

Heterotopia and Heterochrony

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Abstract

The essay investigates certain aspects of contemporary fashion through the “Tenet effect”, that is, researching the dynamics of style that are based on the reinterpretation and rewriting of elements of the past, as well as on their updating. The title of the contribution recalls the work of one of the French “nouveaux philosophes”, Michel Foucault, while the “Tenet effect” derives from cinema, precisely from *Tenet* by Christopher Nolan, released in 2020. The reference figure of the interpretation proposed in the essay is that of Riccardo Tisci, in his long phase of collaboration at Givenchy’s; at the helm of the famous French fashion house, the designer puts into practice his techniques of estrangement and reworking of history and the museum, at the same time proving his extraordinary abilities in the genetic tampering of the expressive codes of fashion. The contribution analyzes the men’s and women’s collections in which Tisci has been able to demonstrate that he is a worthy representative of the quotationism typical of his generation of born “around 1970”, in parallel with the visions of Alexander McQueen or Nicolas Ghesquière.

Keywords: Riccardo Tisci; Contemporary Fashion; Quotationism; Revisitation; Remake.

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The “Tenet Effect” between Text and Texture

Anyone who has seen Christopher Nolan’s latest work, *Tenet* (2020), which together with *Inception* (2010) and *Interstellar* (2014) constitutes the final chapter of a sort of “trilogy of time” by the English director, is very likely to have tried not a few perplexities. Not that the previous tests were free from conceptual headaches; *Tenet*, however, really puts a strain on it, because the themes announced in the other two films multiply, or rather are adulterated, become entangled to a much greater extent starting with the title and the inspirational reason that feeds it. As you can well guess, *Tenet* is a palindromic term, in the same way as the suggestive element from which it draws its fascination, namely the magic square of the Sator with the enigmatic inscription “Sator Arepo Tenet Opera Rotas”, widespread in various versions, including the marble one of the cathedral of Siena (Fig. 1). The translation of the string sounds more or less like “the Arepo sower drives the wheels with care”, but it is undoubtedly the palindrome trigger, again, of the whole sentence, as well as the forward-backward of all the others. Terms of the square read from right to left (and vice versa) and from top to bottom (and vice versa). In short, wherever you take it, the phonetic and semantic result does not change, confirming the crucial pivot (also here, literally, “cross”), of the word “Tenet”, placed to act as a keystone in a logic of reading that, beyond the meaning, bases its magnetism on the constant idea of inversion. Nolan’s film is in fact a complicated, albeit powerful linear and counterlinear narrative machine, in the sense that a large part of the plot takes place precisely with an inverted flow compared to the normal succession of events, thanks to an artifact, the arepo indeed, able to determine a direction opposite to the flow of reality. In other words, in the events of the film one travels back in time, but in doing so the protagonists find themselves in a condition of “inverse entropy”, forced to get used to extreme events and situations, given that in the dimension *e contrario* every activity takes place with symmetrically mirrored modes, and therefore any activity must be recalibrated, such as walking with an upside-down gait or using a special device that compensates for breathing. Among other things, the two temporal regimes are distinguished by a different color, red in normal course, blue in inverted position, according to atmospheres that contribute to disorient the vision of the plot, indicating that something deliberately “wrong” or “does not go straight”: that the author’s visionary direction generates out-of-phase, alienating and hallucinogenic situations (Fig. 2).

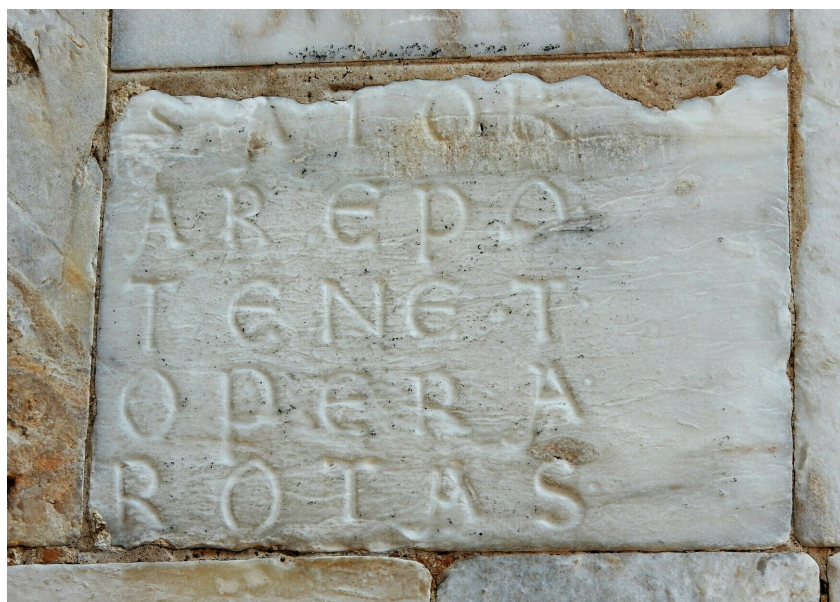


Figure 1: The Sator Square, Siena Cathedral.



Figure 2: *Tenet*, by Christopher Nolan, 2020.

Now, however exaggerated it may seem, Nolan has narrated on celluloid how much culture in general and fashion at the forefront have always testified, certainly with different languages and their own characteristics, but equally split in a binomial phenomenology, in two vectors from opposite directions, so much so that it appears anything but improper to refer to an interpretation paradigm that can be associated with a Nolanian “Tenet effect”. There is therefore an entire line of research projected all the way forward, in a march at times violent and unstoppable that pushes its followers to chase after the new, to track new and unexplored solutions, with the attached corollary of getting rid of everything that belongs to tradition and to the “already seen”; a similar aesthetic-artistic attitude is typical of avant-garde movements, with Marinetti’s Futurism at the forefront, alongside subsequent extensions in the second half of the twentieth century and in the 2000s. But the contemporary also foresees the alternation of a second option, of a recoil, of a retreat, of a bending aimed at re-evaluating the strength of the story, thus setting a course that in its counterclockwise inversion generates the need to turn back, to revive the spell of memory and all its cultural products by going backwards in time, reworking the sedimentation of knowledge and galvanizing its accumulation; also in this case it is easy to find a literal confirmation in the events of De Chirico’s *Metaphysics* and in the numerous revivals that appeared in cycles within the rewriting and quotation, perhaps taking as a paradigm the sign of *The World’s End*, the famous shop of Vivienne Westwood with its hands moving in reverse rotation. In fashion and art, the figure who more than others embodies this double temporal trend, of a Janus turned both towards the past and towards the future, is a character who already in his pseudonym contains the palindromic value of the “Tenet effect”, that is *Thayaht*, born Ernesto Michaelles, famous inventor of the suit in 1920, that is of a simplified and minimal form of new coining, but shortly after, at the end of the decade, he became an excellent auctioneer of a fashion aimed at re-editing peplums and tunics (Fig. 3), Hellenic and Roman helmets and sandals (Fabbri 2019). It is not for nothing that the logo designed by *Thayaht* for Madeleine Vionnet is a perfect example of graphics capable of putting together classical garments, Ionic columns and capitals, in the name of a retrofilic reference yet well aligned with the spirit of the Twenties and Art Deco. In fact, it is better to clarify it, it is not a question of re-proposing the past as it is. To avoid the risk of a sterile copying of past times, each act of revisiting pre-existing materials, drawn from the museum or from the traditional wardrobe, requires a decisive distancing, to be identified in the use of a quotation mark that certifies the past-bound collection with the necessary indices of variation if not with the necessary detachment of irony, perhaps by treating the mass of traditions in the

form of stereotypes. The philosophical investigations of Gilles Deleuze with his *Différence et Répétition*, Jacques Derrida in *L'Écriture et la différence*, not least the extensive exegetical embrace developed by Renato Barilli in *Tra presenza e assenza*, testify to a similar conduct of thought. And it is precisely on this articulated theoretical background that the motivations of heterotopia and heterochrony take shape. Another of the so-called French “nouveaux philosophes”, Michel Foucault, has tried his hand at the two notions evoked in the title and his vision also offers the advantage of having enclosed the subject value in iconic and highly effective words. Meanwhile, Foucault identifies very well the character of diversity of heterotopia, that is the frequentation of “other” places, of *alibis*, literally, recognizable in a culture seduced by the logic – or by the illogical – of its ubiquitous manifestation, “Everything Everywhere All at Once”, to steal the title of the film directed by Dan Kwan and Daniel Scheinert. “In general, heterotopia has as a rule that of juxtaposing in a real place more spaces that normally would be, should be incompatible” (Foucault 2006: 18), writes the scholar, then hastens to integrate how “heterotopias are mostly connected to strange subdivisions of time” and appear “similar, if you like, to heterochrony” (Foucault 2006: 20). Finally, Foucault summarizes his vision in clear and irrefragable words:

[...] the idea of accumulating everything, the idea of stopping time in some way or, rather, of having it deposited indefinitely in a certain privileged space, the idea of constituting the general archive of a culture, the desire to enclose every time, every era, every shape and every taste in a place, the idea of constituting a space for every time, as if this space could be definitively out of time, this is a completely modern idea: the museum and the library are heterotopias of our culture (Foucault 2006: 20-21).

If desired, one can turn to a further category of past-oriented inversion in Zygmunt Bauman’s “retrotopia”, even if the Polish scholar makes use of it in mostly negative and rather alarmist terms (Bauman 2017). After all, the obsession with memory and mnemonic attachment is the basis of another Nolan film, *Memento* (2000), where the protagonist carves his own skin with tattoos that serve to remind him of what happened and what he will have to do.

Having given the necessary theoretical platform as a preliminary introductory of Heterotopia and heterochrony, it is time to get to the heart of the wardrobe and the collections to thoroughly test their effectiveness, not without an additional clarification. Of course, the back and forth of the “Tenet effect”, or the “Thayaht effect”, if you prefer, implies the finding of solutions that appear completely antithetical and contrasting between them, with rare exceptions. The most tangible differences between these two directions of travel concern the clash between the dynamics of the “here and now” and the exhumations of the “there and then”, between the immersive plunge into the present moment with all the fullness of its contingencies and the “flesh of the world”, one would say using the words of Merleau-Ponty, against the jumps of orbit of the chronological remix, of the continuous and frenetic turn between the epochs of the past made in “tiger leap”, according to the beautiful metaphor of Walter Benjamin. With consequences that can be verified in the field. On the one hand, the “red” line – that of presence, of the search for authentic, epiphanic life in the celebration of *carpe diem* – captures reality at its zero degree, immediately and without frills, based on a trend that in fashion it is often expressed through the use of poor and primitive materials of which the Miyake-Kawakubo-Yamamoto triad represents the most convincing example; on the other hand, the “blue” line of the temporal excavation tends vice versa to exalt the myths and stories of a distant and imagined alibi, this time rich, even sumptuous in the use of embroidery and prints, in the wake of designers who, starting from afar, include Balmain, then Valentino, Lagerfeld, Saint Laurent, up on up to the most recent generations. Said in formula, the front of the “presentialists” focuses its drive on the value of the *texture*, opposing any excess of decoration and doodles, guilty of distracting from the primary purpose of freeing the body, of giving it a performative push inside the furrow of the fleeting moment; vice versa, the squadron of “absentialists” loves the syntagmas of narration, history, of myths grabbed in a mixture between the most urgent current events and remote times, and therefore prefers to think of clothing as a pictorial or sculptural surface capable of functioning as a *text* to be filled and varied indefinitely.¹ In addition to linking up with the reasons for the title between

1. The observations of Evans, Vaccari, 13 are perfect: “The concept of antilinear time allows us to understand fashion design as an incessant process of citation, reconstruction and recombination of motifs in which nostalgia and revival are at stake”.

the two poles of heterotopia and heterochrony, this latter branch of investigation based on the *text* and the plot reflects the physiognomy of contents of *Fashion Tales* and the related conference organized by ModaCult, as well as faithfully follows the Global Narratives on Fashion panel that took part in it.

Due to the contiguity of exposure with respect to the “Tenet effect” and referring to other researches the long reconstruction of couturiers and couturiers seduced by the past (Fabbri 2019), in the vast audience of time travelers of contemporary fashion I decided to deepen the collaboration between Givenchy and Riccardo Tisci (1974), the talented creative director at the helm of Burberry from 2018 to 2022, who exemplifies the theses announced so far also from the point of view of generational placement. In fact, the designers that came to light “around 1970”, the year which also saw the birth of Nolan himself, are part of a general constellation of cultural operators that includes characters such as Alexander McQueen (1969), Hussein Chalayan (1970), Nicolas Ghesquière (1971), Alessandro Michele (1972), Pier Paolo Piccioli (1967), Viktor & Rolf (both from 1969), all of which have already been extensively examined in a single study (Fabbri 2021); similarly, Phoebe Philo (1973), Stella McCartney (1972), Haider Ackermann (1971), Hedi Slimane (1968), Julian MacDonald (1971) are part of this talented group of designers, just to name the most representative cases, all sooner or later deserving of adequate monographic studies.

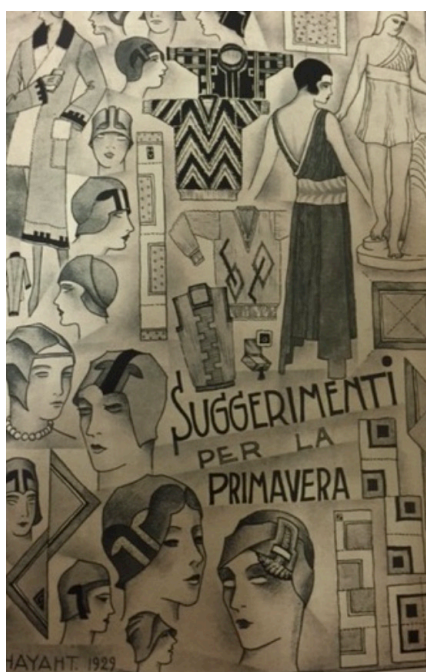


Figure 3: Thayaht, 1929.

The Time Warp

The driving piece of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, 1975, one of the most acclaimed musicals by the public for its energy, its character of pushed artificiality, the masquerades, for the countless queer twirls and crazy transvestites, is *The Time Warp*. In years still quite far from the confirmation of the scientific community, praising a magical dance between a jump to the left and a step to the right, the *text* evokes insane situations that recall the event horizon of a black hole and overshadows the delusions of a journey psychedelic: “I remember doing the Time Warp / Drinking those moments when / The blackness would hit me / And the void would be calling [...] / With a bit of a mind flip / You’re into the time slip”. Time distortion and time shift, then. But aren’t those sung in the song the same ingredients of a fashion devoted to the cult of heterotopia and heterochrony and their space-time travels? Of these

watchwords – as well as style injunctions – Riccardo Tisci testifies since his first official collection, presented in Milan for autumn-winter 2004-05 (Fig. 4), after brief periods by Puma, Coccapani and Ruffo Research. Born in Taranto and trained at Central Saint Martins, where he had actually already created a collection / thesis much appreciated by Björk and John Galliano, for his Milanese fashion show, the only eponymous one, and with the precious help of Mariacarla Boscono, Tisci chooses a rather anomalous setting and modality for an emerging designer, that is, a shabby and derelict factory, late in the evening, there and then much more suitable for the fashion shows of a Helmut Lang or a Rick Owens; it might have seemed the place, indeed the non-place, perfect for totally anti-glam, bare and frayed clothes, therefore attributable to a wardrobe suited to experimentation with *texture* and shapes, little interested in spreading a philosophy of clothing full of ornamental waste and crystallizations of poses. However, with uncovered or hidden face, despite a certain component of “formless”² remnants almost inseparable from Tisci’s poetics, the large cross set up in the room and the scent of incense sprinkled in the air moved the accent on the side relative to the *text*, to narrative storytelling, this time played entirely on the myths and representations of Catholicism. A scale of colors marked by monochrome, in black, white and beige, in short the DNA of the Tiscian palette, shows the execution of long and fluid dresses with wrinkles and raw cuts, in solutions that would lead one to think of Tisci as a disciple of Yamamoto, or Rei Kawakubo, but the designer’s introduction of elements drawn from a wardrobe with a religious imprint such as nun’s bonnets, necklaces and monastic veils is immediately grasped. In practice, in the first and only runway in his name, the designer puts in an atmosphere of stereotype, of inauthenticity, showing that he juggles with visible narrative fragments, with history and with myths of Christological ancestry as in his time it had happened to Versace with the remains of his Magna Graecia. In addition to iconic and iconographic interventions, Tisci distributes to the apparent poverty of his creations a not inconsiderable quantity of “rich” elements, of rhinestones, flakes and lace, the latter not infrequently weakened by a treatment that tends to confer to the whole the visitation of a primary breath. However, that darkness destined to accompany much of the designer’s career, to the point of inducing critics to label him as Gothic and – banally – romantic, does not go towards “oblivion”, that is towards obscurity – as the etymology of the word indicates; on the contrary, it moves with a sure step into the great narratives and the “global tales” of collective memory, revisiting them in a key of inauthenticity and absolute fiction. In fact, we cannot miss the postural catalog of the models, engaged in mimicking the distress of some saint or in assuming the plastic pose of a real Madonna.



Figure 4: Riccardo Tisci, fall-winter 2004-05

2. See the meaning of “formless” investigated by Bois, Krauss (2003) in their eponymous essay.

Marco Gobbetti immediately realizes the potential expressed by Tisci with the few means available at the time, calling him at Givenchy's (and at Burberry's, much later) to replace MacDonald. Judging from the debut moments at the famous French fashion house, it cannot be said that the designer exhibited his skills in one fell swoop. His is a measured progression towards a mature, crazy, unequivocal language, but conducted step by step, without the initial bang in fireworks; the designer conquers his role and his fame with a gradual ascent, scaling, albeit inexorably punctuated by results able to consolidate thanks to the slow pace of their growth, as happens with precious and long-lasting woods. And literally, Tisci's vein begins to reveal more and more of it, in the constant increase of a manipulation designed to freeze, to put a stop to the vitalism of his tissues, now studded with stones, or coagulated in hems of Sangallo lace, see the haute couture spring-summer 2006. Citation, heterochrony and retrophilic suspension also emerge from the choice of photographic shots, often taken against a background of stacked canvases and easels (Fig. 5): as if to say, I conceive my works as made of artistic element, I convert the female silhouette into a sculptural body, I use the tools of a painter to underline my desire to draw from the museum, thus crossing the cultured conceptual art of Giulio Paolini. Between the sixties and the seventies, it is known that the Turin artist also exhibited the tools of the fine arts trade, including canvases, brushes and frames, shown in reverse. As for Tisci, the same "Tenet effect" flaunts all the gravitational force of its application, accumulates, summarizes, piles up a substantial number of other cultural references, including those directed to the history of fashion and in particular to Yves Saint Laurent, among the bulwarks of his training, confirming his propensity to prove himself as a general performer of heterochronic rhapsodies. In spring-summer haute couture 2007 and prêt-à-porter autumn-winter 2007-08, finally Tisci's disruption shows what he can do, also grasping in words the certification of a change, of an acceleration, given that themes are centered, he specifies, on the "metamorphosis of sailors into sirens."³ Perhaps it is good to add a few fleeting observations regarding statements like these, since the sense and range link the stylist's poetics to the equally heterotopic surrealisms of Elsa Schiaparelli and to the visions of a fellow traveler and generation of Tisci, Alexander McQueen, who guided Givenchy until a decade earlier. The fact is that the Tarantinian finds his way well if not the squaring of the circle (Fig. 6); albeit with very different assumptions, as Saint Laurent in the sixties Tisci overturns the machismo all in one piece suggested by the military uniform, specifically that of the navy, but unlike his illustrious predecessor, everything happens with a powerful alteration of the garments and volumes, now resigned to undergo a major rewriting, disassembly and reassembly. In conducting his reinterpretation, Tisci exploits a technique very dear to the expressive arsenal of fashion, hypertrophy, or the magnification of figural elements – to be distinguished from oversize, intended primarily, as the word itself says, with the increase of the usual sizes of a garment. The hypertrophic estrangement consists in inflicting grotesque proportions on his objects of attention, well exemplified by the dimensions of the admiral's caps, abnormal, genetically modified, ready to unfold in the neutral – so to speak – or to offer vast surfaces to garnish, to decorate with pleasure. In fact, prints are becoming increasingly popular, now colored and sumptuous, now graphic and controlled, however careful to avoid easy and predictable appearances, perhaps aided by a hypertrophy treatment already tested by Valentino in the sixties and taken up by Tisci in spring-summer 2008; as with the Last Emperor of fashion (that's how Valentino has been called), here the polka dot motif undergoes yet another chromosomal adulteration and incurs a marked increase in proportions, with small circles, then medium, then large and then enormous (Fig. 7), or hollowed in the surfaces and edged in metal so as to open up in the negative, while slave sandals and tailored cuts accompany courageous grafts of fabric heterotopia in corsets made from single-breasted jackets. Identical tones for the haute couture collection of the same year, in which the alteration and freezing of the flounces stand out, now similar to incredible coils or elaborate fabric chains, but rolled up on the bust of a woman-transformer, magnificent ruffs out of control ready to roll up into balls or wrap part of the silhouette (Fig. 8).

A Frankenstein-like "cut and paste" temper emerges from the aesthetics of Tisci, as a surgeon in the mood for very successful jumble between garment elements of various origins and, let's be clear, in a strictly artistic-literary sense, given that the designer enters by right of style in the line of solutions launched by de Chirico's *Metaphysics*, from the desire to rediscover the "origins", as the artist declared through his *Hebdomeros*, to revive them with acrobatic combinations between the mirages of the past

3. Quoted by S. Mower on www.vogue.com on January 3, 2007.

and the articles of the present time. In its omnivorous vortex, this deadly and extraordinary time warping sucks in other suggestions of Karl Lagerfeld, who at the head of Chanel had replaced the well-known six rounds of pearls of Mademoiselle with rapper chains, tacky, gilded and sparkling, punctually taken up and multiplied by ten in the Tiscian autumn-winter 2008-09, in a deluge of gold and trimmings (Fig. 9). To dispel any hesitation about Tisci's spontaneous adherence to the contours of heterotopia and heterochrony, just listen to the inspirational sources for autumn-winter 2009-10, "in fact, I wanted to showcase a multitude of forms for each type of woman", premising that the show focuses on "Schiaparelli, animal sensuality, the forties, the thirties."⁴ Citing the godmother of Surrealism in fashion, Tisci then cements the fundamentals of his philosophy, the nomadic and wandering of space-time combined in a unitary look, like Romeo Gigli in the eighties and nineties, in the refinements that mix the garments of the Berbers and the ornaments of the Moors but with the usual genetic mutation to introduce notes of special effects.

Maximalism and special effects certainly are not lacking even when Tisci replaces Ozwald Boateng for the men's lines of Givenchy. The debut takes place with spring-summer 2009, where the usual monochromes of the designer, especially in beige, are installed by an extremely Schiaparellian color, fuchsia (Fig. 10), which is presented in plain colors, in lace or decorations, and therefore – with the inevitable administration of estrangement of the Tiscian creed –, in fabrics usually very little associated with men's collections. Perhaps the lesser possibilities of variation of the men's clothing codes, in the common persuasion that perceives the wardrobe as a set of less flexible morphologies compared to the *pour femme* clothes, pushes the designer to get it on with inventiveness and combinations, starting from spring-summer 2010, perfect example of total remodeling of traditional elements such as kilt and tartan plaids (Fig. 11), see McQueen, "revved up" in the remix with gold and other decorations this time fished from the thesaurus of the Greek-Roman world. Naturally, the long echo of the first Tisci brand show returns and returns overwhelmingly to rely on a practice much loved by the designer, printing, resolved by none other than the use of the icon of icons, Jesus Christ, "Jesus is Lord", says the T-shirt with the face of the Ecce Homo. But the fanatics of Catholicism should not be exalted, still less be the many critics, especially Anglo-Saxons, deceived by the spiel of the Catholic designer obsessed with religious worship. If anything, bibles and gospels put aside, like every fellow traveler Tisci confirms himself as a formidable hunter of myths, clichés and stereotypes of the present and the past, of images with a strong visual and media impact, for which Christ not only it reappears in men's spring-summer 2016, it also appears as a prelude to the rottweilers and panthers that will come shortly thereafter; these are masquerades that are often embellished with a styling capable of suggesting dark, wrestler atmospheres, studded as always by the displacements of the heterochronic filter. In other words, each solution made by Tisci is grafted onto materials aimed at underlining the aspects of eclecticism and playfulness, of animalier illustrations used in profusion for example, or precisely of threatening wrestler's helmets however sweetened by stucco ornaments and stuffed with other decorations. And if, to stay on the men's collections, for the autumn-winter 2011-12 the open jaws of the aforementioned rottweilers announce barks of intimidation (Fig. 12), the mastiff barks but does not bite when Tisci clones it in decorations similar to black and yellow flames set with wood-like engravings, almost as if they were metopes, then combined with jackets, over-the-knee boots or, again, the Scottish fabric pattern. Of course, Tisci's solutions can also be much livelier and more colorful, in line with the heterotopic "Tenet effect" approach of which they are impeccable concretization. In this sense, spring-summer 2014 is probably one of his most spectacular men's collections and at the time one of the most emblematic, given that in the eyes of the designer, the geographical shift towards Africa corresponds to a masterful quote of decorations and tribalisms, revisited in a sampling linked to the world of music (Fig. 13). Each graphic piece of the show thus recalls various sound recording tools, on all mixers, audio stations, sequencers and multitracks, cabling and workstations; full and saturated notes of color pour on the designer's beautiful prints used as arabesques of the contemporary, worthy of appearing on fabrics in the same way as tapestries or baroque textures, without forgetting that a similar treatment of handwriting transforms the wearer into a kind of robot, of ostentatiously artificial android creature.

4. Quoted by S. Mower on www.vogue.com on March 8, 2008.

But in fact, returning to the women's collections, it is precisely from this perspective that Tisci certifies what he's capable of, showing with mastery how to tamper with the body, to supplant it, to rewrite its natural forms with frames of inorganic material; to bring these somatic synthetizations back to their historical wailing, the designer also attests to relaunch the "new humanity" theorized in the 1950s by Pierre Balmain and to sympathize remotely with the "superlative majesty of artificial forms" celebrated by Baudelaire over a century ago. Be that as it may, Chantilly lace and ostrich feathers of autumn-winter haute couture 2010-11 would count for nothing, in terms of inventiveness and experimentation, if left to dust in the nobility of even refined traditions, artisanal and executive, but they surprise, enchant and captivate once they have been reworked in a post-human direction, that is to say once mixed with the skin, bones, features of the female body, to the point of replacing them (Fig. 14). In other words, Tisci shapes a corporeality that instead of manifesting itself with a performative temper, marbles itself in poses from which crystals, pearls, golds and diamonds exude, as if secreted by a totally mutated dermis in its genetic pool to adhere to the silhouette with a sheath of symmetrical and not at all obvious preciousness. It is no coincidence that the designer distributes them in impossible configurations, of a biology altered by a spell aimed at converting natural anatomy into its synthetic equivalent, of Rorschach spots made of shimmers and dazzles; in advance of some of Iris van Herpen's outcomes but always careful to respect the heterochronic excursions of the "Tenet effect", well into the "there and then" of sumptuous embroideries, Tisci tames leather to carve it in spectacular, stylized linearisms, like stuccos happy to recline on boleros and corsets as long as all this happens after a bath of digital handwriting. Despite the volatility of many fabrics, veils and plumages, Tisci rushes to harden, to calcify his creations, in any case to structure them with the compactness of incredible bone ramifications, sometimes so expanded as to solidify in the dome of a carapace or to strengthen in the impenetrability of an armor. Equally phenomenal is the spring-summer haute couture 2011 (Fig. 15). Here the designer stages one of the features common to his generational platform of born "around 1970", that is the inspiration from the world of Japanese manga and anime, in full connection with certain results of Nicolas Ghesquière. The focal point of the collection is represented by the hypertrophy of the headgear, leathery elements heralded by the collections dedicated to the navy (spring-summer haute couture 2007 and autumn-winter 2007-08), now made, if possible, even larger, revisited greater in scale as many samurai helmets, as usual genetically modified also thanks to the collaboration with Philip Treacy, the unbeatable mad hatter. Also on this occasion Tisci shows the dialectic between hard and soft materials, between light, transparent fabrics such as veils and feathers, in contrast with plastic and structured fairings; the figurative elements undergo the usual freezing of the designer, therefore they spread out in two-dimensional crushing, sharpen in the shapes and even in the 3D extrusion, to the point of becoming real armor. These Tiscian creatures seem to be depositors of secular if not millenary superpowers, albeit like cartoon heroines for how the designer's heterochrony shifts their silhouette in terms of references to the most stringent current styles. On the other hand, hard and metallic elements also appear in the autumn-winter 2016-17 haute couture collection, where the glassy consistency of glittering gems complements yet another demonstration of the "Tenet effect" (Fig. 16). Against the declarative background of plaster busts, the images capture equally plastered models, but the preciousness of embroidery and artisan savoir faire which Tisci is inspired by is certainly not inert to passively repeat the glories of tradition and is configured in column pleats, see Mariano Fortuny, although modulated to pursue a mutant biology, sumptuous embroideries combined with ties, or wefts and weaves governed by the forces of a magnetic field.



Figure 5: Givenchy, spring-summer haute couture 2006.



Figure 6: Givenchy, fall-winter haute couture 2007–08.



Figure 7: Givenchy, spring-summer 2008.



Figure 8: Givenchy, spring-summer haute couture 2008.



Figure 9: Givenchy, fall-winter 2008-09.



Figure 10: Givenchy, spring-summer menswear 2009.



Figure 11: Givenchy, spring-summer menswear 2010.



Figure 12: Givenchy, fall-winter menswear 2011-12.



Figure 13: Givenchy, spring-summer menswear 2014.



Figure 14: Givenchy fall-winter haute couture 2010-11.



Figure 15: Givenchy, spring-summer haute couture 2011.



Figure 16: Givenchy, Givenchy, fall-winter haute couture 2016–17.

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