



Anime History

Dandere

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Like the tsundere? How about the Dandere?

“...hi...(blush)” (Typical dandere quote...by the Anime Historian)

Dandere Etymology:

Dandere is a character archetype meaning a “person with a shy exterior with a soft interior.” Japanese dictionaries do not have a definition for this term, unlike yandere and tsundere, which makes this a fan-speak term. The term is a portmanteau of the two Japanese words 黙り (danmari) and でれでれ. 黙り means “silence” and でれでれ means “lovestruck.” Dandere is the created term.

Dandere:

A dandere is a character that has a shy exterior while retaining a soft core. The shyness aspect can come from multiple sources:¹

Newcomer: Be they a new transfer student in a new school, an employee at a new work place, or having escaped their hometown.

The Loner: Might be because of preference or ostracism. Freakishness optional. Jerkass-ness optional.

Home Schooled: Similar to newcomer, the character has grown up or lived away from others. May or may not come with interesting psychological quirks.

Emo: Some sadness like parental abuse (often seen in Dark Magical Girls) or other kind of angst may keep the character from letting anyone close to them.

Shyness: Some characters (like in real life) are insecure of themselves for whatever reason and are not even able to talk to other people (sometimes temporary).

Lack of self-confidence: Similar to the one above, the character may believe he is not worthy of other people's friendship while craving acceptance.

Incompetence: A character may simply lack the social intuition required to connect with others, regardless of how willing or confident they are.

Unattractiveness: The character is physically repulsive and avoided or mistreated because of that.

Of course these sources of shyness can apply to other character types but for the sake of this investigation into the dandere, we will use these as a main starting point for looking at why the dandere is the way they are. Whatever the source of the shyness, in romantic anime the love interest is usually the only one who can melt the veil of

¹ http://allthetropes.wikia.com/wiki/Friendless_Background

shyness. Which leads into an interesting contrast in character types between the dandere and kuudere.

Dandere/Kuudere:

Dandere and Kuudere character types can be very similar and hard to distinguish between the two types. However, the main difference between the two characters can be best explained in the viewer's perception of "coolness." An introverted librarian is a classic example of a dandere. The viewers and the characters in the show view this character as "shy." Kuudere, on the other hand, can be generalized as being "cool" by either the viewers and/or other characters. Sometimes both the viewers and characters in the show see the character in this way, sometimes not. Obviously, the term has a certain amount of fluidity to it and can really only be explained using distinct examples.

Dandere History:

Dandere is a term that's an offshoot of the more influential tsundere archetype. Asuka Mizunokouji from Urusei Yatsura (1978-1987) can be considered the first Dandere character in anime/manga. If you guys have a different character in mind for the earliest character, please let me know so I can change this section. Below is a copy and pasted description of this character.²

Asuka Mizunokoji (水乃小路飛鳥)

Tobimaro's sister. The very beautiful and petite girl was isolated, according to the Mizunokoji family's tradition, from any and all males from the moment of her birth until the age of 16, at which time an omiai will be held for her to get married. As such, even her brother was unaware of her existence until then.

Thanks to her daily training and the genetics she inherited from her mother, she is insanely strong (once tearing a completely armored tank apart and fashioning it into a makeshift suit of armor on herself with her bare hands), as well as very athletic (being able to run 100 metres within 12 seconds, while wearing her 200 kilogram suit of armour). ***Nevertheless she is extremely timid and deathly afraid of males*** (as a result of her isolation), in part because the first one she ever met was Ataru Moroboshi. Now whenever she sees one, she pushes him away, screams "Eek! A maaan!" ("Aa~! Otokoo~!") (ああ~! おとこ~ ~ !), and runs in terror at high speed from all males, not heeding any obstacles unfortunate to be in her path (such as buildings).

Two Possible Growth Paths:

If the dandere character is an important character in a story, usually they will receive a certain amount of character growth. These are my two interpretations of the possible paths they may take.

Typical Love Story:

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Urusei_Yatsura_characters#Asuka_Mizunokoji

The “typical” dandere story involves a shy person who feels they cannot express themselves in a particular environment. Usually, desired motive for expression is to find friends or a lover. In this way, we can see that the desired character growth for both the viewers and possibly other characters is to see the character grow out of their introverted personality to express their deredere side. The love story narrative grows the character to come out of their shell to learn to express themselves. The focus is then on how the danmari part of their personality if negative and affecting their ability to function within their particular environment. This can be seen as the typical narrative of character growth for a dandere character. However, I feel there is another way to look at this character type in the same country but under different cultural constraints.

Yamato Nadeshiko:

A Yamato Nadeshiko is a Japanese cultural concept of the perfect woman. She will exemplify the neo-Confucian ideals of filial piety and feudal loyalty. Filial piety basically meaning respect to male figures in society. She will project feminine values of loyalty, domestic ability, wisdom, maturity, and humility. A story existing within traditionalist Japanese cultural constraints may explore the feminist growth of a woman in terms of a cultural understanding. Basically, a narrative of character growth shown during this time would exploring the transition from male rule, both psychologically and physically, to empowerment. Although the Yamato Nadeshiko represents a patrilineal design of a male dominated society, this does not suggest that women had no power. A properly done Yamato Nadeshiko is able to work within the system to create an appearance of subjectivity while having inner strength and wit to get what they want. A dandere character growing from shy and oppressed would turn into an ideal Yamato Nadeshiko. In this way, the dandere would not lose their shy exterior but rather use it to get what they want out of their environment. The deredere part of their personality wouldn't be shown so much on the outside but rather a showing of internal growth.

Dandere Narratives:

Tvtropes.org organizes different ways the basic trope of dandere can be manipulated beyond its plain classification.³

Basic Trope: A character is quiet and reserved, but also soft and emotional. This character's emotional side that is more prevalent when he/she is with people that make him/her feel comfortable, like her not-boyfriend Bob.

³ <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/PlayingWith/Dandere>

Straight: Alice appears to be The Quiet One, but she has deep emotions she lets out only with people she feels safe with.

Exaggerated: Alice is a stuttering, fretful Nervous Wreck when any sort of social interaction is involved. But through The Power of Friendship, she becomes a natural-born leader, and maybe even grows a spine in the process.

Justified:

Alice needs to stay focused and to control her emotions.

Alice has No Social Skills and doesn't know how to properly express herself toward other people. The closest she usually gets to most people is typically from behind a corner.

Alice doesn't have the power of trust going well for her.

Subverted: She turns out to be The Social Expert, and appearing quiet and unnoticed was the best way to test the hero and put her scheme right.

Double Subverted: But it was very agreeable for her, because that's how she would naturally be if she relied on something else than manipulation. And now that she has told the heroes, she can genuinely behave that way.

Parodied: Charlie is in love with Alice. His friends tell him that she is not going to pay attention to him, and she seems uninterested. Charlie's poisonous friend Danny successively convinces him that stalking is love, that all girls want bad boys and that he should just eat more peanut butter, because peanut is somehow linked to the bee's pollination, and bees are linked with spring, and Saint-Valentine comes in spring. Alice seems unimpressed, and remains stoic, until he kindly asks her to go out with him... at which point she squees and reveals to have been just as much interested.

Zig Zagged: Alice is that way because she's traumatized, but then she heals, but then she realizes it's useful, but then decides just to be natural.

Averted: Alice has no problem talking about her feelings.

Invoked: Bob wants to know if generally pleasant and peaceful heroine Alice is interested in him, but finds her general distant kindness hard to interpret.

Deconstructed: It takes her a lot to talk about her feelings...

Reconstructed: ...But ultimately she does, and everyone succumbs to her charm.

Played For Laughs: Alice is a quiet, emotionless Stalker with a Crush for Bob, who at first sees her as one relationship upgrade away from psycho girlfriend. Then he finally says hi to her, and she suddenly smiles and reveals she's always wanted someone to talk to her...and finally glomps him.

Thanks for reading! I also have a YouTube channel at "[Anime Historian](#)."

Comments, concerns, hate...I don't care. I love responding to you guys. Put it in the comments section below.