

Document Citation

Title	Hamnstad
Author(s)	R.V. (Monthly Film Bulletin)
Source	<i>Monthly Film Bulletin</i>
Date	1959 Nov
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Hamnstad (Port of call), Bergman, Ingmar, 1948

HAMNSTAD (Port of Call), Sweden, 1948

Cert: X. *dist:* Cross Channel. *p.c.:* Svensk Filmindustri. *d:* Ingmar Bergman. *sc:* Ingmar Bergman, based on a story by Olle Länberg. *ph:* Gunnar Fischer. *ed:* Oscar Rosander. *a.d.:* Nils Svenwall. *m:* Erland von Koch. *sd:* Sven Hansen. *l.p.:* Nine-Christine Jönsson (*Berit*), Bengt Eklund (*Gösta*), Berta Hall (*Berit's Mother*), Erik Heli (*Berit's Father*), Mimi Nelson (*Gertrud*), Birgitta Valberg (*Welfare Worker*), Stig Olin (*Thomas*), Sif Ruud (*Mrs. Krona*), Hans Strååt (*Engineer Vilander*). 9,000 ft. 100 mins.

Gösta, a disillusioned young seaman, finds work in Göteborg as a docker. At a dance hall he meets Berit, a factory girl who has tried to drown herself. He is attracted to her, but she is anxious to be honest with him and, upset by an encounter with Gertrud, a former girl friend, during a weekend at a seaside hotel, decides to tell him everything about her past. Through discord at home and various unlucky circumstances she spent a year in an institution for delinquent girls and is still on probation. Gösta is revolted by her confession, gets drunk and decides to leave her. Meanwhile Gertrud begs Berit to lend her some money for an abortion. Berit goes with her, the operation is unsuccessful and Gertrud dies. The police try to make Berit give the address of the woman who performed the operation; Berit at first refuses, but under pressure from her probation officer eventually gives in. Gösta now realises his own loneliness and returns to Berit. They try to escape from everything by leaving on an outgoing steamer—then suddenly decide to remain and face all their difficulties together.

This is an early, virtually archetypal film, made when Bergman was thirty, on the theme of the loneliness of the individual in a cold and indifferent world. It is worked out in terms of troubled relationships—between parent and child, between disillusioned lover and morally ruined lover—and the pressures of the past determine the actions and feelings of the main characters. The approach is sharply realistic, at times verging on documentary, and it is this anti-romantic, unsophisticated hardness of background, problems and faces which lends the picture its powerfully expressive flavour. Bergman discovers his own poetry in the harsh world that here obsesses him, balancing it with the emotional content of the characters and situations. The harbour with its depressing beauty makes a perfect background to the bitter, well-observed love story, and a rich sound-track brings out all the coldly mechanical life of the city. The narrative loses some of its force in the second half, when the dialogue becomes repetitive and literary and the handling over-personalised: somehow Gösta's drama is made to seem less convincing than Berit's. But the acting is brilliant, from the heroine, Nine-Christine Jönsson, down to the small-part players, and confirms *Hamnstad* as a grim but uplifting, almost transcendental experience, rich in imagination and humanity.

Suitability: A. R.V.

MFB: Nov. '59