

In his novel *East of Eden*, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature John Steinbeck lets one of the characters (Chinese butler Lee) explain the Cain and Abel story:

*“I think this is the best-known story in the world because it is everybody’s story. I think it is the symbol story of the human soul. I’m feeling my way now – don’t jump on me if I’m not clear. The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt – and there is the story of mankind. I think that if rejection could be amputated, the human would not be what he is. Maybe there would be fewer crazy people. I am sure in myself there would not be many jails. It is all there – the start, the beginning. One child, refused the love he craves, kicks the cat and hides the secret guilt; and another steals so that money will make him loved; and a third conquers the world – and always the guilt and revenge and more guilt. The human is the only guilty animal. Now wait! Therefore I think this old and terrible story is important because it is a chart of the soul – the secret, rejected, guilty soul.”*

