

SCIENCE IN THE WORKS

DR. ANTONIO DAMASIO KEEPS FEELINGS IN MIND

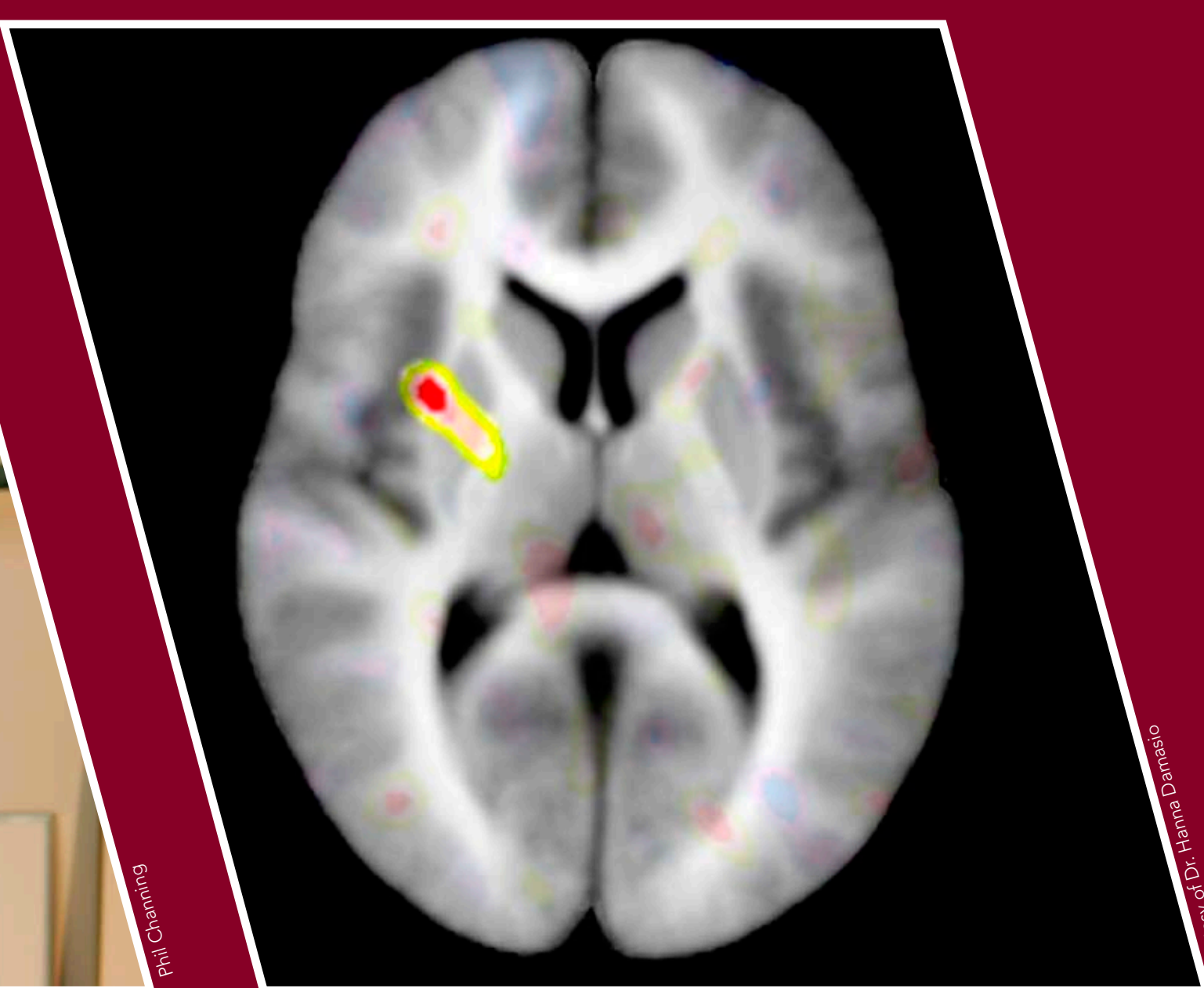
Fear is an emotion – a response that produces biological changes throughout the brain and body. But anyone who’s ever been scared knows that a conscious feeling of fear accompanies those bodily changes.

“Feelings are an indispensable part of mind and behavior processes,” says Dr. Antonio Damasio. “Loves, hates, preferences and learning depend critically on feelings.” By studying the neurobiological basis for these emotions and feelings, Damasio says scientists have the opportunity to address long-standing questions in such diverse areas as social behavior, creative thinking, learning and addiction.

Damasio has discovered that a brain area called the insular cortex is critical to our experience of feelings. This region receives messages from neurons about what’s happening in the rest of the body. Using that information, it updates a representation of the chemistry and structure of the body at the moment, providing the brain with a mental picture – the conscious feeling of what happens.



Dr. Antonio Damasio, M.D., Ph.D.
**David Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience, Director of
the Brain and Creativity Institute**
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Dr. Antonio Damasio has shown that the insular cortex, lit up in yellow and red in this PET (positron emission tomography) scan, is crucial to the experience of fear.