



When Did I Begin?: Conception of the Human Individual in History, Philosophy and Science

(Conception of the Human Individual in History and Philosophy)

Norman Ford

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When Did I Begin?: Conception of the Human Individual in History, Philosophy and Science (Conception of the Human Individual in History and Philosophy) Norman Ford

When Did I Begin? investigates the theoretical, moral and biological issues surrounding the debate over the beginning of human life. With the continuing controversy over the use of in vitro fertilization techniques and experimentation with human embryos, these issues have been forced into the arena of public debate. The answer to the question, 'When did I begin?' draws on both scientific evidence, and on the philosophical concepts of the presence of the human individual. As a leading theologian and moral philosopher, thoroughly conversant with modern embryology, Norman Ford, a Salesian priest, is well qualified to bridge the gap between the biological and philosophical point of view. Dr Ford argues that a human individual could not begin before definitive individuation occurs with the appearance of the primitive streak about two weeks after fertilisation. While he does not specifically address any moral issues regarding the treatment of human embryos, the author views reading of this book as an essential prerequisite for such moral considerations. The implications of Dr Ford's answer to the question posed in the title will be crucially important for fully evaluating such problems as embryo experimentation and contraception, for a range of readers from embryologists and physicians to moral philosophers and theologians. The book has already stimulated considerable interest and debate, and is now available in paperback for the first time.



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