

Essay plan

a) Describe an absolutist response to issues raised by infertility

T – Kant – Good Will
I – Consent for use of frozen embryos
C – Natalie Evans (cancer; ex denied consent)
K – Good will ignores the individual circumstances – Natalie desperate for a child and unable to have one any other way. European Court agreed with Kant: can't use embryos without both partners' consent.

T – Natural Law – Primary Precepts
I – IVF – embryos discarded
C – America – 400,000 embryos kept frozen
K – Protect and Preserve the Innocent leads to a secondary precept – do not discard embryos. Roman Catholics may see this as a kind of mass murder.

T – Kant – CI - Universalisability
I – Sperm donation
C – 'The Kids are All Right'
K – Not self-contradictory, but contrary to the will. Relationship with donor unclear, & responsibilities – a rational person would not choose to be unrelated to their 'parents'.

T – Natural Law – PP 'Ordered Society'
I – PGD
C – Preventing genetic disorders
K – Treats people with disorders differently. Devalues human life, and attacks the principle of equality that is the cornerstone of civilised society. Suggests people with that condition are 'worth less'

T – Kant – CI – Ends in themselves
I – Commercial surrogacy
C – India
K – Kant says the surrogates are throwing away their humanity. Rich westerners are using these women merely as a means to an end. The child is also traded like a commodity.

T – Natural Law – Real/Apparent Goods
I – Selling eggs
C – Cyprus
K – Becoming pregnant by buying eggs is an apparent good, but the child is not biologically related, so this does not fulfil your purpose – it is not a 'real' good.

b) 'The end justifies the means if a childless couple can have a baby.' Discuss.

	Agree	Disagree
Utilitarianism	Richness (having child leads to other pleasures) Duration (lasts a lifetime); Intensity (becoming a parent is the most memorable event in life)	IVF is unreliable. For every happy couple, there are three who are devastated, and may be left too old to adopt a baby.
Natural Law	Fulfils your God-given purpose to reproduce; NL would argue for adoption even though it means raising a child not biologically related	Against artificial conception, as fertilisation should happen as the result of an act of love, not something mechanical
Kant	Kant's theory would support a couple's right to reproduce (CI – Universalisability), although this isn't really the 'end' justifying the means	Kant would also look at the child's rights, and whether it would want to have multiple parents, or have been created in a lab etc.
Situation Ethics	Pragmatism – as long as the parents love the child, it doesn't matter whether the embryo was frozen, had three parents etc.	In some situations, buying and selling eggs and sperm is exploitation; not a loving act to help a childless couple but cynical commercialism

Kant can be used to argue for reproductive rights, as well as against exploiting donors, surrogates and the potential child. Natural Law is actually against infertility treatments for different reasons (attack sanctity of marriage and sanctity of life) but is for reproduction and families. Utilitarianism focuses more on the happiness of the couple and the child, so may deny the right to reproduce if the prospective parents don't measure up. Also, the allocation of resources to IVF is a practical consideration, so the provision of IVF becomes inconsistent – some people just can't get it on the NHS. Situation Ethics puts the people first, so won't totally rule out any forms of treatment.