1. **Defining Sustainable Development**

Kallis references Serge Latouche, who declares sustainable development an oxymoron. But what exactly is sustainable development, and how is it an oxymoron? To be sustainable means that the amount of resources used is less than or equal to the amount of resources being produced. To develop means to create or to build upon. I believe that Latouche calls “sustainable development” an oxymoron because it seems impossible to grow without a net positive consumption of resources. While this is true to the extent that there are finitely many resources and that being 100% efficient would almost certainly violate the laws of thermodynamics, in most cases, sustainable development refers to the process of becoming as efficient with resources as possible.

1. **Ecomodernism vs Degrowth**

While both ideas are quite radical in their own sense, I find that ecomodernism seems like a more viable path forward. If it is taken that people make decisions based on self-interest, then the concept of degrowth is antithetical to human nature. The case can be made that economic systems have changed over time, and to the extent that different opportunities were afforded in different historical eras this holds true. However, all economic systems, whether it be a traditional, feudal, or free market, all rely on growth and therefore capitalism.

While capitalism certainly has its flaws and must be watched closely and carefully to detect moral imbalances, its efficiency when it comes to generating vast amounts of resources and wealth is unparalleled. It is this efficiency, that I believe will be our saving grace, and it is why I fall in line more with the ecomodernists. If the immense power of free market capitalism is used properly, we can leverage profit motives to clean up our act and our planet.

It should go without saying that both potential solutions will have unforeseen negative consequences, and that any impulsive decisions will almost certainly be catastrophic. We tend to assume we know more than we do. The number of variables involved in the climate equation is unmatched, so we must tread carefully when it comes to messing with nature.