Singerite Role Sheet

**Core Beliefs**

You are a proponent of the philosophy of Peter Singer as it is outlined in the essay, “All Animals are Equal.” This essay is the foundation of your beliefs. In some moments in the game it may be obvious how Singer’s argument obliges you to speak and act. At other times however it will likely be unclear how to apply the essay’s abstract principles to political issues of the here and now. In such instances you will need to decide for yourself what to say or do. So long as your speech and actions do not contradict your foundational principles you will be living up to your role.

A central principle the essay defends in the equal consideration of interests. As, Singer summarizes this idea, it holds that “the interests of every being affected by an action are to be taken into account and given the same weight as the like interests of any other being” (Singer 1990: 5). For Singer, racism and sexism are morally wrong because they fail to live up the equal consideration principle by giving extra weight to the interests of members of a preferred race or sex. To be just however requires us to avoid such biases. As a result, your philosophy places a strong emphasis on impartiality.

A second major principle of your philosophy is anti-speciesism. This is the view that species membership, by itself, has no moral significance. Thus if we would view it wrong to cause a baby pain by slapping it, then it would be equally wrong to cause the same amount of pain to a horse, all else being equal.

Singer equal consideration is a principle that is widely endorsed by most contemporary philosophies. He would view all three factions in our game, small government advocates, uniform and difference liberals alike, as endorsing it in abstract terms, while disagreeing over the details of what it entails in practice. This gives you a point of commonality to emphasize with members of factions (and possible other indeterminates) as you try to forge agreements or alliances with them.

If equal consideration is widely endorsed, anti-speciesism is not. Some factions and indeterminates may regard this as a radical aspect of your belief system. But you are confident that speciesism is no more justified than racism or sexism. Importantly, anti-speciesism does not mean that it is wrong to treat human beings differently from animals. We have many interests, such as in interest in political and civil liberties, that other animals lack. Animals however share with us an interest in avoiding suffering. A central goal of yours therefore is to use your political influence to reduce the harms done to animals as much as you can.

**Major Goal**

A central goal for you will be to have the legislative assembly pass a motion that will have a major impact on reducing animal suffering. It could be to ban animal experiments. Or it could address the suffering of farmed or circus animals, or something else entirely. The precise nature of the proposal will be up to you. Of course you may experience push back if you ask for too much. But you are not opposed to compromise. Singer himself for example is a vegetarian but has been active in lobbying for farmed animals to be slaughtered humanely (Singer 1999: 166-77). You will need to feel out what type of animal-related proposal has the best chance of being passed and make its passage your central goal. This outcome is far from assured: other indeterminates will have their own proposals that they will want to add to the agenda. You will need to build support for your initiative by forging alliances with other indeterminates and, especially, with members of the three main factions.

**Tips and Strategies**

Some players may refer to you as a utilitarian. The essay of Singer’s that informs your perspective however does not oblige you to endorse utilitarianism. As Singer has noted, “[t]he text of *Animal Liberation* is not utilitarian. It was specifically intended to appeal to readers who were concerned about equality, or justice, or fairness, irrespective of the precise nature of their commitment” (Singer 1999: 283). So you can decide for yourself if you wish to take a utilitarian or a rights-based approach to the subjects at issue in the game. You can’t be a utilitarian one day and a rights theorists the next: you do have to choose one approach and stick to it. But it is up to you to decide for yourself which approach is ultimately what equal consideration entails.

Because your commitment to equal consideration gives you this flexibility, you have broad freedom to decide which faction to vote with on issues not involving animals. This is a great strength of your role which you would do well to take advantage of. You are truly indeterminate on the game’s central issues, and so are potentially of great value to any faction that takes the trouble to ally with you.

Many of the philosophers whose work other roles are based on have written on animal issues. Doing some digging to discover what Robert Nozick, Will Kymlicka and others have written on animals could be of great benefit to you, if you take the time to do the research.

**Primary Essay:**

Singer, Peter. (1990) All Animals are Equal. *Animal Liberation*: *Second Edition*. New York: New York Review of Books, 1-24.

**References and Further Reading:**

Singer, Peter. (1999*a*). *Ethics Into Action: Henry Spira and the Animal Rights Movement*. Melboune: Melbourne University Press.

Singer, Peter. (1999b). A Response. In *Singer and His Critics*, edited by Dale Jamieson, 269–335. Oxford: Blackwell.