

早稲田法学部 Theme 16 春

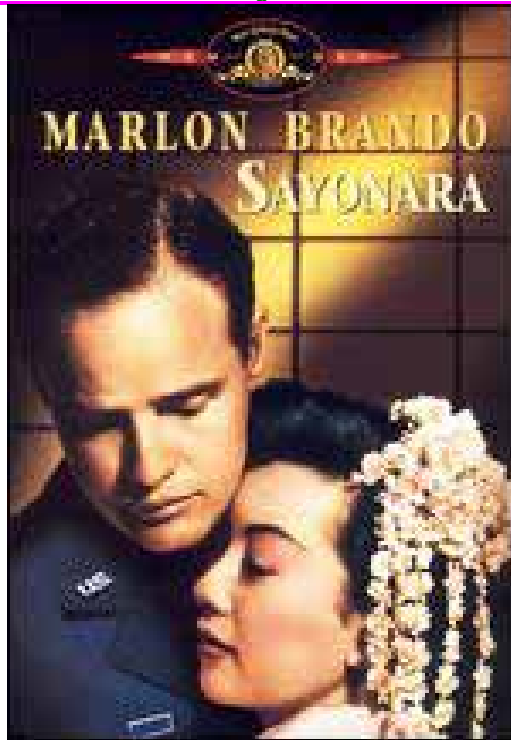
P.A.C. O'CONNOR

The Idea of Japan [I]

WEEK 11: **GOODBYE (AGAIN)**

- **SAYONARA (1957)**

READING 1: Sayonara (1952)



BASED ON a novel by James Michener, *Sayonara* earned a fistful of Oscar nominations (including Best Picture, Director, and Actor) and wound up winning statuettes for supporting actors Red Buttons and Miyoshi Umeki. Marlon Brando plays a Korean War fighter pilot, the son of a general, reassigned to Japan, where fraternization with local women is taboo. After breaking off his engagement to another general's daughter, he finds himself falling for a Japanese entertainer (Miiko Taka), then struggling with his own bias. Subplots deal with other servicemen (played by Buttons and James Garner) who also fall for Japanese women. Directed by Joshua Logan from a script by Paul Osborn, the film takes a then-daring look at prejudice as well as post-war racial bias against the Japanese. Brando's Southern accent makes him sound like Matthew McConaughey, while Buttons is actually touching as tough, tender American struggling against racism.

CAST:

Marlon Brando as Major Lloyd Gruver, Patricia Owens as Eileen Webster

James Garner as Captain Mike Bailey, Martha Scott as Mrs. Webster

Miiko Taka as Hana-ogi, Miyoshi Umeki as Katsumi

Red Buttons as Airman Joe Kelly, Kent Smith as General Webster

Douglass Watson as Colonel Craford, Ricardo Montalban as Nakamura

Dennis Hopper as Interviewer, James Stacy as Reporter

DIRECTOR: Joshua Logan **WRITERS:** James Michener and Paul Osborn

Shot entirely on location at the famous
"Yamashiro" Japanese restaurant in
Hollywood:

(1999 N. Sycamore Avenue,
Hollywood, CA. / (323) 466-5125



READING 2: *NEW YORK TIMES* REVIEW

SAYONARA TAKES ITS OWN SWEET TIME TO UNFOLD; in so doing, it permits us to make intimate acquaintance with its characters, so as to better understand their multitextured motivations. The film is set in Japan during the Korean War. While on leave, pugnacious American soldier Red Buttons falls in love with Japanese maiden Miyoshi Umeki. Given the army's official policy against interracial marriage, Buttons is courting a court-martial. His best friend, major Marlon Brando, tries to talk Buttons out of "ruining" his life. Brando himself is about to marry Patricia Owens, the daughter of general Kent Smith. Fighting back his own prejudices, Brando agrees to be Buttons' best man at the latter's wedding to Umeki. Later, Brando himself falls for Miiko Taka, a beautiful Kabuki dancer. This sparks an all-out onslaught of racial bigotry from the Army brass, and an official edict sending American soldiers back to the states without their Japanese wives. Buttons cannot bear being parted with Umeki; as a result, the two commit suicide. The tragedy compels the army to soften its attitudes towards miscegenation. Brando is reunited with Taka, who in a parallel situation has had to ward off the inbred prejudices of her people.

READING 3: ASIAN AMERICAN OBJECTIONS

"Many deem *Sayonara* as a major spark of the Asian fetish in America. The film depicts two extreme stereotypes of Asian women. The first is of Hana-ogi, the Americanized Asian woman who steals the hearts of American soldiers through her exotic charm. The second is of the "traditional" Asian woman who is extremely submissive and subservient. Gruver illustrates the ultimate fantasy in this film--to be able to enjoy the services of the "traditional" Asian women during his time in Asia, but to ultimately *love* the Americanized woman."

– ASIAN-AMERICAN FEMINIST WEBSITE, CALIFORNIA.

QUESTIONNAIRE	CLASS NAME	WEEK NO.
NAME	STUDENT NO.	DATE
1. WHAT WAS THIS FILM ABOUT?		
2. WHAT ARE THE MAIN QUESTIONS IT RAISES?		
3. WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?		
4. ANY OTHER COMMENTS?		