toward creating self-contained boutiques—or "shop-in-shops"—in department stores across the Middle East and Asia; he also got them to open their first store on Madison Avenue. Rosen also takes an energetic interest in the types of merchandise the designers offered. Hernandez told me, "He will say, 'There seems to be a hole in that collection. I feel like we are missing an indoors jacket. I did one of those and it sold really well—maybe you should find a way to do that.'" Theyskens, who made his name designing intricate, very expensive clothes, told me that joining Theory had been an education in how to create clothing closer to the everyday separates he'd admired on female friends, made by mass brands like Zara. "Andrew is a little bit like our best merchandiser," he said. "He has the flair not necessarily to create the product but to *react* to it, and to understand where there is an opportunity."

For years, Rosen has served as a judge on the C.F.D.A.'s annual talent competition. In 2006, David Neville and Marcus Wainwright, the British designers behind Rag & Bone, were finalists. Rosen, however, had already given the duo his personal seal of approval; the previous year, he had invested in their company, after his son recommended that he take a look at their jeans. Rosen reacted to them the way Rose Marie Bravo had to Theory's original pants: "They just felt different. They were stiffer but comfortable." Wainwright, who had begun the business without any fashion education and was silk-screening T-shirts in his Brooklyn apartment when Rosen made his investment, says that Rosen's leverage gave them access to the vast wholesale business; at the same time, Rosen respected their creative independence. "The confidence he gave us to build our company meant that it catapulted us to a different space," Neville says. Rosen still has a stake in Rag & Bone. "It's the best investment he's ever made," Wainwright boasts.

Rosen has served as a mentor to many of the C.F.D.A. finalists, and his protégés routinely compare him to the Godfather (and, indeed, he is a godparent to Marcus Wainwright's daughter). Under certain circumstances, Rosen can manifest more intimidating, donlike characteristics. I overheard him conducting a brief business call from his car that was an object lesson in the exertion of power. It began with an unflinching critique of the conduct of the person on the other end of the line, shifted to a freighted suggestion that if things continued in this manner their relationship would have to change, and concluded with a jocularly dismissive invitation to be trounced at golf.

Theory's offices used to be on the fringes of the garment district, on Forty-second Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, but in 2005 Rosen followed the lead of other houses and moved downtown. The company now occupies a renovated meatpacking plant on the corner of Gansevoort Street and Ninth Avenue. The new Whitney Museum is rising at the end of the block.

On the ground floor of the headquarters is Theory's flagship store, and one recent afternoon Rosen stopped to inspect the wares: early-fall clothes were arriving, and he wanted to make sure that they were being displayed to his liking. Having been immersed in retail his whole life—when he was at Puritan, he used to make the rounds of the department stores, gathering sales data—he has firm

THE DEATH OF ARGOS

(*Homer's Odyssey, Book 17: 260–327*)

Meanwhile Odysseus arrived along with the swineherd.
They stopped in front of the palace, and all around them
echoed the sound of the lyre; it was Phemius striking
the chords of the prelude as he began his song.
Odysseus took hold of the swineherd's hand, and he said,
"This house right here must be Odysseus' palace.
How splendid it is, and how easy to pick it out
at a glance from a hundred others. One building leads
into the next, and the courtyard is very well built,
with its corniced wall, and the double doors are so solid
that no enemy could break through. A crowd must be feasting
inside now. I can smell the roast meat, and I hear
the lyre, which the gods have made the crown of a banquet."

Then, in response to his words, Eumaeus, you said,
"It is easy for someone as clever as you to notice
that kind of thing. But now we need to consider
what we should do. Either you enter the palace
first and approach the suitors, and I will stay here,
or *you* stay here if you wish, and I will go first.
But don't be too long; someone may see you waiting
and throw a stone or a spear at you. Please be careful."

Odysseus said to him, "All right. I understand.
You go in first, and I will remain behind.
I am accustomed to being beaten and having
things thrown at me. My heart has endured. Before now
I have suffered great hardships, both on the sea and in war,
and if I must suffer another hardship so be it.
But a man can't hide the belly's accursèd craving,
which causes so many evils and makes us sail ships
across the vast sea to bring war upon distant people."

As they spoke, a dog who was lying there lifted his head
and pricked up his ears. It was Argos, Odysseus' dog;
he had trained him and brought him up as a puppy, but never

hunted with him before he sailed off to Troy.
In earlier times the young men had taken him out
with them to hunt for wild goats and deer and hares,
but he had grown old in his master's absence, and now
he lay abandoned on one of the heaps of mule
and cattle dung that piled up outside the front gates
until the farmhands could come by and cart it off
to manure the fields. And so the dog Argos lay there,
covered with ticks. As soon as he was aware
of Odysseus, he wagged his tail and flattened his ears,
but he lacked the strength to get up and go to his master.
Odysseus wiped a tear away, turning aside
to keep the swineherd from seeing it, and he said,
"Eumaeus, it is surprising that such a dog,
of such quality, should be lying here on a dunghill.
He is a beauty, but I can't tell if his looks
were matched by his speed or if he was one of those pampered
table dogs, which are kept around just for show."

Then, in response to his words, Eumaeus, you said,
"This is the dog of a man who died far away.
If he were now what he used to be when Odysseus
left and sailed off to Troy, you would be astonished
at his power and speed. No animal could escape him
in the deep forest once he began to track it.
What an amazing nose he had! But misfortune
has fallen upon him now that his master is dead
in some far-distant land, and the women are all too thoughtless
to take any care of him. Servants are always like that:
when their masters aren't right there to give them their orders,
they slack off, get lazy, and no longer do an honest
day's work, for Zeus almighty takes half the good
out of a man on the day he becomes a slave."

With these words he entered the palace and went to the hall
where the suitors were assembled at one of their banquets.
And just then death came and darkened the eyes of Argos,
who had seen Odysseus again after twenty years.

(*Translated, from the Greek, by Stephen Mitchell.*)

opinions about what works and what doesn't.

He flicked through a rail of women's garments hanging near the entrance. Office-ready pants and shell tops hung alongside collared shirts, sweaters, and jeans. He weeded out all the jeans and sweaters, and dumped them into the arms of the store's visual-merchandising director. "It's much better if there is less going on," he said.

He noticed a pair of white jodhpurs on a store mannequin, and was unhappy that they were wrinkled at the shin. "What does that look like on?" Rosen asked. He crushed the material between his fingers to see if it could be smoothed out. (Apparently, Rosen cannot come near a fabric without testing its stretchiness.)

Afterward, he walked over to a gleaming new Theory factory on Little West Twelfth Street. Rosen sees the facility, which creates samples for the designers, as a potential model for the New York fashion industry. The pattern-makers, cutters, and sewing-machine operators work with equipment that is considerably more modern than the Seventh Avenue standard. Because the samples are made so close to Theory's headquarters, Rosen can easily keep an eye on whether, say, a bonded-jersey jacket that the Colovoses have designed for the Helmut Lang line looks as good on the clothes hanger as it does in a sketch. Once a sample is approved, larger orders are manufactured uptown or overseas.

I joined Rosen at the factory as he reacted to some of Olivier Theyskens's proposals for his spring, 2014, line. Rosen does not look like a fashionista—he wears even his own label's clothes as if he were one of those guys whose girlfriends choose their outfits for them—but Theyskens is every inch the beautiful person. Slight and soft-spoken, with a heart-shaped face and glossy black hair that falls past his shoulders, Theyskens perched on a stool in front of a series of boards that had been pinned with fabric swatches, sketches of garments, and images of vaulted Gothic-cathedral interiors, which had inspired embroidery patterns. Several other designers were present, along with sales staff and merchandising executives. Rosen took a stool as a pair of models emerged from behind a curtain.

He watched as Theyskens's team showed him a trenchcoat with three-quarter-length sleeves and a cunning, flattering fold at the small of the back. Rosen looked the outfit up and down impassively, as if eying a horse at an auction. As other garments were shown to him, he asked a few, very focussed questions: Would embroidery be done on this pant leg and, if so, how much? Could this zipper be replaced with buttons?

When a model appeared in an abbreviated, stonewashed bluejean jacket, the sleeves of which were slashed and frayed from biceps to wrist, skepticism flickered across Rosen's face. He was concerned not just with artistry but with commercial viability.

"You say you like the frays, because it gives the customer a reason to buy," he said. "But we're not doing the frays anywhere else?" He said that he liked the shape, with or without the frayed sleeves.

Theyskens defended the frays, suggesting that he might try doing them in a gray denim wash. Rosen wasn't persuaded: without the frays, the jacket