

'Lost': History, Personality

A Theater Review

By ELIZABETH LEE

Synergic Theater's *Lost*, having its premiere performances this weekend and next, is a major step for the experimental stage company.

Created and directed by David Manning, in collaboration with the six-person cast whose multiple talents create an illusion of greater numbers, this shadow-screen work is an amazing, delightful and provocative exploration of personality and history.

A journey towards personal identity finds Virginia Dare both discoverer and sacrificial victim, often uncomfortable in time and confused by it. Played in various incarnations by Carol Fike, Anne Deloria and Suzanne White Manning, Virginia becomes a shadow that is more real than her corporeal self. She is a mythic character—identified in the play with the mythological figure Iphigenia—who moves from the Lost Colony through pre-World War II America to the present and suggests history is a series of overlapping time frames that undermine formation of a unified personality.

THE TECHNICAL possibilities of the shadow-screen allow these themes a wide range of expression. The three performers, backed by lighting operator St. Clair Williams, optics operator Katrina Stevens and crew member Raymond Fike, create colonists, Indians, children, fashion models, a monstrous Governor White and other characters. A multiplicity of shadow people dance in the splendor of a colonial mansion, or run searching through empty doorways.

The rapidly changing, overlapping and multiple characterization is made possible by a giant screen onto which are projected the shadows of the performers, who are dressed, draped or layered into their parts. Hidden from view are the living, breathing, real people; here are shadow people, incomplete, always searching for a clear identity. When one does appear in



Staff Photo By Kevin Keister

Scene From 'Lost': Virginia Dare As Myth Figure

front of the screen, she is disoriented, most lost when most real. Behind the screen she has a setting, but not one into which to settle.

CONTEXT IS less important than the present image, which may appear or disappear suddenly. A lush graveyard appears on the screen, and a pregnant woman steps into the scene; a lady's bedroom appears, a woman climbs out of bed and begins to dress; a forest of strange plants and flowers appears, the young woman wandering through it menaced by a huge, passive leopard; a fashion show is interrupted by a Panzer tank, which becomes the fashion.

A woman decorates a room with the "scrapbook look" suggested by *Vogue*, lamps, couches, portraits, chairs appearing like magic as a voice describes America's elegant unconsciousness of the 1930s. When she is through, she kicks at the furniture and it flies away. The inconstancy, the easy and swift irradicability of the images, say that time and personality are undependable.

An often moving sound score, scripted and arranged by Manning from the music of more than 25—mostly North Carolinian—composers, adds to the unpredictability.

Lost will be performed at 9 p.m. today and Saturday, and Thursday through June 9, in the Duke University Ark.