



Normal Is Over: The Movie ★★★1/2

(2016) 103 min. DVD: \$29.95: public libraries & high schools, \$249: colleges & universities. Telekan (available from www.normalisoverthemovie.com). PPR. Four years in the making and largely self-funded by longtime documentary filmmaker Renée Scheltema, *Normal Is Over: The Movie* initially appears to be a catalog of environmentalist grievances. But very quickly Scheltema establishes a tone of intellectual curiosity, drawing clear and accessible connections between global issues that are more typically approached as unique problems, including income inequality, climate change, species extinction, the depletion of natural resources, corporate control of food production, and more. Scheltema begins with the premise that during her youth in Holland, she was profoundly affected by an international coalition of scientists who wrote a report maintaining that sustained economic growth on the planet was not possible, and further predicted that the entire system would come crashing down in another half-century—about where we are right now. The filmmaker interviews several of the original scientists on the report, as well as a small army of experts in sustainability, environmental devastation, wealth concentration, and alternative currencies. Along the way, she reveals how a for-profit economy based on interest-yielding loans (especially compounded interest) rapidly drives up the need to use resources while also concentrating more and more money

into fewer hands, leading to both poverty and ecological destruction. She presents these big ideas with frightening, real-world examples of poaching in Africa, rising oceans, children living in garbage dumps, and dead bodies on the sidewalks of New Delhi. Despite the bleakness, however, *Normal Is Over* maintains an overall sense of hope that communities can ultimately buck the destructive engines of globalization by becoming self-sufficient. A smart, thought-provoking, and timely film, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (*T. Keogh*)