

“It will give you a few hundred dollars if you let me cut down these trees,” it’s not easy to turn your nose up at that. Those are dollars people can spend on schools and hospitals. The ecological impact of decisions like that are devastating. Decaying trees contribute greatly to increases in the levels of greenhouse gases. Plant life absorbs CO₂. But when forests disappear, the earth loses one of its two essential carbon sponges (the other is the ocean). The results are visible even from space. Satellite photographs taken over Indonesia and Brazil show thick plumes of smoke rising from the forest. According to the latest figures, deforestation pushes nearly six billion tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere every year. That amounts to thirty million acres an area half the size of the United Kingdom chopped down each year. Put another way, according to one recent calculation, during the next twenty-four hours the effect of losing forests in Brazil and Indonesia will be the same as if eight million people boarded airplanes at Heathrow Airport and flew en masse to New York. Read Big Foot In measuring carbon emissions, it’s easy to confuse morality and science. by Michael Specter Via: The Frontal Cortex Harold R. Medina (1888-1990)