

“Madonnas, witches and goddesses! That’s been my trinity!

*Beautiful Necessity* came out of this publication that I did that was kind of a queer lesbian feminist effort back in the day. I published this from 1976 to 1983 and it was based on a trip that I made to Mexico where I was trying to trace the lineage of this major goddess from Central America, Guatemala, and Southern Mexico who had had great power and a great sort of influence before the invasion. She was always only mentioned in the footnotes of any scholarship that I could find! The gods were in the body of the text and the goddesses were in the footnotes. This was in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s when I was really beginning to come into lesbian feminism and performance around that! I had a group called The Oral Tradition. We dressed in nightgowns that we got from Sears and wore black lipstick – we were kind of proto-punk weirdos. We had little fluffy nightgowns that we got at Sears for nothing, black lipstick and we re-did all these various Motown songs that I had grown up with like “Heard It Through The Grapevine” with funny little lesbian skits. We changed the pronouns and did all this kind of stuff. It was wack! It was super wack, feminist performance. It was all about lesbian eroticism that was really not available in those other songs that were much more about partnering! They were about having a girlfriend and they were romantic but we were not of that ilk.

In 1972 I didn’t really know about folklore yet but I was the manager and book buyer at Gramercy Books in New Brunswick, NJ and I had ordered a book called *Oral Tradition* [1965] because I loved the sound of it and it turns out it was a famous folklore studies book done by Jan Vansina, this Belgian anthropologist. I loved the name *Oral Tradition* and then of course I learned later on what the oral tradition really is. But it was just funny. We started the band the year after I graduated, yeah. I graduated in ’71 and our first show was at a party in February of ‘72. It was great and the costumes were amazing. We were so happy! There was a Sears right off the campus on Route One right back there and we just went over and got those night gowns! But anyway that was all connected to music and lesbianism. And then Nancy and I went to Mexico to look for the moon goddess and when I came back in March 1975 I organized this collective to publish *Lady-Unique-Inclination-of-the-Night*, this journal about feminist art and women’s spirituality.”

Kay Turner, 2020