

# On the nature of the Basement Boy

*By Elenore Chesnutt*

The hermit lives alone and foregoes the material world. The monk practises the path of perfection in movement and thought. The high priest operates in the domain of the ethereal and attempts to understand the mysterious.

The basement boy is a loner, often outcast from society, who has created a culture out of invisibility. He exists outside of space and time, primarily manifesting as electronic signal – a video game persona, a software hacker, a laptop deejay, text on a BBS. When he is not occupied with these chosen background roles, he is engaged in escapism. The basement boy lives vicariously through those capable characters which whom he identifies: Deckard, Bruce Lee, Aragorn, Boba Fett, Jet Li. All are admired for their lonesome hero quality as well as their historical or futuristic setting.

To be “in the know” is a key element of the basement boy’s persona. The stereotype of the IT manager’s egotistic superiority complex is the most obvious example. But it can also be seen in the obsessive video store clerk’s meticulous mental catalogue of the Shaw Brothers, Blaxploitation, and gangster movies (see Quentin Tarantino). The irrepressible penchant for one up-manship is a result of this know-it-all-ism. Consequently, relationships with other basement boys seem to be temporary alliances based on mutual respect at best. These tenuous relationships eventually fracture due to a preference each has for being the dominant personality.

Rarely can the basement boy enjoy a thing for its own sake. True, he is passionate about film, but above that is his need to dissect it for the technical elements, the fight choreography, and the relationship to everything that came before it. The basement boy prides himself on being the omniscient master manipulator. And so, he obsessively pursues conspiracy theories, video game cheats, and debunks special F/X. This also explains his willingness to break any beloved object in order to understand how it works.

Underlying all that he does is the basement boy’s essential admiration for strength, wisdom, and power. And although he had many incarnations, the archetypal basement boy lacks the means to achieve all that in a physical sense. Instead, he emulates his predecessors through his mastery of becoming the other, living by the Playstation motto “*your reputation is online*”.

*Written for the inside jacket of the Basement Boy Hardcore DVD album FAMEFAME release*