Through the plays Othello and Macbeth, William Shakespeare prods at Robert Cleaver’s early modern warning, “If she be not subject to her husband to let him rule all household...things will goe backwarde, the house will come to ruine” (88). Through Desdemona and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare interrogates male anxiety of female agency and companionate marriage in the context of the early modern society. There were varied, complex views of women at the time, but a common social fear existed that female strength and choice would impact male power and position in society. Both Lady Macbeth and Desdemona are confined within the misogyny of a patriarchal society, but navigate within that, gaining some personal agency. Their marriages, too, demonstrate devotion and influence from both parties, resulting in more equal partnerships. In the conclusion of both Othello and Macbeth, these strong female characters retreat into more stereotypical versions of dutiful, virtuous wives. I will prove that the extreme nature of these endings suggests that Shakespeare challenges the anxiety, not the agency itself. It is my contention that Shakespeare invites readers and viewers to critique the fear of companionate marriage and female agency. He mocks societal fears about what could happen when a woman tries to “unsex” herself and behaves unnaturally by presenting absurd, severe situations wherein the lives of everyone involved are destroyed.