

**Coelho, M.C. M. N. (2021) “Horses for Ladies, High-riding Women and Whores”, in S. Matheson (ed), *Iconography and Archetypes in Western Film and Television*, MacFarland and Company, 113-23.**

In the 1950s, a number of Westerns showcased the horse as an instrument of freedom and power for the woman who rode and functioned as a symbol of submission and objectification of women in a world controlled by men. Placed in the sphere of “myth,” the horse is a complex symbol, from the Trojan Horse and its connection to Helen in Troy to the modern cinema. In a number of Westerns films in which it is associated with female characters, the horse acts as both an equalizer which gives women as much freedom and power as men and as property that can be branded, tamed and used according to male codes of morality, sexuality and heroism. This paper focuses on scenes in which the horse is closely associated with women in five films: *Forty Guns*, *The Furies*, *Unforgiven*, *The Professionals*, and *The Ballad of Little Jo*. *The Furies* (Anthony Mann, 1950) and *Forty Guns* (Samuella Fuller, 1957), and explores the continuity of some patterns related to the image of feminine, from Homer to Hollywood.