside an etheric region of great energy bending; (1-3 amplification, 4-6 drain)

In amplification,

Apply effect 2. Above, stage all energy effects upward **four** stages on the dice chain, and all batteries become charged, lights grow brighter, etc. Those with recent injuries will heal four times faster.

In Drain,

Again apply 2. Above but all affected parties become sluggish and sleep. Those with hibernation tendencies will fall into such a state. All light and sound are dimmed for the duration of the voyage. Thought passes slower. Dreams do not seem to occur. All energy effects are reduced 4 steps on the dice chain. Those who are injured will heal four times slower than normal and magical / technological healing is affected by the energy curve as above.

Thank your Navigator or Ship's God right now.

Pan dimensional rift

- the gravity drive momentarily spawns a pan-dimensional microrift, on the other side could be theoretically anything, anywhere. The Judge can do whatever they like with this obviously. Otherwise, Roll 1d6

1-2 Small stable ones are contained within the counter rotating streams of positive and negative material energy within the outer gravity drive and allowed to dissipate on their own within d3 rounds. Seldom does anything poke through and even rarer do they remain extent for long.

3-5 Larger ones need to be pinched off by an active duty engineer or expelled from the vessel at speed to allow them to naturally dissipate on their own time at no risk to the vessel.

6 Very large ones or rifts that are automatically achieving super-stability are automatically ejected at speed from within the drive chamber while the vessel is in flight. The latter almost certainly will bring strange new visitors to the Sub-ether in the vessel's wake.

Dance along the edge

- possibly your navigator is pushing her limits, or the Ship's God is especially heady with worship, but the combined limits of ship, etheric protections, and power have been reached if not exceeded. Likely will arrive at destination d5 days sooner than projected, even if this is impossible. Also, psychic spillover affects all unshielded passengers and non-crew life forms : sleep, arousal, hunger, communal clustering, communal grazing, communal grooming

Sub tables

Echoes (sub table) A pair of examples

1. The Twin Specters - (the flickering twin specters of rampant disease) an apparently two dimensional image of two organic humanoids of greatly advanced age, in strange clothing, of no known ethnography, speaking slowly and repeatedly at length for some time. While they have manifested, the pair neutralize the effects of all pharmacologicals within a (LARGE) radius. When pressed, realize that the effect is powerful enough that such things are effectively rendered chemically inert for the duration. Even if removed from the area of effect (though anything removed from the area of effect remains in such a state once the effect has reverted)
2. The Voice of Dawn - one of the oldest of these 'ghosts', stories of it date to the early Second Empire, the disembodied voice repeats a single word over and over while all in the affected area experience a full sensory hallucination of fire, jungle, explosions, bombing, ending in what feels like sudden G acceleration (3 or so) and the suggestion that The echo is old enough that imperial linguists have managed to thoroughly analyze the word and have translated it to be a Pre-Ancient (Before the First Empire) word meaning, literally, {"sacrifice."} repeated, relentlessly, over images of animals being butchered for slaughter, mass killings, and fire.

Noosphere Contacts (sub Table)

1. Mutational (Morphogenetic) Field- subtle interactions with morphic resonance fields from the Noosphere activate and invigorate some junk code in your DNA over the next d30 hours.
 1. coccyx - you grow a tail
 2. Appendix - you develop an appendix.
 3. Gills -
2. Noosphere Mega-intellect - You have briefly wandered into the attention of one of the Information Gods of the Noosphere so it has pulled 1. The Captain 2. Certain of the crew (the PCs) 3. The ship out of space and time temporarily for a little chat.
3. Projection of Dead Civilization - In the Noosphere, "nothing is ever forgotten." Sometimes, a great civilization will fall, catastrophically, and leave a tremendous wake in both the Noosphere and it's local Sub-ether. The vessel is now passing through the resulting 'shadow' is sort of an idiot god, a massed hallucination/transformation experience of the Death of a Civilization.
4. Etheric Predators
Ether Hounds, Stains (Idea stains?), "Skein of Evil,"
5. Contagious Thoughts (page numbers)
6. Meme warps (page numbers)

More on the Noosphere will be covered in Galaxy Black V the Book of Common Prayer

Sub Etheric Misjumps

Because of the compression of the collapsing universe, each successive 'layer' of the sub ether is both a steeper 'arc' into the ether as well as folded space; this is ultimately why lower sub ether levels (1-3) are relatively safe and also stable, while successively deeper layers allow faster more rapid travel but are correspondingly more dangerous⁴.

One of the most infamous of all deep sub ether misjumps is the one where you arrive at your destination to find that the world you charted is there, but the life forms are all based off of pre-Imperial Noosphere educational icons....not organic lifeforms. Or everyone is descended from mushrooms...or everyone is made of colonies of dripping slime worms.

Either way you've slipped into one of the 88 billion splinters (more accurately you have passed into a form of parallel universe known to Imperial science as an Analog, where 83% or more of dominant Noosphere still exists but in an often vastly different form. . (See Splinters)

Another possibility for a serious misjump is to be flung into one of the Memory Realms (see below)

Jump Failures – when the Gravy drive is on the fritz

1. Failure – drive may implode taking the ship with it.
2. Failure
3. Antigrav – a series of coruscating gravitational fields wash over the ship, twisting it into new shapes but also dividing the vessel into areas of randomly occurring gravity.
4. Drive jumps without ship; 4d10% of the vessel goes on a long, eternal voyage with the ship's drive.
5. Engineering compartment is flooded with exotic radiation.
6. Ship flips into a sub-etheric layer (roll a d10) but drifting and with no motive force.
7. Jump successful – however, the ship's God, Navigator, or AI has vanished. They are not in the ship.
8. Wormhole – gravity drive misfires but a superspace wormhole opens anyway, transporting the ship theoretically anywhere in the universe, if not beyond
9. Full material collapse: drive briefly achieves limited singularity, force screens and safeguards prevent the ship from becoming 1 mm of super dense radioactive allow BUT the ship, functionally, disintegrates, and reintegrates in a parallel medium; an elemental realm, a parallel universe, or other adjacent conceptual space. Now the ship and its crew are made of the native materials here. Should they return to their home universe, they may find that they have inherited different strengths and weaknesses than they began with

⁴ A misjump to some tenth sub ether is not a journey you will be returning from unless your captain is named Janeway or perhaps Rann.

Misjump

Misjump - in a flash of pink and purple translocation energy 1d6 organic beings aboard are immediately replaced by their doppelgangers. These are hostile invaders from a foreign splinter and will work in concert.

Misjump is minor – the gravity drive burps and spontaneously creates a Spark Elemental. Elemental is likely now trapped in the drive section.

A travesty – the gravity drive hiccups and – only momentarily – do you slip into an unfamiliar splinter; however, immediately the drive corrects, and you arrive at your destination. Meanwhile, in a far splinter, your vessel's departure has set off pre-existing instabilities, inciting a vacuum state collapse. By the time those responsible are dead, they will have literally trillions of dead weighing their souls down should they come to judgment.....

Misjump Hazards

Pan Dimensional Sinkhole –

Drive failure wraps an unspecified amount of (four dimensions of) space about the ship and drops it into the Sub-ether, which is only passes through briefly before winding up in a new realm. Essentially a pocket universe, containing the vessel, and any random (or not so random) matter, energy, and the like that the Judge sees fit to pull into or replicate. Can get weird.

Probability Null

The misjump has catastrophically thrown the vessel clear of the Sub-ether entirely; it now floats in a meaningless void where there are inherently no possibilities.

Immediately everyone on board begins to hemorrhage their luck attribute, one point an hour (as though spent).

Once a crew member's luck reaches zero they fade from existence.

Once no one remains aboard ship, it will also slowly fade from existence.

Functionally this gives the vessel less than 20 hours (and likely a lot less) until all is actually lost. The good news is that nothing (at all) will oppose them. Ship's systems, while still fraught with the aftereffects of the misjump itself will otherwise function as normal until the last crew member (optionally: the Captain) loses their last point of luck

Further it may be stumbled upon or the work of experimenting spell casters but spellburn can hold of the luck decay by one hour per point so spent. Either way, possibilities are reduced. (Any such magic however that misfires pretty much can be assumed to mean the caster has just annihilated them self)

Navigators will be unable to function and may very well react....poorly to such a misjump. Ship's Gods may react a variety of ways but will be VERY motivated to leave quickly. They will begin losing coherency and power immediately and their own integrity will be, predictably, tied up with that of ship and crew.

The first AI Gods used to calculate / navigate jumps were used precisely to escape such a place and function normally and quite effectively in these circumstances.

Slow Transit Zones

Slow Transit zones are a bizarre phenomena whereby the vessel and its systems and those aboard become almost completely asynchronous and disconnected from the material universe (more than is normally the case in a Sub-etheric Jump). The ship enters a bizarre trajectory in which entropy is reduced, and so the systems aboard ship (biological and mechanical) become more efficient.

How much more efficient? Noticeable after only a few days. However, this is not the danger. The greater the seeming gain in efficiency, the longer the ship's voyage will become; moreover, when they re-enter material space, they will find that vast amounts of time have passed.

This is sometimes the result of a misjump; rarely the result of a sub-etheric encounter below the third Sub-ether⁵. The longer the vessel is in transit the less energy it and those aboard will use. However, the further in the future they will arrive.

Details: When a ship enters or rather helps create (through misjump or misadventure) such a zone, there is no immediate indication. The vessel has created and entered/been drawn into a highly obtuse arc of Sub-etheric travel – and one that decouples the vessel far more than normal from time and space of their origin point.

As time passes it becomes clear that the vessel and indeed anything that requires a power source aboard ship requires less energy to derive more benefit – though in fact they are seemingly using less. This is a side effect of the Slow Transit zone they are passing through; the ship is now super efficiently traveling across time as well as space; the warp curvature of their situation however causes this to manifest in a disparity between energy usage and energy gained.

Slow transit zones (unless 'naturally' occurring) are not persistent; they are one way and so may not be used to return to one's 'native era.' Getting back may not even be possible.

Degree of disparity (start at one or roll 1d4, add the jump rating, and modify by navigator as appropriate)

1 Systems functioning at 10% greater efficiency; add one to the material column of the transit times table, and subtract one from the ship's timetable.

2 Systems functioning at about 25% greater efficiency; supplies are being moved through at a greatly reduced rate. Vessel is fully cut off from material reality and ansible contact. Add 4 to the material column of the transit times table and add 2 to the ship's timetable.

3 Systems running with terrifying efficiency. As 2 above but those aboard now heal twice as fast, require half as much food and rest, all life forms aboard experience giddiness and lightheadedness. Sub-etheric encounters are functionally impossible. Add 3 to the ship's time transit table results; on arrival, Vessel is now 1d6x1d30x100 sidereals in the future.

4 Systems run with unparalleled efficiency up to 90% improved; sleeping, eating, and such are optional for the whole journey. Shipboard transit time is double the results on the ship's timetable; vessel arrives 1d100x1d30x666 years in the future. The Judge is urged to make this hypothetical future era a VERY different place.

⁵ Paranaturally occurring slow transit zones are rare as hen's teeth, but all spacer captains have heard of them and many fear them. It is thought that tremendous energy imbalances in the jump process lead to such dangerous anomalies.

Temporal Misjumps

Misjump? Fuck with them with time as well as space. Not a splinter. Just the future.

4,000 Sidereals or so in the future. The *early Saurid Dynasty*.

<Play Reptile Sun now>

“Many were critical of the Empress’ decision to incorporate several of the Saurid core worlds into the Imperium at the end of her reign. However, then and especially since, one does not criticize the Mother of Our Civilization. Not in polite company.

Over 5,000 years have passed since that decision and only the Imperial Mother could have foreseen this, else she would not have done so. The Saurid peoples have overrun the Empire, both internally and from without, though imperial space has overall tripled in size and more than that in its ability to project economic and military power. The very old of the imperial old guard are terrified and threatened by these changes of fortune and have largely withdrawn save from their business affairs in which they meddle extensively.

Meanwhile the Third Imperial Saurinate is genecrafting new breeds of Saurid, imperial breeds designed to go forth and conquer the galaxy as colonizers, on Mars and in other places, many secret and removed from the old imperial core. “

Other futures

Maybe 9,000 Sidereals beyond the present

Perhaps when the Empire takes up about half the galaxy, will be the dour and black & white comics era of the Imperial State as the empire wanders through a hard fascist period before again emerging from a crisis of stasis *** ready to “breakout” into and take “custodianship” of the rest of the galaxy

- now the empire moving into it’s final “mature” form whereby the maximized potential of the citizens of the empire as a slightly more fertile ground for immortality as an experiment is completed. D

Maybe 50,000 Sidereals beyond the present and forward

The Age of the Sun Eater, an era of chaos and demon magic.

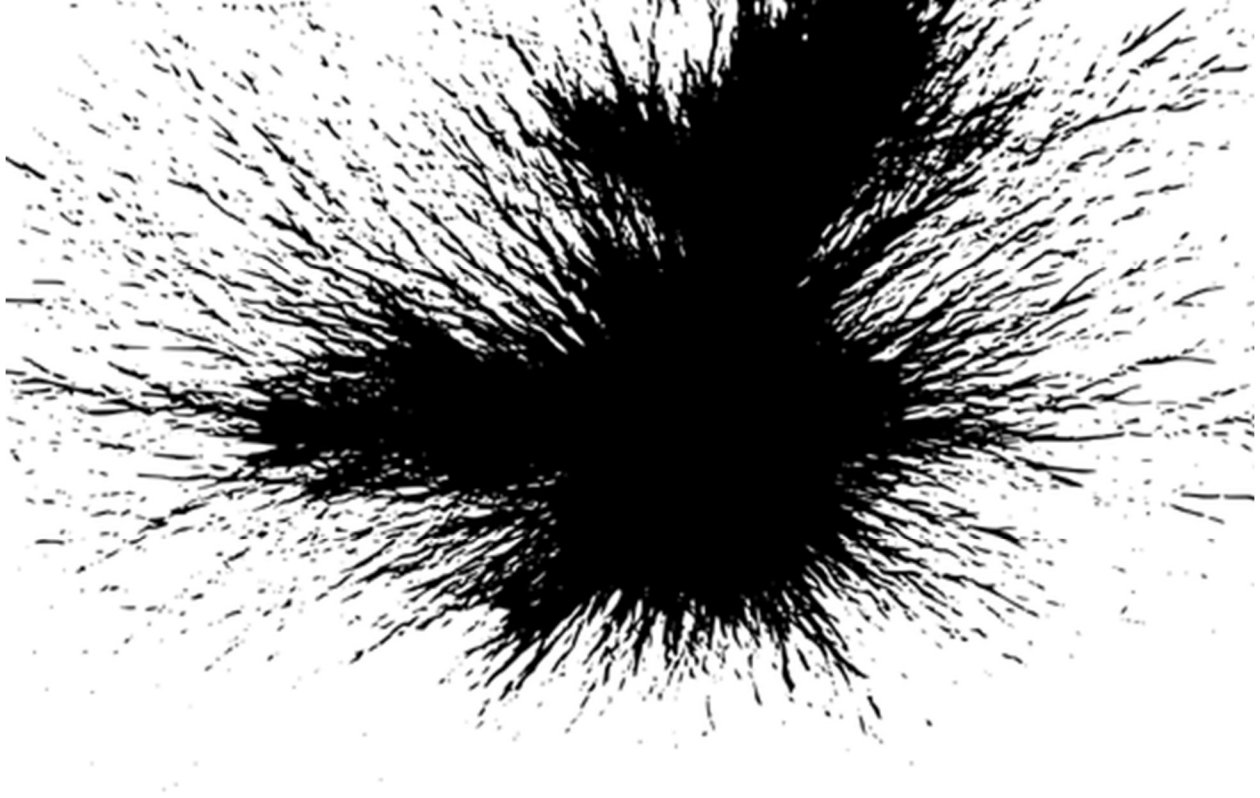
The Demon-That-Will-Come assumes mantle High Lord of the multiverse; allows your sun to exist because of your worship.

2,000,000 Sidereals from now....

Much of the local group has slid into the enormous spatial discontinuity that has eaten 9/10 of the (now) **Kryllopede Galaxy**, which is under quarantine by every other life form left in the **Groupcluster**. They are blamed for, well, everything, including the rapidly shrinking universe of that era. What’s left of the GalFed is spread halfway across the Cluster Remains after a collision with a foreign brane dragged a super-gravitic cosmic string through the Large Magellanic Cloud. That string exists interlinked with several systems it initially came into contact with, the string itself that has several other different brane-universes linked along it’s twisted length to a lesser or greater degree. This is **The Bridge**. All of what is from the now is forgotten completely save in the stories of the descendants of the Hinh of Jaldipoor now spread halfway across the cluster. They remember in stories & song.

1d14 Additional Misjumps

Random Misjump - these are bad. And likely game altering



1. Star Flung - you are merely dumped back into the Materium 1d10x100 lights and 1d5+1 weeks distant. IT could be worse.
2. Across the universe - congratulations! You are in another galaxy, (probably) in your own universe. You may be able to determine your position, or you may be so far from your point of origin as to make locating your home galaxy impossible.
3. Crossbleed - you arrive in a parallel universe. It may be functionally identical to the one you left, or it may be considerably further afield. How you get back is your own business.
4. Across the Mirror - you are...else. Another universe, a higher (or lower) plane of existence, or pocket dimension.
5. Time and space are unfixed - you create an etheric cyclone which draws your vessel through convoluted pathways never meant for mortals. You emerge hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years distant in the past or future, and in conceivably any universe.
6. You arrive at your destination precisely as intended. Minus your space drive and quite possibly other parts of the ship as well. They simply are gone once the ship returns to full Materium.
7. The ship violently is wrenched into a place it should never be - within a fiery Hell Pit, or suddenly buried within titano skeletal rock within Tartarus.
8. Dies Irae - The Void Coughs up it's Dead and Lost alien Undead horrors of those lost in space forever manifest aboard ship, hungry and angry at all who live. 1d4 angry alien ghosts manifest plus an incursion of zombies, skeletons from available

corpses. IN some cases, this may mean those in cryogenic suspension rise as undead, their souls cast into nightmare.

9. Ship passes a bit too close to a star; Navigator or ship's god must immediately pass a series of REF saves or
 1. Ship is destroyed
 2. Ship slingshots around the star travelling back in time
 3. Ship is trapped in decaying solar orbit
 4. Ship is awash with a wave of hard radiation but otherwise persists
 5. Ship passes through a solar prominence – depending on the vessel it may be liquefied or protected by screens
 6. Ship is flung into the tenth Sub-ether and traveling on a non-linear course from this point. Existential terrors await.
10. What has happened? The ship comes to a stop, fully, around a single moon, orbiting a single dead world, orbiting a black star. There are no other stars or other celestial bodies visible in the ship's light cone. Destination is
 1. A negative universe 'snapshot' of their intended destination
 2. A small pocket universe instantly created around them. A second jump should get them to their proper destination but don't tell them that.
 3. Billions of years in their future, along one of many possible future timelines. All is as it seems.
 4. A small, entropy ridden pocket universe that the ship has been shunted into
11. There is a golden light. It permeates everything outside the ship, and the sensors are overwhelmed. After 6d12 minutes, starting with the highest luck, characters will begin to hear a beckoning, a familiar voice or set of whispers (though indistinct) – and a longing for ... something will emerge, fueling a desire to exit the ship. Anyone who gives into this madness will be suffused in a rosy, pink glow and gone forever from this reality. Just the suggestion however that they are...happier wherever they have gone. Once three have given themselves over to the light, the ship will slowly return to normal space, though perhaps in a random location, 1d6 years after their scheduled point of arrival. Seemingly no one will think much of the missing people until well after the time they have disembarked.
12. Splinter collapse – your transit, however briefly, into a rather spatially “delicate” Splinter has either immediately preceded or in fact caused, a full collapse of that reality; the ship's gravity drive immediately shunts you over “one step” likely to a somewhat less doomed version of the same conceptual space, but could be anywhere. For vessels capable of, and engaged, in moving at a combined speed/depth in excess of the Fifth Sub-ether have a 1% chance per drive rating of creating those same conditions when they do leave this reality, regardless of speed or depth or means of transport.
13. Ethical warp – All chaotic characters are now the mob. All Lawful characters are G-men; all Neutrals are journalists, or cops, or bystanders. They exist in a phantom dreamlike urban setting only somewhat reminiscent of a lost age of gangsters and prohibition. Judge's option as to whether PCs retain their magic/sf gear and powers while they are here and if escape is possible (or desirable!)
14. Abortive – Demons pour from torn holes in reality. The uncoiled uncoil and tear their way from underneath and rage across your world's landscape. The Gods smite all who oppose them. IF there be no true Gods, then Unimaginable Space Horrors do it instead (Really, difference?) The moon(s) go dark or red or both. The sun's) shine at night or when they aren't supposed to. Dogs and cats...you know. IN a rain of burning raging fire, all life is extinguished.

Traversing the Sub-ether



Encounters In The Depths of the Sub-ether

The Zero

-The initial or “zeroth” layer of the Sub-Ether, sometimes called the Zero, Light Point Zero⁶, or Zero-space⁷, is lit. The process of skirting both ether and Materia; while debatably the safest for interstellar travel it has its own set of challenges.

Those with especially strong or especially weak egos will find themselves confronting their own preconceptions, either to dodge or given in to them, as appropriate.

There are at least five (or six) other ‘Sub’-etheric layers between this and the materia. (Spacer lingo has names for the others - The White Sky, the Black Sky, etc. see below)

The Deepest Depths

-Now the seventh and subsequent Sub-ether exist but are increasingly dangerous. In the sixth and subsequent sub-etherae the Megaflows from the Higher and Lower Worlds are far stronger, constantly disrupting and creating new flows within the various levels of the Sub-ether.

The Seventh Sub-ether especially so. It is called the Red Sky. Some spacers believe the Seventh Sub-ether to be something else entirely; some say it is an enormous (universe sized) massive living creature. Some say it hungers for both flesh and souls. And many ascribe this thus. On at least one world of the Empire, the Seventh Sub-ether was known in ancient times as The Hungry Plane. Presumably this is the source of the legend-meme.

Further, within the seventh and lower, it is the nature of the sub-ether to attempt to reject foreign substances, meaning material ones. Encounters at this level and below feature a variety of Prismatic Gates each of which will shunt the craft into a short wormhole leading to another world, likely within the Fundament.

So play some SunO))) and reflect on why ships have Navigators, AI, or Little Gods helming.

If rolling randomly to determine encounters

roll 1d4+Sub-etheric depth

- /+ navigator’s level (if applicable)
- Level of any cleric who blessed the voyage prior to dive (must be in favor with god, must be imperial deity)

Add + 1 per drive rating unless and only unless the vessel is unpowered and unmoving,

⁶ *this refers to the inability of a vessel to accelerate beyond lightspeed in the Zero; one must achieve the first or second sub-ether to noticeably move beyond the light barrier of baryonic matter..) It is mostly used for “Cruising speed” for long voyage vessels that desire to remain somewhat interactive with the Materia.

⁷ Archaically, in the Second Empire era, it was poorly understood and called the Gray or Grey space

Spread throughout encounter tables

Sub-ether Encounters (from Core)

- Ghost
- Demon
- Dimensional Sailor
- Extradimensional Analog
- Elemental
- Shadow
- More Specific (below)

More specific – the dead rise; all corpses, uninstantiated clones, morphs or other forms rise, animated by a cluster of spirits, most likely the dead, but possibly a mixed band also. The Ship's God will know immediately, and a purge will follow.

List of Etheric threats from the Bestiary (see Judges' Guide)

- Grave Maggots
- Dim Ghosts
- Ether hounds
- Flail
- Warp Wasp
- Hungry Dead
- Haunting (fleshpile)
- Haunting (vision)
- Imprint
- Psychic Residue
- Wisp
- Spectral Type One Wight
- Spectral Type Two Wraith
- Spectral Type Three True Spectre Greater Undead
- Judgement
- Smothering Bag
- Lumasi
- Splinter ghost

List of Noosphere threats from the Bestiary

- Preconception cloud
- Insufferable internal antagonist
- Polychromatic anxiety beast
- Hobgoblins of the mind
- Embodiments
- Daemons
- Zeitgeists
- Data ghosts
- Creatures from the Id

encounter tables The Sub-Ether

Using these encounter tables - By design, these tables were designed to emulate old school ideas of wealth and encounter by dungeon level for ease of information digestion – and yes one could run all space encounters absolutely straight that way. Which works fine, unless you want a campaign where everyone isn't constantly bringing in new characters.

Space travel is dangerous, and travel through the Sub-ether more dangerous still. By intent, the tables should be thought of as containing long term voyage planning. The entire scope of a campaign can be determined (randomly or by choice) simply by determining encounters. Moreover, each encounter is considered less an opportunity for combat in itself as a drive to further action. Consider for a moment, especially in classic Star Trek, how many times an episode centered on encountering a weird thing in space? These are those weird things, or some of them, for your ships and characters to encounter, contend with, and escape or unravel.

In super-science we trust, all others pay cash A note on Sub-etheric voyage events

As the encounter tables to follow will make clear, you can have entire sessions go by as the vessel streaks through space; the journey can be and often is the thing – but encounters most often occur inside the vessel, those outside it being the exception. It is a different pace than you may be used to in an SF game, but it is very workable. The original Star Trek series springs to mind as the single best example of this sort of thing – how many times did some random strange alien thing in the path of the enterprise pluck crew members of out of time and space or appear before them as American Presidents or Greek Gods?

Tables represent “common but noteworthy” phenomena during a voyage in the shallower depths of the Sub-ether, ranked from the Mundane to the exotic; suitable for SbE1 to SbE4;

Beyond the fifth sub-ether, the things encountered are likely capable of actually damaging the ship. It may help the Judge to visualize each subsequent “depth” of the Sub-ether as an old 1e Dungeon Level, with much the same level of potential threat in mind.

Each layer of the Sub ether is a deeper ‘arc’ into the Aetheric medium, allowing for far faster speeds, over greatly compressed space, making for a (theoretically) faster journey, in exchange for jumping further and further removed from the common Imperial experience; at the deeper Sub etheric depths, Sub ether six and deeper, those without the experience and proper training may require sedation (or cryogenic / temporal suspension) or risk madness.

Unauthorized action alert, we have an Intruder alert on deck 13, section 33

In part, the encounter tables generate results that seemingly may be irrelevant unless someone is outside their ship or is afloat in the Sub-ether alone without a vessel, however in a given voyage it is common enough for things to “slip through” the power grids and various defense screens, even with all of the safeguards and tech in place. The encounter tables can and should be read to include shipboard intruders when such results are determined.

Great fun results when the players slowly realize that now they are the monsters⁸ and it is they who must repel a constant stream of invaders to their home. Welcome to the Sub-ether.

Remember to check for Grave Maggots if anyone dies aboard ship while in transit. (see bestiary)

Ether Encounters

Can occur at any Sub-ether depth; chose the most relevant, most interesting, or just roll.

Athegeist phenomena – entropic

Athegeist phenomena – supernal

Aetheric Cavitation

Bleed Wind

Death wave

Free Floating Event Structure

Grazing the Toum-var

Orgonic Parasites

Pass through Conceptual Space

Proximity Alert

Rising into Fire

Ship Mirror

Soul screen breach – ‘ponicsbay

Spectral Turbulence

Roll on table for particular Sub-etheric Depth

Ship passing and grazes the outer parabola of a noosphere **death wave**; a massive death toll occurring in ‘adjacent idea space’ (another dimension, parallel universe, psi realm, etc.) – all sensitives must succeed at a DC 15 will save or be momentarily disoriented as “billions of lives cried out and were suddenly silenced.”

Ship Mirror – sensors detect other vessel; other vessel is Splinter of the character’s own vessel from a Possibility not far from that of the PCs.

Orgonic parasites

Freely exist as vast clouds in the shallows of the Sub-ether, as well as distributed across the etheric shadows of countless worlds across the Material. They infect a psychic’s aura slowly weakening them through a long process of reproduction via budding

Ship passes through conceptual space claimed by the armies of Implicate Order. 5% chance one or more members of the Clockwork syndicate may materialize aboard vessel. (see –Judges guide to the Collapsing Universe)

⁸ Flying through space in a giant maze no less. Full of weird gizmos and other eclectic, electric, and genuinely magic items. And lots of weird beings you would not think would get on well in the first place - let alone in such ‘confined’ spaces.

Proximity Alert - a substantial chunk of ghost matter has wandered into the ship's course plot.

Athegeist phenomena (Hallucinatory vision - Entropy); the sight of foodstuffs or other perishables erupting with small reducing worms triggers a full sensory experience d3 minutes later in which the affected seems to claw at their face or chest, tearing chunks of flesh off down to the bloody bone. The victim must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or inflict 1d6 (plus strength bonuses, and any natural damage bonus for claws or the like) on themselves as they give into the hallucination, if only briefly.

Athegeist phenomena (Hallucinatory vision - Supernal); 1d3 nearby life forms will just audibly note a voice or song coming from nearby. Subsequent investigation will reveal an inaudible voice, tuning primarily on a dead channel. No matter what the affected does, it will not become clearer.

Soul Screen Breach - xPonics; somewhere deep in the ship's ag section, a small tree or large vine or other plant groans as it, apparently possessed, crawls out of the ground (or other mounting) and makes its way to the nearest higher living being. Should it find a target nearby It will attempt to bury them in soil or the nearest equivalent to the detriment of all other actions. Otherwise, it will roam the ship, slowly making its way toward the drive core.

Spectral Turbulence - Many things exist within the Sub-ether that a starship can pass through, creating a kind of turbulence. Psychic waves of all kinds, both living and dead, pass through the Sub-etheric medium with regularity, and at times breaching pocketed areas of the aether where lingering traces of things that have gone before remaining. The ship has broached a Memory of Atrocity or encountered the wake of a supernova destroying an inhabited system, (or will be completing jump in the aftermath of a tremendous new social movement on the destination world. Any and all of these things create turbulence and the resulting waveforms. Navigators and (some) Ship's Gods (depending on the disturbance) are sensitive to these occurrences and so can avoid them fairly effortlessly most of the time.

Aetheric Cavitation - starships do leave an ethereal wake in their passing; Especially skilled engineers and sensor ops can determine speed, class of drive system, and thus lots of sundries from analyzing this wake. The patterns created by these effects are called Cavitations, and they may allow a space vessel traversing the sub-ether to be followed or even tracked at shorter distances. (Remember, the Sub-ether is primarily analogous to a gaseous nature but at FTL speeds behaves like a liquid.)

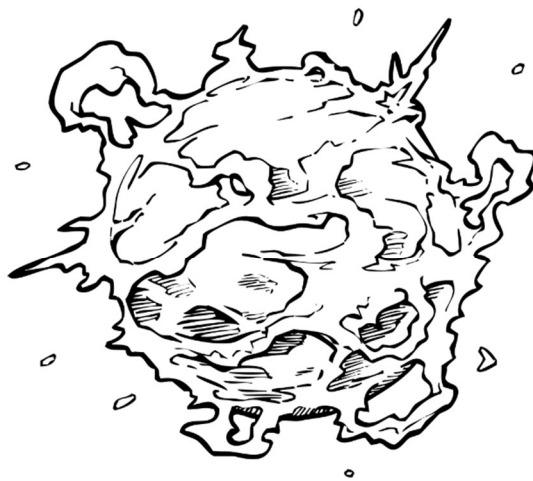
Rising into Fire - the vessel is ascending to the first sub-ether (from the second or below) towards the end of their voyage and do so into an ether vortex.

Bleed wind - An extraordinarily powerful wave emanates from “behind” the ship, radiating outward from some parallel universe through the Sub-ether; it also propels material things ‘downward’ as the emanation begins in the first sub-ether and spirals downward until it loses energy. This can cause the ship to go off course, arrive elsewhere or elsewhere, throw them into a much deeper level of the Sub ether, Can easily lead to Turbulence (above), a Free Floating Event Structure (below)

Free floating Event Structure - the great overlap between the Noosphere and the Aetherium can create (or summon) these odd structures - uneven assemblages of cubical shapes, sometimes tunneled into and rising out of, an asteroid, and sometimes free floating, like a fortress designed by MC Escher. They do not have atmospheres nor are they quite extent. Until they are landed on or boarded they are in a superposition state; once they are boarded however the interior will take on attributes appropriate to those boarding (if the group has a mix of atmosphere breathers, this will get very confusing!). Within, a completely random, almost fractally so, layout and arrangement of shifting force fields create a series of rooms and corridors, stacked seemingly on top of one another.

Due to the coterminous existence of this place with the Noosphere, the structure will, during such an exploration, likely turn out to be inhabited, provided the PCs are expecting such. Theoretically anything could be encountered as it is a Tualpa, or pure thought form, and not a material entity. (Indeed, most anything they encounter is a fragment of one of the Noosphere’s mighty Archetypes)

Grazing the Toum-Var - Ship’s energy screens or the like graze the outer edge of the barrier between the material and the immaterial; momentarily, it bleeds; 1d3+6 dimensional analogs spawn near or replace local versions immediately.



encounter tables **The First Sub-Ether – The White Sky**

-The first sub-ether, the shallowest penetration into the Sub ether is by Spacers sometimes called the White Sky. It appears across most visual spectra as a (faintly) rippling infinite expanse of bright white in all directions.

Disorientation is almost a surety for any organic mind who slips from the relatively safe confines of being located deeply within a heavily screened, psionically armored, million ton ship, then madness. Then no one knows.

It is the domain of ancestor spirits, memory spirits, and passing Noospherical entities, traveling back and forth between the idea realm and the Toum-var. In the first Empire it was the only layer of Sub-ether penetrated⁹,

Vessels traveling through the White Sky move on average about one Light/standard day (24 hours) or 7 Lights/Prog (One hex / day at this depth on a standard one hex = 1 cubic Light)

Noosphere, and Material universe interaction here are common. Sometimes in passing one can even “see” spectacular uses of psychic powers (and rarely magic) manifest in the Sub-ether outside.

Native Encounters the White Sky

1d10 more things that can go wrong at 730 times the speed of light

1 (Noospherical Phenomena): **Zeitgeists** – these time spirits are relatively harmless though useful to sorcerers seeking to scry with detail upon past (and future) ages.

2 (Elan Phenomena) : **Kundaline** – these energy spirits from the yang realm seek interaction and rising living energy. Your spacecraft for instance. Some sorcerers (and many Navigators) have means of harnessing such creatures, symbiotically.

3 (Orgonne Phenomena): **Disembodied Ancestor spirit** – the river of souls carries the fey to their spiritual homelands and back in an endless cycle of existence. Unlike many, they will avoid contact with the vessel ... unless they have some use for it or those aboard it. If any are caught in the ship’s ether collection grid, there will be retribution, be it from the Summerlands, the spirits themselves, or stranger things.

4 (Noosphere Phenomena): **dhavenchis** – noospherical Thoughtforms descending and seeking out flesh and blood versions of themselves. Appear as stylized representations of the Vitruvian man. Curious, their agenda is unknown. Telepaths may find out, however.

5 (Noosphere Phenom) **City Thoughtform** – the vast Noospherical construct-Plane CITY intrudes upon the local Sub ether. 1d4+4 random aspects of the City will rise into material existence aboard vessel in the next d12 hours. The Ship’s God is positively howling for their destruction. Cunning sorcerers can use them to affect rapid transit to almost any world in the Imperium (and thousands beyond) via spirit barter.

6 (Q Class Etheric Phenomena:) a **Disembodied spirit of the higher worlds**; reduced greatly from what it was, it has lost particulars of irrelevancies like its name or what specifically it was. May be fearful, may be curious. May not be totally depowered.

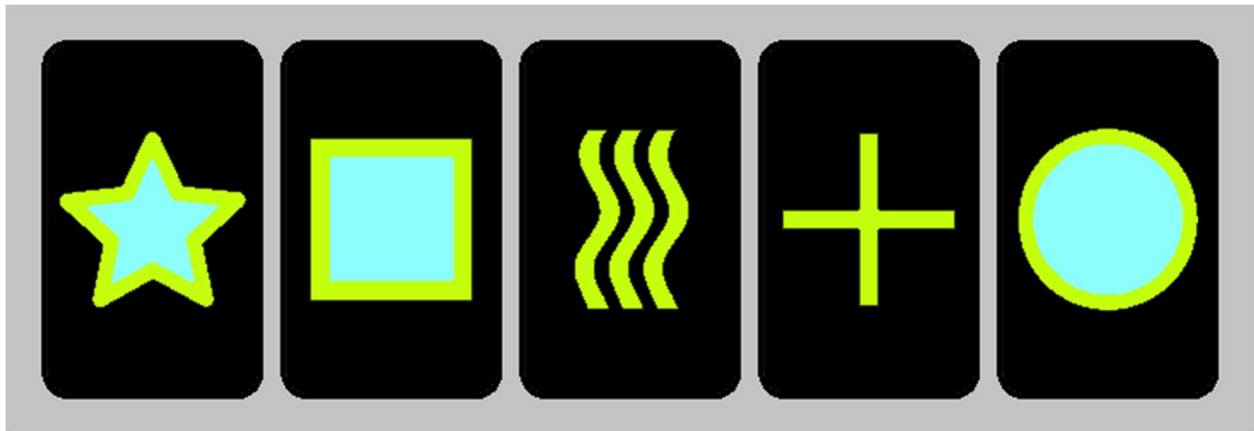
⁹ historically was known as the Ether; it is from this usage that the modern term originates

7 **disembodied spirit of a world**; possibly the world was destroyed, or a collision altered its orbit, leaving the spirit suddenly stranded in the etheric void, blasted far out into the white sky in its wake. Or maybe it's just bored?

8 **disembodied spirit of an ocean**, ring system, or other massed hydrographical mass. These appear in groups of 1d4x100 but are almost always (95%) sleeping.

9 **rage of the dying** one of those aboard is attacked at distance by a ghost, specter, or other unquiet dead who has a clear and present grudge against that target. 0 levels must succeed at a DC 14 Fort save or experience a heart attack, stroke, code fragmentation, collective disassociation, or primary systems failure as is appropriate.

10 **Intruder aboard**



We Have an Intruder (1d6)

1 **Imprint** (bestiary) is encountered or, if the circumstances permit, created

2 1d12 **plasmic residue** (bestiary) manifest somewhere on the vessel and begin pursuing urges

3 A lesser **Ghost** manifests somewhere on the central decks near the Ship's God or navigator suite.

4 a **Wisp** penetrates the ghost screens and is loose in the ship

5 **Warp Wasp swarm** buzzes the traveling vessel. If it is unpowered for some reason they may alight upon it and seek entry en masse.

6 **Noosphere Dropdown** a momentary spill over between planes occurs at a region of great intersection; check for noosphere encounter (pp) within the ship immediately thereafter.

Encounter Tables the Second Sub-ether – the Black Sky

Sinking into the depths of the Second Sub-ether, the so-called Black Sky appears as a constant swirling oily black mass twisting and turning about the vessel. Biologicals that rely upon visual scanning cast adrift in such an environment commonly go through periods wherein they think they have been struck blind as the oily black ‘haze’ clumps thicker without a vessel passing to disrupt it. Those experiencing EVA in the Black Sky commonly report it seems ‘warm.’ Regardless of personal environmental controls.

“It is a particularly bleak lava lamp outside”

Vessels traveling through the Black Sky can move on average twice as fast as one with shallower Sub-ether penetration. The vessel can be counted on to move about two Lights/standard day (24 hours) or 14 Lights/Prog (Two hexes / day at this depth on a standard one hex = 1 cubic Light)

Native encounters, the black Sky – 1d12

1. Lemure caravan – Five Hell-metrics escort a team of 1d3xd% damned souls bound for one of the 100,000 Hells. The Hellmetrics consist of One Hell Sphere and Four Hell-cubes; Hellmetrics are red and black rune covered platonic solids that glow with burning hell-light from within their black surfaces. The smallest are vehicle sized, the larger ones that of smaller spacecraft. alternately replace Hell-metrics with 1d3 demons.
2. Dead Rise – the dead rise; all corpses, uninstantiated clones, morphs or other forms rise, animated by a cluster of spirits, most likely the dead, but possibly a mixed band also. The Ship’s God will know immediately, and a purge will follow.
3. 1d5 ghosts manifest at intervals throughout the journey. This could be mischievous or deadly danger.
4. Gravity sink
5. Shadow
6. 1d3 random hauntings – screaming terrified bloodcurdling noises sweeping up and down the interior length of the ship. This is only the scream effect reflected back upon the interior and absolutely harmless, but it may very well seem a genuine haunting.
7. Slime accumulation
8. Warp wasp swarm
9. Haunting, vision (spectral audio – Hooves. The sound of many scores of hooves, as though a great horsed army passed by, accompanied by stench of war and death)
10. Everyone aboard develops an uncontrollable eye or eyelid tic unless they successfully make a DC 12 Fortitude save. The tic persists for the remainder of the voyage.
11. **Spectral spawning** –d2 wights if conditions exist (bestiary pp)
12. Inky black shadows creep about the interior of several cabins during the third shift, many times for 4d4 nights successively unless interrupted by change in Sub-etheric depth or other major change of gravito-spiritual locus.
13. Haunting (vision) – Lupoid rebellion; the baying of a thousand canid humanoids accompanies a mass haunting, a slave gang from a Second Empire transport tearing off their brain caps and going on a terrifying melee throughout the vessel. The ghosts are ancient, and their power diminished however so all they can do is share their final, bloody memory, and fade like static

Middle Depth Encounters (3-5) (05)

Down by the river

One of the crew (pick a PC determined randomly or as appropriate) has an unusually strange nightmare. In it, they exist in a barren wasteland save for rocks, scrub and mist, before coming to the banks of a river, where an old crone, withered in primitive ways, comes into view, just on the shore, washing your clothes....then they wake. Ideally this is well outside the cultural frame of reference for the character.

1d4 hours later, a crew member known to that PC (not another PC) will die. Despite whatever their other feelings on the matter might be, the character will have the distinct feeling they have 'dodged a bullet.' so to speak.

If this has never happened to the PC before, roll percentile dice. If the result is equal or below their starting luck score, they earn a point of luck additionally to be applied immediately. If this would somehow bring a character's luck score beyond 18, then the next time the PCs voyage through the Sub-ether, randomly determine one of the other party members - they will have the same dream and thereafter, "Mr. 19 luck" will no longer be amongst them.

Mind vine or brain weed (1-20) Init +1; Atk +0 Psychic blast (3d6 all psions in 130') Psi draining field (1d6 all psions in 260'/round); AC 12 brain nodes / 16 weed; HD 1d8 per brain node, typically plus 3d10 (the weeds); this example hp 117; MV n/a; Act 19d20; SP Psi-draining field, psychic blasts, can grow to immense size, hard to kill; SV Fort+2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL C.

The sample specimen has 19d8 and 3d10 HD, with a hp total of 117

Psi draining field – the blind idiot brains constantly leech brain activity, neural experiences, and power from other passing psions

Psychic Blasts – at half the range above the idiot brains can also lash out, inflicting intense psychic trauma and injury to all psychics, psions, or those using psionic devices equally.

Can grow to immense size. The above stat block is for a specimen perhaps 300 yards long, clotted lumps of the stuff have been sighted that are ten or a hundred times that size in the deeps of the Sub-ether.

Hard to Kill The weeds are not made of conventional matter (though the brain fronds seem to be) - it is often easier and definitely more accurate to send a Vec party out to simply cut the brain nodes. (AC 12) Inflicting 7 or more points of damage on site will be enough to cut one free, which will kill it almost immediately.

Rarely (12% of the time) especially large clusters of them can accumulate; in concert these generate an effective psi null field in the local sub-ether to about a Light, out in every direction. This will get in the way of any Navigator action.

A bizarre phenomenon, often stretching for many apparent kilometers across a stretch of the local Sub-ether, often in the shallows. Appearing as nothing so much a long, blue-green tendril with periodic 'nodes' resembling red-blue-white cauliflower...or brains, as you see it.

Curiously, these brain-nodes do seem to be some sort of attempted imitation of an organic brain. They are not sentient but collectively very powerful psions. Each weed is the sum of its experiences with other brain-bearing life forms; they imitate but have neither true sapience nor actual 'self'.

Most often they simply drain the psi reserves of any psychics aboard ship that get close enough to detect or interact with it or vice versa. Some specimens have been known to randomly deliver psi blasts to passing spacecraft. For this and many other reasons the Navigator houses make a policy of destroying these weeds whenever possible.

‘Gauguin’ (1-6) Init +0; Atk fists +4 melee (1d6); AC 16; HD 3d10; hp 23 or 23, 21, 20, 18, 17, 16; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP XXX; SV Fort+3, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

At times, one will die who has had a profound, if not necessarily apparent (to them) effect on the world around them, and that one will find itself not trapped precisely but not bound or obligated to “go on.” As time passes, the works that are done in their name or the emulation of same strengthens the consciousness spark (it is unknown if such a being’s spirit lingers or is replaced by another) such that it can, at times remain conscious...treating the material aspects of its legacy as its body.

Example - a pre-spaceflight world has a musician that, long after her death, becomes that world’s basis for music; then they take that meme to the stars. That musician would eventually “wake” and their physical form would be the actual sound of their music, physical recordings, that sort of thing. Such classes of spirits are somewhere between Zeitgeists of the Noosphere and classical ghosts - not even the ISA can say, definitively, what manner of spirit they are, or if they are actually the consciousness of the deceased or merely a copy.

Some especially old spacers have been known to refer to such beings as Gauguin, though the reason why is lost in the mists of time and space.

Compression Fold

Ship passes through a region of enormous spatial compression; this could be an area of unstable Sub-ether, the result of a minor drive hiccup, or indicate the presence of a dwarf star, black hole or other massive body.

Organics take 2d6 damage from the resulting tissue compression trauma. Mechanicals, synthetics, and other non-organics take 1d8 from same.

Seething Memories of Another’s War

The ship passes through a floating Haunt Zone (a region of the Sub-ether where a fragmented sort of micro-splinter memory has coalesced into a haunting or possessing such qualities) a sort of communal flashback to horrible events. Immediately d3+Sub-ether Depth individuals aboard ship begin experiencing a sort of Post-Traumatic Stress as Haunting; each of them are overridden with memories from the Third Chemical War, fought with toxic, caustic, and pharmacological agents, and the death of your squad on this barren asteroid.

Encounter Tables the Third Sub-ether – the Amber Sky

-The Third Sub-ether is most often perceived as a bubbling sea of compressed amber and sickly cough syrup pale yellow with a constant “heat shimmer.”

Dreams are vivid and hallucinatory while traveling at this depth; some (especially non-spacer first voyagers of weak constitutions) may find themselves quite unusually somnambulant during such a journey. Use of certain classes of narcotics are very dangerous at such a depth as they can functionally unbend the user’s sense of time indefinitely, long after the effects have worn off and the vessel risen to more shallow Sub-etheric depth. Various plasmic and elemental creatures seem to be more common here.

Vessels traveling through the Yellow is much faster still, now such a vessel can reliably achieve about 21 Lights per Progression, or about 3 Lights/Day

The third sub-ether 1d20

- 1 Plague of nightmares (33% among crew, 66% among passengers)
- 2 1d3 Demons
- 3 Elemental, air
- 4 Elemental, fire
- 5 Extradimensional analogs (50% pop into existence alongside)
- 6 ghost
- 7 Noosphere contact (see sub table)
- 8 d7 days where dreams of lost loves are common and intoxicating
- 9 spectral spawning (d2 Spectres if conditions are met)
- 10 Ether shear
- 11 matter island
- 12 Elemental (d6 1-3 8HD, 4-5 12 HD, 6 16 HD)
- 13 Those with PERS scores below 9 hallucinate the dead and dying.
- 14 a pod of 4d100 Smothering Bags (see bestiary)
- 15 1d4 days where dreams of a terrifying but erotic nature strike all
- 16 matter island, disintegrating
- 17 Wraith
- 18 Hyperspace prison – 4d structure likely contains immensely old & malevolent being
- 19 Dimensional Sink The Beetles’ Dream – a bounded pocket dimension that can be opened, seemingly at will, but only in the right place. Contains naught but a VAST (macro scale) proto-beetle thing. If allowed to stir it will escape it’s containment realm and attempt to “swim” to the material world – if it reaches a world, material or otherwise, it will land and find a place, deep in the soil, to lay it’s millions of eggs. 2d5x10 days later, a scourge of beetles will pour over the world’s surface, eating everything in their path. Ether Shear?
- 20 the beautiful face (see page XX)(

Demons – roll 1d5 for demonic origin 1 hell 2. The abyss 3. The wicked city 4.

“When gambling with Time remember, the House always has the advantage.”

The book of nine toes

Encounter Tables the Fourth Sub-ether – the Green Sky

-The Fourth Sub-ether (Churn) *The “green sky”* material vessels, ships, and other matter that are drawn into the Sub-ether involuntarily or unintentionally often begin their Sub-etheric journey here. The green sky is especially turbulent and shipboard sensors have minimal range. Deliberately plotting Sub-ether journeys in the Third Sub-ether are especially asynchronous with material reality.

In the sixth and subsequent sub-etherae the Megaflows from the Higher and Lower Worlds are far stronger, constantly disrupting and creating new flows within the various levels of the Sub-ether. Hallucinations and pseudo-matter ‘phantoms’ appear regularly in the distance, detectable at times even via passive sensors with ghost filters disengaged, a seemingly bizarre assemblage of ancient pre-spaceflight primitive aircraft, ancient architecture, and strange glowing ruins among more recognizable things. Anything not tethered to the vessel undertaking any kind of EVA will almost certainly be lost and near immediately. Distance, time, Sympathy and contagion have little sway here in the endless green deeps....

Vessels traveling through the Green sky is seemingly a slow and steady march through ambiguous non-terrain; but is in fact much faster still, now such a vessel can reliably achieve about 28 Lights per Progression, or about 4 Lights/Day at maintained depth. Deliberately plotting Sub-ether journeys in the Third Sub-ether are especially asynchronous with material reality; *Modify voyage and comms rolls by 1 in either direction, whichever will give the most asynchronous result.*

The fourth Sub-ether 1d12

1. The Black Horde (bestiary pp)
2. Dimensional Sailors (DCC RPG pp)
3. Elemental Water
4. Ether Shear
5. Foo Fighters
6. Ghost
7. Gremlins
8. Shadow
9. Technical Failure
10. Approaching Splinter
11. Prank – d5 relevant or sacred items or working tools go missing for the duration of the voyage, misplaced or ‘borrowed’ by gremlins, ghosts, or spirits of some kind
12. Psi-shadow of a Great Mold contacts 1d4 random people aboard for a chat.
(Determine psion ability at random)

Foo Fighter – 5-12 unidentified moving material objects just inside sensor range seem to shadow the vessel; the more curiosity is shown the more the foo fighters will interact with the vessel

3% / fighter that foo fighters are Splinter variations/shadows of the players own Vessel

Encounter Tables the Fifth Sub-ether – Twisted Sky

-The fifth Sub-ether, called the Wrinkled Sky, appears to the unaided as a twisted series of folds, knots, and clashing, intersecting planes. To some this seems almost like gazing into a mineral formation, to others, like the skin of a very old humanoid. Sometimes, in times of high turbulence, pulsating patterns of light will seem to emanate from beyond these intersections...

The fifth Sub-ether 1d10

1. Colour Gate
2. Ether Shear
3. Ghost
4. Starmetal elementals- essentially elite earth elementals made out of mithril, dwarf star etc.
5. Splinter
6. Warp typhoon
7. A Small cluster of Warp Wasps
8. Ancient Undead
9. Psi being (Only in Imperial Core) **Cacaoux** / *KO-Lah*– Embodiment of Pleasant Conformity; Lord of the Shell (if not in imperial core, replace with)
10. Vergence – see below

Vergence – Splinters are believed to be, essentially, alternate timelines or universes created by differing outcomes across Probability. In Splinter study, the Fracture is a terms sometimes applied to denote the divergence point between timelines; contrariwise a vergence then would be what would happen if two splinters somehow began to overlap or merge.

A vergence as encountered in the depths of the Sub-ether is not permanent (which would be catastrophic) but denotes an area of apparent space time wherein two (theoretically more) Splinters come together.

Rarely, this will occur as the result of a misjump. These are far more dangerous; they usually take the form of the mis jumping vessel traveling to a far splinter and creating an unzip effect. The longer the foreign vessel remains the more things from the originating universe will begin to bleed through as they voyage through the sub-ether. In all known cases, the passage of time and the pulsations of the megaflores are sufficient to draw these vergences apart (or closed, depending on your point of view).



Deep Depth Encounters (6+) (05)

Vena Aethrae - the Endless Thrumming of the Warp Heart - ship encounters an eddy being cast off of what seems to be a tremendous flowe current emanating from just 'below' them. Descent will reveal waves and intense pseudo fluidic pressure as it does seem that the Sub-ether here has a bizarre 'heartbeat that sends out pairs of thrumming pulses from deep below causing massive waves, creating turbulence if descending further. Diving further should become increasingly dangerous, even as the exterior Sub-etheric pressure increases; the epicenter of the phenomena will seem larger and larger the further they descend. Any vessel that dives to the ninth Sub-ether may well get the impression that this is the 'heart' "at the bottom of the Sub-ether."

But what is below?

Sub-ether vortex a truly monstrous one, this is one is nearly immobile it is so large; indeed, it is massive enough to distort the local Sub-ether; gravity drives in the vicinity will note this but too late to do much about it. The vortex unless avoided early will almost certainly spit the vessel out somewhere, possibly somewhere else.

Tremendous turbulence is encountered, in the form of shockwaves from ahead. 1d6+8 hours of this rough chop later, the shockwaves will begin to subside, and the vessel will appear to have wandered into the wreckage and aftermath of some tremendous space battle, though between who is not clear. 1 in 5 chance of Ghost Ship herein or near the wreckage zone.

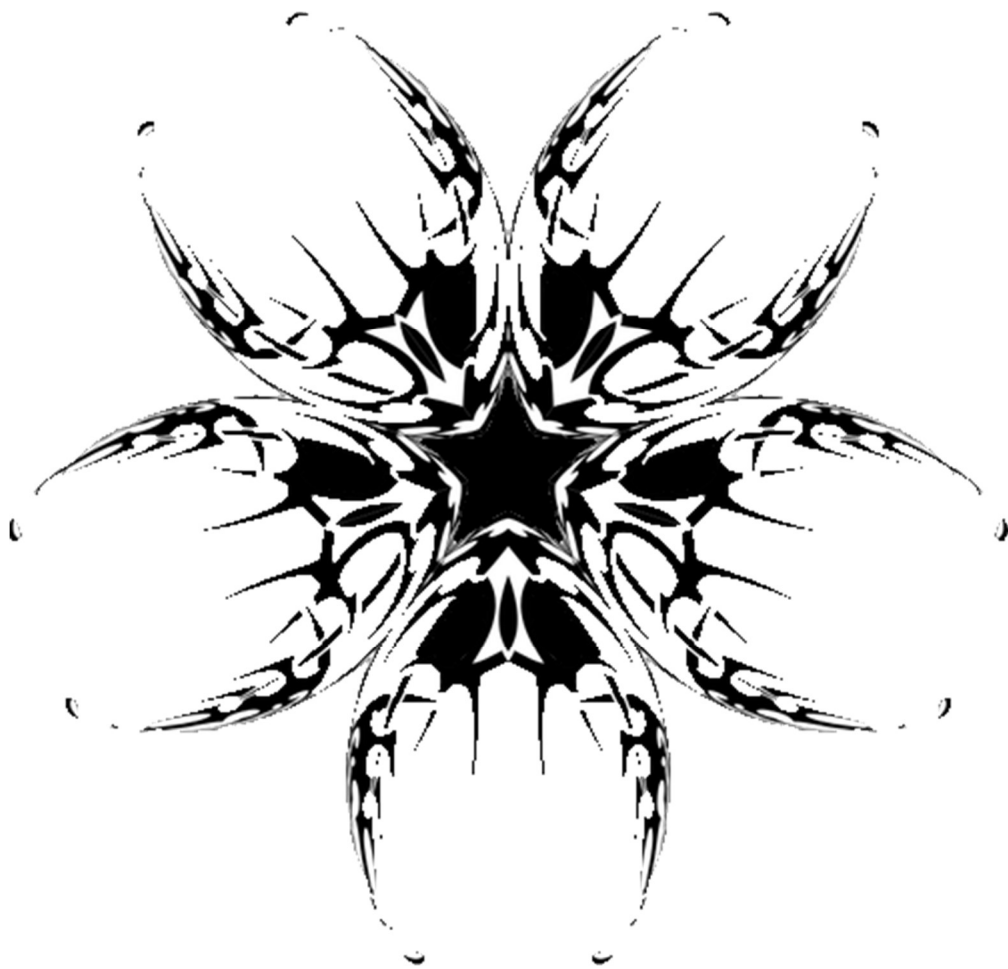
Ominous shapes resembling featureless inverted black pyramids. Or the shape of such, for they are entirely black save for a wild blue radiance around the edges. Distance becomes harder to measure around these shapes - sometimes they seem large enough to set no more than three imperial humanoids upon, other times they seem to dwarf the most massive jump ships possible. As yet undetermined, they are fragments of a vast hyper-galactic transit system - an activation sequence will safely and instantly transport any discernable mass object(s) upon the top face of the monolith to a point of no closer than 10 million x 1d6 lights and more likely 220 million x 1d30 lights. For obvious reasons there is no way of determining if these exist within the same splinter or even in some cases the same plane of reality. They reveal as somewhat cool to the touch (regardless) and do not register any power signatures ever. The most sensitive Gravitics instruments will note a very slight negative mass, though fluctuating. (The surest sign of a transit medium) Inexplicably, these monolith devices are primarily known for what was originally a safety feature to prevent unauthorized use. Ships tethered to or in stable proximity to the device without transit will experience a direct negative energy field that will spontaneously animate any biologically dead material within the target area (presumably the starship in question)

These reanimated dead are mindless meat machine post animals, driven by semi rotten instinct and a bizarre and unnatural need to be close to the living.

(Again, I ask if your ship has a morgue why doesn't it have guards. And more security and stasis And a big, big incinerator)

Some rare instances, these monoliths will deposit something more; amongst the reanimated dead will be a spark of consciousness. Whatever it rises into will have the qualities of a vampire (Type) -

It would seem that whomever or whatever built this massive transit system fell ultimately to some sort of vampirism that spread via their own 'technology.' Whole worlds, possibly even whole galaxies, wiped of higher life in a generation of mass vampirism.



Encounter Tables the Sixth Sub-ether – the Rainbow Sky

-And the Sixth Sub-ether, the Radiant Sub-ether, or the Rainbow Sky. Here, reality is an unfixed thing; the very nature of the Sub-ether gets into everything. Without screens, a ship God or a Navigator, you will not return from this voyage. And certainly not without the cost in sanity, new flippers, and a sudden craving for the fine and delicate taste of crayons and bone marrow. Visually tracking starships in the sixth sub ether is impossible.

In the sixth and subsequent Sub-etherae the Megaflowes from the Higher and Lower Worlds are far stronger, constantly disrupting and creating new flows within the various levels of the Sub-ether. It is tremendously easy to be blown or blasted into one of these momentary wormholes, spat out at a random level of the Sub-ether or somewhen, some else entirely....

The limbo winds of this megaflowe dominate here, casting all aside, and sweeping all material objects 'downstream.' Those attempting EVA in such conditions must work quickly. The roar of the prime current has been known to deafen or drive the sanest mad in a matter of minutes.

The Sixth Sub-ether 1d14

1. The cold membrane see p. 126
2. Colour Gate
3. Dead God (1-2 Afterimage, 3-5 immense island corpse)
4. Dead Rise -
5. Ether shear
6. Lumasi
7. Ghost horde
8. Pathway
9. Invading Extrusion from LOVE
10. Road of the dead
11. Spectral entities
12. Splinter
13. Warp typhoon
14. Virgul'd

Add a related sidebar here or something

The Deeps: What Lurks below

-Now the seventh and subsequent Sub-ether exist but are increasingly dangerous. Further, within the seventh and lower, it is the nature of the sub-ether to attempt to reject foreign) substances, especially here meaning material ones. Encounters at this level and below feature a variety of Prismatic Gates each of which will shunt the craft into a short wormhole leading to another world, likely within the Fundament. In some cases, the flow itself will seem to drive or guide the vessel toward these Gates.

the Seventh Sub-ether – Red Sky

Some spacers believe there is no Seventh Sub-ether; rather that it is somehow something else entirely; some say it is an enormous (universe sized) massive living creature and that it hungers for both flesh and souls. And many ascribe this thus. On at least one world of the Empire, the Seventh Sub-ether was known in ancient times as The Hungry Plane¹⁰.

Sidebar – Rules for Playing Dead People

Even at the most trigger or scabbard happy of DCC parties, sooner or later, all these ghosts are going to lead to someone trying to talk to one of them. This is good as it's pulling a pin on that thematic grenade to see what comes of the explosion.

Rule (why)

Don't ever say what you are.

Phenomenologically the dead cannot or will not wrap their heads around being able to do that. They ... lack that kind of perception.

Also, too many easy answers makes talking to the dead like a checklist. It should be disconcerting. Unnecessary exposition kills the unknown.

Don't respect social boundaries, you can't see them.

Ideally this goes hand in hand with rule three below

Unsettle The Living

You are the ultimate "Other"

Remind the living that they too will die

If you can't *be* Memento Mori then make use of such.

You are The Unknown

You are the very definition of The Other, You are Fear and Anxiety. You are the sum of all uncertainties. Obfuscate except when the truth is more necessary....or pushes more buttons.

And the Known

Refer to things from the characters past that the dead person would find interesting or important. Act very familiar with the character from time to time, even if you are complete strangers.

And you are, you are dead.

¹⁰ Presumably this is the source of the legend-meme.

Voyaging Sub-tables

Translumininal Voyage complications & Incidents sub table

- Exit Encounters & Ether Transit Complications

Roll to determine complications at outset of journey or at jump calculation. Deviation from this course will be dangerous and require the intervention of the Ship's God, Navigator, or AI.

1. Sympathetic Field - vessel passes through a region of the ether with an especial connection to the Akasha or another of many noological info spheres. Essentially a giant 'Cosmic Awareness Field' that allows divinations, consultations, and oracular things to work with greater power and efficiency.
2. Mutational Field - a fold in hyperspace releases vast energies trapped by the ship's transit, penetrating the vessel's screens and shields immediately.
3. Dimensional Rift - Most likely the vessel will drop into the next lower level of the Sub-ether but continue on their course (See below) otherwise this collision of transplanar energies could lead the ship ANYWHERE.
4. Dematerialized Adjacency
 1. Noosphere object
 2. adjacent Sub-ether object (The Egg - a single vast leathery egg; analysis suggests it to be some manner of reptile, albeit of ancient lineage. It does not crack, it does not open, it does not move.)
 3. Adjacent Sub-ether object, active gravity drive (this is another starship)
 4. Momentary co-existence: this a Navigator controlled vessel briefly overlap in the sub ether; psions and nethermanticly sensitive passengers and crew may interact briefly but otherwise likely a non-event.
 5. Object descending from the Higher Worlds
 1. Deity or Godform descending from Higher Plane of Existence.
 2. Planar turbulence from the Higher Worlds
 6. Divine genesis - a Godform is compiling, sending waves out and away from itself throughout the local Noosphere and into the Sub-ether. Possibly 1d4+1 other starships have been attracted to the Birth Ritual. Note that Ship Gods will almost certainly move immediately away from such dangers.
5. Navigable Flow Instability: Navigator, AI, or Ship God navigates an instability zone with greater efficiency. Roll d%; vessel arrives that much sooner from predetermined voyage time. Yes this can violate causality.
6. Phlogiston Slipstream - A high speed shortcut can be plotted through a massive transplanar flow.

Modifiers

Add 5 if the ship has a Navigator

Subtract 3 if the ship has an unshielded psion aboard.

The Most Ancient of Death's Bosom

– ancient undead in the Sub-ether sub table

As a general rule the deeper in the Sub-ether, the older the dead. Beyond the Fifth Sub-ether, the dead are

1. Slaxxanar elders
2. The Gods of Mars
3. Quetz'l
4. The Dark Ones (nagah precursors)
5. Electronic Datalich

Noosphere threats sub table

1. Stains (Idea Stains)
2. Contagious Thoughts
3. Meme Warp
4. Ether Hounds
5. Projection of dead civilization
6. CONTACT HAS BEEN MADE - A Vast and Mighty Intelligence, perhaps an Idea God, notes the ship and possibly Calls the Character over for a Chat; consult Idea Gods to determine nature of the Noosphere Intellect.

Psychic Organism sub table

1. Warp Wasps
2. Notions
3. Kaos - Somewhere aboard ship, a creature – sometimes appearing as an archaic humanoid, sometimes as an unintelligent pre-lift Canid of one or more varieties, this being always appears in extraordinarily loud and garishly clashing pants. An aspect of the primordial trickster itself, the being seems both passively indestructible and confused as to their purpose. Eventually it will suborn the crew for some bizarre purpose or leave once it reaches boredom.
4. Memory spirits - a rare occasion will cause the deceased or memories of a deceased to coalesce in such a way as they have simultaneous existence in both the Sub-ether and on the Noosphere plane. Such beings are far more interactive and freer willed (one might say “almost alive.....”) Companions lost that one still thinks of are common encounters; whether the spirit is taking their form or it's a form of the deceased can seldom be identified. Owing to their existence as dual-planar beings, (frequently confused ones at that) it should be noted that each one seems to contain 1, sometimes from 1 to 3 XP. No known means exists of collecting these XP, but this prevents no sorcerer ever from attempting.

One time in third however, these are not encounters with such Memory Spirits as they are encounters with Memory Wells. (See below)

Idea Gods Sub table 1d5

The Two Guardians - Lucy and Ethel will commonly challenge “weird” vessels that jump into the imperial core. They appear as a twin greyscale humanoid femmes, hundreds of meters high each, always wearing any number of conceivable but semi recognizable outfits – anywhere from the semi protective gear of a factory prole to middling High Imperial Fashion. Ships, past and present, and crews, past and present who have served in the Deep Exploration Fleet are said to sometimes elicit Lucy’s special favor for unknown reasons.

Cheat Codes – Cheat Codes is one of the eldest of the Idea Gods, so much so that its origin is obscured almost completely – only legacy remains.

Cheat Codes is not your friend. Cheat Codes wants you to realize that life is cheap and often completely meaningless, even, sometimes especially, in the face of total impossibility and the largest imaginable body count. Cheat Codes will keep you alive alright, but it’s not living much. Often mistaken (on world surfaces especially) for a curse.

Lights out long believed a phenomena or creature rather than a proper Noosphere intellect, Lights Out manifests in patches of growing darkness, most often aboard ship, and almost always on Third Watch or equivalent. Lights Out exists to create a palpable atmosphere of fear and terror, ratcheting up the tension until enough Fear has been generated to empower Lights Out. At that time, all light aboard ship will dim and (in the Sub-ether beyond) a brief hazy outline of a figure, sometimes humanoid, most often not, will appear momentarily; a negative after image that is already fading by the time it is seen.

The Lord of Infinite Executables

This terror is known to inflict Quest type effects on every sentient being He encounters; each is then sent on a spiritual/mentally dependent quest for an impossible or unfulfillable thing. IN so doing, it ruins everything around it. Believed a demon but likely originated as one3 of the original Idea Gods. Appears often as a richly appointed humanoid male with lavish but somewhat savage ornamentation and wardrobe (Furs and skins though of the most exquisite make and craftsmanship)

God (Sometimes called George)

Always disincorporate with a “Say Good Night Gracie.”

Call the ships to port star-sailor

Lost and Infamous locales within the Sub-ether

These are legendary locations of no fixed point (Save that which the Judge wills of course – all of these are IDEAL for Judge placement on their own Sub-ether maps – see page XX). They may serve as quest goals, exotic locales for misjumps or places to commune with ancient space gods.

Should any of these occur on the encounter tables the Judge can assume great Sub-ethereal drift; if desired, the Judge can also assume a ‘transit point’ has been by passed which has facilitated immediate travel to that location (the Judge should add this to their notes and map if one is kept).

The Beautiful Face

The Cold Membrane

Charm

Graveyard

The Lifeway

Memory Realms

The Mycotic Colonies

Naguary

Red Light Zone

Silver Gates of Ivory and Horn

The Wall of Faces

The Beautiful Face

Far beyond the imperial border, somewhere below the Third Sub-ether it is said by certain, perhaps more philosophically minded spacers, lay a profound transformative experience that allows one to touch – and be touched by – a God.

Finding the right set of coordinates should find the PCs and their vessel some one thousand lights into the Rimward Beyond where, in an analog to otherwise empty interstellar space (there are no star systems for 8 - 10 lights in any direction)

A brilliant white light will seem to emanate from a distant patch of dense mist of etheric ‘matter.’

Penetration of this ‘fogbank’ will reveal a sort of mini domain approximately half a light across – inside which, the ship or any voyages will be mystically drawn toward the nucleus regardless of intended heading or engine configuration. (Exception: turning the ship round 180 and going to full will allow a ship to leave relatively unmolested so long as they do so prior to encountering the nucleus.)

At the nucleus, which could take anywhere from 2 hours to five days to reach depending, they will seem to be in an endless expanse of white that stretches off to infinity in every perceived direction; Have they been dumped unceremoniously into some far sector of the White Sky? No. This close to the nucleus, time and space apparently go on forever, both sensors and mystic information gathering will reveal much the same thing.

Some 2d3 hours after arrival at the nucleus, the crew will see the Face. Best viewed from a distance, it will appear around 800,000 kilometers ahead, in the ship’s intended

path of movement – a pale, made up, humanoid face about 8000 km high, surrounded by balls or bubbles of coloured light that ripple and change texture constantly.

On approach, the most startling transformation occurs. Those who have been touched by the whims of fate and the winds of luck (the Player Characters) are intriguing to the thing that appears as a face, and it will seek to draw them out so as to better examine them.

Flesh flows like wax as all of the party are simultaneously ‘blended’ – their flesh ‘flows’ off of their bones and slides into a central pile where it combines with the other flesh of the party. Unless the resident skeletons of the PCs exceed a DC 20 Will save, said skeletal remnants will be compelled to gather the now roiling pool of shifting flesh into a ball, whereupon they will roll the ball down to the nearest airlock. Eventually the ball will be ejected into the Sub-ether and the skeletons will, one at a time, leap into the jelly-like ball and be consumed by it until the last skeleton has done so.

IN the meantime, the ball of flesh continues to generate a bizarre array of sensory information to the fully aware and strangely not riddled with pain brains of the PCs. IT will slowly be drawn toward the face itself, at which time a voice will seem to ripple from the face, whose lips do not move,

Be One Flesh

And so, they will become. In moments, the characters will flow together, experiencing a temporary feeling of oneness and the death of their ego. The face, if any can perceive it, will seem to close its eyes and derive some sort of satisfaction, possibly pleasure, from the experience.

Then as soon as it began, the characters will, one at a time, be reconstituted out of the flesh ball and, in a kind of stasis, returned to their vessel. Once all are aboard, the ship will be propelled out of this region, often emerging 1d3+7 days later at a point some (roll %d000) lights distant in a random direction.

Further, the PCs will find that not all of their qualities have come through intact, in fact it does seem that they have traded certain aspects of themselves with one another.

These do seem to be permanent.

System – For every PC who experiences this bizarreness, pick a single ability score (randomly works), this score is about to change, rather permanently. Consult the other PCs record sheets; from them determine (pick or roll randomly) which one swaps that ability score out with the PC.

Repeat this process for all Player characters so affected. Stats may be swapped between multiple parties. If this means that some all wind up with one character’s 14 strength (or whatever) then so be it. All of them will seem to have inherited bits of the strength donating character, and vice versa.

This will probably prove pretty unsettling for them.

(to the Judge: Ideally this should be an unsettling encounter that leaves the party a bit closer together, one way or another. At the Judge’s option and with the full cooperation of the players, possibly other character attributes could be swapped out. Alignment, class, race, in theory it’s all possible depending on how far you want to take the remixing of the player party.)

The Cold Membrane

At a certain point traveling in the vasty deeps of the Sub-ether, the sort of voyage restricted to military vessels, it is said you can (and likely will) encounter anything and everything if you travel long enough along the same trajectory.

Though eventually you will encounter the Membrane.

Immense even for a Macrostructure, it has no other like anywhere in the known Otherworlds. Detectible from a great distance the membrane appears as a 'flattened' barrier of folded matter, often described as "brain-like" in appearance, located dead ahead, many many lights distant, but possessing no identifiable edge. Indeed, while the surface appears to be dead ahead (always), in other dimensions it seems quite to stretch out to forever, or at least the absolute limit for Imperial ether sensors.

Attempts to traveling along and parallel to this surface meet with a bizarre space folding phenomenon; those aboard such vessels claim in interviews to have experienced a precursor time of sensory distortion of uncertain origin before their vessel appeared to have been moved...most often across the barriers into the material universe, and frequently many thousands of lights distant from the star sector that should have contained both destination world, origin point, or both.

Per one temporally displaced message, it is believed an imperial scout so displaced has been making their way home from beyond the galactic rim for some 33 standard years. (A frontier cruiser is to be dispatched to affect rendezvous sometime in the next five years barring crises)

The Membrane is resistant to sensors in that it seems to absorb any energy sent toward it; the best that can be managed is a comparative topography reverse engineered from areas of data loss. The overall effect seems to suggest a surface of slow moving, semi-liquid matter that only appears solid. Those who have voyaged to the proximity of the surface and returned state that the surface is very heat absorbing, and so it's VERY cold there, colder than normally occurs in the Sub-ether, akin to being airlocked in deep space between spiral arms. Survival there without a fully fitted environment suit will not be possible.

System: Linger in the vicinity (500 yards up) for more than a dozen rounds or so will lead to a slow drain on the energy in their suits, their bodies, and any storage media they may have on them. Starships that approach this close will be moved by mysterious forces before the power drain has any lasting effect. Those in suits or in small exploratory craft will not likely be so fortunate. The power drain begins very fractionally at first but increases at an exponential rate - such that unless someone is closely tracking this, in a matter of minutes, any powered craft will be dangerously low on energy. Oddly, those in suits or without an additional craft will find that the power drain does not affect them at all for 30 minutes - current STA rating. Once that time has elapsed, their batteries and powered devices will begin draining, to complete emptiness within four rounds. Subsequently, those remaining in the area will begin to experience temporary Stamina loss, one a round. These are unrecoverable until the character has moved out of the area of effect.

Those reduced to zero will be observed to slowly be drawn onto the surface of the only semi-permeable liquid membrane, drawn into it and absorbed within a further d3 rounds.

After that time, it will be noted that divination of any kind with regard to the lost, their past, or anything they might have known, will prove impossible. For all intents and purposes, they have been deleted from reality.

Charm

“When you forsake all - or have nothing left but -dreams, seek Charm.” even the Navigators, it is said, do not know precisely what Charm is. IT is thought to be like Graveyard - an area possessed of almost malevolent raw *intent*; strong enough to fold space. Charm however has a more rarefied selection process in what and who it attracts.

Charm makes dreams come true. IT is wish fulfillment, it will show you the way, it gives you what you want. It attracts the parts of the sentient mind capable of desire. Particularly unfulfilled desire. Unfulfillable desire is more like it. Those who have given themselves over to the impossible, those who quest in the face of certain unattainable goals, are those it attracts. Charm is elusive and perhaps moves. Some Navigators suggest it is a door to one of the Higher Worlds and so it moves and winnows, randomly perhaps, through the Fundament and the observable universe. Who knows? Those who seek Charm, seek nothing else. And those who **find** Charm, do not return. It is often as though they have never been.....

Graveyard

Somewhere beyond the 5th Sub ether is a Place. Known in spacer legend as a riddle *“Only those who find it come to die.”* It is a non-place far removed from other, more *cohesive* parts of space. Not corresponding to any known world, solar system, or phenomena, it is a place of deep and swirling colors, where countless thousands of vast hulks float, powerless and lifeless. Many a spacer has panicked on arrival, thinking they have found the Ghost Riders (though it is allegedly easier to invoke them there). No, Graveyard is so named because in the ether, traveling faster than light, those who seek death will eventually feel a call. A longing for a place familiar and distant. Eventually those spacers find themselves in Graveyard. Graveyard is a vast stain upon the ether, a slow, cold ineffable but tangible urge to die, a misty eyed longing for one's own extinction.

The Lifeway

a person (not ship) sized backdoor into one of the 999 mortal near paradises of the Yangdoms. Each of the 999 worlds is accessible from one another; it is said they each represent one ideal of mortal life on the material plane. Any beings local to the plane are awash in contentment so any outsiders will easily stand out. Mortal beings heal at twice the normal rate here (at least) and may (if sustained very recently less than six hours) allow recovery from recovering the body checks. For any such rest period, however, the healed must pass a will save, DC 10+the number of points healed or be compelled to remain in that yang world, possibly forever. (the DC for those who have recovered from Rolling the Body results is 30)

Memory Realms

Certain periods etch themselves into the tapestry of reality. By the same (or similar) process of Noosphere & Sub-ether interaction that creates Zeitgeists, sometimes the Ether contracts around a period or event and 'imprints' them; these are invariably times and places of great emotional, sorcerous, and lethal might, and esp. where those three combine.

They are a common result of misjumps

Crews without a psion are in for trouble as it is only via psionic or navigational ability that a Memory realm can be escaped from; some memory realms functional are identical to high level illusions and function thusly, perhaps as though a spell check result of 28 or higher was achieved in most instances. (And in such realms they may be dispelled or otherwise manipulated via magic or other means available to the PCs).

Entering or leaving Memory realms sometimes brings small clusters of Mnemonic Vores

The Zero Point - the Stand and the Fall An Angel, A Mage, A Scientist, A (half) demon, a psychic, and a shaman, the inheritor of an ancient alien mystic tradition. The saviors of the last age and the architects of the present era, deep in the mythology of ancient Prehistory. Here the First Angel was loosed and again fell, and the course of destiny changed forever.

The Archons of the Technarchy AD 4621 AD A borglike maze of cybernetic humanoids who all appear precisely identical, meticulously carrying out the extermination of all sapient life that is not their own lifeform. Psychics, sorcerers, and other users of paranormal energies are tracked, hunted, and exterminated.

Hell on Earth AD 6877 A savage jungle area south of the walled city state of Dis; Teranaya is divided into estates run by various Dukes of Hell. The ancestors of the Novas exist, primitive and wild in skins and spears, hunted by parties of hell's nobility.

"First Empire" Primitive spacecraft barely skirting the Sub-ether; many many species that are strange yet uniform in their features as though many imperial subjects were torn apart and reassembled into exceedingly mundane and unnecessarily specialized forms. Early navigators are the only form of accurate FTL guidance.

Tannhauser Gate mishap c. AD 16,000 The wormhole dilates; something is disintegrated and strange ribbon-like streamers of exotic matter swim through the system, annihilating, changing, and transforming all matter and energy it encounters. At least one moon breaks and shatters as parts of its interior are fused and transformed into exotic matter creating a secondary cascade across the system, saving the space between the planets in a lethal blast of hard radiation. On the crowded world below, panic leads to chaos and war; 200 years later the surface is becoming widely inhabitable again but the civilization before lay in total ruin.

The wormhole burps again before sphinctering closed, and a third shower of exotic and lethal strangelets rain down through the now quiet system, creating life where there was none before and destroying much life where it might have survived previously. Below, the invaders wait.

The Helter Skelter - Transmittable madness, the final break; the people pursue, hunt, torture, kill and consume those different from themselves. 'Wild and free and beyond good and evil.' Hyper nova, gamma rays, kaiju and Starbeast ravaging and ravaging across the inner planets. The rot from within bursts without and consumes all that is civilized and light. A new cycle begins. Civilization death.

The 20,000 year tyranny - the Great Ignorance of the Second Imperium

Constant and total surveillance everywhere, spaceflight is greatly restricted, constant and recursive exposure to behavioral modification and overwrite; heresies are everywhere, and genetic purges are common. A complete rejection of traditional First Empire values. Information Correction Teams seek out proof and evidence contrary to official facts and destroy them in mass info terror strikes. Invoking any of the Lords of Ignorance is at +2 in such a realm.

The Mycotic Colonies

at some point, a variety of mutagenic mycotic spores, engineered with various Sub-etheric plasms to prosper in that environment were accidentally (?) released into the local Sub-ether.

600 years later and spacers now speak of sometimes encountering weird mycotic 'islands adrift in the warp and weft of the Sub-ether' - growing in all three dimensions and often inhabited by very strange life forms. Those few spacers who have touched down upon these island would be surprised to know how gregarious the more intelligent inhabitants can be ...as almost every spacer has run screaming. Some quality drives even the most jaded of spacers mad. Is it spores in the air? Do the growths radiate outward from a source of secret and invisible exotic radiation? Both?

Should the PCs manage to get around such barriers (as they tend to) the mycolians (or such) will be HAPPY to trade any of their rich stocks of plasms or oof course any of their mind expanding spores and will be happy to share "semi exotic zoom resonations doom-bag." They are a freewheeling and laid back people, prone to trading dreams with one another, chemically. These dreams naturally arise but are the memories of dead people from across the Splinters. Especially friendly player characters may be invited to huff their neighbors thusly while their tube fronds glow red and greenly at you..

Naguary

The Great Nagah, largely extinct, descend from the First Ones, the first species to colonize other worlds of the galaxy. While they are gone, rarely these pockets of serpent wisdom remain. Appearing as self-contained elaborate structures floating in the deeps of the Sub-ether, no two are precisely identical. To date, one has been identified as resembling an asteroid city, one a great brass piping structure as though an elaborate musical instrument, and one resembling a great tomb; each of these contain various artifacts of the Nagah body of wisdom, and often include the semi preserved remains of (or rarely one or more intact members) of the race itself, ostensibly in stasis. The suggestion of one such brings the worst dregs of spacer trash out of the imperial fabric, as unlikely as they are, they are great sources of wealth - be it information, technology, magick or some other rarefied treasure.

Each time it is an elaborate structure with 11d6 rooms, chambers, or cysts, along with connecting tunnels, bridges, and the like. At its center is generally a sort of vault which often will contain 1d4+1 deceased but variously preserved Nagah specimens, or (1 in 20) a live one. (see below) which is likely aware even if in stasis. It is thought by imperial scientists that each such Naguary had a dedicated purpose or function and so the contents are likely to be "themed".

Given that waves travel somewhat predicable curves in the (nearer) sub ether

Red Light Zone

Among the oldest of spacer's tales are those that speak of lost ships encountering, distantly, an area of space notable (in the Sub ether anyway) for an apparent immense ring of lights, of a distinct reddish hue. (Red or red shifted) - this "red light zone" has never been charted, nor has it's true nature (if any) been determined.

None of which helps you now as just ahead, at the edge of visual sensor range, an immense distant space of darkness encircled by a vast ring of red dots. Distance is as impossible to determine as size. Other sensors give no useful information. Supposedly nothing has ever returned from such a voyage.

The silver gates of ivory and horn

long sought as a backdoor into the local Noosphere, this is, while a quasi-real location in the Sub-ether, this acts as an anchor head into the realms of dream, adjacent and connected to, but wholly separate from the Noosphere overall. Passage: there is no toll, but vessels do not return from such voyages.

The Wall of Faces

When spacers from different ships from different parts of the galaxy get together, very TALL tales are exchanged, (a kudzu vine wrapped around a star like a ring system) mixed in with the genuine spacer lore, astrographic information, patrol routes, and the like. Chances are, someone in the group has heard this tale at least once. Always from a misjump, a misjump so far out that the pilot (often a scout but sometimes a merchant) will be initially unsure as to whether they have returned to the material side of the universe or not. Soon, seeking any kind of navigational fix, they will find a single, LARGE object. Sensors, direct approach, regardless, they all eventually tell the same thing; a megastructure of incalculable size several light minutes in one direction. That structure, always sufficiently large to defy sensors, appears to be a solid wall, into which are set what allege to be millions of giant faces. Faces hundreds of kilometers high, in rows. Faces with eyes that.....watch.

The story usually goes that they attempted to flee in the opposite direction or tried to land, either way there is a silvery gray mist that spills in from the outside somehow, a seemingly malevolent cloud that leads to loss of consciousness...and a return, possibly minus things or passengers (all aboard with red hair, or all aboard with orange skin, though a common story alleges that the "left most" of all paired things aboard ship were just absent thereafter, from gloves, to socks, eating utensils, and to uniflow circuits,) Those faces follow that spacer, they cannot sleep or power down without seeing those millions of faces, staring back at them with infinite age and infinite patience.

Shortcuts and Pathways

It becomes clear that any countermeasures, cheats, or advantages that can be had to ensure a vessel's safe passage through the Sub-ether can, and must, be attained by any Captain that wishes their ship, their mind, and their soul to remain even grossly intact. Offsetting the tremendous difficulty and danger associated with Sub-etheric travel, are a plenitude of rare, obscure, but reliable semi-stable paths or 'Flows' through the Sub-ether, – within encounters are reduced, speed is more rapid, and in general it is a smoother journey.

Within the Empire especially, the oldest travel back toward the imperial core, newer ones, which are far less stable, seem to correspond in a vague way to the flow of information between worlds. Regular routes between highly trafficked star system become more stable and predictable over time, though subject somewhat to drift. These Star Lanes are tracked most closely by those who traverse them most in the imperial core, the regularity that comes with the core of the Ansible network is directly observed and monitored by the Navigator Families and the Imperial authorities. The further and older one travels into imperial space, the more regular and predictable such things tend to be

Pathways are a common (if anachronistic) Spacer euphemism for these stable wormholes, warps in space, and more esoteric Sub-etheric and transplanar corridors that allow for quicker – and hopefully safer – passage to their destination.

Poorly understood and known only to Navigators, AI mind, little gods, a few sorcerers, and those who have been Out Here Way Too Long, these each ship maintains its own list of such Pathways and the lore associated with such ...though each road does exact its own particular *kind* of toll. Many times, a guardian or similar will "greet" the ether ship's travelers, who may wish they took the long way very soon.

Pay the ferryman. All sales are final.

Under typical circumstances, a vessel traveling by one of these Pathways arrives at their destination after departing the pathway, essentially doing an end run around the majority of the etheric voyage itself. Dangerous but sometimes regarded as necessary.

Also, not all vessels in the suboether are starships. Some in fact may not be vessels at all but life forms, however exotic or familiar (or apparently familiar).

Further, there is another class of stable "pathway." The Sympathy Roads (the Viam Sumpatheia) are transit points between highly energetic, ethereally active bodies in the material universe and those of the Inner Fundament.

Pathways through the Sub-ether

1	<p>The soul roads – patrolled and protected by the armies of the Hell gods, ensuring the traffic of souls to the Pit. For a toll or other agreed upon stand-in, they may give ships and voyagers access to the deeper planes via such a road. Be wary. It is not unknown for stowaways and other undesirables to be offered forth to the Pit’s minions. as “Leviathan tax.” Devils both classical and technological claim choice pickings for soul slavery or to offer up as computing substrate to Colossus the Hell-Computer. Contracts are final.</p> <p><i>Typical Offering:</i> 5 convicts from their world of departure. Traditionally, a murderer, a rapist, a thief, a liar, and a traitor. Most Imperial ships get by easy though. Existing contract.</p>
2	<p>The Red Lodge – the vessel overlaps, however briefly in transit, with a hallucinatory conceptual space defined by desire, hunger, life, passion, and violence. The crew is randomly distributed across this hallucinatory mindscape until they can find a way to break free. Good luck. Also, cancel your plans for the evening, this is a misjump. Attempting to engage the drive systems here could be interesting.</p>
3	<p>The City of Dreams – impossibly tall, thin glass towers throbbing with red and yellow glow are everywhere packed in too tightly together. Immediately your vessel is surrounded by little beings with tremendously deep eyes. “You aren’t supposed to be here.” All goes black. Consciousness regained 1d12+5 hours later.....somewhere along the ship’s intended path of travel. Maybe.</p> <p><i>Typical Offering</i> – your body shows signs of being...studied. Scars you don’t remember. Everything works okay, however.</p>
4	<p>The Metropolis – Dim recollections, missing time, soul terror, examinations, you arrive at your destination 1d8 hours prior to your departure. Violate your light cone at peril. No one seems to recall who suggested the pathway – it is gone from your memory. (Judges see VALISA in the Book of Common Prayer)</p> <p><i>Typical Offering</i> – if only you could remember. Recollection, perhaps? Hope it is so.</p>
5	<p>Nightmare 102 – it gets...bad. Reality goes runny. Each and every individual mote of consciousness spends the next period of conceptual existence trapped in a hell of their own making. IT must be endured; many will seemingly die. 5d12 real hours later, the ship will arrive – safely – at its destination point.</p> <p><i>Mandatory Offering</i> – All those who have “died” in the meantime must make a DC 20 Fort save or they will experience immediate death by system shock. Some may persist or arrive at their destination d20 days later as ghosts or other ethereally active phenomenal undead (Spectre, wraith, etc.) though a revival team may Roll the Body per usual; if they are standing by at death, the ‘dead’ may be revived without penalty.</p>
6	<p>The Writhe – ship now voyaging through an only semi-material realm wrought of small writhing, scuttling insect analogs. Sacrifices must be honored every d12 hours or the creatures making up matter in this realm will attempt to infest and consume the vessel and its contents. (Judges also see the Scarpering Mother pp XX)</p> <p><i>Typical Offering</i> – Sacrifices must take the form of those openly displaying the most fear. They must die afraid.</p>

Other Hazards of the Sub-ether

Colour (Prismatic) Gates

Probably less artificial than their name would suggest, these are (frequently unstable) doors into the higher and lower worlds. Those experienced in traveling through the Aether proper may know of a handful of such. They seem especially common in the Deeps, the seventh and subsequent sub-etherae.

Ether Shear

Sometimes the swirling and competing psychically driven masses of the aetheric medium create two highly energetic waves which then collide; if a starship is traveling along one of these, they will encounter Ether Shear.

A period of intense turbulence, sometimes worse. In the very worst, ships can be damaged (or in one or two cases, destroyed).

Signal Angels

Up to twelve of these things have made arrangements (strategic alliances, if you will) with the Empire to provide guidance to ships, primarily those voyaging through the deep ether.

They were allegedly all members of a great court once long ago but no more. During the second empire period, several of them allowed themselves to be somewhat modified by mortal interaction (Reformatted one might say) in order that they might better serve man's "greater purpose" Their purpose here lends the Empire a certain amount of perceived legitimacy.

Technical Failure -

When a vessel's plasm-deflectors and Ghost-screens fail, there are a series of redundancies but sometimes the Ghost screens fail completely. Depending on the circumstances this could be an inconvenience or a nightmare. Most of the time when this comes to pass there is a very real danger of losing the ship. In the beginning any corpses, un-sleeved bodies, or those cryodisplaced may find themselves inhabited by the dead, or at least, the dead will attempt to possess. (Ships with morgue facilities are locked and from the outside whilst in transit).

Warp Typhoon (Nether-cyclone)

Danger: Pull you off course, changing your heading and getting your ship f'ing lost. Also drops ships into lower Sub-etherae, oft beyond their drive's ability to "climb" back out. Sometimes dumps ships into the Aetherium proper or one of any number of trillions of other universes.

Where's the Rest of ME? – When The Dead Wear Your Face

A consequence of energy drain, and the particular kind of life force vampirism demonstrated by hostile etheric and postmortem beings is often that, bits of the target organism's essential essence is distilled, or copied, or in some cases apparently stolen...and inherited by one or more members of the undead or undead collective that was responsible.

The tormented dead of the Sub-ether are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon; so distraught at their own loss of life that the inheritors of such things find their pitiful egos often overridden by what they have stolen. Sometimes, this leads to particular spectral entities or haunts tracking a particular person or sometimes the same person across multiple splinters - trying to get more of itself.

Rarely, these dead things do manage to get another piece of the pie. Sometimes they do this more than twice.

Every now and then - and especially when the 'host' organism is dead or near death - these pieces will somehow cohere across the Sub-ether and within a kilometer of the original there will appear a Doppelganger. It has momentarily absorbed the knowledge and realization that it has somehow stolen new life while also no longer quite able to recall it's immediately prior existence. They will do anything not to lose this gift again.

Dire Proclamations of the Dead and Damned (1d4)

1. On the next solar eclipse, your population will be reduced by a tenth
2. There are invaders among you
3. By the time your child comes of age, your world will fall
4. Harvesting. Withering. Planting. Death. Direct exposure to the bottle's contents will be eternity, but fatal.

Virgul'd ¹¹

Sometimes, a ship captain, regardless of the presence of a Ship's God or Navigator or such, will as much as from tradition as from superstition offer a 'gift' to the dead on achieving jump. It is hard to say if this successfully wards off the dead or not and it is not (ever) actual standard protocol - not on an imperial vessel anyway. Sometimes however, the dead - or other things - WILL demand some payment....or sometimes the ghost screens flicker and the captain has to negotiate terms.

Offering up a worthy sacrifice to the Void - similarly, some Captains take on certain classes of criminals or unworthies at their various ports of call. Sometimes it is so that they have someone to space at the beginning of their journey.

Spacer rumor alleges the existence of "Blessed Travel Demons" essentially demon spirits of accurate and rapid travel; if you summon and offer a sacrifice to one at the outset of your journey it will reduce the incidence of encounters.

The dead might have some mild opposition to the ships of the imperium at this point.

¹¹ Virgul or Virgul'd - an Ancient word (actually Wergild) here meaning any transaction demanded by the dead or other Sub-etheric entity to ensure safe passage. The transaction can be material, psychic, mystic, or anything really. Traditionally applied to the literal number of living souls needing passage, regardless of if this has ever had any basis.

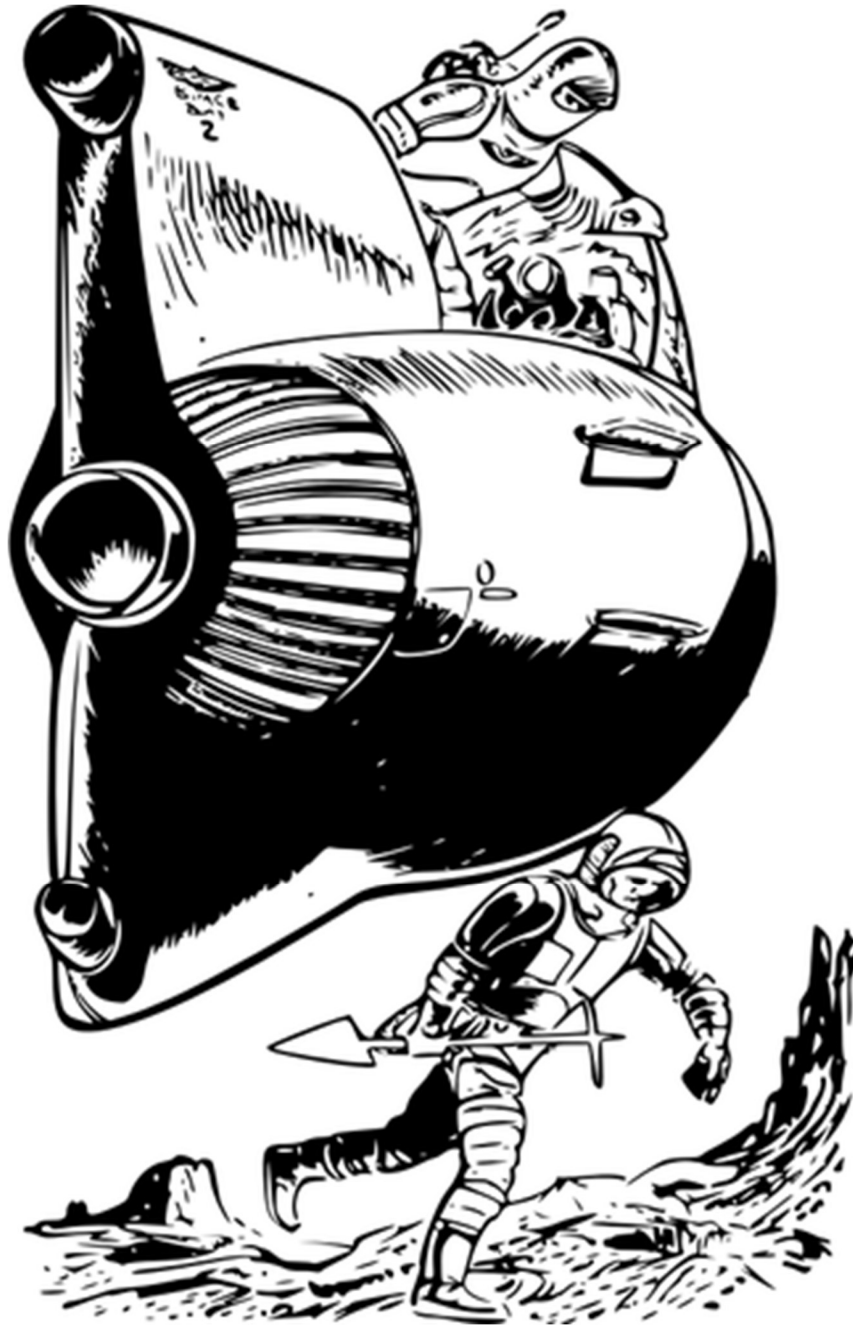
YOU HAVE ANGERED THE DEAD

1. Death Follows - You are cursed. (You here meaning 1. The ship itself 2. The ship, meaning the crew 3. The captain 4. The ship meaning the passengers if any 5. The ship meaning the helm, who or whatever it is, 6. The ship here meaning the crew, the cargo, anything that disembarks at their destination) is struck by some manner of (1d5 - on anything but a five it is a major curse; otherwise, it is a Dire Proclamation)
2. Death Reaches - howls and moans accompany your vessel as it makes jumpa and traverses into the Sub-ether; by the end of the journey, 1d4 locations about ship have obvious claw and battering marks as though *something* was trying to *get inside*.
3. The dead claw at the living - Hungry, desperate, like blind insects the souls crowd about and dogpile your vessel as though this will in some way slow it down. Perhaps it has. On arrival at your destination multiple all voyage times (on table XXXX) by ten.
4. The dead hunger for your life - A Death Choir manages to achieve the right perfect note to bleed bits of you (your lives, your souls that sort of thing) through the vessel's ghost screens. AS the voyage continues, those aboard must successfully pass a DC 20 Fort save or find themselves aging 4d10 years by the time the vessel arrives at destination. For every player character affected, roll 1d4. On a 4, the Dead Wear Your Face,
5. Trixy death - one and only one person aboard ship is singled out for persecution by communication "OPEN THE DOORS Roj! We don't want you, we want the gynoid. You know we'd never hurt a nice little boy like you....." Someone they can isolate and prey upon....and get to lower the ghost screens.



Naked Before God – EVA in the Sub-ether

Direct exposure to the etheric medium is not in itself innately hazardous. However, organic creatures lost in the flow will find a great biological urge to sleep setting in. Should they give into this, dire things can happen. Those with especially strong or especially weak egos will find themselves confronting their own preconceptions, either to dodge or given in to them, as appropriate. With an environment suit (and the appropriate Psi screens) however extra vehicular mayhem may be attempted without undue danger. In theory. Or possibly you stowed away and have just been spaced. Or were the unfortunate recipient of a Legionnaire vortex effect field.



Jump Madness, uncontrolled planar shifting, and total physical disincorporation are all possibilities.

For one adrift in the Aether, the approach or even near passage of a Starship *is* distinctive. Especially those vessels with ghost scoops, the ship with its drive engaged will appear to be a piercing white light approaching with a time slowed doppler sort of effect on the local Sub-ether, actually compressing space ahead of it...and then shockwaving it into wider space behind; from behind the ship appears (now accelerating away exponentially faster compared to the one caught in the outer drag wake) to be two or three blurry versions of the same ship, each slowly oozing a trail of refracted light. "Shitting rainbows." in spacer lingo.

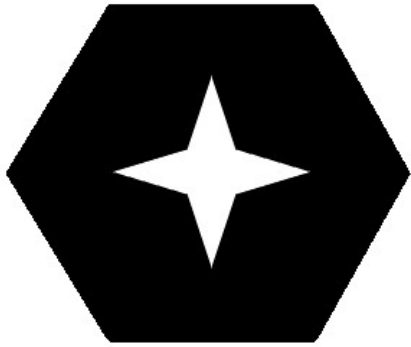
Those who have been marooned, adrift in the aether and survived with persona and memory intact report that of all of the various types of spirits and non-material entities in the various aethere, the dead seem attracted or drawn (compelled) by that light. Even before the ghost scoop, and the way the gravity drive works in the Sub-ether, the dead are drawn to that light, rushing toward it like so many suicidal moths. Of course, this witness also suggested that in the passing of that one vessel he estimated thousands of dead souls were drawn into the scoop and destroyed, which is preposterous of course. No harm befalls the dead who interact with ghost scoop technology. The imperium says it is so.

There is but one scream in space - "Wraith-wail"

When a starship emerges back into the material universe from the Sub-ether, it is often (perhaps always) accompanied by an impossible phenomenon for those unlucky enough to be present when it occurs. Seemingly preceeding and lingering until the starship has completed its return to normal space there is an audible wail or scream.

Called (among other things) "Wraith wail," wraith shear, the ghost cry, the "sound" is caused by the variety of ghosts, plasmics, and other Sub-etheric beings as they are 'burned off' by re-entry into the familiar universe. Opinions vary as to whether the process leaves them behind, destroys them, or somehow allows them into the material universe. Regardless, for the poor spacer in EVA the terrifying manifestation of psychic phenomena when a starship is just suddenly THERE is one of the most unnerving things to experience.

According to some, *"if you hear the wraith shear, your own death is near."* Which is fairly likely if you are in deep space in just a vac suit.



Ansible tech –

the third empire was the product of the Ansible, a reliable means of communicating faster than (or at least broadly comparable to) ships could transport the information....without paying one of the Farseers of a Navigator house to do it for you. A wave broadcast between stations through the etheric medium. Being massless, they are both more, and less, susceptible to the chaos of the Aether than material things. Consequently, all Ansible transmissions to some degree face the same

dangers listed here as do material objects; however, as they are not material things they are affected to much greater degree by the nature of the mediums through which it crosses. Resonance and etheric surges alter and distort messages, sometimes bringing messages from the past, the future, or an alternate present.

A **Broadwave** is one way transmission but it is very powerful. It radiates out as a massive etheric pulse traveling in all directions. It disrupts the flow elements of the local Sub-ether and creates an inevitable series of recursive memes in the Noosphere, but all stations receive it. All ships with receivers receive it as they enter the transmission bubble.

While theoretically still possible of course, A broadwave has not been sent out in centuries. At the present time it is viewed a thing to be used in emergencies.

Ether wave 1 - 6 transluminal channels used to transmit signals between Ansible relays. Each star system has a single Ansible station but every twenty lights or so there are transmission Hubs, all created in the last 700 years, allowing for far greater bandwidth and control. In a practical sense, should it matter, each ether wave channel corresponds to a depth of the Sub-ether, and is correspondingly fast.

Well, “fast.” While you can definitely send an Ether Wave 6 message to the home office, the sector governor, your secret navigator masters, or what have you, this message is just as subject to distortion as any other. Moreso in fact. So...channel six, not always the go to in an emergency. (Per imperial doctrine in an emergency, accuracy of information always takes priority over quantity of it. The nature of Sub-ether communications is such however that that is often more a good idea than an applied principle.)

Of course, there is also the fact that the deeper you send a signal like that, the greater the odds are going to be that it will be received by the version of the recipient that is made of breathing glass and hates organic life forms. Comms splintering is harsh.

Comms splintering - the tendency for powerful ansible signals at greater Sub-ether depths to be received by a Splinter or parallel universe, version of the intended recipient and so technically unreceived at the intended destination.

Ansible comms operations specialists are hardened. They have to be. After six weeks on the job, they have been threatened by communications from demons which want to take their souls to hell,

Ansible protocols – certain orders require as many as thrice or triple authentication on three different channels to ensure both lack of intervention by hostile agency and that the orders are being confirmed by one's own reality. Poss. Code sequences are embedded in the frequencies are employed to make authentication of order of information from one's home reality easier?

Protocol when one logs a comm that doesn't require decryption but has different code? Log it and that's it

Imperial Shipboard communications protocols re: FTL comms.

No single transmission should ever be considered totally accurate. Only two subsequent (and with certain types of communications, more) consecutive corroborations to a communication (for a total of three) before a communication is considered to have "accuracy." Why is this?

Because of how ether communications work (could easily be from a parallel universe) & because causality (for similar; messages from near alt timelines are poss. (Especially with even minor malfunction/perturbations of the gravitic drive.)

Near Light Comms Broadcasts - (see above)

To ensure accurate communication, and not some parallel universe version of the other end of your comms, one end of any ansible communication must *always* be located, or "parked" rather, inside a deep gravity well. No imperial starship smaller than a Monitor class vessel is quite so massive as to count. IN most imperial systems there is one Ansible, for the entire system and it is controlled (of course) by Imperial authorities. Quite often this ansible is located within a Monitor class vessel. But generally nothing massing less than a "small moon" or so will do. Consequently, it must be remembered that ship to ship Ansible communication is impossible.

The ansible stations are largely administrated, naturally, by members of the vast imperial intelligence apparatus. A small group of the imperial bureaucracy inside Luna oversee these activities, the Imperial Office of Information Control.

Ansible Signal Transmission table

Add in results from near, near recent, and near possible futures, as well as parallel and the like. Also, tachyons and radiation, violations of causality. Impressions upon the Noosphere.

1. No message is sent. Likely, the Message is lost in ether distortions
2. Message lost but ship lights up like a beacon to those sensitive to ether comms. Additional encounters, at the least, are likely.
3. Message arrives in 1d4 years and is so distorted as to be meaningless.
4. Message intercepted by something else in the way – a planet, a ship, another universe, etc. IF they respond it may well get through
5. Message received by nearby (relative to starting point) ansible station, for later transmission to the intended destination (maybe)
6. Message accumulates psychic residue and manifests at point of reception as noosphere daemon, animated by the intent behind the message. The Empire will certainly bill you for the destruction at least.
7. Message received at destination (on-world or equivalent) but as dreams to an appropriate segment of the population.
8. Message arrives in 1d4 weeks
9. Message arrives in 1d4 days
10. Message arrives in 1d3 hours.
- 11+ Message arrives before transmission

The Secure Communications sub table

Roll 1d6

Add depth of sub ether and alter for strength of ansible sender, and modifiers for receiver, the CL of the psion operating, etc.

0 or less the signal is sent successfully with a minimum of information distortion.

1 um...noise got through?

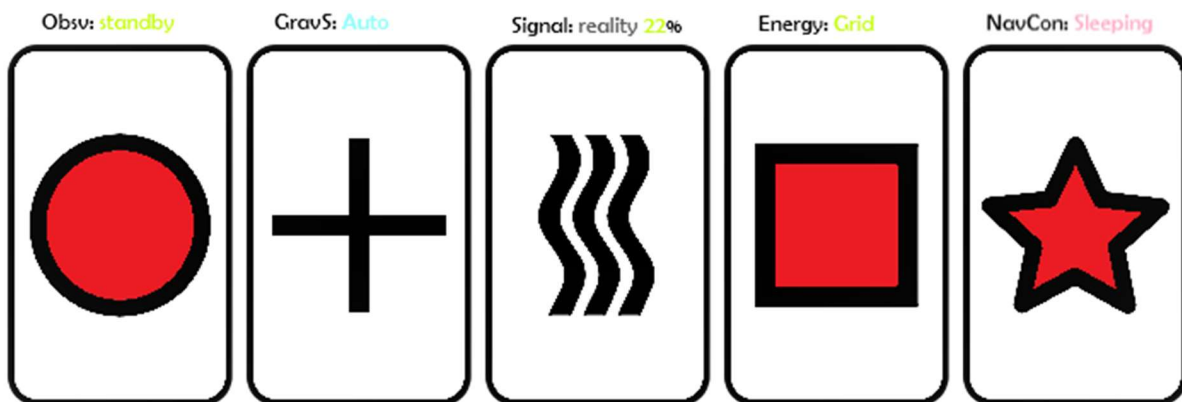
2 Massive distortions

3 partial distortion or mistranslation; also, imperial security is fully aware of the contents of the message (or soon will be)

4 message gets through to recipient plus 1-3 splinter recipients; high power or high density transmissions may experience even greater splinter mirroring

5 Message arrives at approximately intended location though subject to massive signal distortion; message has passed through 1-3 (random) sub-ether events and been altered by each of them. Message may thus be near identical to original or completely different. (or...alive if somehow transmitted to a class IV maker...)

6+ Anything that is considered existentially threatening to the Imperium (independent gravity tech, is intercepted immediately. At the most rapid feasible time distortion possible, several imperial naval vessels will warp into system within d3 days (likely from several weeks in the future) with intent to confirm the information and then contain The Situation. If need be, Asteroids will be pulverized, worlds will be glassed, and habitats will be reduced to clouds of particulates before consumed by imperial matter scrubbers



In the core, most information sources already have an accuracy index. Interstellar news is similarly rated for estimated 'reality.' Secure comms even moreso.

Splinters

Sometimes the result of a misjump and not uncommonly the result of a near miss with a Sub-ether vortex, the particular technology utilized by the Empire in their space drive makes possible a ship arriving at a destination...somewhat off. A little different than it should be.

Such a ship has traveled into one that world's "splinters." In the near Sub-ether, other, parallel versions of many worlds exist and can -in some rare times and places near effortlessly - slip into one of these alternate histories. Or back. There are, of course, trillions of such alternate worlds (or Splinter Possibilities, as the ISA would call them) for most points in the material universe; the further afield one travels from their point of splintering, the less likely they are to find a way back. It is thought perhaps that many, perhaps even most commercial starships perhaps travel between five or six slightly different variations of the same material universe, none terribly different from one another save regionally.. (This theory goes on to suggest that the world here described is merely an aggregate of the experiences of the ship crews of those...half dozen universes. Indeed, it may be so. How does one disprove such a theory?)

So, it is a known phenomenon. Sometimes dreaded, but not completely unfamiliar.

First roll 1d6. On an even result, you arrive at the Splinter of your intended destination, and on an odd result you arrive at a splinter of your departure point, the latter with an additional roll on the ship voyage time added on to the elapsed time for the journey.

Then determine the nature of the splinter

1. Minor variation. Might be a near analog of the previous universe, or it might be six or seven universes nearly interchangeable thanks to the gravity drive.
2. Subtle variation. Definite differences exist but they do not affect the interstellar level of things too much. A few worlds are VERY different, however. (Sliders)
3. Noticeable variation The nature of civilization is different; possibly magic is dominant, or a single race or species somehow had dominion over all of the others? Maybe the system of government is different? The details personal to the characters however will remain intact, save replaced with suitable analogs of course. (Mirror, Mirror)
4. Major divergence - there is no empire or other overarching stellar society. Possibly the laws of the universe work somewhat different there? (The Judge at this point is encouraged to whip out Traveller or whatever their favorite other SF game system happens to be. Roll with it.)
5. Massive Divergence - the ship is likely very far away from their home universe; the Splinter may not at first be recognized as such for conditions here will be so different that more likely explanations may suggest. The universe could be filled with fluid rather than vacuum, or the nature of stars and planets are very different or do not exist. (Fluidic Space from ST:Voyager)
6. AT this point, such splinter realities are likely implicitly hazardous to or incompatible with the existence of life as the player characters know it. They may return, mad from confrontation with That Which Cannot Be Fathomed, or they may be so altered to adapt to the splinter as to be fundamentally different characters playing a different game. (And Judges, if you really want to blow your players' minds, interpret this result to do precisely that! Change it up significantly. Put this and DCC down and play some Gangbusters. Or Boot Hill. OR Bunnies & Burrows. Something....different.) It may not even be possible to return from such a Splinter universe, or if so it may not be apparent in it's now current form.

Splinters near and far to fall into or from

Other Second Empires

1. *The Eternal Empire of the Saurid-mother*; instead of the second Empire, this history saw a wave of matriarchal psychic Saurids sweep across the known galaxy and bring order and stability to it. After finding Canopus and the 'spice reserves' there, they and their psychic navigator descendants still dominate the galaxy nearly 40 thousand years later.
2. *The Empire of the Mutants* - Tanix did not succumb to an atomic war and instead began conquest of the old First Empire systems c. AD 38,000. Here mutant humanoids and genelifted animals conquer the stars and establish a new order where mutants rule superior and all other life forms, created or organic, are second (or worse) class citizens.
3. *Garden Exterminators* – a coalition of methane & chlorine respirating life forms over run the core systems on a war of mass destruction, eliminating 80% of the old imperial garden worlds; 16,000 years later, the survivors of that purge exist hidden on isolated and scattered planets, but the decadent overrule of the chlorine and methane breathing lords
4. *Hyperxenophobic Second Imperium* variation dominated by a psychic hunting fascist theocracy in the service of an emperor lich messiah figure who may be insane. Skulls. On. Everything.

Other Third Empires

1. Terran homo sapiens rule the third empire though many alien enemies are stronger in this less cosmopolitan polity.
2. Terran homo sapiens rule the third empire as the only sapient species which stretches throughout the known galaxy, though that empire is dying unbeknownst to all but a few.
3. Variation where the Third Empire equivalent rules over a galaxy that wiped out most non-humanoid life in a tremendous nuclear holocaust. Rule is from Terra but power ultimately rests with Federated Space Command. Technologically inferior to the Empress Imperium but has successfully repulsed at least one extragalactic invasion. A tough and resilient fascist state.

Other Imperia

1. Variation where the First Empire achieved an Empress Imperium level of success and sophistication; benefits extraordinarily from good P.R. and a devastating diplomatic/intelligence apparatus. They consistently portray themselves as the neutral arbiters and "the good guys of space" while nevertheless being a technologically advanced expansionistic colonial power that ultimately seeks to incorporate all of the civilized worlds into itself. Problematic attitudes toward artificial life and quite xenophobic toward all engineered life forms.

2. The New Suzereineity – The Reconquista failed...or perhaps never occurred. The indolent and ebbing Third Empire shrivels to a maintenance state. 455 years ago, the Imprimarch of Suzerein seized power and within 30 Sidereals Saurid vessels were swarming across the ruins of the imperial core,
3. Welcome to AD 233,192 – this sector of galactic space (just like every other) is overseen, owned, and operated exclusively by the Federated Imperial Galactic Company; their ansible web technology allows them to detect instantly down to the micrometer any thing, matter or energy that just magically appears out of nowhere. They will investigate in mee minutes – because it's a violation of their monopoly. This possible unprobeable future fusion of the imperium and the federation has become a corporate entity controlled by immortal super psychic aquatic navigators that exercise a monopoly on FTL, space travel and indeed, all teleportation and precognition in six galaxies. They will be enacting their 3% excise tax soon. You will pay in blocks of dwarf star alloy, raw computronium, or you own genetic material. Choose. In the meantime, any clerics, faithful, or even lay adherents of any faith, cult, or semi fictional mythology will be systematically reduced to baseblock material as a courtesy of eradicating illegal vermin. As a courtesy you will not be fined for introduction of thoughtcrime (religion, a category VI uncompany violation) If the characters survive this process and yet linger they will likely wind up Gravity Pirates.
4. The Corps of the Lens – four halfling-like beings appear before the vessel, radiating massive psychic power from lenses set in their color themed uniforms. They police this sector of space but are quite chatty and happy to send the PCs and their vessel back to their native spacetime.

Other Possibilities

1. Terran splinter 1,972 – an odd splinter; magic and the like flows very weakly here, the Sub-ether does not touch this realms but tenuously. Access is restricted to Noosphere communication and transference. (But looks an awful lot like *The Real World Outside Your Window.....*)
2. Non-splinter alternate universe: higher vacuum energy warps space and makes evolution of life impossible. Ship is transported to a high energy, warped medium in an uninhabited variation of the universe.
3. Non-baryonic Universe – ship may well phase through this exotic matter
 - 1.

Generating Other Splinter Possibilities

Fractures - Basis for Splinter

Roll 1d16 to determine Divergence point or Element of Difference

1. Age of Muscle
2. Age of Heroes
3. Age of Industry
4. Age of Data - The last age of old earth
5. Age of Space
6. Age of the Mind
7. The Modern Imperium
8. Elemental Fire
9. Element
10. Furry & Scaly
11. Negative Material
12. Mirror world (eyepatches and goatees)
13. Vastly different physical assumptions (semiluminiferous ether, a literal clockwork cosmos)
14. Far Future/Primordial past (the first few billion years of the universe...or the last)
15. Vastly different metaphysical assumptions (dangerous; could be no souls, could be world where all are as gods)
16. Completely Foreign Reference Point

Age of Muscle divergences

Often the stone age, this is a primal era populated by spirits and elder demons; tools are no more sophisticated than stone or wood and muscle. Magic is in its infancy and at its most basic.

Age of Heroes divergences

May never have stopped using bronze, or transitioned to something other than iron and steel. (Mithril or some substance indigenous to the splinter? Gods blood perhaps, or crudely fashioned alien metal from a starship)

Age of Industry divergences

The Last Age of Old Earth – anywhere from the early steam and other industrial engines of the 1770s up to the pre Data age of 1989; Industry dominates this era more than any other thing. Technocrats, Robber barons, commercialism and early propaganda war are common elements. The first mechanized large scale (worldwide) conflicts become not just possible but inevitable at this era.

Age of Data divergences

The last age of old earth is replaced quickly by an era of ubiquitous computing, disinformation warfare and likely environmental collapse.

Age of Space divergences

From the first satellite to the first age of FTL and all points in between.

Age of the Mind divergences and parallels

Every possible variation incorporating the emergence of psychic powers, psionics, and the like.

The Modern Imperium divergences

Could be many; gravity control may be more or less accessible to the masses, and the sub-ether is most certainly tappable by the gravity engines of the age. Information control is a hallmark of this era, though that expresses itself in a thousand different ways across the Splinters.

Elemental Divergences (Fire, Water, etc.)

Morphic divergences (Furry & Scaly) almost everyone will have an analog here as the Splinter tends toward emulation of the originating universe; however almost everyone is an upright terran animal for some faintly mystical reason.

Age of Misrule divergences

The Gods are dead, the heavens looted and burning. Space itself has torn asunder – the void and the Sub-ether have become one. The dead walk and all the demons are free, loosed on a thousand worlds. The heavens have fallen, and hell has withdrawn into itself.

The twice-born God, the demon-that-came, child of both elf and man, has risen and eats the suns of those worlds who will not bow down before it. There is no civilization, only death and horror for hundreds of thousands of years to come.

Negative Material Splinters

exist on the far side of the (XXXXXX wall) within the Negative zone. Tools are made of and used to harness both anti-matter (requiring rare matter to be acquired or manufactured) and Entropy itself. An inversion of all that is familiar to organic life, the dominant sapients here are those riddled with undeath and parasitoids, both arising out of a form of necrotic evolution; Bizarre and terrifying phenomena such as unbirthing and a dominant scavenging based morality rule the culture in such splinters.

Mirror world divergences

Are built on inverted morality and sometimes ethics as well. (eyepatches and goatees)

Splinters with Vastly different physical assumptions

Such as the semiluminiferous ether, or a literal clockwork cosmos (Space 1889 frex)

Far Future/Primordial past splinters

Could be the first few billion years of the universe...or the last such.

Splinters with Vastly different metaphysical assumptions (dangerous; could be no souls, could be world where all are as gods)

Completely Foreign Reference Point Splinters

Can be almost anything, what is necessary is the utter lack of a point of commonality, or perhaps but a single such point.

Dominant form of Paranormal Activity

1. Magical activity is unknown
2. Magical activity exists in myth and folklore
3. Magical activity is unknown, but the world is overrun with monsters
4. Magical activity is unknown by the world is ruled by actual gods
5. Divine magic is the only form of magical activity known. Clerics rule the world in warring God-kingdoms of bronze age sophistication.
6. Sorcerous magic is the only form of magical activity known. Fell sorcerer kings repeatedly destroy civilization by calling down that which should not have been freed, corrupt mutant magical warlords rule over the remains.
7. Psychic powers are the only form of magical activity known. The Mentalists rule over a second class of mixed mutants, genejokes, and mundane humans, who are confined to their planets while their psychic masters go to the stars.
8. Divine and Sorcerous magic is known but psychic powers as a distinct force are weak, impossible, or simply unknown.
9. Magic is unknown by non-elves, who dominate some or all of the world with their massive sprawling clans held together by sorcerous bindings and patron giri. Sort of age of war japan with magic elf samurai each fighting for a different daimyo and their demonic/sorcerous patron.
10. All forms of magical activity exist
11. World is an inherently corrupt and sinful place. Demon magic, necromancy, and the like are dominant, functioning a step higher on the dice chain, while divine magic of any kind functions a step *lower*
12. Worlds is an inherently surreal and dream-like place. Illusion magic, psychic powers, and any form of divination or vision seeking occur a step higher on the dice chain. Material manipulation, true creation, and repair/healing powers function at a reduced level, a step lower on the dice chain.

Starship Operations



"Because of the unusual dangers of sailing, mariners took on patron gods and goddesses to help them safely through a voyage. The sea posed the biggest threat and created the greatest trepidation for sailors; therefore it was critical to the seafarer to be protected from the depths and its guardian spirits. The tutelary deities of the mariner, as well as the physical presence of the ship, guarded him from the uncertainties of the water."

Two types of deities were of utmost importance to classical and modern traditional sailors; those gods who controlled the winds or storms, because of their abilities to power the sails of a ship with a favorable wind, and to raise or calm tempests; and the gods whose attributes added in safe and successful navigation."

"Each Man Cried Out to His God"

The Specialized Religion of Canaanite and Phoenician Seafarers

Aaron J. Brody, 1998

.Movement, Scale, and Space Encounters - Mapping the Sub-ether

The simplest form of map keeping for the tracking of scale, time, movement, and encounters is possible. Such a voyage would represent a typical interstellar voyage but would play out at the table similar to other large overland hex crawls traditional to fantasy role playing games.

In the first Sub-ether, a traveling starship travels at one Light (roughly a light year) per day in Warp. Diving to subsequent layers of the sub-ether increase this travel time correspondingly, provided the ship's gravity drive is properly rated for that depth (see ship's drive rating; this serves as an indicator of the lowest depth, and so fastest possible speed, that the starship is capable of under normal circumstances.

Encounters would be checked once, per hex traveled through; if an encounter is determined, the starship's precise depth determines the encounter level – in conventional space, the normal space encounter tables are used, in the first sub-ether, the first Sub-ether tables are used, and so on.

Advanced Preparation - Mapping the Sub-ether

With adequate preparation, the Judge can prepare sections of space, from planets and settlements in individual star systems to whole sectors and the whole of the Imperium, or beyond of course.

Even for extended campaign play, the largest practical region of space to map fully for our purposes will be the Imperial Star Sector, or sector, an arbitrary but regular area of space (15 cubic lights in size). However, save in very long, very detailed campaigns will even this area of space be a practical one for the Judge to imagine and develop, especially in advance! Consider that – simply in terms of material space, a star sector (as mapped, keeping with the convention of each hex on the star map being approx.. 1 cubic light in distance and volume) fifteen hexes across on either side, and fifteen layers of hexes deep. That is 3,375 hexes! Now not all of those hexes will contain star systems of course, many/most will contain empty space.

Consider now that when mapping the Sub-ether not only need there be an analog to every hex above, but there must be one for each layer of the Sub-ether! In such mapping, placement of literally every possible encounter in this book, plus many many more of the Judge's own creation, is literally possible. Considering the increasing challenge to sanity, and survival with each deeper layer of the Sub-ether, it becomes easy to realize that space is truly the largest megadungeon....at a scale of one light year / hex that goes on forever in every direction. If the Judge can place it, it can be there. Space is BIG.

There is no official map of the Imperium. Nor should there be the specifics of the setting and its implementation are up to the Judge. As written, Galaxy black assumes that neither map nor detailed tracking of movement and travel is utilized or desired. However, if the Judge wishes to establish a star map for the purposes of tracking movement and developing a particular area of space for their campaign, it is suggested that the imperial sector is considered as a model - a cubic volume of space 15 lights in area.

Remembering that space is a three dimensional medium, each sector map would be a stacked set of 15 maps, each 15 hexes wide and 15 hexes across, stacked with up to 14 others vertically. Each hex would presumably be stacked directly atop the hex above it; the hexes would be numbered from the top map down for ease of tracking movement.

Each hex would represent approx. A cubic light in area, largely for ease of tracking

At the beginning of a vessel's journey, the next destination would be stated, and the course plotted; subsequently, movement would be tracked upon this map. A ship's drive rating in this system reflects both the max. Jump depth as well as the number of hexes it travels per 'leg' of a given journey. To emulate a traditional encounter RPG model, the possibility and nature of an encounter should be determined by the Judge on each leg of such a journey and, optionally, a different roll on the Transit Times table (page XX 83)

Throughout, I have attempted to emphasize individual character action over a reliance upon tech, gadgets, and imperial resources. Keeping a focus on the characters keeps scaling easy (important in any kind of SF) and also reminds us about the sorts of games we'll be playing. Vance's Planet of Adventure or a crash on Volturnus rather than a high speed fleet engagement. Look to Kirth Gersen and Northwest Smith. Barbarella on Tau Ceti, or Flash Gordon and Thun on Mongo.

Running a campaign, mapping systems and keeping track of your galaxy

As the Judge you have several potential options for how to handle this.

Preparation -Beforehand, the Judge is encouraged to go through the various categories of Sub-ether phenomena, threats, and so on and assign which will be encountered by location and which should populate any wandering 'monster' or random encounter charts that the Judge wishes to use. There is certainly nothing wrong with setting certain areas aside that the Judge doesn't wish to use of course!

Also, it is accepted and encouraged that each Judge will also populate "their" Sub-ether with threats and weirdness from all manner of other sources as well. Don't feel constrained by what's written here!

The traditional method - you make a star map with a hex grid, one hex equaling approx. 1 cubic light year or thereabouts (A "light"); I suggest this scale as it will be easiest to track starship movement. (And if you want a detailed map but have no intention of tracking movement that's fine too.) Place as many (or all or none) of the various Sub-ether threats and phenomena across the map as you like.

Suggested - Make two maps if you have the inclination to do so; one of them is a basic star map showing relation of star systems to one another and any other known phenomena. Then make, essentially a second map, though this will be a map of the local Sub-ether, which the Judge would then populate with threats and things from this and any other book desired. As the players flit about the Judge's galaxy, they will in the finest hex crawl fashion, learn what is in each hex as they traverse it. For an additional XP each session or so, let any Navigator types plot their course on the player's (blank) hex map and see what they run across, just like a trad hex crawl on a planet surface or equivalent.

Troubleshooting - Such preparation requires a LOT of work in advance, or the Judge will find herself trying to find a reason why Captain Chuckie can't jump their vessel to planet Georgetown, despite that being the only place the party wants to go. (We've all had players like that.) Unless you have a very forgiving table you probably can't tell them "I haven't written up Georgetown yet." You can wing it of course but if you are comfortable doing that, likely you don't need me to tell you to do it. You can always swap out another prepared world that they haven't visited but that gets tricky. The last thing you want is to be running a campaign where "Meticulous time notes **must** be kept."

One solution is to limit player choices to what you have prepared at the time. It seems obvious but sometimes the obvious is easily overlooked. You don't want to restrict them too long though. Once you have more (another world or ideally another area) prepared you can begin seeding the game with rumors and NPCs and cargo going to and from such places. Allow it to happen gradually. Remember that in most ongoing games, a large amount of the GM's prep never gets used. THAT is the stuff to keep around for when you are out of ideas.

The Mapless Method - the default assumption in this book is that the Judge has neither desire nor need for such meticulous bookkeeping. Worlds and star systems are located only in relation to one another, often in generalizations like "close" or "far" - or things are entirely left to the transit times table and there is no expectation. This makes for a much more haphazard and chaotic feel, but the author feels it gives the best "feel" for Sub-etheric travel. E.g., Make each voyage as though you will never return. (Indeed, much of Spacer mentality tracks from that kind of nomadism.) Suggested - Save in the loosest games, the Judge should have at least a rough idea where things are in relation to each other and attempt to be consistent about it.

Troubleshooting - it never hurts to have something, be it deliberate session prep, a go-to adventure/scenario, or whatever, to fall back on when the Judge's mapless winging it is just not cutting the mustard. Small self-contained and quirky one off adventures are great for this purpose.

Of course, sometimes it's just best to sit back and let the players tell you what they want to do (always, actually, but YMMV). In a well-run campaign, some sessions the Judge just shouldn't be able to get a word in edgewise without the players barking stuff they want to do at them!

For what it's worth, the author's preferred is setup A cunningly disguised as setup B, but subject to remix whenever I feel like it. Remember Judges, there will be those times when you aren't feeling it. Those sessions when the neurons aren't firing, and no one is engaging with what you have prepared. That's the sign that it's time to chuck it. Do something to change things up, even if only for a session. Body swaps, shared hallucinations, whatever. Misjumps can dump them anywhere, away from all that you have prepared if necessary.....never be afraid to toss out what you have prepared in favor of winging it, or doing something you haven't done before. Be bold and your players will love the game all the more for it.

Typical travel times —

(if larger or slower Imperium is sought multiply these figures by ten. To shrink the empire or increase the efficiency of its drives, divide these figures by ten.)

Imperial Core world to Imperial core world

- Ishtar to Tanix (Capital to Capital run) – about 8 weeks base ship time
- Mars to Maleth Noir – about 9 weeks base ship time (second empire run, or the loyalist run)

Imperial core to world in Middlemarches

- The deep core (Ishtar or Mars Solar, etc.) to penal colony? 8 mos. ship time. Quite likely longer real time.
- Old Core to the near edge of the Widders? 39 progs (also about 8 mos.)

Imperial core to world on Frontier

- The deep core (Solar, etc.) to the Orion Reclamation Zone? About 47 months base ship time.
- Tanix to the Forgeworlds? 60 months base ship time.
- Siren to Foomh on the Imperial rim Frontier? 53 mos. Base ship time.

Old Core

Ishtar Solus (Siren Sector, Imperial core) – includes Mars & Teranaya of course

Middle Core

Maleth Noir (Aldebaran Sector, Imperial core) – Gateway to the Saurian Worlds

New Core

Tanix (Seven Sisters Sector, Imperial core) - current imperial capital

Middlemarches

World

Widders

Worlds

Rim Frontier

Foomh -

Travel times represent an average and nothing more. Average meaning a standard large body citizen/commercial starship traveling primarily in the shallows (the first and second sub-ethrae

Base ship time indicates time to destination before factoring in other qualities such as etheric distortion, flow irregularities, encounters along the way,

These numbers also refer to direct line voyages between stars, only allowing for stops within a light's radius on course. Most spacer tribe vessels hop between nearer stars, making for even more randomness and asynchronicity.

Typical travel times - The deep core (Solar, etc.) to penal colony? 8 mos. ship time. Quite likely longer real time.

Typical transit times table (determine at time of jump)

<u>Materia (Imperial Time)</u>	<u>Aetheria (Shipboard time)</u>
0 Min result d5 days	d5+2 days
1 1d4 weeks	d8+3 days
2 1d3 months	1d14 days
3 2d4 mos.	2d14 days
4 3d6 mos.	2d30 days
5 1d3 years	d% days / alt d14 weeks
6 1d4 years	2d6 months
7 1d5 years	d4+8 months
8 Max result 3d12 years	a year

Notes:

Navigators can alter the results of either table and in either direction by one per CL. If plotting starship movement on a hexagonal grid, then these times are added to the time calculated from travel at the *end* of the journey.

Travel Times: It may not appear it but the travel times table is relatively essential. Part of the spacer mentality is that you have only your crew to fall back on. And that's largely it. When you next call upon a given port, it may be a thousand years after you were last here. Contacts, even among datalife, only last for so long. Or you may wind up in a Splinter, maybe forever. To a true spacer, they have everything they need on their back, in their heart, and with their crew.

To a true spacer, every single trip is an adventure, or ought to be. Every jump assumes it will be your last.

Unusual Jump conditions (gravity disharmonies)

Vessel arrives d3 days before departure. This will attract attention from, at least, Imperial security (temporal control) and likely any transtemporal phenomena in the local sub-ether anywhere along transit.

Vessel arrives d5 days after their departure

Vessel arrives d2 days ahead of predicted arrival

Vessel arrives 3d6+30 days after expected arrival

Vessel arrives D5 years after predicted arrival date

Vessel arrives d20 years after predicted arrival date

Vessel arrives a century late

Vessel arrives a thousand years in their own future.

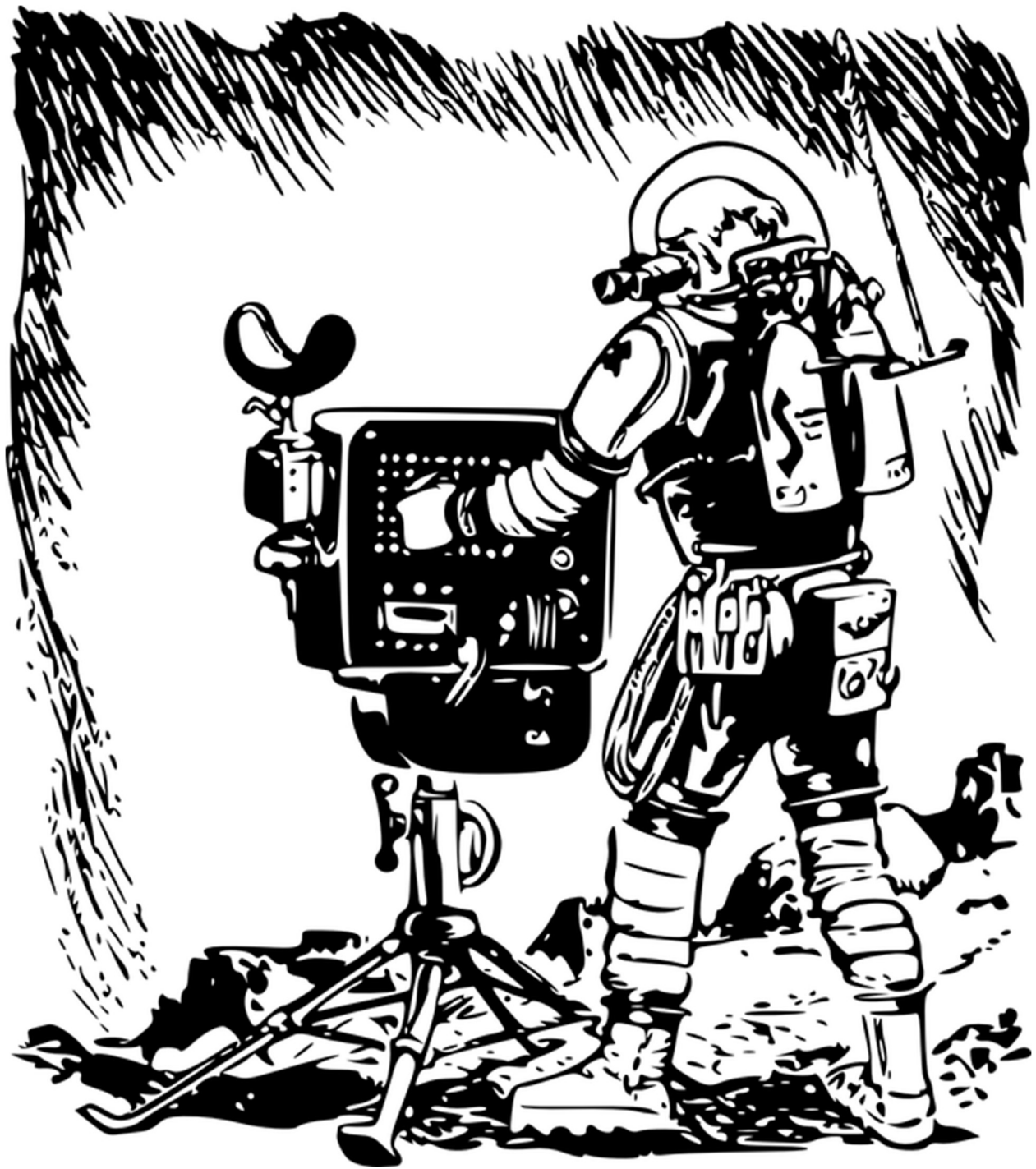
6 Important Navigational Beacons

1. The Crab Pulsar
2. The Eta Carinae Singularity (on the far side of the Maenad Veil)
3. The Antares Supernova
4. The Vela Pulsar
5. The wolf Rayet emission lines of the Sculptor starburst (emission) galaxy
6. The Diamond Pulsar (PSR J2222-0137¹²)
7. (of course) The pulse beacon of the nearest Ansible.

Note that of the above, save the Sculptor starburst emission lines, all of the listed beacons exist within or surrounding, imperial space. Each can be found and verified by sensors attached to a ship's gravity drive, and through mundane sensors in material space. In flight, however, the ansible pulse beacons are the 'loudest' such.



¹² PSR J2222-0137, constantly sending out radio waves like a light house. Is a white dwarf orbiting a pulsar (rapidly rotating neutron star) the dwarf star is 'cold' and primarily composed of crystalized carbon - diamond in essence.



Section Three Ship stuff

Voyagers are a breed of their own; frequently lonely and isolated by the standards of their long abandoned home worlds, they build ties with those they serve, others like themselves, forging each ship crew into a tribe unto itself, a small nation with its own customs, values, Gods, and the like.

...Indeed, there are starships where the crew are not contextually skilled; aboard ship, they are wholly dependent upon the ship's AI, Navigator, or God; without which they will rapidly lose their ability to maintain the ship. Aboard craft the shipboard tribe is functionally a cargo cult, invoking the Helm by rote when an issue arises that their traditions do not cover. Some Ship Gods or AIs deliberately keep their crews in such a state, out of fear, madness, past experiences, or other reasons.

Starships are vessels that ply the Sub-ether between the many worlds and star systems of the empire. Ship's gravity drives are rated from one to six (infrequently up to ten). This is the ship's Drive Rating.

A ship's Drive Rating determines many things - practically though, it is an indicator of how fast and how far a starship may travel. This is not a function of an individual vessel being implicitly faster however, so much as it is a more efficient system, integrated well with a starships' on board systems, able to endure greater pressures and stresses.

A starship with a Drive Rating of 1 can only slip barely into the Sub-ether; they slip from the material world into the local Sub-ether. Because the vessel has only a single point of Drive Rating, it may not cruise any deeper than the first Sub-ether.

The Sub-ether is (or seems to be) structured in a way that each layer of the Sub-ether seems stacked upon other, deeper layers. A ship with a drive rating of one is incapable of withstanding the stresses of deeper layers of the Sub-ether and is limited to a depth equal to its drive rating.

However, plumbing deeper into the Sub-ether allows faster and farther travel - a steeper and steeper parabola can be calculated to dive into the second and subsequent 'layers' - each depth is further from the material world and closer to the 'Mega-flow' a roiling and surging channel of raw chaos that is a, if not the, driving element in the local Sub-ether. In practical terms, a starship with a Drive Rating of 2 can achieve the first or second layer of the Sub-ether. A ship in the second layer will find that the moving energy of the channel and the distorted space functionally doubles their speed and distance. But at a greater danger. Each deeper layer of the Sub-ether is more tempestuous, more dangerous and less 'real.' Commercial vessels seldom travel at a depth exceeding the second or (rarely) third Sub-ether.

Note that a vessel may rise to a higher (or dive to a lower) layer of the Sub-etheric 'ocean' if desired, provided it is within the ship's drive rating. A super advanced starship with a Drive Rating of 5 may well spend most of its cruising time in the fifth Sub-ether, but it can always 'rise' to the fourth, or third, etc. to avoid a conflict, or whatever the reason may be.

Ships at the end of their Sub-etheric voyage will have to rise back through the intervening layers to return to the material side of the universe, though it is thought Imperial naval vessels have ways around this.

Drive Ratings are commonly rated 1 - 6. 1-3 for commercial vessels, and 4-5 for corporate and research vessels. The Imperial Navy of course has ships with a Drive Rating of 6 and possibly higher. Only the Navigators regularly travel at deeper Sub-ether depths.

Vessels- In the Empire, starships are extraordinarily large things, more small mobile worlds than 'stock light freighters' - even transports are huge monstrous things. The

nature of the game world reflects this - ships are places for encounters and means of getting from point a to point b for the most part, they are adventure sites in and of themselves; not so much a thing to be sole master of.

These are concepts not things to go on the character sheet. At least not for right now. Starship hulls and particularly advanced facilities, esp. those built by the navigator houses or such are built to LAST; the hulls and the overall dome/structures are recycled and repurposed many times in a given thousand year period. Some of the oldest Third Empire installations are almost 9,000 years old in this sense. And some starship hulls are MUCH older than that.

A vessel's drive rating is both the maximum Sub-ether depth and so a measure of how fast & far the vessel can travel.

Spacer Life

Spacers value their freedom, their lives, and the loyalty of their crewmates before anything else. Their lifestyle is dangerous and there is a constant attrition of crew. Many can trace their lineage back to 23 or more generations in space, proudly and are accorded a certain amount of respect but Spacer society is based on what you can do, not what you say or where you came from. Everyone starts off equal in spacer society. The more you scrum up and act like a dirt farmer, the less well you will be treated. Sort of a meritocracy. But only sort of. Certain folk do have titles and positions that functionally give them hierarchy over the rest of the crew and each other of course. On each ship, a community unto itself, the specifics are different of course, but a few generalizations can be made for the Thousand Tribes.

Spacers value your ability to speak the spug up, your ability to shut the spug up, and your ability to know when which is appropriate. Initiative and direction are good. Spacers value 'rough sketches' over detailed preplanning. Always. Keep it flexible or be dead.

So yes, most runaways that manage to make it aboard their ship do in fact have the benefit of the fairy tale idea that they can run away and join a space crew. Of course, once you are aboard, you are treated just like any other newcomer – called dirt farmers in the parlance (or other less friendly terms).

In spacer society, those who find themselves with a cadre of people who want to do what they are told become leaders, and that remains flexible.

To spacers, planet bound people dither, they fuck off, they pay no attention to their surroundings. They often think in two dimensions. They don't track their air. They don't think in terms of needs so much as wants. They are hemmed in and lead weirdly restrictive lives.

Some of this is true but that's the stereotype. When a new crew member comes aboard, "dirtfarmers" (a double meaning – both someone who lives amongst soil and well a euphemism for fertilizer; the soon to be dead) find themselves getting picked on for some weeks. By pretty much everyone. But it is always to a purpose. The dirtfarmers have to be broken of those habits that will get everyone killed. They have to get used to ideas like the gravity being turned off for extended periods, or up heavier than they are used to.

So, they are being both tested and to a certain extent trained.

They also assume most dirtfarmers don't know how to fight, move in vac, microG (or both), or when it's time to run. Again, there's a certain truth to these perhaps.

Most ships keep an away bribes fund, a sort of slush pile for the purpose of getting past SecFor, dealing with bureaucrats, docking and trade officials, etc. but also bail when shore leave ends and other 'clean-up costs.'

On a well-run ship, with a good crew, everyone puts back into this whenever they can. It can literally make a dirtside excursion transform from "Let's involuntarily visit the local death camp" to "cool planet, great Zyxnnox, what the hell did I do for the last two days?"

Most tribe hulls are old. Thousands of years old in many cases. Spacers do not throw away that which can be used, and it is with pride that many shipboard children can tell you the story of every hull crater, every bright purple miscolouration, every re-manufactured hull breach.

Children on many, if not most, Spacer ships are produced au natural or "the old fashioned way," much to the shock of many, though this is by no means universal. Those Spacer vessels that maintain a hatchery often keep it near the Ship's God for dual purposes of defense and whatever spiritual benefit they derive from such (Not advisable if your little god is say, a demon, but it's a known practice nonetheless.)

Stowaways

Stowing away aboard ship is one of the easiest ways to touch Vac, right? Everyone knows that.

In this particular instance, not only is everyone wrong but the converse is true. Most stowaways become crew. Those who never leave their world do not understand this. In part this is because of imperial propaganda – stowing away aboard ship is dangerous. More to the ship than to the stowaway often. Also, an epidemic of such (And there would be an epidemic, or so goes the logic) would tax the economies of both imperium and worlds and strain relations thereunto.

But also, it belies a fundamental misunderstanding of what spacer life is like.

Aynchs – Asynchronous. Anyone that exists "outside of their local/native time stream" – a common feature of space travel as far back as the prehistoric "relativistic era," and so long accepted. Almost every space traveler, and certainly all spacers, technically fall into this category but in parlance the term is reserved for those who live a life of it, such as Navigators. (In practice, all spaces "live the life of it" and in the current era, that of the "fewest ever navigators," population-wise, they make up the smallest number of those Spacers)

The Black Cant - a dialect of Basic and Lingishtar used by space jockeys, shiprats and deep miners

A ship's wake and its Fate

Because of the laws the govern the Sub-ether, places a vessel have already been are easier to get to by the same vessel, they are more 'real.' The full manifest of ports/destinations that a ship has visited is traditionally called its wake. The ports that a vessel calls upon commonly is its Fate, a statement often interpreted or endowed with quasi mystical significance by the lifetimes spacers who speak it.

Jump prep

The brightly robed priests who walk the length of the ship scattering thick clouds of incense, blue and red, purple and yellow, intoning, performing a blessing to ward the spirits of the dead from harming the ship or its passengers.

Like normal but with a lot more ritual. In some parts of the core, there is a chaplain aboard who blesses everyone before the jump. It is considered VERY bad luck to refuse the blessing.

Some priests spend time traveling in the core just to take advantage of this.

Ghost screens are tested twice

The "ghost walk" - A security group surveys the ship to ensure no "stragglers" (mostly of a spiritual or immaterial sense nowadays; stowaways are trad dealt with during jump anyway)

Aboard naval vessels – at least three (rated) Psychic Security Officers. The PS officers: almost always double trained to fill needed positions, Psychic Security officers rotate the position of PsychSec officer while the others remain at their assigned duty positions; it is their job to detect crew in need of therapy or psych. Evaluation, as well as to protect the crew from dangerous alien (and known) psychic threats. Quite often only the Captain and possibly the medical officer or other senior command staff have certainty who aboard is PsychSec rated, and certainly are kept (mostly) in the dark about who among them is the "active duty officer" for PsychSec detail.

It is a largely thankless job, and those selected for the position must have a great deal of mental fortitude, devotion to duty and generally, a high empathy rating. They must also possess a notable resistance to ongoing stress loads.



“common” space hazards

Magnetic voids - Most commonly between spiral arms, sometimes smaller such voids exist. Sort of small (cosmically speaking, they may be several hundred thousand miles across) bubbles of null magnetism, oddly often dragged behind certain assemblages of star systems as they turn about the central spiral of the galaxy. Not harmful but distressing to mechanical lifeforms and they have been known to knock traveling ships out of FTL flight when encountered in the shallows (anything deeper than the second Sub-ether is safe or safer). Rather more tiresome when encountered in normal space as they can throw various elements of the gravity drive out of alignment, requiring sometimes weeks of calibration before it is useable, let alone safely.

Radiation area - be it a gamma ray burst, an explosion of antimatter particles, or some micro wormhole's quantum emissions, radiation is all over the place. Even behind all those screens this can still pose a genuine hazard to vessel and crew.

Ship designations and registry classes

ICS – Imperial Commercial Ship for all of the (b?)millions of imperial commercial system ships. VERY subject to local system registry.

RIS – Registered Imperial ship, ostensibly any private systemship. Subject to local system registry.

ICSS –Imperial Commercial Starship – subject to scrutiny by the imperium, trade and regulatory bodies, system authorities, inspection teams, or a Legion boarding party declared for any reason. Most such are company ships of course but even the “captain’s trade” (e. g. on the side) operating in a gray area (off the books) offers greater trade authority than other classes of Ship, however. (Though remember, the Empire and the Company both take their share of ANY profits made by a vessel flying an ICSS registry. Pirates sometimes call them “slave ships” referring to their crews.)

RISS – Registered Imperial Starship (private vessels; somewhat less subject to scrutiny)

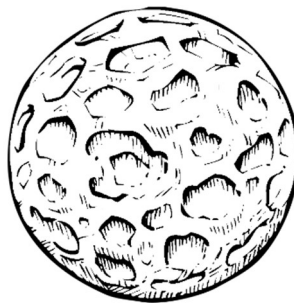
SNV – Sovereign Noble Vessel

IDSF – Imperial Deep Space Fleet

ALSO

Imperial Deep Space Expeditionary Fleet (IDSEF) – older (pre-Revision) class of Deep Space naval vessels, many still in service hence the retained registry numbers.

LAO -Licensed Anomalous Object; where civilian ships and sensors would see no registration or identification at all likely, gov’t sensors read this as one of the Empire’s ‘black ships’ – do not harass or interfere with.



“Shore leave? I’ll skip it. Somehow I find no appeal in breathing atmo contaminated by the farts of seven billion omnivore spuds glued to their Telescreens. If I want VD I’ll have the ship brew me one up in a lab, thanks.”

- **Godkeeper Rahls**, the ICSS *Serendipity*

The Gravity Drive

“That which controls gravity, controls all space, and thus the universe. Control of gravity means control of all matter and energy, and thus the fate of uncounted trillions.”

–Emile H. Lheng, imperial certified gravitation engineer

Gravitics (Gravity control technology) is something the Imperium keeps to itself. Without control and manipulation of gravity, the Imperium would not, could not, exist. Gravy tech is among the most key technologies the Imperium possesses. A “Gravity Drive” (an Interbleed Ethero-Hyper Gravitic Manipulation Device) forms¹³ a stable, unidirectional, and collapsing aperture between intersecting planes of existence to ‘tunnel’ into the local Sub-ether. Once this is achieved (the most energy intensive part of the “jump”) the ship hits the navigated parabola, and begins sinking to the correct ‘depth.’

It is also called the ethereo-gravitic drive, the Ghost Drive, the Ether drive, the Sub-ether drive, etc. etc.

The Modern Gravity Drive ¹⁴

The current generation of etherogravitic drive system is the *direct energy injection system* utilizing dual positive and negative material energy; the effect is rotating and counterrotating spherically hollow force fields of partially filled in negative or positive material/energy, spinning around the central Primary Field Emitter. In casual use they appear to “duel” casting strange shadow shapes upon the outer walls of the inner drive chamber.

(and in fact, one of the things that can happen if your fields are out of alignment, shadow creatures slip in; the fields generate a kind of negative gravity, calling it up from beyond the Negative Zone.)

As with many things in the empire it is advanced utilization of very specific-use dedicated force fields that make this level and accuracy of the technology possible.

Lower tech Gravity drives

Older models (two generations ago) still use basic gravity impellers (which by their very design are limited to Sub-ether 2 or 3)

Even more primitive version utilized a “gravity screw” (Sub-ether 0 or 1) – sometimes called dismissively a screw drive (then called, for this was the Second Empire, a Void Screw)

Otherwise to the above, even at present tech level there are many varieties of gravity drives; the most common and most applicable to our purposes, utilize an orgonne pump as part of its central assembly; this is necessary to create and maintain a suitable biosphere for living beings, created, or any other physical or computational life that is sentient and possesses a soul. This is important in that it links life support to a vessel’s ability to move through the Sub-ether.

¹³ thanks to the principles of Geometrodynamics - a geometric description of all physics. Derived from the “16 Principles” or the “Tyrpanni rules” (both refer to the Sixteen Principles agreed upon by the Conference of Tyrpanni of 1114 Third Empire, which presented a gravo-electromagnetic theory of material everything)

¹⁴ Type IV Interbleed Ethero-hypergravitic drive with Full Immersion Symbiotic Navigation is the top of the line in 11,020 Third Empire

A matter of some.....Gravity!

Imperial Grav tech is sufficiently advanced to make much of common SF gravity issues somewhat irrelevant. But only somewhat. Seldom do thrilling space adventures happen in the relative safety of a settled & civilized imperial planet. Thus, gravity and gravitational fields (natural and artificial) are generalized for our purposes into relatively broad categories.

“Why do this to yourself? Is anything ore than 9Gs that isn’t immediately fatal.

“For Great Justice” covers 5.1Gs up to about 9Gs

“Super High” is anything from 3.5 to about 5Gs

“High” gravity for our purposes is about 1.3Gs to around 3Gs.

“Standard” is akin to 0.8 or 0.9Gs to about 1.2Gs in realistic terms.

“Low” is relative but broadly about 0.3Gs to 0.7Gs

“MicroG” is for game terms 0.1 to 0.2Gs.

These rules represent ongoing immersion in a gravity well, not G forces created by acceleration etc. Should the Judge require it, for rare events, assume there are perhaps two more levels of gravity above Super High . Humorously we will call the category above Super High “For Great Justice” which covers 5.1Gs to about 9Gs. Beyond that we have a rank of “Why Do This to Yourself?” covering anything more than 9Gs that isn’t immediately fatal.

When moving out of one’s gravity tolerances, you move down the dice chain for certain/most things (Does it involve movement? Then the answer is yes) that many steps. Those with zeroG or microG training (see background, origin, etc. also class) may freely disregard.

These rules may free be ignored of course but in this case I call especial attention to it as this can easily feel needlessly penalizing and not necessarily in the greater DCC spirit, but I include them for completeness.

Doubly so if you include the following

There is a flip side to the harshness of being out of one’s element gravitationally. Those from greater G environments when acting in lower gravity can with practice, move strength and possibly other rolls up the dice chain by a corresponding number of gravity steps. So, when John Carter, with say a strength of 16 on Earth, goes bounding around on mars, he’s still got a 16 strength but he’s now adding that to a d24 roll rather than a d20.

JUDGES: BE aware, this could easily lead to a sudden population influx of high gravity worlders in your game for reasons I can’t fathom to speculate. :P In such case, I suggest the following.

Increased Fumbles: the side effect of all that extra strength tis such - each step below one’s native gravity one gains a Fumble die. One below is a d4, two below is a d6, and so on.

Remember, it is certainly in the spirit of much of the literature to only apply this rule to zero levels; first and subsequent leveled characters can be presumed to be made of stronger stuff. (We’ll call this *the John Carter option.*)

Imperial Starship technology- Common technologies

a brief, end-user overview

Starship hulls and particularly advanced facilities, esp. those built by the navigator houses or such are built to LAST; the hulls and the overall dome/structures are recycled and repurposed many many times in a given thousand year period. Some of the oldest Third Empire installations are almost 9,000 years old in this sense. And some starship hulls are MUCH older than that.

Defense Systems Armor, shields, and screens technology

Because all transit through the etheric medium is dangerous; most especially so for large vessels with large crews on long voyages (98% of all Imperial craft) and so defenses are needed. So far we have seen the fate of (most) Private and (limited) Commercial Star vessels - they have Ship Gods. Rarely they will have Navigators instead. Military vessels utilize super advanced AI, Navigators, and (very rarely) Ship Gods

In the Empress Imperium, force field generation is a mature technology. Extrapolated from the psychokinetic principle (the first true force field generators were psionic in nature) the phenomenon has been studied sufficiently to unlock it's secrets and refine the technologies for their use. As such many variants exist from simple kinetic barriers to 'bounce' fields, which reflect the energy poured into them back, primarily used as restraints and containment for inactive compounds. More advanced and military applications best resemble the classic Energy Barriers of golden and silver age science fiction.

Combat space craft and of course military starships have multiple batteries of such generators each deploying a variety of fields. Most such vessels maintain kinetic barriers, deflection screens (advanced versions of the 'bounce fields' mentioned above) while in flight or in combat, EM and ECCM barriers, and radiation screens, with energy dampening barriers deployed by military vessels.

Armor - often in the manner of a segmented outer hull, designed for heat radiation, ablation, and kinetic dispersal.

Advanced military vessels have regenerative armor.

Shields - are the most obvious and high powered utilization of force field technology. Milspec only.

Both tractor and pressor beams are refinements of this force field tech.

Screens - the most basic are the *EM screens* (to prevent damage to ship, components, and crew by radiation, magnetic pulses, etc. - also to keep the gravity drive from encountering any undue outer influence) , and the *Deflector Screen* (a necessity for any kind of high velocity maneuvering) and the various ratings of *Ghost screens* (at this point considered a necessity for any kind of Sub-ether travel)

Screens

Charged particle screens

Magnetic screens

Radiation screens

Ghost Screens

Ship Defense Organization – or - Breaching a Ship the Hard Way –
this is your order of operations, from hull to the outermost projection screen or field of a vessel

Armor
(ablativ armor)

ECM
ECCM
Screens
Shields

Chaff (a defensive weapon but often deployed to act in a screen or field manner)

Advanced “Defensive” Technologies

More Fun With Forcefields

The base Tractor Beam is ultimately a development of Force field technology, albeit an old standby. The Imperium has many technologies developed from this.

Pressor Beam – sometimes called a repulson beam. Does what it sounds like, as it is literally a tractor beam, reversed. Pushing / Away rather than Pulling / Nearing

The Shearing Plane – a sort of massed ‘blazing blade’ attack, power hungry but devastating. It is a refinement of a high power, sustained Pressor beam.

Force Beam – a beam of pure kinetic force, sustained or fired in high energy blasts, devastating against hull. A purely military weapon, it’s use, and development is highly trafficked by the navy.

Scattering field – aka a shearing scatter

A refinement of “shearing plane” technology, whereby tractor beam tech is reversed to create vast planes of repulsive force.

A Shearing scatter field is a relatively recent (200 years) development of imperial ship technology and once again requires a gravity drive to project. A Scatter field is actually defensive – it’s “a constant aggro-repulsive pseudo kinetic energy field” but of low and cycling power. It’s primary purpose is to repulse (unpowered) material projectiles; smaller ones are destroyed, larger ones are shattered or deflected.

In the absence of sufficient flak, the field left running has been known to generate large amounts of waste energy as static electricity

A list of some Common Vessel Weapons and Offensive capabilities

Directed Energy Weapons

Lasers are chiefly used for short range “knife fight” engagements

Particle Beams and various directed radiological discharges

Kinetic Kill Weapons, railguns,

Propulsion

In the Imperium is highly standardized, with most spacecraft equipped with an ion drive or a Fusion torch

Ion drives are low power but capable of constant acceleration. They are used for short range hops within solar systems and thrusters aboard starships.

Fusion torches are ancient very mature tech, highly efficient mass to energy fusion thrust rockets. Of limited (and often restricted) use in the inner system of many solar systems. These are the primary reaction drives of most spacecraft and star vessels

Power Systems aboard vessel

Micro fusion reactors are ubiquitous and common, some no larger than a PC tower.

Antimatter and exotic matter materials are used for higher energy requirements, like traveling at sub-light speeds, spinning up the gravity drive, and maintenance of screens and shields of various types at all times.

FTL tech

The Gravity drive is a requirement for voiding the speed of light barrier within imperial space. It also is a relatively mature technology, having passed through many differing developmental phases in pre-imperial times. These range from First Empire *gravity screws*, some of which were only capable of breaching “warp zero,” the somewhat more advanced *contragravity impeller* (allowing for a capable and constant warp depth one cruising speed), *caterpillar drive* (which can just barely manage to drop to warp depth 02,) and modern gravity tech, refined from earlier models by lore gained from that most Third Empire breakthrough the Ansible.

Ghost tech - Screens and the Ghost Scoop¹⁵

The Ghost Scoop has been discussed extensively elsewhere. Ghost tech *of course* has no side effects? What makes you say that?

Crystech - technology involving crystals is a frequent component of psionic tech, which often includes starship control systems and information storage.

Most such crystals are broken in to three broad types

Information storage, Advanced information storage, and Holocrystals

¹⁵ the first ghost scoop was manufactured 722 Sidereals ago in low orbit over Goth. While the technology was slow to adopt at first, it has enjoyed fairly widespread usage over the last two centuries especially. Nay, Gothe' Spacewerks

Crew Ratings:

Give ships a morale rating; this factors also into higher level characters (5+) getting followers aboard ship

- Ship's morale can be affected by lots of things
 - Shore leave
 - Extended time at particular alert settings
 - Combat fatigue
 - Victories and defeats

Determine common level (most likely this will be zero)

Quite possibly this is more commonly a crew quality / reflection of HD shorthand.

Ratings would be 0 – raw recruits, untrained, dirtfarmers, etc.

- 1 – green
- 2 - competent
- 3 - experienced
- 4 – elite

Each level gives you base HD (replace or add to base creature to customize) their saves for specific things () and possibly an action die for ship things.

1 Green Save to Resist Morale Loss DC 14 HD 1dX (X= base HD of base creature) +1 any required rolls

2 Competent Save to Resist Morale Loss DC 12 HD 2dX (X= base HD of base creature) +2 any required rolls

3 Experienced Save to Resist Morale Loss DC 10 HD 3dX (X= base HD of base creature) +2 any required rolls

4 Elite Save to resist Morale loss DC 8 HD 3dX (X= base HD of base creature) +3 any required rolls

Notes: A captain with a high pers score can add their Pers bonus to the ship's Crew Rating effectively.

Ship Extended Effects of Battle Chart

Sometimes a vessel gets into it with another ship. What are the PCs to do who are stuck aboard one of these ships? Consult the chart below, note that each grows a bit worse as you go on.

1. Target ship suffers some cosmetic damage but is otherwise not the worse for wear
2. Comms (23% Ansible systems) down for 3d6 hours
3. Target ship loses a part of its outer hull and it will need replacing
4. Target ship loses some of its sensors
5. Hull breach - a section of the ship is now exposed to space and is venting Atmo. Consult Explosive Decompression effects chart. Apply immediately to any Player Character in that section!
6. Small craft carried by targeted vessel become unmoored and begin drifting, internally or externally.
7. As above, however this here could also mean 1d4 escape pods short circuit and are jettisoned, or similar with a ship's boat, the captain's gig, etc. Afterward crew must

make a saving throw to resist the effects of being rattled, especially after a costly defeat. (each crew rating has a different dc)

8. */Life support is impaired or offline entirely. As this means the gravity drive's osmotic pump is out, the target vessel is in dire dire trouble. They are pro 'lly dead in space.*
9. *Radiation or energy/chemical leak on the affected vessel. Will require immediate attention regardless of other activities.*
10. *The target vessel is at least partially boarded. Likely the PCs will be leading the charge, or the defense.*

Explosive Decompression effects

Decompression - each round a DC 15 Fort save is required to avoid taking 1d6 damage. Each round a DC 12 REF save is required to move or take any action unless the character is vacuum trained.

Breach is small. Patching will take one round of action. If need be consult EVA in Sub-ether and the gravity pages.

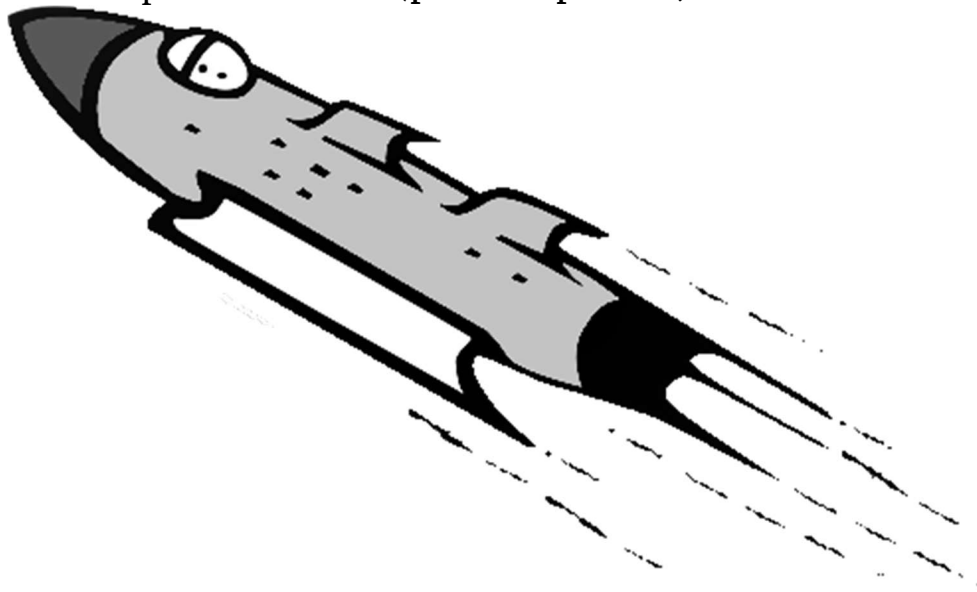


Gravitometric Oscillations and other Sub Ether Tech Transit Peculiarities

Engineering Technobabble

1. "Foul vibrations in the resonation chamber"
2. "The Oscillator is out of tune"; the Spatial Bleed Oscillator incorporates rods that may be made of a variety of materials, all of which need to survive transition to etheric space intact; many oscillations required only are possible within "non-conventional" space.
3. Gravimetric blah blah (not really, just stick gravimetric on to whatever other word you were going to use. Like 'Radioactive,' or 'Nanotechnology,'" it is a magic word that means you can do anything, in context.
 1. (The core of the tech is a gravity drive; a system to manipulate the gravitational force)
4. In gravity tech certain crystals are used to direct or focus N-rays, as well as making up part of the suite of Nth tech y-and z-rays.
5. An excessive particle build up in the Z-ray manifold

Recognized Ship Hull Classes (past and present)



Interface vessels

Flitter – core world personal gravity vehicle

Bubble top Flitter

Spacecraft

Small Bubble top one, two, or three person personal jet saucer

Personal gravity shuttle

Aquashuttle

Stations

Shack (one, two, and three person modules available)

A *shack stack* is lit. just a bunch of stacks assembled in any manner

Transfer station

Medical station – bright green

Hub

Space Colony

System ships – are typically fusion torch ships

Starships

Monitor class vessels – one per imperial system (*The Empire alone shall control communication.*)

Light commercial merchant hull

Heavy commercial merchant hull

Starship hulls are endlessly recycled. To a degree that many are classed based on original or most common function

Colony class

Transport class

Settlement class

Generation Class

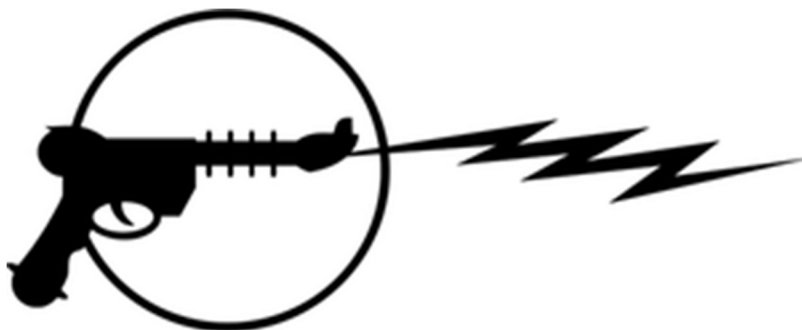
Warship Class

Starship & Vessel Generation

What kind of ship is it?

Commercial towing vehicle (Corporate/Tug)
Imperial naval transport
Private aristocrat (you are all retainers of a noble/Yacht)
Corsair - you are pirates. (Mash up with tables from Poison'd at your own risk)
Biological Research Mission
Extraordinarily Legitimate Business Folk (Smugglers)
Private research vessel - Don't ask any questions and you will be paid. Those were not screams.
Empire licensed foundation or institute science vessel
Trade Boat
Flyte - a special type of inner coreworld imperial fast trading vessel, styled after a quick haul warp one vessel but with a gravity drive capable of dropping into the second Sub-ether. (though an absolutely tiny vessel for such deep etheric operations; the crew of such a ship can be EASILY overwhelmed by common threats of travel. Much more dangerous.)
Passenger vessel - see pp
Exploration vessel
Salvage - the hull is ancient, pre-Imperial but intact. Somehow it's up and moving now.
"No Ma'am, we're musicians." Whatever *type* (roll again) of ship it is, it's filled with a traveling band and its crew and entourage. Roll d5 to determine ship god - 1. Harmonyx the Soundwave 2. The Balladeer 3. Mok 4. Or just make Daft Punk your Ship's God; you were going to anyway. Interstella 555!





What is in the ship's locker?

A single unwashed environment suit with minimal battery power and no atmo in its tanks.
A somewhat mummified G-ration from 6 jumps ago.
Space.....Herpie (init +4 AC 16 HD 1d6 SA: EWWWWW (all are at -1 to hit it for fear of touching it) Makes disgusting blotch on deck when killed SV F+0 R +6 W+1
A note from the Captain politely explaining that he can't stand any of you anymore and he's jumped ship and sold you out to pirates and/or the authorities. Good luck!
Clubs. And Daggers. And two punctured environment suits
A dog-eared, printed advert for Mr. Scattergun Monthly but no weapons.
A full janitorial load out. Mops, buckets, push brooms, static bags, brushes, and a variety of cleansers that you probably shouldn't inhale like that. A single spare but dingy jumpsuit.
A dead red shirt; queue the Star Trek twist music. 5% chance also of an unopened Za pod, which contains an alien parasite.
1 Neuronic Whip, 2 Sticky Nets,
A single pain stick at half charge and a coil of sticky rope with handling gloves (Humanoid).
4 antipersonnel tasps, 4 Sticky Nets, 1 Antipersonnel Sonic Ship rechargeable E-cells for each.
A 200 year old Trixie series sexbot, in at least 50% disassembly
A brace of slug throwers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Scatterguns with hull-safe loadout, 4 and 3
A hologram of a power bow, a stick, a blue cloak, green hat, a shield and a glowing wooden club, suspended over the actual contents of the locker. Roll again. If you somehow get this result again, either (1-3) those aren't holograms (4-5) they aren't holograms AND they are magic items (6) the locker contains a portal to fantastical world with three or more suns. The portal will close behind them if used.

What is the ship?

1. *The Vulgar Boojim*
2. *Mojo Rising*
3. *Vermillion Permanent Assurance*
4. *Doom snake*
5. *Smoke Treader*
6. *Bhong of Cthulhu*
7. *Eridani Sunset*
8. *Altair Fig*
9. *The Most Excellent Yellow Voyager of Transportation and Conveyance*
10. *Cat's Claw*
11. *Graywand*
12. *Traitor's Grace*
13. *Astromancer's Bride*
14. *Nomad Seeks Nothing*
15. *Eon Phoenix*
16. *Wazabi Starshine*
17. *Volcanic Slut (formerly the Olympus Eruption before hijack)*

By what means does the ship safely travel through the Ether?

Instructions: Roll 1d8 (1-5 Ship's little God, 6-7 Navigator, 8 AI God)

The Gods in the Ships

The ten thousand gods of the travelling pantheon

The largest, oldest ships have ship gods that guide their travel through the aether without danger, so-called "Little Gods" of the Noosphere and the Sub-ether that aid navigation, travel, and survival through the Otherworlds. These ship gods are often what protect the ship and its crew from the dangers of noosphere exposure and Sub-etheral traffic.'

Each ship, a literal vessel for the navigating entity, is the heart of a roaming nation in space. The vessel is temple, housing for its crew-cult, and place of power for that entity all at once.

Some of the oldest of these Ship's Gods offer other unique to purpose magic or psionic benefits, sometimes items; (It's power can be used to create stuff presumably, poss. Including short term healing?)

Manifesting in flight – as the starship becomes a literal vessel for the entity, it can on a limited basis manifest physically (or as physically as those within the ship) or otherwise make demonstrable effects known. Such a manifestation may take the form of a being with HD (see description), or to repel/destroy sub-etheric threats, or to heal those aboard the vessel.

Spectral Repulsion – rating in HD indicated is the number of HD of Spectral threats and undead beings that are driven from the God's sight, burning with wrath. These dice can be used to turn, destroy, or purge (say engage in an exorcism with a possessed crew member)

Healing or Corporeality –use the Manifest die, in number equal to the current Sub-ether depth. In theory this can be used by PCs in a pinch in practice this is generally used to keep crew safe, healthy, and fit.

Ship's God Minimal stats – drive rating 1, repulsion d2 Manifestation 0

There is one more category – "emergent" ship gods. Even on ships where the ship gods are not (yet) real, sufficient voyages in the Otherworlds, and sufficient devotion can make them so. Calling like, or apparently like, beings from elsewhere or creating them whole cloth. (See Patron Bond Ship's God on pp)

Note to the Judge:

When creating Ship's Gods, chose or make up patrons that feature or are connected to domains of pseudo divinity relevant to the spacers and their ilk

Air

Cannibalism

Exploration

Sub-ether

The dead

Memory

Where possible, Ship's Gods should throw lots of exorcisms, protections v. the dead and so forth.

Ship's God Minimal stats – drive rating 1, repulsion d2 Manifestation o

Who is the Ship's God? (XðX ship Gods tables)

Via Transit
Eris Discordium
Great Cthulhu - Ia IA
Nyx Galaxsea - Goddess of Wonder and the spaces between the stars
Ptah - the Old; the Way
Ishtar Eternia - the Terragenetic mother
Lyra Starfire - the Eternal Hero
The Empress - the empire builder
Bella Fortune
Colossus - memory shell of an ancient Solar supercomputer.
Hool Na'aaz - the star jockey of the Rim's fallen empires
<p>A demon? Roll or see the list of additional ideas on page 342</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Juellea Bellix - the slime girl 2. Ares the demon of war 3. N'gah that which consumes, the spirit of consumption of that which rots away between misjumps
<p>One of the many Benevolent God Minds of Superspace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Laika the Space Dog (see Patrons) 3. Vegas Fortunatis - the superspace radio shell of Vega-5. 4. Kasarbi M'Nell - the War on the deeps of the hidden places 5. Gagarin mind - the sentient legend of the First Great Explorer

More little gods of the thousand tribes

1. The Mother ship
2. A Space nymph
3. An alien collective intelligence that survived the death of its biosphere but wants to see the galaxy
4. Executron, Lord of the Airlock
5. Alien space baby – salvaged after vessel collided with its own, slaying its parents.
6. Long marooned mythical, now free
7. The Phantom of Deneb – the phantom reaches with its mind tendrils from beyond the Negative Zone, drawing ships toward its domain. You have pacted with it to bring ships to it. Space Pirates!
8. The Lord of Doors
9. The Many Eyed one Whose Gaze Sees Forever
10. The lord of proper computations
11. The Hollow Eyed Goddess Whose Gaze Sees Ghost Worlds
12. The Blessed Lady of Full Holds
13. The Master of Cargo
14. Zomithirax the Air Collector (devil; lord of air taxation)
15. Ooonis – the eater of flesh
16. The Great Memory Cube
17. St. Virgil o' Charts
18. Rock Lord – Earth Patron of asteroid miners
19. Foliage type blessed boy of sweet renewing air. A male presented plant spirit, the spirit of "the air" via pollen. Very fertility focused as well.
20. St. Peter von Hellsing / Crushing. A noosphere being that looks like Peter Cushing (or a mashup of his roles anyway) and the little god demands that the ship primarily focus on its mission of hunting down and killing vampires.

Other forms of Helming

Ship with an AI God (Slave, Zen) Mech Navigators may be the most difficult to "grow" successfully as they do not innately map to the galaxy's orgosphere.

Patron AI God - as patron but uses rules for material existence: -1 on all drive, transit, and arrival times rolls. ? D10 HD/point spent; poss. +1 on precision things

- Note that these are imparted to a Navigator if for some reason a Navigator is working with an AI god in such a fashion.

Navigator – rarest in this day and age, a member of one of the remaining Navigator families is resident on your vessel; in many respects this is her ship.

Notes: Ship's AIs will have an attendant class of InfoTechs, Ship Gods an attendant class of Godkeepers and/or clerics, and Navigators will likely but not definitely have a retinue of psions and/or attendants.

Who is the Ship's Navigator (ꜥꜥꜥ) Navigator tables

1. Taansenyella – of House Aveltirith
2. Towatriptadoylae – of House Aveltirith
3. Sand Virst – apprentice navigator of the house of Ozma-ogox
4. Maximia Cecillia – the runaway Navigator (House Ozma-ozox)
5. Hieronymous Rielpak – of the house of Ogolix
6. Ialthea Tillyarde – of the house of Ozma-ozox
7. Burafyett Nine – of the House of Ogolix
8. Golgol Brule' – mad cybernavigator of House Ozma-ogox
9. Ulanee Farcaster of the house of Ogolix.

Who is the Ship's AI? – Mech Navigators may be the most difficult to "grow" successfully as they do not innately map to the galaxy's orgosphere.

1. Built with the starship, the intelligence regards the vessel as it's body, and those within it as it's children. The Ship mind is old, experienced, and in no way off the shelf. Likely it's personality matrix has gone a little off with extended use.
2. Father series – models might include the Zheng He, Francis Drake, the Neville Kingston Brown, etc.
3. Dodecahedral mind – navigation as philosophical inquiry. They tend to get hooked on a particular type of voyage, sometimes this means misjumps or deliberative inter-splinter hops.
4. Tranquility – a Phoebe¹ series AI Helm navigator ; Tranquility is actually a late beta test model for the final Data shell of the full production model; once the line went into production after some ten or twenty years of trials Tranquility became space rated and was given her choice of a small array of (ship) options into which she would like to be fitted.

Spacers are a superstitious lot; they have to be. Just going from one system to another can be an adventure unto itself at times. And in the deeper layers of the Sub-ether, even momentary belief is dangerous.

Spacers are also a cliquish bunch. If you are from the same vessel, you are family, community, nation, and lifestyle all rolled into one happy bizarre unit with everyone else from your ship. Aboard ship yes but especially when off vessel wearing your tags, flying your colours, is very very important.

“Always get your insides hosed out when you come back from shore leave. Leave that dreggu dirtside where it belongs.”

¹ The Phoebe series is one of Goddess Omnimechanix greatest most successful creations, a series of stable AI God minds that are Navi sensitive, one of only two such production lines in existence

TABLES FOR THE THOUSAND TRIBES OF SPACE

Crew Identifiers (2d3) (number d3-1)

1. Ink
2. Ritual scarification
3. Ornamental implants (gemstones, etc)
4. Clothing/uniform
5. Standardized implant or mod (like - everyone has implanted rabbit ears frex)
6. Ship language - ship has unique cant
7. A shipboard disease; poss. A harmless STD or equivalent that marks but does not infect
8. Your clothes are made from the skins and remains of your enemies (also their stuff). You know. You keep what you kill. All that.
9. Code (Masonic Handshake!)
10. Common jewelry or embedded ornaments (could be bracelets, rings, or piercings frex)

Ship Culture

Crew Taboos (d5) (number d3)

1. Never take part in the services or activities of another Ship's God EVER
2. Your fluids are belonging to your tribe and your God; do not exchange fluids with non-crew.
3. You are forbidden from wearing a particular colour under any circumstances
4. You must be ritually married to the ship's Captain or other senior officer for one year (or month, whatever)
5. Once you have joined the crew you take a new name. NEVER use your old name. NEVER allow anyone else to speak that name or you will die.

Crew Practices (d6) (number 1d4, +1 for every)

1. Mass Recycling Services - the dead are recycled in batches and a large funereal type (Could also be a wake) services occurs at that time.
2. Ritual Hunt
3. Crew broken into smaller clusters; each considered a family. Likely this means the PCs are considered a family unit, defined however the players like.
4. To become an officer, crew members must quest for the ship's point of origin; find the world or settlement at which the ship's hull was originally constructed. Likely this will require them to leave the ship.
5. Adolescent pilgrimage - those born on ship are sent away for 1-5 years to learn their way around the galaxy; likely it is expected they will leave or bring back something of use or value to the ship.

Crew Memes (d3) (roll or pick up to d3+1)

1. All souls hail from the subether; dying in real space is considered bad mojo and a ritual of purification will have to occur before they are recycled. (Example - at death all must have their eyes open and be looking upward in the ether)
2. Space itself, in its emptiness, is actually a patient, hungry goddess. Sometimes that goddess must be appeased before or after very long space journeys.
3. The planet bound have lesser souls and are not to be trusted as full persons.

Crew Identifiers (2d3) (number d3-1)

1. Ink
2. Ritual scarification
3. Ornamental implants (gemstones, etc)
4. Clothing/uniform
5. Standardized implant or mod (like - everyone has implanted rabbit ears frex, or everyone has the same model of optical implants or whatever)
6. Ship language - ship has unique cant
7. A shipboard disease; poss. A harmless STD or equivalent that marks but does not infect
8. Your clothes are made from the skins and remains of your enemies (also their stuff). You know. You keep what you kill. All that.
9. Code (Masonic Handshake!)

4 increasingly antagonistic Spacer notions

1. Worlds and planets are fine things and all and I do enjoy visiting them, but proper survival instincts mean knowing when it is time to leave that gravity well behind. Almost always, soon, and often.
2. Dirthuffers are idiots. Get enough of them in one place and they get real strange ideas real fast. Must be all that.... Air
3. You want to know what causes mutants? Unregulated Gravity wells do. Live on one of those planets constantly long enough and of course your genome is going to get peculiar. Best to stay with your family, out here, in the void.
4. Give it a generation or two and you too can be infiltrated by dirt-scrubbing microbes, vegetal pollens, and other infiltrating organisms, ready to hijack your behavior and mind. And that's before they started changing your genes.

Favored Areas of Space: (d12) (singular)

1. The Somtow Expanse
2. Orion Sector
3. The Core
4. Frontier (Rim)
5. Frontier (Coreward)
6. The Neutral Zone
7. The Forgeworlds sector
8. The Yui-Laosh Imperial Free Trade Zone
9. Spinward Autonomous Trade Organization space
10. Gateway sector
11. The Federated Imperial Co-Development Zone
12. A void (a lesser rift, the space between spiral arms, above the galactic plane, beyond the galaxy)

Lucky / Blessed omens: (d8) (singular)

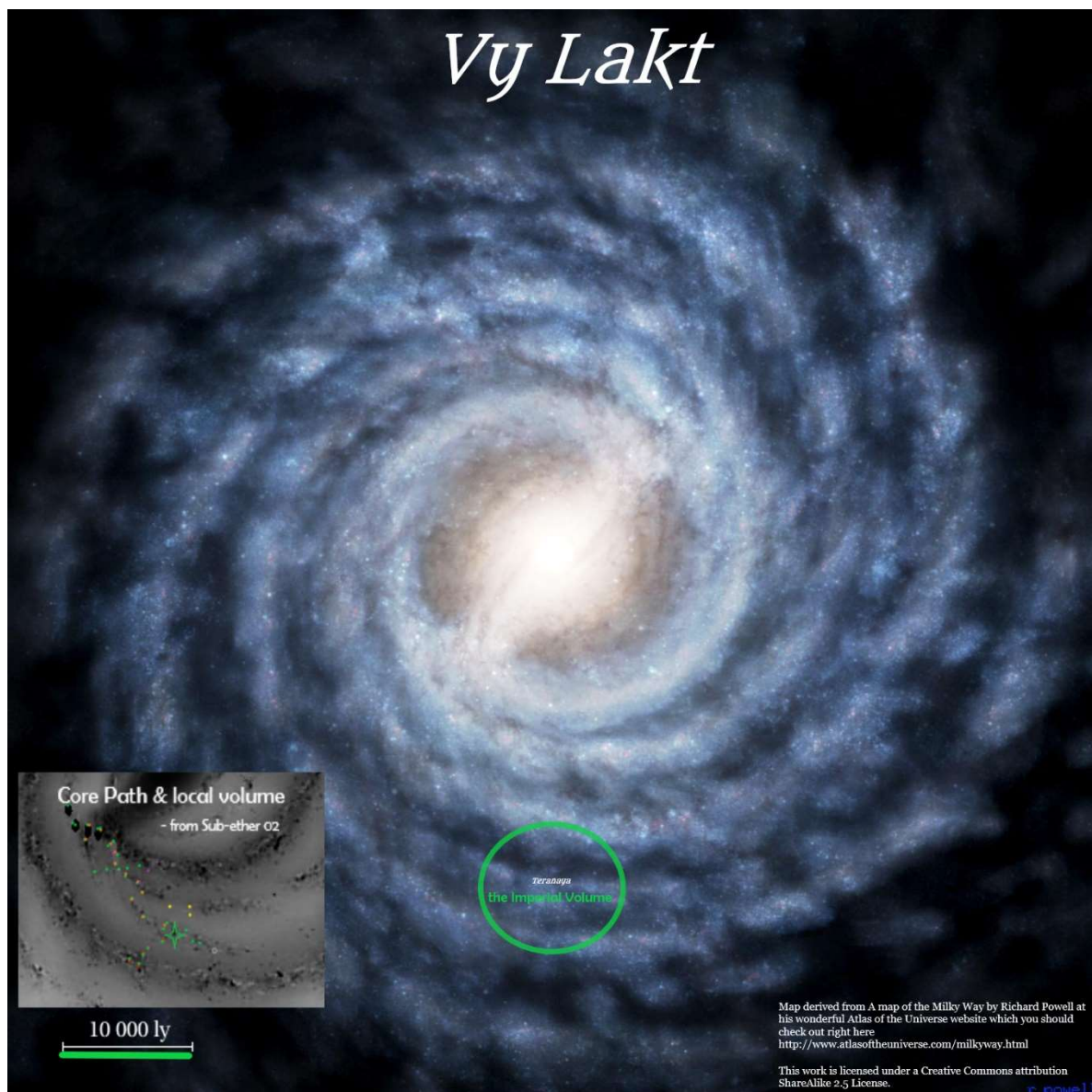
1. A number or series of numbers
2. A phrase, likely an ancient one that has lost original meaning
3. A symbol
4. Any combination of a single pressure suit, one melee weapon, and one non-melee weapon, when found together.
5. 23 sporks
6. 2 identical and adjacent airlocks

Likely shipboard organizations

Crew Memory – they maintain the wall or other data; theirs is the lore of what the ship tribe has done before now.

10 Readily available cargoes

1. Common (Deadsicles,
2. Precious metals (Titanium, Strontium, Mithral, Adamantine, Neutronium, Crystaliron, etc.)
3. Cybernetic parts
4. Radioactives
5. A signed and sealed Slimes consignment.
6. Crystals
7. Gene seed (stored in secure containers. Likely with its own accompaniment)
8. Computronium



Passenger vessels

(of which there are never really very many) and especially yachts (the majority of them) have a reputation of being party vessels. While much of this is contempt and envy of the lifestyle of those aboard, much of it has at least a grain of truth to it. Why? Quite simply, it is necessary to keep the passengers (read: those not accustomed to interstellar travel) distracted from what is going on outside the ship and what may be manifesting, at times, in and around the ship). From simple numbers the easiest and commonest method is to get everyone extraordinarily intoxicated in a variety of substances, provided they elicit a certain...variety of distraction of course.

In those instances, in which such a ship misjumps, at the least you can suggest that they died happily.

Unusual Passenger Events

1. Each time the ship has jumped, the last three jumps, a wealthy passenger the ship's Captain is trying to court as patron has had some sort of seizure, each time thereafter claiming to have seen some sort of colossal stellar explosion. Possibly an actual supernova. The passenger seems not to have any Psi ability, nor any psionic devices; moreover, the passenger is increasingly alarmed, and the Captain wants the matter dealt with before the passenger abandons the negotiations.
2. It happens. Even if unwanted, sometimes it is necessary to carry....dodgy cargo. The hold of a medical ship, declared lost over 1200 years ago, contained over 300 intact cryotubes. Which the ship has been impressed (in one manner or another) into carrying at maximum gravity warp to an Imperial Starbase. Now however, just after jumping, the tubes lose power. Do you thaw out 311 disoriented anachronism or risk carrying the cargo intact to Starbase in the hopes that they will take custody, hopefully to revive them. Or whatever. Not asking the Captain.
3. Someone, possibly an old flame or (less stereotypically) a teacher, work acquaintance, even an old bully, turns up on the passenger manifest. Save that they are supposed to be dead. Likely they are a clone, a twin, or possibly their likeness was purchased for use on organiform robotoids...or they are deader resleeves. Perhaps most likely and most elusive, it is no one they know, merely someone who happens to be a precise physical match. Or appears to be. Optionally, the Judge can always play it this way, only to reveal it later to be an actual ghost of the deceased, drawn here not by malice or by the ship's ghost scoop,
4. One or more among them are hijackers with backing, training, equipment, and a plan
5. As above but they have neither training nor backing and so are all the more dangerous for their total amateurishness
6. One of them is an old, decrepit energy being who has been living among the "meat beings" to learn about their strange society. IT is done now and it's last act is to go back to its home nebula and disperse back into the cloud. Likely to mistaken for a suicide or poss. Hostage situation
7. One of the passengers is not there; it is a ghost that only (one character determined at random) can perceive. The ghost acts like a passenger just to make things stranger. The ghost is trapped in a loop recreating it's destruction. Is the ship now on course for whatever destroyed the ghost's original vessel?

Also see Ghost Tea pp.

In Transit Events - Shipboard

1. A minor shipboard infection is spreading, likely derived from the last planetfall or receipt of cargo.

2. Meme outbreak in one compartment of vessel. Harmless but annoying

3. Recurrent sub-ether hauntings - **The dying spaceman**

common enough as an early symptom of space dementia, a common hallucination in jump sickness, and consequently, a common enough form for noosphere little gods to take when confronted with the above. Often seen out of the corner of the eye or only through indirect optics for created characters. At its most visceral it will appear not quite close enough to touch, horizontal, on a plane with the viewer's center of gravity, writhing an indeterminate humanoid form in an early vacuum suit writhing about as though out of air in the deeps of space.

Rarely, it is reported that some not experiencing any of these symptoms will hallucinate the very same image...and later find that it presages their own potential demise.

4. THE PHANTOM IS WATCHING - **The Phantom of Deneb**, a phenomenon that goes back to the dawn of history; an Intelligence of some kind that reaches out after antimatter storms and attempts to seize mental control of passing spacecraft.

Perhaps it is reaching out from the Negative zone?



Dying Spaceman premonition sub table

1. The viewer will run out of air or other essential gasses within 3d12 hours
2. Will save (DC PERS score + Level)
3. An associate or someone close to the viewer will have trouble in space or within a vacuum or environment suit.
4. Viewer will be jittery and uncertain when next on EVA or while within a vacuum or environment suit for any significant length of time (over 4 hours enclosed) most direct to suit and environment relevant tasks will be initially one step lower on the dice chain

Some real horror show crew complications

We're going to want some of your blood

At some point 1-3 members of the crew were turned. You have no idea how. You are just now learning. They are obviously new and uninstructed as they are -trying- to be reasonable. They approached you because they thought you wouldn't just space them.

Look dirtscrubber there is nothing in the airlock

There is new crew aboard from a low tech planet. At least one of them however seems to suffer the persistent hallucination that something is scraping at lock C-37, trying to get in. Their work duties and initial habitation take them by that bulkhead at least five times a day.

It is a hallucination right?

It's certainly not a ghost that has possessed this poor dirthumper just to get aboard vessel to cause mayhem right? You've done nothing to anger the dead right?

Scrrriiitch scrrriiitch scrrriiitch

the signal is coming from inside the ship

You keep hearing persistent...voices? A voice? In the signal static every time you use a particular item of equipment. All test channels come up negative, there is nothing electronically wrong with the gear, and you can get it exorcised and nothing is tethered to it.

So, what's making that noise? Asking forhelp? It's asking you to come to the drive chamber. Alone. You may be thinking how unlikely it is that some life form got trapped in the gravity drive but what if what of those Imperial Certified Gravitational Engineers is up to something?

Red Velvet Lines

You have just found out the hard way that you are harboring a secret cult aboard your craft. Up to 6 other members of the crew are most certainly not dedicated to the ship's god or other belief system but instead to whomever demanded this bloody sacrifice you just literally walked into.

Alternately, they are all experienced vampires and are looking to expand their operations. Either way you are in trouble.

Undead undead undead undead

A modest proposal

IT just makes that kind of sense, for one part of the crew...to eat another part. Why?

Terrifying acts of sabotage

Someone injects vampiric ichor directly into the Navitank *while the ship is in flight* – the shock hits the navigator like a proverbial two ton heavy thing. Ship misjumps at +5 on the roll.

Navigator must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or suffer immediate life threatening trauma and possibly death. The worse off the navigator is, the more hosed the ship should be.

FIND THE SABOTAUR

Why did these spacers REALLY let you aboard?

These are the voyages of our thirsty space gods

Regrettably for the new crew or passengers (that is, the Player characters) the primary use the Spacers aboard ship have for them isto feed their ship's Little god.

Soon you will become a True Believer

The ship did not need new crew, not in the way they said. But their Ship's God is hungry for new followers. Perhaps it has reasons to swell its ranks now.....

Parts is Parts

Running off with strangers on a strange ship into the unknown is very very very good way to wind up a pile of spare parts crystalizing in cryo or hanging out in a stasis field. Are you a good match for certain crew members with degenerative conditions?



GALAXY **BLACK**



**Star travel & the Secrets of the
Sub-ether**