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Stipend Session Review

The session Decolonizing Nomenclature: One Language at a Time was presented by Nathalie Guénelle and Joanna McMann. They were from the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) and the Government of Nunavut (GN) Heritage Collection. The session was about how the nomenclature we use in museums are centered around French and English culture for cataloging. With the help of the surrounding Indigenous communities CHIN is working to use the correct words that relate to the specific cultures wording for their cultural items. GN and CHIN work together to highlight the cultural objects related to the Nunavut people.

This session was interesting in that it reminded me that the cultures that owned items originally often have different names. While they were talking about Indigenous cultures this principle can also be applied to the cultural items for Africans. Working at an African American Museum with a large ethnographic collection, we may have the same issue in how we have categorized some of the objects. These terms will not only help us to honor the cultures the items have come from but will also teach the public the proper terms with a public catalog. This idea not only shows that we are trying to honor the cultures we are exhibiting but also trying to learn ourselves. As someone who is new in their role, this also provides me with an opportunity to reach out and connect with the community as well as keep my research skills sharp.