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.*]

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<tr>
<th>SHOT</th>
<th>SPEAKER</th>
<th>VOICEOVER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>black and white shot of hands meeting across bedsheets</td>
<td>ROBERT</td>
<td><em>You are the most exasperating girl I’ve ever met.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>lips</td>
<td>SUZIE</td>
<td><em>We not meet. I no talk to strangers.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td><em>Mnnn Nmmm.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JOYCE</td>
<td><em>It’s just a little mole.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td><em>It’s ugly.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JOYCE</td>
<td><em>Everyone has a scar, silly. Or a birthmark like that.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td><em>I hate it. It’s black and ugly. Don’t talk about it anymore.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sally’s lips/body</td>
<td>HELEN</td>
<td><em>Shhhhh.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black screen</td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td><em>Heaving breath</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sally scrubbing her mole</td>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td><em>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...</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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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.
When did you first become aware of it? Its presence, that is.

When my breasts started to grow.

And how did you feel about that?

About what—the growing?

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

Oh. Like I had to hide it.

Do you really think she loves him?

I guess so. Just watch.

Why do you like the movie so much?

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

Sally close-up tilt up dress

Tim’s face

Suzie’s face

Sally & Tim kiss

Robert confronts Suzie, strips her

It’s the first thing I see when I look in the mirror.

I feel it growing. It gets bigger—and darker—every day.

Sally... and what did he say?

He said he liked it, still shiny and black.

Take that terrible dress off.

This expensive dress!

I don’t care what it cost. You look like a cheap European street walker.

You shut up!

Why don’t you put a ring in your nose too?
Sally & Philip kiss
Suzie in traditional Chinese empress dress bows to Robert
Tim & Sally kiss
Robert & Suzie kiss

JOYCE
What else?

SALLY
I don’t know, that I looked different, I guess.

ROBERT
You haven’t the faintest idea what real beauty is.

JOYCE
Different from what?

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?
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
Sally
Helen

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.

Cameron

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

JOYCE
DOMINIC
SALLY
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  Oops.

SALLY  humming

(1990)