Sally's Beauty Spot

a film by Helen Lee
Sally’s Beauty Spot

[“Robert” and “Suzie” are characters played by William Holden and Nancy Kwan in clips from the 1960 Robert Quine film, *The World of Suzie Wong.*]

**SHOT**

black and white shot of hands meeting across bedsheets

**SPRaker**

ROBERT

SUZIE

**VOICEOVER**

You are the most exasperating girl I’ve ever met.

We not meet. I no talk to strangers.

**lips**

SALLY

JOYCE

SALLY

JOYCE

SALLY

**VOICEOVER**

Mnnn Nmmm.

It’s just a little mole.

It’s ugly.

Everyone has a scar, silly. Or a birthmark like that.

I hate it. It’s black and ugly. Don’t talk about it anymore.

**Sally’s lips/body**

HELEN

**VOICEOVER**

Shhhhhhh.

**black screen**

SALLY

**VOICEOVER**

heaving breath

**Sally scrubbing her mole**

SALLY

**VOICEOVER**

Get this/ If only I could get the/ Take it off and find/ Get it clean/ Off/ Get rid of this stupid little/Ugly/ Black/ Get this...
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Suzie dancing with sailor/ eye, extreme close-up

DOMINIC

“Indeed, a feminist criticism, by dancing contrast, aims at seizing authority from men at the same time that it seeks to redefine traditional models (like the ethnographic one) of authority, power and hierarchy. Given the current state of affairs...”

eye/mirror

CHRIS

Your skin's very smooth. And the hair—so silky. And black.

Suzie in cheongsam

HELEN

Specular fascination.

Sally combing her hair, slow motion

JOYCE

He was just a guy, an American who took a year off from his business job to try to be an artist. So he goes to Hong Kong.

SALLY

How does he meet Suzie?

JOYCE

She's a Chinese prostitute who he first thought was a rich virgin. Anyway, she becomes his model.

SALLY

Do they fall in love?

JOYCE

Of course.
Mitsuyo KERRI When did you first become aware of it? Its presence, that is.

Yumiko SALLY When my breasts started to grow.

KERRI And how did you feel about that?

SALLY About what—the growing?

KERRI No. The fact that you had this, this blemish.

SALLY Oh. Like I had to hide it.

Suzie singing on bed as Robert paints her

SALLY Do you really think she loves him?

JOYCE I guess so. Just watch.

Robert looks

SALLY Why do you like the movie so much?

Suzie sings

Sally close-up

SALLY It’s always been there, ever since I was a little girl.
Suzie teaching Robert how to use chopsticks

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<td>Robert confronts Suzie, strips her</td>
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<td>SUZIE</td>
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<td>I don't care what it cost. You look like a cheap European street walker.</td>
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<td>SUZIE</td>
<td>You shut up!</td>
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<td>Sally &amp; Philip kiss</td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td>I don’t know, that I looked different, I guess.</td>
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<td>Suzie in traditional Chinese empress dress bows to Robert</td>
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Robert & Suzie kiss

DOMINIC "Skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as ‘common knowledge’ in a range of cultural, political discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies. Secondly, it may be said that sexual fetish is closely linked to the ‘good object’; it is the prop that makes the whole object desirable and lovable, facilitates sexual relations and can even promote a form of happiness."

CHRIS Were you born with it? Can I see how it feels?
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SALLY  Don’t touch it. Please.

KERRI  Have you considered surgical methods of removal?

JOYCE  It’s like a small bump on your skin. So small I can barely see it.

SALLY  He put it in his mouth yesterday.

JOYCE  What’s in-between?

HELEN  Does it make a difference?

Kerri    HELEN  How could we not have any expectations? A face-to-face encounter based not on first impressions, a natural occurrence, but a pre-existing order of things. Finished. Closed. Defined.

Sally    HELEN  [overlapping voices] They will always pose the problem of difference as that between the preconstituted, “natural” poles of black and white.

Helen
Sally reacts
side-view of Sally applying eye shadow
Sally applying lipstick
Cameron's lips, extreme close up
Sally's lips, extreme close up
Sally, smiling, being photographed

SALLY SALLY Oops.

humming

(1990)