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Article Title

[Killing Schrödinger's Feral Cat \(http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1071&context=asj\)](http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1071&context=asj)

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Abstract

Animal experimentation is a highly emotive issue, yet rarely do we hear accounts of how the use of animals in lethal experiments impact upon those researchers involved. Although emotion has no part in the application of the scientific method, science has never demanded emotional nihilism or the abandonment of compassion from its practitioners. Yet the feelings that drive individual justifications, compromises and uncertainties are never the stuff of scientific papers; in fact, they are almost never discussed. Silence about these personal issues has played to the idea that scientists are largely ambivalent and impervious to such concerns. This is a significant misconception and an omission, not the least because ideas about what is right and wrong about our relationship with animals are not informed by purely objective information. The topic remains largely taboo and is seldom explored given that emotion and objectivity are often seen as the oil and water of scientific discourse. Problematically, attempting to describe how you feel about killing animals in scientific research using a dispassionate and objective approach is self-defeating. It is a little like trying to hide what it is to be human while considering how to be humane. This is the reason why I wrote an account that is unapologetically rich in personal introspection. It is a story about my own inner thoughts and conflicting feelings associated with animal experimentation undertaken to improve the humaneness of feral cat control. It is also an attempt to communicate the personal equivocality, the limbo, that can be experienced while attempting to reconcile what is ethical when confronted with the dilemma of Morton's fork in an environment where dogmatism is rife. Biologists in particular should aspire towards a more robust paradigm inclusive of their empathy for animals where a personal emotional context can be freely discussed. In science, dogma and killing without empathy are dangerous bedfellows. No biologist should ever carry the burden of killing for science too easily, because only a psychopath kills without emotion.

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