The Connection between The Eye of Horus and The Movie Now You See Me

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I. Introduction

1. Background of the Study

   The criminal and mystery movie *Now You See Me* was released in 2013. Directed by Louis Leterrier, it was a blockbuster movie. The story features four magicians, J. Daniel Atlas, Merritt McKinney, Henley Reeves and Jack Wilder. They all possessed their magical skills respectively. They all received a tarot card for different meanings. They were required to accede to the organization called “the Eye.” The four magicians were named “The Four Horsemen.” In addition, the organization was found to use the magic to rob the bank or syndicate, getting benefit from public in an illegal way. The stolen money was used to give relief to the poor.

2. Purposes and Method of the Study

   The movie *Now You See Me* was on one year ago. The special effects did fascinate the audiences, but the thing that we were more curious about is the “eye” that appears in the film continuously. It actually got the idea from Egyptian mythology, the eye of Horus. We hope to find the connection between the documents and the film to know more about the mystery and the eye of Horus.

II. Thesis

1. The meaning of “The Eye of Horus” in the myth:

   It all begins with a murder. An ancient myth describes a battle between Horus and Set, in which Horus’ left eye was torn out. Horus was actually fighting for his father, Osiris, because his father was murdered by Set. As a result, Horus’ left eye was said to be the moon. He was helped to restore the eye with magic by Thoth. It was the origin of “The eye of Horus”.

   The eye was given several meanings. In the movie, it represents the ability to distinguish good and evil.

2. Decoding the movie “Now You See Me” from “The Eye of Horus”:

   After he killed Osiris and ascended to Egypt’s throne, Set expected to reign for a very long time. As it turned out, however, he was sorely mistaken. Set had not reckoned on the birth of Horus or foreseen that this son of his brother Osiris and his sister Isis would come to challenge his uncle for mastery of the lands of the Nile. This
was exactly the course of action Horus pursued when he grew old enough.

First, he summoned the gods of the sacred Ennead, along with a number of other deities, and asked them to sit in judgment, reviewing his claim for the throne that had once belonged to his father. One of these deities was his mother, Isis, who over the years had protected her son from Set and patiently watched the boy grow into adult god. Standing before the other gods, Horus retold the story of how Set had cruelly slain Osiris and unjustly usurped the kingship. Then, having made his case, Horus demanded that he be allowed to take his rightful place on the throne. All the gods were impressed by his powers of oratory. And many immediately accepted his claim, agreeing that it would be only right for a king’s son to inherit his titles and property.

From the Egyptian mythology, we can see that Horus stands for justice and revenge. Also, the villain in the story is Horus’ uncle, Set, whom didn’t really believe in the gods. Comparing the movie with the mythology, we can come up with the chart below, which shows how the Egyptian myth affects the characters in the movie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counterpart in Egyptian myth</th>
<th>Dylan Rhodes</th>
<th>Alma Dray</th>
<th>Thaddeus Bradley</th>
<th>Lionel Shrike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>FBI agent</td>
<td>job</td>
<td>1. ex-magician</td>
<td>1. a drowned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>partner</td>
<td>2. having the job</td>
<td>magician</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>of revealing</td>
<td>2. Agent Rhodes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>magic tricks</td>
<td>father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key characteristic</td>
<td>taking revenge for</td>
<td>a Paris citizen</td>
<td>didn’t believe in</td>
<td>drowned in a box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his father</td>
<td></td>
<td>magic and was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>logical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Horus and Dylan:

By analyzing Dylan’s act, we can figure out he may be Horus! In the movie, Dylan has disguised himself as a FBI agent and his skills of confusing the audience shows that he has the same wisdom as Horus himself. By creating a secret society, “The Eye,” and gathering up the four horsemen to help him, he imitated Horus, who took action for revenge. Also, from the name of the society and the number of the horsemen, all of them are the clues that shows Dylan may be Horus.
b. **Isis and Alma**

“Very good and you know why? Because Paris is an Egyptian city. It has pyramids, Sphinxes, statues, and even the Luxor Obelisk!”

*City Of The Winds, P.D. Baccalario*

From this quote, we can see that Alma Dray is a French, for some reason! Throughout the movie, she kept telling Dylan to keep faith whenever Dylan got logical or impatient. She has a motherly characteristic. Legend has it that Isis has once strolled into the harbor of Paris, so that’s why the movie’s last scene was set in Paris, where Dylan meets Alma. Dylan’s arrival in Paris is like Horus ending his task and returning back to his mother.

c. **Set and Thaddeus**

Thaddeus made money by exposing the truth behind every trick. That’s why he kept spreading rumors that the four horsemen were fake. There’s a quick scene of Thaddeus flipping by a picture of the eye of Horus, saying that Horus’ four sons were peasants who stole from the rich. Being Set, Thaddeus happened to be an older gentleman and have a darker complexion because he’s like a rich, dark deity. Being wiser and more like a God, Thaddeus seemed to see through everything. When he was talking to Dylan for the first time, he mentioned that he had dinner with the magician, Lionel Shrike, and tricked him into a box, drowning him. This is similar to the scene in the Egypt mythology, where Set tricked Osiris into a box and drowned him afterwards.

d. **Osiris and Lionel**

Lionel was drowned, just like how Osiris died in the end. He was Dylan’s (Horus) father, which explains Dylan was taking revenge on him.

3. **The four horsemen and the Tarots:**

The reason why the horsemen were grouped up in four is that Horus had four sons. Since Horus was their father, Isis, Horus's original wife in the early mythological phase, was usually seen as their mother, though in the details of the funerary ritual each son, and therefore each canopic jar, was protected by a
particular goddess. Researchers point out that the sons of Horus protected the contents of a canopic jar, the king’s organs, so they in turn were protected. This explains the reason why the four horsemen were truly loyal to secret society, “the Eye”, because it provided them enough resources to complete each task and left them the best route to escape when they were chased after.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The four horsemen in the movie</th>
<th>J. Daniel (Danny)</th>
<th>Merritt McKinney</th>
<th>Henley Reeves</th>
<th>Jack Wilder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tarots symbols</td>
<td>The Lovers</td>
<td>The Hermit</td>
<td>The High Priestess</td>
<td>Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the movie character</td>
<td>1. illusionist</td>
<td>1. hypnotist</td>
<td>1. escapist</td>
<td>1. illusionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. street magician</td>
<td>2. mentalist</td>
<td>2. street magician</td>
<td>2. street magician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. publically-seen leader of the four Horsemen.</td>
<td>3. self-proclaimed psychic</td>
<td>3. talented impressionist of other people's voices</td>
<td>3. talented impressionist of other people's voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. pickpocket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The Lovers

“The Lovers is predominantly a card of the emotions, and it often portrays love that is divinely blessed.” (http://www.ata-tarot.com/resource/cards/)

As we can see, Danny’s characteristic in the movie is the beloved one and he’s always in the center of attention. This seems to imply that nothing but good can come of this union, though with such a dualistic card there is always the potential for a sad conclusion, despite the best of beginnings. After all, love is like a flame not only because it can ignite the blaze of passion, but also because it can consume and destroy if used carelessly. This explains why Danny got his card when he was busy accompanied by girls. The final meaning of the Lovers is perhaps best illustrated by the image of the card in the Rider-Waite deck, and some of its variants. This image shows the man looking at the woman, who in turn looks at the divine figure above them both. The man cannot see the angel, and he must trust the woman to see it for
him, which explains why Helen used to be Danny’s assistant.

b. The High Priestess

“The Priestess seems to bear the widest range of interpretations, because she speaks directly to the Inner Voice, the unconscious mind.”
(http://www.ata-tarot.com/resource/cards/)

She is the manifestation of the unconscious and the effects of the mysterious in our everyday world, and above all else, the base of potential that is the source of the power wielded by the Magician. This type of balance, as found between potential and creation, masculine and feminine, is the key to unlocking some of the mysteries of the High Priestess. Without this balance there can be no power. The second symbolic motif found in almost all instances of the High Priestess are symbols of the unconscious mind. On the Rider-Waite version this motif is especially prominent, but most decks feature at least some lunar imagery that in turn has ties to the unconscious. Most decks that have the "twin pillars" symbols also depict a veil strung between those pillars; the High Priestess stands between us and that veil as a moderator. Behind the veil lies the powers of the unconscious, which we cannot start to understand but which, through her, we can learn to control. She is the gateway to realms that we may never fully comprehend or master. Also, the goddess’ dress stands for water, so that’s why Henley got her card in the fish tank she performed.

c. The Death

“Death symbolizes transformation. It’s a sign to eliminate things that just aren’t working anymore. It’s reassurance that you can break old habits and change.”
(http://www.biddytarot.com/tarot-card-meanings/major-arcan/death/)

The character is the youngest magician in the organization. He did the same magic to trick audiences and earn money from them several times. Once he played dead in a mission. The mission succeeded perfectly and he was praised by other members that he was no longer a boy. The card symbolizes he is alive and also has an opportunity to grow.

d. The Hermit

“Any preoccupations of the world, no matter how small or inconsequential they may seem, will be heard as shouts that drown out the still voice within........”
Merritt, being able to read people’s mind is like the image of a mentor, showed people how to find the answers that they are seeking within themselves. He was older than the rest; therefore, he was more experienced and a bit like a loner because he was really illuminating in the head.

III. Conclusion:

The movie *Now You See Me* has many connections with Egyptian mythologies. There are some clues that remind the audience of the eye of Horus. First, the organization was called “the Eye.” Second, the book from the federal agent has an eye on it. Moreover, it is a movie that features revenge, just like Horus’s revenge for his father in mythology. At last, the plan those magicians had done for the syndicate, came from their sense of justice.

From the characteristic of the characters, props and the plots, we could know that the whole theme was directed with implication for displaying “The eye of Horus” in Egyptian mythology.

IV. References:

1. Books

2. Websites
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   http://www.akhet.co.uk/4sons.htm
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3. Recorded Media
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALn7Rm__3c4
   Louis Leterrier *Now You See Me* (2013) Summit Entertainment