

# The FFA as a Portal into the Architecture of the Human Mind

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What is the nature of the human mind? Philosophers, poets, and lay people have debated this question for centuries, but now we can answer this question scientifically by exploring the organ where the mind happens: the brain. I will describe our early work establishing that the fusiform face area (FFA) constitutes a specialized processor of visual information about faces that plays a central role in our awareness of faces. I will then confront the limitations of methods in human cognitive neuroscience in identifying the representations and computations conducted in this region, as well as the circuits that implement them, underscoring the critical role of Tsao and Freiwald's beautiful work answering these questions in monkeys. Finally, I will show how we applied methods developed for the work on the FFA to more broadly explore many other specialized processors in the human brain engaged in specific mental functions such as perceiving music, understanding language, and thinking about what other people are thinking.