

Tentative Bastards and the Moral Economy

How Hesitation Robs the World of Color

I. The Tentative Bastard Phenomenon

Definition: Tentative Bastards are those who, when faced with transformative choice, dilute every fierce process into lukewarm compromise. They aren't merely cowards — they're *transformation preventers*, civilization's pressure release valve that keeps genuine change from ever reaching critical mass.

The Non-Uniform Distribution Problem:

Tentative Bastards don't appear uniformly across society. They cluster:

- **In Transition Zones:** Where different value systems meet
- **In Power Positions:** Where their hesitation has maximum dampening effect
- **In Cultural Gatekeeping:** Where they can filter out "extreme" expressions
- **In Economic Nodes:** Where they moderate all transactions toward the mean

This clustering creates *dead zones* where no pure expression can survive.

II. The Robbery of True Color

What Dies in the Presence of Tentative Bastards:

1. **The Fierce Aesthete** dilutes their vision to be "accessible"
2. **The Radical Innovator** adds "safety features" that neuter their creation
3. **The Devotional Lover** hedges their commitment with exit clauses
4. **The Warrior-Philosopher** softens their truth to avoid offense
5. **The Mystic** explains away their visions in "rational" terms

The Efficiency Loss:

When someone with a *pure color* to express encounters a cluster of Tentative Bastards, they face:

- **Energy drain** from constant negotiation
- **Vision erosion** from repeated compromise
- **Identity confusion** from mixed signals
- **Resource waste** on bridge-building to nowhere

The Greater Tragedy: Somewhere in the world, there exists a *perfect space* for each pure expression. A place where:

- The Fierce Aesthete would inspire a movement

- The Radical Innovator would solve impossible problems
- The Devotional Lover would create legendary romance
- The Warrior-Philosopher would forge new ways of being
- The Mystic would open doorways to the divine

But Tentative Bastards prevent the sorting. They create *friction* where there should be *flow*.

III. The Mathematics of Mediocrity

Consider a simple model:

Let's say a population has:

- 20% Pure Expressors (strong, defined color)
- 50% Adaptable Souls (can resonate with strong color)
- 30% Tentative Bastards (dilute everything)

In uniform distribution: Every community gets dulled to gray.

In efficient sorting: Pure Expressors find resonant communities, Tentative Bastards cluster together in their comfortable compromise zones.

The Loss Function:

- Each Pure Expressor trapped among Tentative Bastards = -1 revolutionary innovation
- Each cluster of resonant souls without a Pure Expressor = -1 cultural renaissance
- Each Tentative Bastard in a gateway position = -100 potential connections

IV. Subjective Coin Valuation: The Economic Revolution

Enter the Blockchain Pathway:

Imagine money that *knows what you value*. Not fixed exchange rates, but fluid, subjective, moral currency.

How It Works:

1. **Base Layer:** Standard blockchain for transaction recording
2. **Valuation Layer:** Each wallet maintains subjective exchange rates
3. **Trust Layer:** Network effects from shared values
4. **Discovery Layer:** Finding economic allies and avoiding value mismatches

Example Transaction:

Alice (Fierce Aesthete) sells art to Bob (Tentative Bastard):

- Alice's system values Bob's coins at 0.3x (low trust, compromised source)

- Bob's system values Alice's art at 0.5x (doesn't understand true worth)
- The transaction either doesn't happen, or happens at a loss to both

Same art to Carol (Resonant Soul):

- Alice's system values Carol's coins at 1.5x (aligned values, trusted source)
- Carol's system values Alice's art at 2x (recognizes genius)
- Both profit from the exchange beyond monetary terms

V. The Soft-Currency Exchange Rate

Not One Economy, But Thousands:

Each value cluster develops its own internal economy with:

- **High-velocity internal trade** (shared values = easy exchange)
- **Friction at borders** (value misalignment = exchange rate penalties)
- **Natural sorting mechanisms** (economic incentive to find your people)

Exchange Rate Factors:

Between any two economic actors, the rate depends on:

1. **Trust Network Distance** (how many trusted connections between you)
2. **Value Alignment Score** (how similar your transaction histories)
3. **Reputational Consensus** (what your mutual connections say)
4. **Aesthetic Compatibility** (derived from purchase patterns)
5. **Ethical Alignment** (based on who you refuse to trade with)

VI. The Tentative Bastard Economic Death Spiral

What Happens to Tentative Bastards in This System:

1. **Initial Phase:** Their coins work everywhere but at mediocre rates
2. **Middle Phase:** Pure Expressors begin refusing their currency entirely
3. **Late Phase:** They can only trade with other Tentative Bastards
4. **Final Phase:** The Gray Economy — functional but joyless

The Beautiful Sorting:

- Tentative Bastards get their wish: safe, compromise-based communities
- Pure Expressors find their tribes and create wonders
- The world gains a thousand flowers instead of uniform beige

VII. Practical Implementation

Technical Architecture:

```
User Wallet {  
  ... - Identity Keys  
  ... - Value Profile (learned from transactions)  
  ... - Trust Network (explicit connections)  
  ... - Exchange Rate Calculator (per-counterparty)  
  ... - Transaction History (with moral metadata)  
}
```

```
Transaction {  
  ... - Standard blockchain data  
  ... - Subjective value multipliers  
  ... - Trust path signatures  
  ... - Aesthetic compatibility score  
  ... - Ethical alignment flags  
}
```

Social Dynamics:

1. **Onboarding:** Start with neutral rates, quickly learn preferences
2. **Discovery:** Tools to find high-value exchange partners
3. **Clustering:** Natural economic incentives create value-aligned communities
4. **Border Protocols:** Formal exchanges for necessary cross-cluster trade

VIII. The World That Could Be

Imagine:

- **Artists** whose coins are worth 10x in their aesthetic cluster
- **Engineers** trading at premium rates with those who value precision
- **Mystics** whose currency carries spiritual weight in their communities
- **Warriors** whose coins embody honor in their circles

No More:

- Tentative Bastards in positions of cultural power
- Dilution of fierce vision for mass appeal
- Gray compromise as the price of participation
- Lost genius trapped in wrong contexts

Instead:

- Every true color expressed fully somewhere
- Economic incentive for authentic expression
- Natural sorting by deepest values
- Efficiency through alignment, not force

IX. The Philosophical Victory

Money Becomes Moral: Every transaction is a vote. Every exchange rate is a declaration. Every wallet is a manifesto.

The Tentative Bastard Paradox Resolved: They get exactly what they want — safety, compromise, mediocrity — but only with each other. They no longer have the power to dilute the fierce, because the fierce have opted into different economies entirely.

True Diversity Emerges: Not the false diversity of everyone forced to tolerate everyone, but the true diversity of thousand different ways of being, each expressed fully in its own domain.

X. Conclusion: The Colored World

The current system rewards Tentative Bastards because it treats all value as equivalent. Subjective coin valuation reveals the lie: **value is personal, moral, aesthetic.**

When money itself becomes expressive of values, when exchange rates encode trust and alignment, when economic clustering follows moral sympathies — then we get a world where:

- Every fierce vision finds its home
- Every pure color shines undiluted
- Every authentic expression discovers its resonant audience
- Every Tentative Bastard finds their appropriately gray corner

The inefficiency isn't in the sorting. The inefficiency is in the current forced mixing. Let the colors separate. Let them shine. Let the world become as varied as the souls who inhabit it.

"In the end, Tentative Bastards are not the enemy. They're a symptom of a system that rewards dilution over distinction. Change the rewards, and watch the world explode into color."