At the turn of the 20th century the Russian Empire suffered an identity crisis on cultural, political and national grounds. Members of the Russian and non-Russian intelligentsia tried to come to terms with industrialization, revolutions, pogroms, World War I, and other cataclysms, re-evaluating many ideas about society and their role in it. The brewing social unrest forced many writers and poets who belonged to ethnic minorities to make political choices and choose their affiliations carefully as they observed a sharp rise of various nationalisms. This paper will examine the national question in the fictional works of two writers and politicians – one Ukrainian, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, and one Jewish, Vladimir Jabotinsky.  Both were born on Ukrainian territory and explored the relationship among Russians, Ukrainians and Jews. I am interested in narrative strategies these writers used to portray interethnic interactions, conflicts and dialogues, which reflected the evolution of national identity on the individual level of various characters. For example, the use of synthetic, mimetic and thematic functions of setting can be significant – public and private spaces where characters encounter each other, the placement of these characters in relation to each other, as well as barriers and bridges between ingroup/outgroup members, etc. I will focus on Vynnychenko’s plays *Dyzharmonia, Pisnia Izrailia* and *Mizh Dvokh Syl,* and Jabotisnky’s play *Chuzhbina,* as well as his novel *Piatero*.