

ABSTRACT

It is true that the only thing man is sure of in life is death, thus a study of death and death rituals is crucial to understanding how man perceives himself.

This paper aims to depict Afro-Jamaican observance of death by describing their mortuary rituals and the extent to which they perceive these as being fundamental to the proper interment of the dead and protection of the bereaved.

No ethnic group in the Caribbean escaped the creolization process, which has occurred over the hundreds of year since a written history of the area began. Bearing this in mind, this paper aims at attempting to identify the ethnic origins of these rituals with a view to establishing whether they are as a result of the inter-culturation process or whether African retentions dominate.

The research relied heavily on oral data. Thirty three formal interviews were done in seventeen different locations in the island and supplemented by secondary sources. The analysis resulted in this paper.