This study sets out to investigate the nature and purpose of the mode of absurd drama with close reference to selected plays of Robert Serumaga, Francis Imbuga and Baranabas Kasigwa.

Serumaga's three plays *A play*, *The Elephants*, and *Majangwa* represent the Ugandan situation. Imbuga's *Game of Silence* represents Kenya while Kasigwa's four short plays, *The Trials*, *The Conflict*, *The Absurd* and *The Scum* present a kind of intermediate case because of the author's dual experience. He was initially a Uganda national, born and educated there but he is now a Kenyan.

The main thrust of the study is to explore the relationship between the style of absurd drama and its circumstance. The aim here is to try and establish the reason for the growing tendency towards the absurd idiom in East African drama.

This tendency raises several questions that become the focus of this study: written absurd drama traces it origins to Europe; do the East African player wrights express themselves in their written drama the same way as their European counterparts? What do the East African playwrights hope to achieve by the adoption of this genre? How do the circumstances of the East African playwrights condition the creation of their drama?

The main thesis of this study is that the absurd in East African drama consists more in the historical political reality than merely in the form. The absurdity mode, therefore, is only adopted as a survivalist strategy by the playwrights.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One comprises the background to the problem, statement of the problem, hypotheses, literature review, objectives and justification of the study, theoretical framework, methodology and scope and limitations.

Chapter Two comprises the definition of absurd drama, its origins and development. Chapter Three is concerned with the analysis of the stylistic aspects of absurd drama from the plays of study. It assesses the artistic worth of these elements, which include structure, characterization, language, style and folkloric features, and absurd theatrical devices.

Chapter Four deals with the thematic concerns of the plays. It looks at the rationale for the adoption of this genre. Lastly, Chapter Five, which forms the conclusion, summarises the issues raised in the other chapters and suggests areas for future study.