"Do we truly need a true sex?" It is the question that Foucault raised at the very beginning of 'Introduction' to the diaries of Herculine Barbin.

Herculine or Alexina Barbin was a nineteenth century French hermaphrodite. A 'girl' born in a poor family in 1838, she was brought up in a religious boarding school. At the age of puberty, she did not begin to menstruate, did not have identifiable breasts, shaved her face and was fascinated by her girl friends' bodies. As a successful student, Alexina could get a teaching position in a girls' school where she fell in love with another teacher, Sara. Because of her confused feelings as a pious Catholic person or because of rumors circulated about her relationships, Alexina was led to confess to a priest who later asked a physician to examine her. The doctor classified her as a physiologically masculine person with a small penis or an enlarged clitoris and testicles inside the body. In other words, after the physical examination, her body was officially determined as a 'masculine' one, her case was called a 'pseudo-hermaphrodite'; and finally she was forced to leave her job and her lover as well. Alexina eventually changed her name to
Abel Barbin, but she could not cope with this new sex and new identity and ultimately committed suicide in 1868.

The tragic memoirs of Herculine Barbin were discovered by Michel Foucault in the archives of the French Department of Public Hygiene. In the 'Introduction' to Herculine's self exposition, Foucault relates the story of the body whose way of being and pleasures do not conform to the religious, societal and particularly medical expectations of the time. He also explains that in the Middle Age it was the role of the father or the godfather to determine the name and the sex of a hermaphrodite child, but at the age of marriage he or she was free to determine his or her own sex. But later, with the entry of biological theories of sexuality, this practice was changed. As such, Foucault designates the years from 1860 to 1870 as "one of those periods when investigations of sexual identity were carried out with the most intensity, in an attempt not only to establish the true sex of hermaphrodites but also to identify, classify, and characterize the different type of perversions". It was the time when juridical and medical experts rejected the idea of intermingling of different sexes in a single body as an 'error' of nature, and it was the time when "experts" began "to say which sex nature had been chosen for him and to which society must consequently ask him to adhere".

On this ground, it was left to these experts to find out beneath the weird or monstrous appearances of unidentifiable sexualities a single sex, a single truth. These mixtures of sexuality are the disguises of nature and "hermaphrodites were always 'pseudo-hermaphrodites'". They were also authorized to wake up people from their illusory pleasures and to remind them that every one "has a sex, a true sex". Referring to Alexina's past, Foucault addresses the delights and pleasures she could enjoy in the "happy limbo of a non-identity", the happiness before the medicalisation of her body and her identity. Regarding Herculine Barbin's diaries and Foucault's interpretation of
the document, Judith Butler emphasizes two aspects. On the one hand, she truly recognizes that this happiness is not a kind of emancipation before the law or beyond power relations. And on the other, by criticizing the theories based on a 'single' sex or a single identity, she tries to replace them with 'non-identity' thought. Hence, in Gender Trouble, she argues that Foucault's articulation of a "happy limbo" is the possibility which unfolds to Alexina "within the confines of convent conventions", namely within a homosexual environment which is structured by an 'eroticized taboo'. In other words, it was not an Eden free from relations of power or without the compulsory forces; but rather it was produced by the same relations and their enforcing rules. Accordingly, Butler warns us to refuse "to romanticize Herculine's sexuality as the utopian play of pleasures prior to the imposition and restrictions of 'sex'". 7

One could further develop the idea and argue that before the grip of medicine on her life, Alexina, first and foremost, was living under the rule of religion and culture which made her confess. But, in the very confinement, Alexina could find petits plaisirs through her 'line of flight'. Perhaps the confession could be seen as an alternative to reduce the burden of the so called sinful acts. Besides, it could also be stated that there was no naturalness about Alexina's sexuality before the entry of medicine into her life— as she was raised as a 'girl' and treated as a 'school girl'— but in which she could enjoy a sort of satisfaction and 'happiness'. In other words, Foucault as an 'archivist' and a genealogist is not marking an emancipatory point before the medicalized hold on human sexuality. Rather he addresses the turning point of introduction of biological theories of sexuality and their imperatives of attributing a single sex to human body. He tries to show the crucial role of the experts in conducting the classification and placing each person onto an appropriate shelf.
But, Butler's overemphasis on Foucault's happy 'non-identity' shows the highlighting of the 'homosexual environment' as an emancipatory potentiality which could provide the conditions of multiple pleasures. She assumes that Foucault implicitly wants to suggest that "non-identity is what is produced in homosexual contexts — namely, that homosexuality is instrumental to the overthrow of the category of sex". By offering such an interpretation, Butler stays too far from Foucault's thought. In other words, her critique of single identity leads her to mistakenly dissolve 'identity' altogether. Based on Foucault's comment that the "monosexuality of religious and school life fosters the tender pleasures that sexual non-identity discovers [...] in the midst of bodies that are similar to one another", Butler conceives the homosexual structure as a potentiality which could overthrow the tyranny of the category of sex. And having a non-identity, an anomalous body, 'rather than a variety of female identities' could produce multiplicitous polyvalence, pleasures and love.

In this way, she forgets that Foucault's project manifests how sexuality and subjectivity are constructed in different regimes of truth which are neither 'true' nor 'false' in themselves, and how the constructed subjectivity through particular relation of self with self could resist the obligatory codes of power or could even benefit from them to create its own pleasures, sex and identity which may sound different from others. Foucault is not overturning identity; rather he is challenging a universal truth which is hidden in the idea of single identity. In this sense he is a pragmatist not an idealist. He does not imagine a utopian land; rather he tries to grapple with a phenomenon without accepting or rejecting it totally. Accordingly he argues that "we must not exclude identity if people find their pleasure through this identity, but we must not think of this as an ethical universal rule." If we read Foucault as a 'nonidentity' thinker, we can no longer justify individuals like 'transsexuals'
who out of *free choice* and with the help of *medical tools* – operation or hormone therapy – cross over to the other side as a sexual identity, or the subjects who *decide* to create a new sex and a new identity by changing their old one; namely those who, according to Foucault, prefer "to pass over to the other side — to the side of the sex they desire to have and in whose world they would like to belong". According to Foucault, homosexuality or heterosexuality both are historic occasions which could simultaneously unfold or block the sexual possibilities, hence there is no emancipatory potential in a certain structure *per se*. His thought is too far from saying: *viva homosexuality, viva marginal groups, viva non-identity or viva*....

Hence, in the "Introduction" Foucault refuses to identify Alexina with a fixed "he" or a fixed "she", rather he uses "he" and sometimes "she", "her" and sometimes "his". In this way, Foucault's fluid play with the pronouns stands firmly against Butler's insistence on using "s/he" or "h/er" as fixed non-identity pronouns. As such Foucault implies that Alexina plays different roles and possesses different identities which are identifiable as "he" or "she". Alexina does not have a fixed sexuality, although on each occasion she presents a particular one. Now, we may understand why he always resisted "the confessional moment in his own work", as it may be viewed as a general model or an alternative one to sexual life. Foucault does not dismiss 'identity', but strongly challenges a single identity which may be imposed by the regulatory pressures of different regimes of truth. Opposing the obligatory codes of these regimes, he presents the possibility of creating a new identity if one finds his/her old identity restrictive. He tries to show how different meanings are made and how multiple relations of self with self are constructed in one subject when he, for example, *goes to vote, speaks at a meeting or seeks to fulfill his desires in a sexual relationship*.
Then, 'non-identity' in his terminology should be understood in the light of the experts' efforts to name and classify an identity, namely in terms of the way they designate the unidentifiable identity "to the realm of chimeras". To Foucault non-identity or not having a definite sex is not a privilege per se, as Alexina in the time of composing his memoirs "was still without a definite sex, but she was deprived of the delights she experienced in not having one". In other words, Alexina possessed something, a sex and an identity — perhaps different from the others — by which she could define her relations with herself and with others, she could be loved and she could love others. Alexina had an identity by which she could seek some delights but not the 'one' which was discernible and classifiable by the experts of the time. Hence the "Introduction" needs to be read as Foucault's concern with the decisive role of experts and their regulatory discourse in imposing a single identity on those who are chimera or have a 'pseudo' identity or 'non-identity'. With Foucault we could think that such classifications are nothing but experts' products and it could be replaced by another at any time. And it is in such a genealogical critique that the possibility of change would be unfolded.

It also appears that a figurative thread could stitch the French life of Alexina to the Chinese story of Douzi as a lead character in "Farewell My Concubine". The film begins around 1924 with the very touching attempts of a poor, helpless mother who is begging Master Guan, as the chief administrator of the training school of Beijing opera, to accept her child and train him. Thus, the infant, Douzi, was adopted by the Master and trained by his severe methods and merciless punishments in the intense monosexuality of the school. But in such a harsh environment he could find an intimacy with Shitou, an especial relationship which later transformed into a deep attachment. In the macho environment of the school, he — because of the fine feminine features of his face and body — was asked to play female roles.
Refusing to play the feminine role by reciting "I am by nature a girl, not a boy", Douzi instead said: "I am by nature a boy ". But when he was confronted with the violent reaction of his friend, he eventually said: "I am by nature a girl... not a boy." As such, he played a queen's role vis-à-vis the opposite role of Shitou as a king for about forty years —dramatic years for Douzi who was suffering from painful jealousy triggered by the heterosexual relations of his philogynous beloved, Shitou. Toward the end of the film and in a dramatic sense, Douzi was shown with his repeated error in drawing female lines on his face, the error which was always corrected by Shitou. And eventually on the last stage of his performance or in the last play of his life, Douzi committed suicide in the same way he acted for four decades.

Douzi and Alexina were born in poor families, they were abandoned in boarding schools, they were brought up in monosexual structures, they were forced to change their sexual identity, they both had homosexual feelings and finally they both committed suicide. But there is also a difference between their sexual experiences, particularly if we are tempted to see them from Butler's point of view. Whereas Alexina was raised in homosexual conventions in which she could find some pleasures, Douzi could never enjoy any delights in such a structure. In other words there is no sign of 'happiness' in his homosexual life. But at the same time both were in trouble with the compulsory identity or its last product — 'non-identity' — which was imposed by medical 'experts' or the 'Master'. To Douzi the 'non-identity' — to be a boy but to act as a girl — was a sorrowful hell from which he seeks release by having recourse to his favorite identity of "I am by nature a boy". Hence, suicide for both is the manifestation of their resistance to such identity-suspension, namely non-identity, even by taking their lives.

Perhaps one could find a similar resonance between the 18th century experts and the contemporary therapists of identity. In this dissertation we
have examined how different theorists, feminists or non-feminists deploy different 'regimes of truth' to fusion a 'true' identity or a true 'consciousness' for their political subjects. We have discussed how the thinkers, by resorting to biology, psychoanalysis or politics, establish particular formulations of the radical subject, true feminine identity, true political action and finally freedom. We have seen how the distinction theory is involved in sublimating pseudo-body to the true category of the 'citizen'. The mechanisms by correcting the *distortion* of identity try to produce a certain truth and impose a *given* sort of action. Through the strong belief that the 'true' female subjectivity has been repressed by patriarchy or buried in the soil of phallocentrism, feminism seeks to transform the pseudo-female features into the 'true' ones. Challenging the so-called masculine law, it dictates certain emancipatory strategies to liberate the hidden female origin. And finally by playing the role of 18th century experts the feminists are engaged in discerning errors of female chimeras, waking up pseudo-ones from their fake 'illusory pleasures' to ultimately discover that 'at the bottom of sex, there is truth'.

So it seems that we are also witnessing the emergence of a new asceticism in a feminist genre which articulates the true female actions, pleasures or consciousness — 'writing', 'autoerotism', the ideal relation of mother and child or sublimating the female realm to the masculine realm of *polis* — to actively engage in renouncing of 'pseudo' identities and pleasures. In effect, through establishing such a grand apparatus, feminism produces the same machinery which it challenges strongly and it provides a new hold on female subjectivity which it claims to remove. By reproducing the existing power relations, it limits the free choice of individuals and compels them to discover a *given*, an origin. And finally by sketching long-term strategies for the mobile nature of their lives and giving them ready-made solutions to their polymorphous problems, it prevents women from embarking on the journey of
becoming and thinking about the new roles they can play in the meshes of power, through every day reflection on their main problems and dangers, for "what exists is far from filling all possible spaces".15

Perhaps, through such a challenge and via such reflection, we may think of occupying the 'spaces' (the space of 'non-identity', for example) by free choice of our own before they are confiscated and redesignated as a particular category by the orthopedists of our time.

Notes

2. Ibid., pp. xi-xii.
3. Ibid., P. ix.
4. Ibid.,
5. Ibid., x.
6. Ibid., P. xiii.
7. Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, P.98.
8. Ibid., p. 100.
13. Ibid., P. xiii.