Love Overwhelming

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If there's any concept that is universal across almost every human culture, its the power of love. Love is a very powerful force, but some can say it is too powerful. In Edith Hamilton's book, *Mythology,* the author writes about the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as well as Daphne. The power of love brought Orpheus to do all he could to help his lover, Eurydice, but it had ended up as a miserable failure. In addition, the wishes of Daphne to remain free have also been destroyed by the power of love. It can be said that the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as well as Daphne support the Greek theme of love being an overbearing and destructive force.

Orpheus's love for Eurydice has ultimately become his downfall. Twice he has to endure a great amount of emotional torment. The first time was when the two were having their wedding, Eurydice was stung by a viper and dies after only briefly being in love with her. Hamilton describes Orphesus' grief as "... overwhelming. He could not endure it. He determined to go down to the world of death and try to bring Eurydice back," (108). For such a brief period of relationship to elicit such a strong response is worthy of compliment, but also shows how overbearing love can be. There are many risks associated with going to the underworld. There is the guard dog, Cerberus, the Furies, as well as Hades. All three of which have a reputation for killing or being generally cruel. To take such a large risk after a brief period of love is worthy of honor, but also shows the dangerous overbearing power of love. Orpheus neutralizes these threats due to his talent with the lyre. He managed to strike a deal with Hades where Orpheus was allowed to bring Eurydice up the stairs of the underworld to the regular world provided that during the journey, he never looks back at Eurydice. Things do not go as well when Orpheus and Eurydice are near the entrance to the regular world. Hamilton writes "But now they were almost there...they had stepped out joyfully into the daylight. Then he turned to her. It was too soon; she was still in the cavern. He saw her on the instant she was gone...He was forced to return to the earth alone," (109). A great deal of effort and mental fortitude was required to even reach the exit of the cavern, but a small amount of patience removed by carelessness caused by love resulted in Orpheus losing his dear Eurydice. With a large amount of love fueled effort down the drain, any man would fall into the pits of despair. Orpheus chose to isolate himself from the rest of humanity and live among nature, playing his lyre. However, this would seal Orpheus's fate as his body is butchered by a band of Maenads. His own death was brought upon by a downward spiral fueled by love. Hence, the power of overbearing love has brought ruin to Orpheus.

Secondly, the tale of Daphne also demonstrates the tyrannical power love can exert. Daphne was a wild woman, who the author describes as nevertheless still having beauty. Apollo fell in love with Daphne, but seeing as she desires to never marry, a one sided love situation is created. This pursuit of love by Apollo escalates into physical pursuit which Hamilton illustrates as "As he ran, he sent his voice ahead of him, entreating her... "Do not fear...Stop and find out who I am, no rude rustic or sheppard. I am the Lord of Delphi, and I love you," (120). A god chasing after someone while spouting nonsense about love would inspire fear in many people. Daphne manages to escape Apollo's love by asking for help from her father at the a grave price, who in desperation, changes Daphne into a laurel tree. The power of love inspires desperation in the tale of Daphne, which led to a desperate measure to be taken. Therefore, the power of love robbed Daphne of her freedom.'

Thus, it is a common theme throughout several Greek myths that the power of love can be overbearing and destructive. Orpheus's spiral toward ruin and Daphane's loss of freedom were products of love. Depression, craziness, and imprisonment are the products of love when it has grown too strong.