The present paper intend to provide some insights on the cultural and ideological debate between veganism and carnism. The increasing popularity of the vegan lifestyle among diverse layers of society, and most of all its transition from a hardly-tangible phenomenon to a very visible and outspoken one, has generated a strong reaction from those who Melanie Joy has defined “carnists” (i.e., meat-eaters not only in the culinary sense, but also in the cultural one), but it has also brought to the fore the question of the different communication strategies of the two parties. After a brief but hopefully-exhaustive introduction to veganism as socio-cultural and ideological movement, the paper shall proceed to focus on the communication strategies operated by carnism to convey or disguise (depending on the case) the kind of information that veganism is ethically pointing the finger at: the promotion of meat as product, necessity, display of luxury, nutritionally-valuable aliment, and so forth. In describing such cases, and offering a theoretical framework for their interpretation, it is also argued that carnism, like any other form of anthropization, is filtered via three similar-but-compatible mental attitudes: anthropocentrism, speciesism and anthropocracy.

Dario Martinelli (1974) is Chief-Researcher at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Full Professor at Kaunas University of Technology, and Adjunct Professor at the Universities of Helsinki and Lapland. He is also Editor-in-chief of the series “Numeracies – Arts and Humanities in Progress”, published by Springer, and has been directing the International Semiotics Institute from 2013 to 2018.

As of 2018, he has published thirteen monographs and about 150 among edited collections, studies and scientific articles. His most recent monographs include: Give Peace a Chant (Springer, 2017), Arts and Humanities in Progress (Springer 2016), Lights, Camera, Bark! (Technologija, 2014) and A Critical Companion to Zoosemiotics (Springer, 2010).

Besides his affiliations, he has been visiting professor in four academic institutions, and has been giving nearly one hundred lecture courses in fourteen different academic institutions in Europe. He has been recipient of several prizes, including, in 2006, a knighthood from the Italian Republic for his contribution to Italian culture.