

# Work, Expression, Manifestation & Item:

## A short explanation of “resource entities”

RDA Workshop at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference 2024

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

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# What is an “entity”?

**RDA glossary definition:** “An **abstract class** of a physical or conceptual thing in the universe of human discourse.”

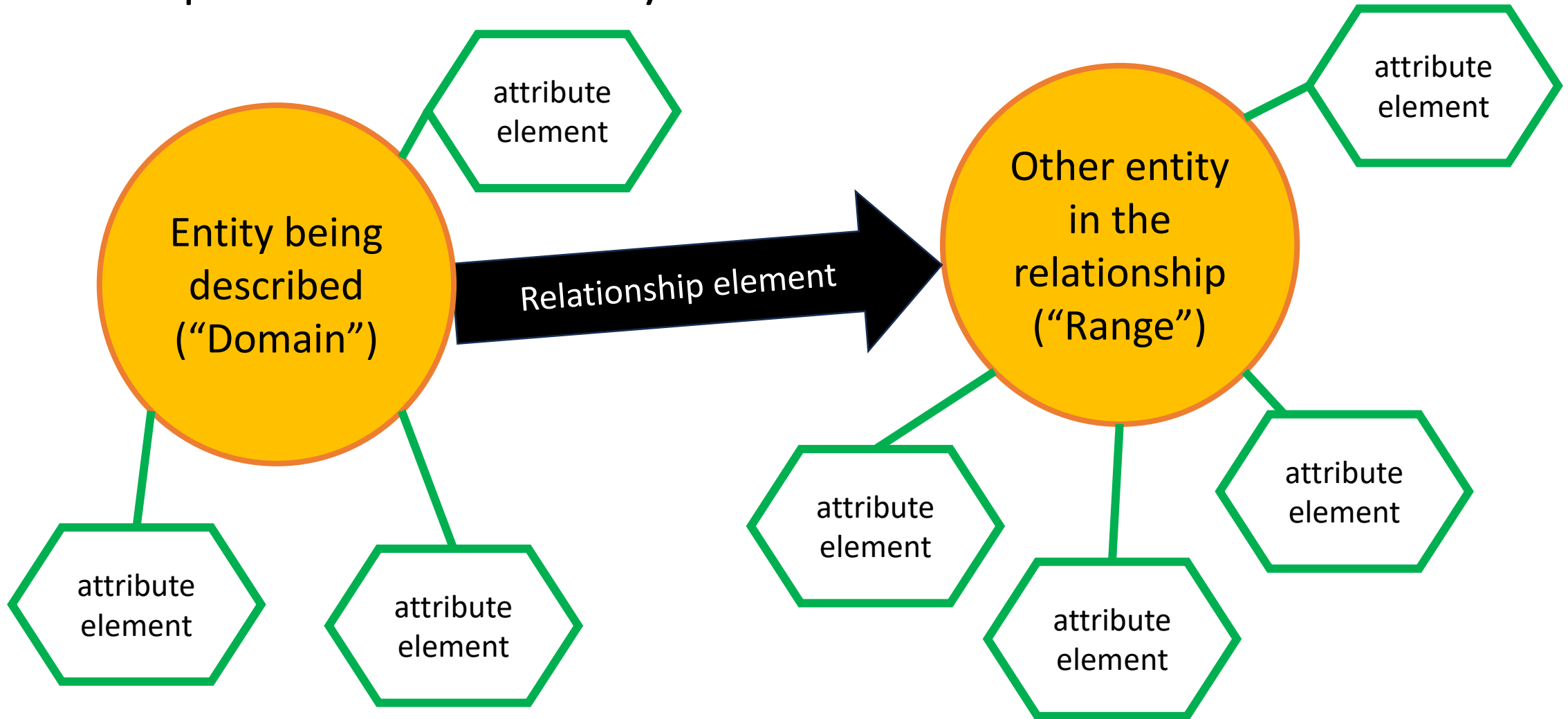
**In plain words:** A **particular way** of looking at or describing an object or idea to someone else.

RDA only provides guidance and instructions on *certain* classes of things. These are broadly called “RDA entities”. An RDA entity can be further sorted into one of these subtypes: Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item, Agent (such as Person, Collective Agent, Family, Corporate Body), Nomen, Timespan, and Place.

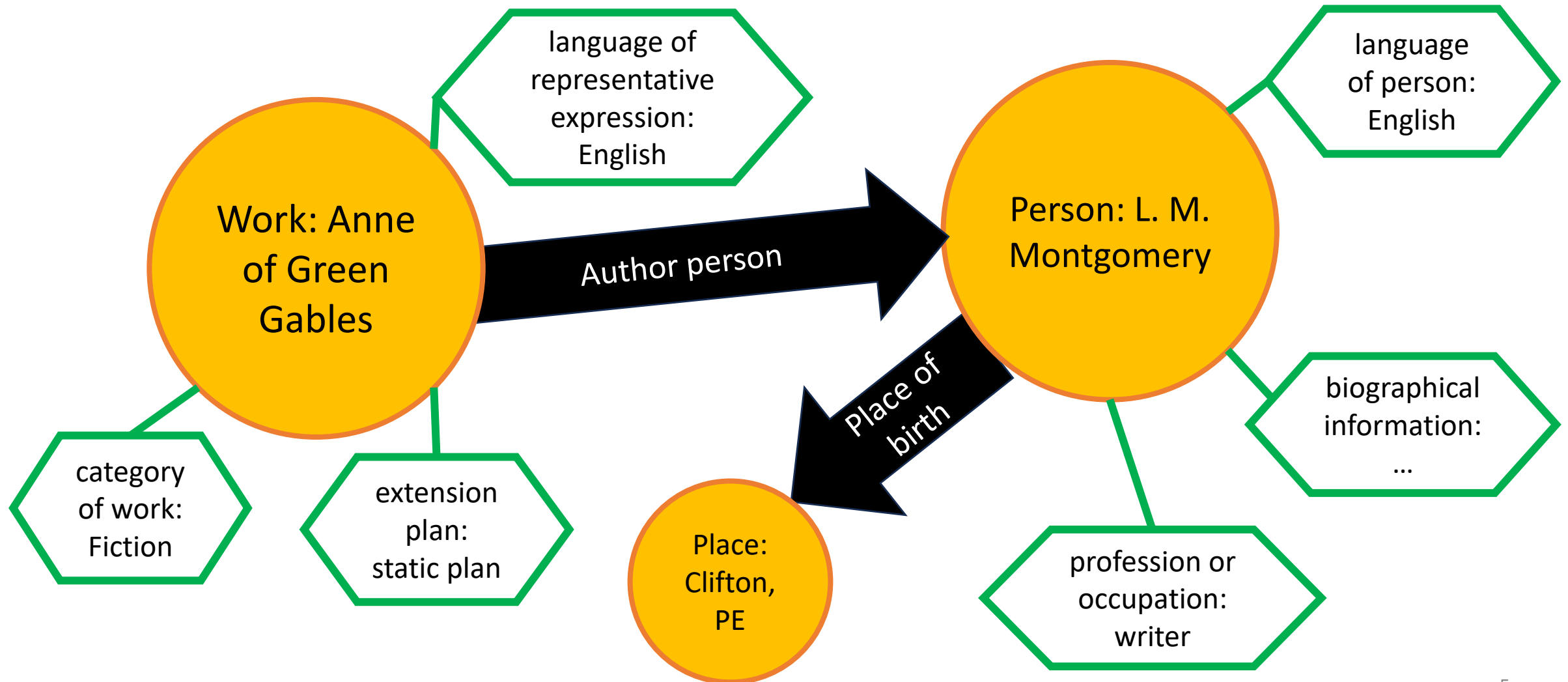
# Work, Expression, Manifestation, Item (“WEMI”) = our “resource entities”

- When we describe something in our library collection, we describe it in terms of its Work, Expression, Manifestation, and/or Item properties.
- WEMI = different ways to look at, think about, or describe a resource.
  - We do this using **elements**:
    - **Attribute element** – a property or characteristic of an entity
    - **Relationship element** – a relationship between one entity and another entity (e.g., an agent responsible for the resource, or a place associated with the resource, etc.)
- Current cataloguers already record attribute and relationship elements. ***Can you come up with at least one element that you’ve recorded recently?***

A set of attributes + relationships make up a description of a library resource



A set of attributes + relationships make up a description of a library resource



# Attributes and relationships are not new

Take a look at the different search interfaces listed on the right.

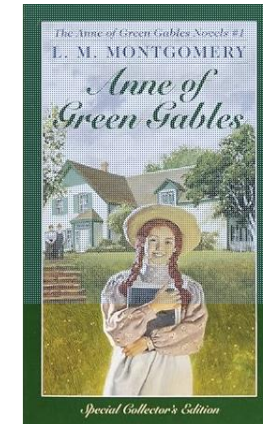
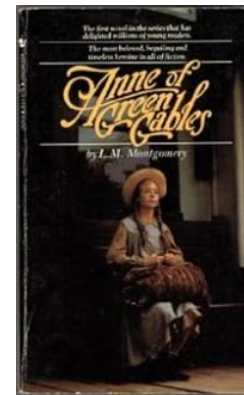
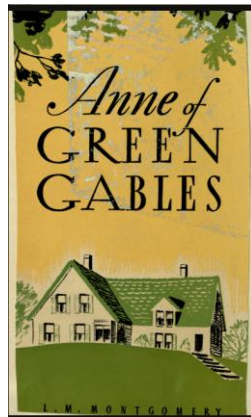
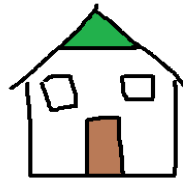
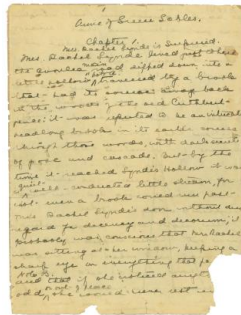
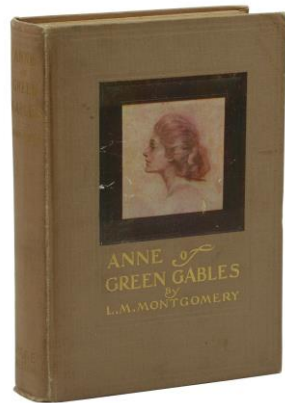
Some of these interfaces try to show us relationships based on the existing metadata created by cataloguers.

Staff and patrons view the record details for more elements that help them decide if the record describes their desired resource.

- Orangeville Public Library (Bibliocommons) – [search by Title “anne of green gables”](#)
- Bracebridge Public Library (SirsiDynix) – [search everything by Title “anne of green gables”](#)
- Concordia University Library (WorldCat Discovery) – [search for ti: \(“anne of green gables”\)](#)

# Why care about WEMI?

Recording Work, Expression, Manifestation, and Item elements can mean more accurate identification of the library resource when confronted with many similar-looking resources.



# WEMI distinctions in everyday library scenarios

A patron might ask:

- “I returned *Anne of Green Gables* a moment ago, but I think I left something inside the book. Can I get it back just for a minute?”
- “Does the first edition of *Anne of Green Gables* published in 1908 still exist anywhere?”
- “Do you have *Anne of Green Gables*, the novel by L.M. Montgomery?”
- “Do you have *Anne of Green Gables* in French?”
- “Do you have *Anne with an E* available to stream?”

You help by distinguishing between WEMI entities!

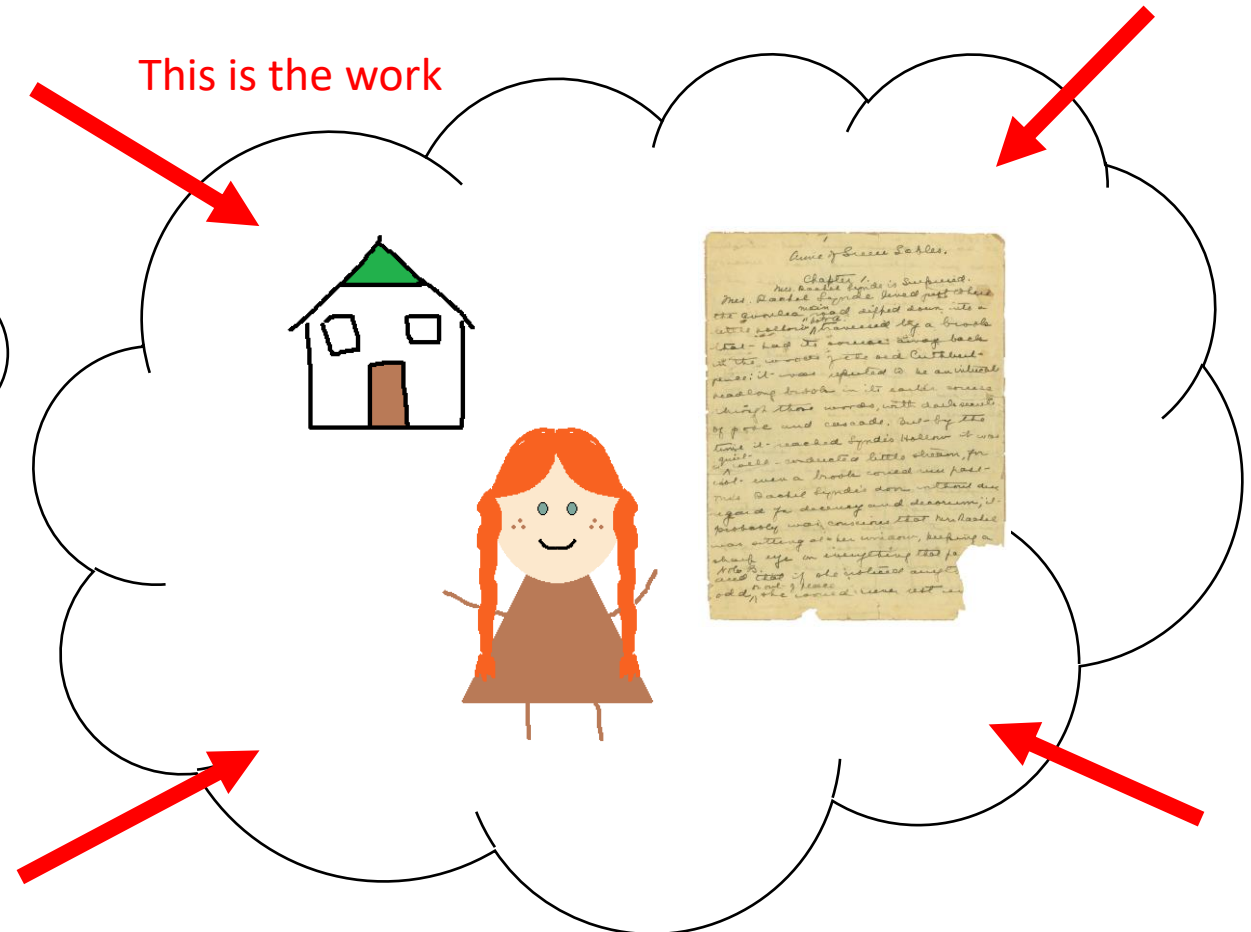


# Work

**RDA glossary definition:** “A distinct intellectual or artistic creation, that is, the intellectual or artistic content.”

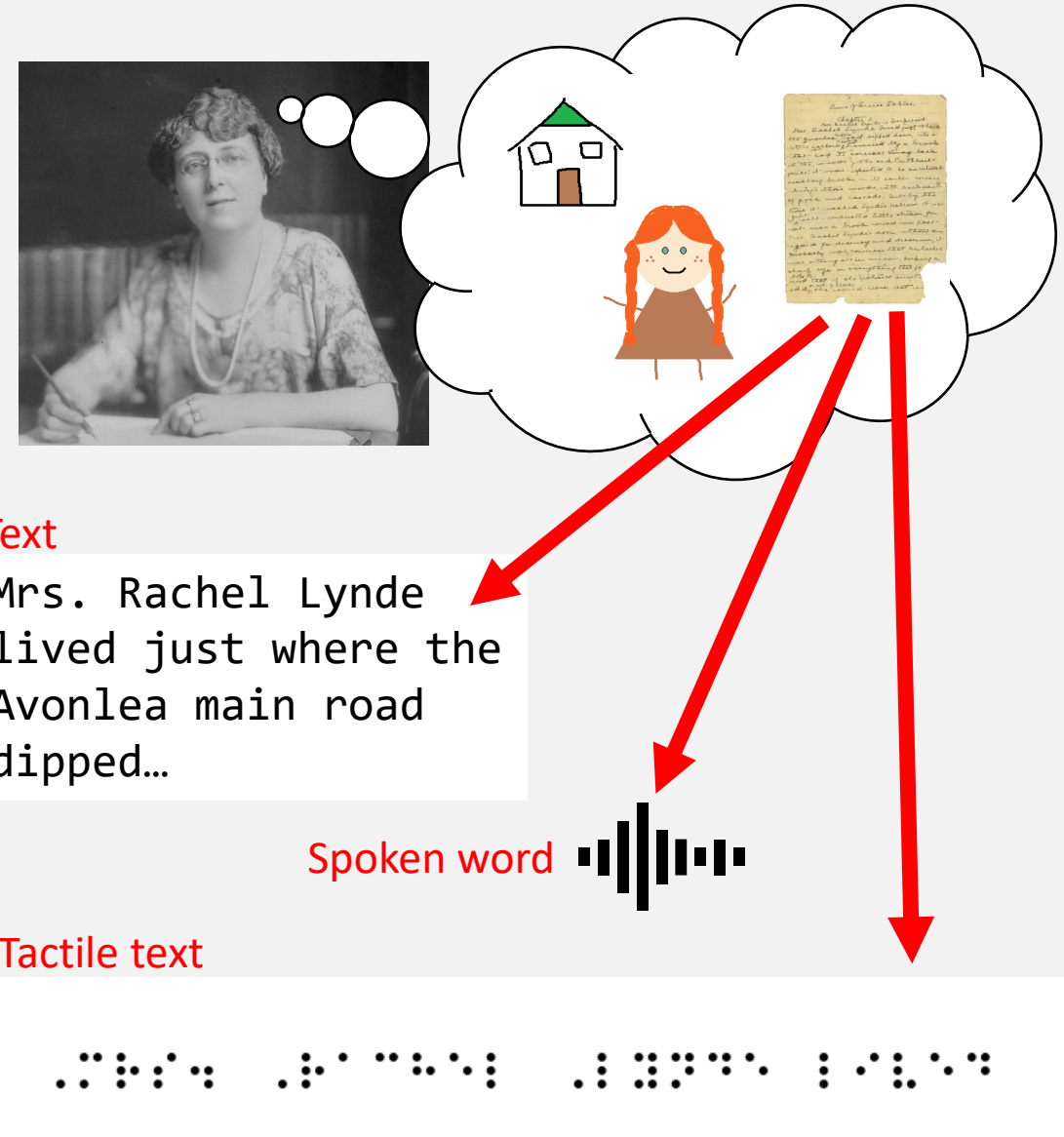


Portrait of L.M. Montgomery. Public domain image from [Wikimedia Commons](#)



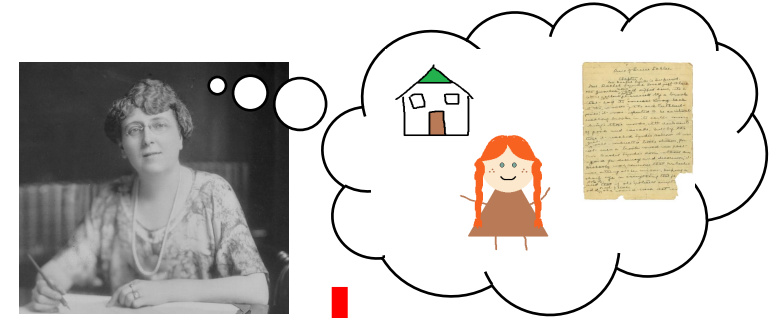
# Expression

- **RDA glossary definition:** “An intellectual or artistic realization of a work in the form of alpha-numeric, musical or choreographic notation, sound, image, object, movement, etc., or any combination of such forms.”
- **In plain words:** A communication (of the work) that can be seen, read, heard, or touched.
- Different expressions can include: different language versions, different content types (such as text, tactile text, or spoken word)

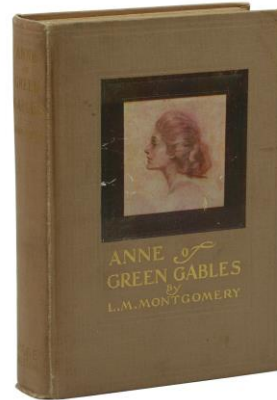


# Manifestation

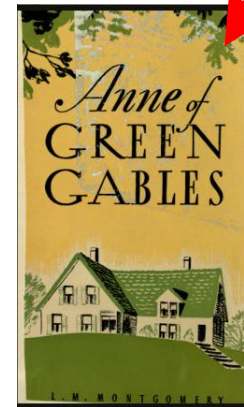
- **RDA glossary definition:**  
“A physical embodiment of an expression of a work.”
- **In plain words:** A publication, production, or manufacture that makes an expression concrete.
- Think of the physical/digital container that is meant to “carry” or “hold” the communication.



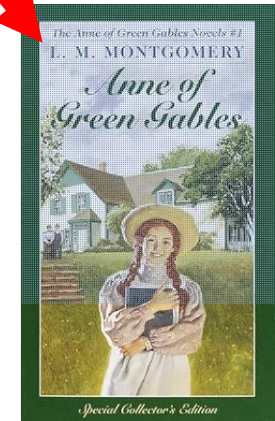
Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...



L.C. Page, 1<sup>st</sup> edition,  
1<sup>st</sup> printing, 1908



Ryerson Press, 1<sup>st</sup>  
Canadian edition,  
1942; reprinted 1946

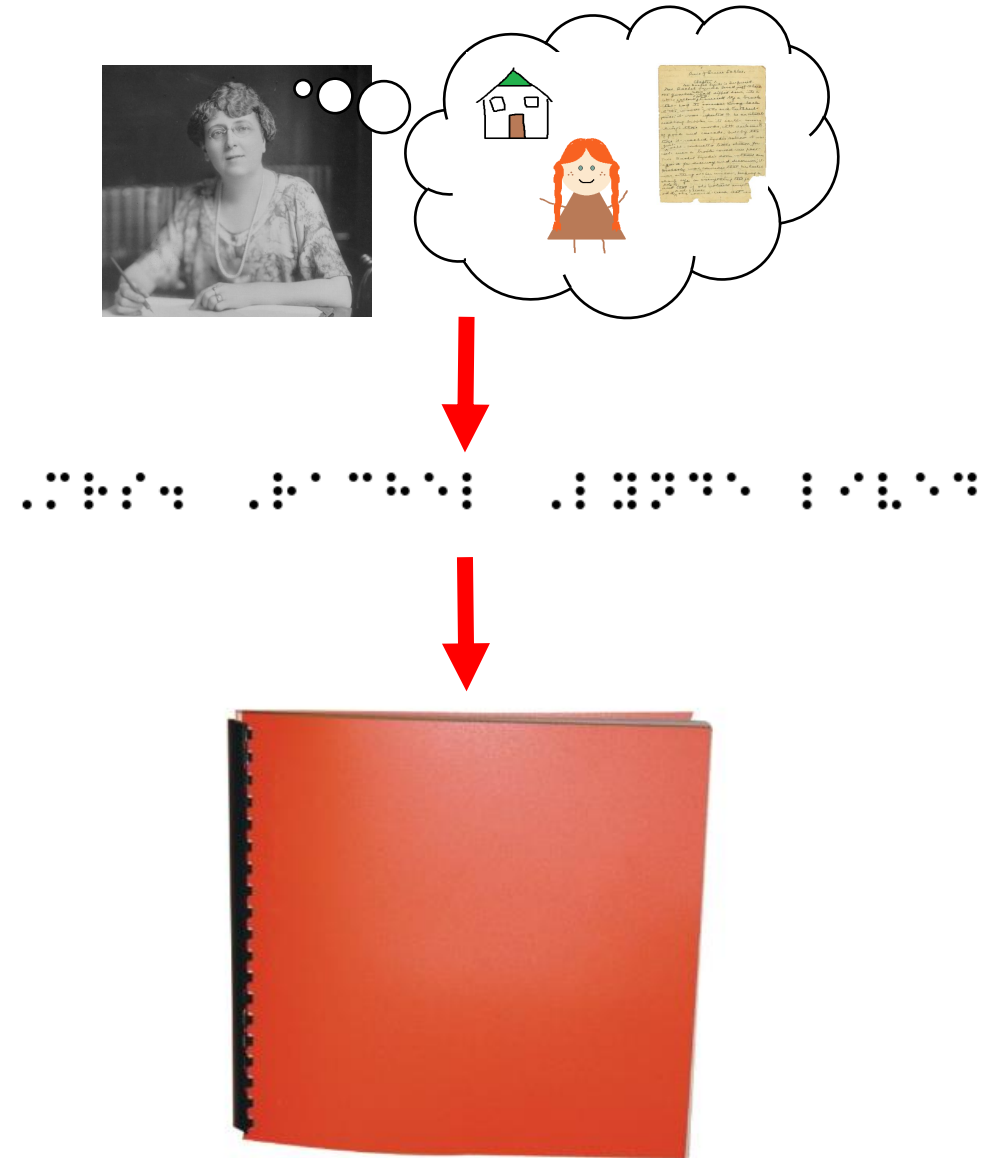


Bantam/Starfire, “Special  
Collector’s Edition”, 1982

# Manifestation

This manifestation is different from the manifestations shown on the previous slide:

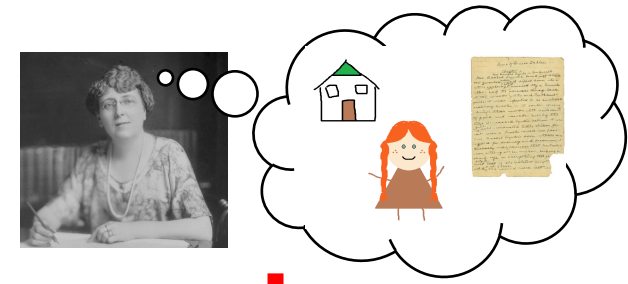
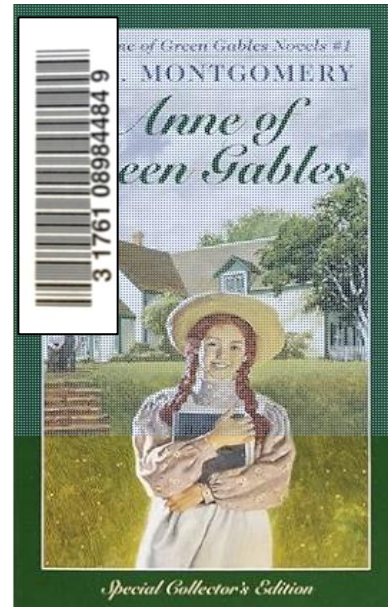
- Different publisher and date of publication
- Embodies a different expression (one that is communicated through tactile text)



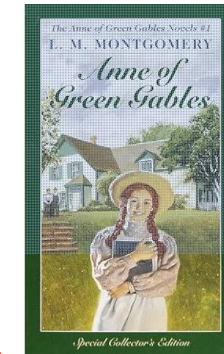
# Item

- **RDA glossary definition:** “A single exemplar or instance of a manifestation.”
- **In plain words:** One particular copy of a manifestation.
- Hint: You can identify an item by its specific library barcode. A patron might look for a manifestation but is borrowing an item.

Some Public Library's copy, checked out for 2 weeks



Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...

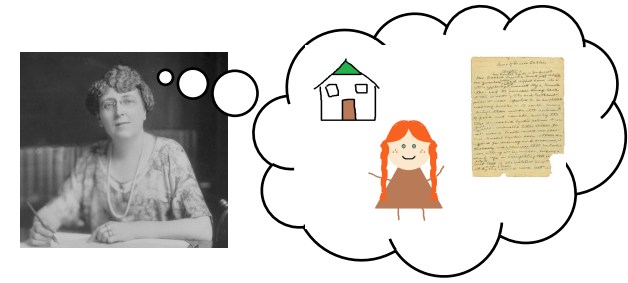


Copies at other libraries 13

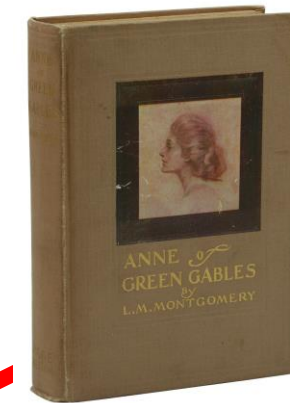


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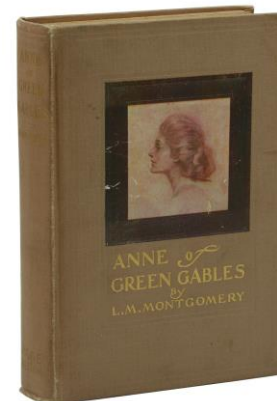


Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped..

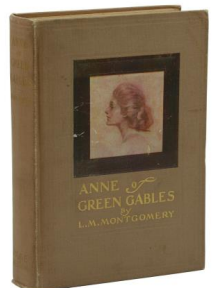


L.C. Page, 1<sup>st</sup> edition,  
1<sup>st</sup> printing, 1908

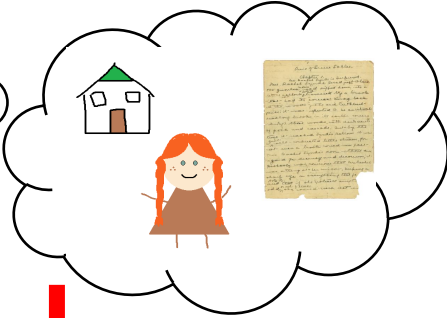
Vendor's copy  
listed for  
\$20,000 USD



Another vendor's  
copy, listed for  
\$15,000 USD

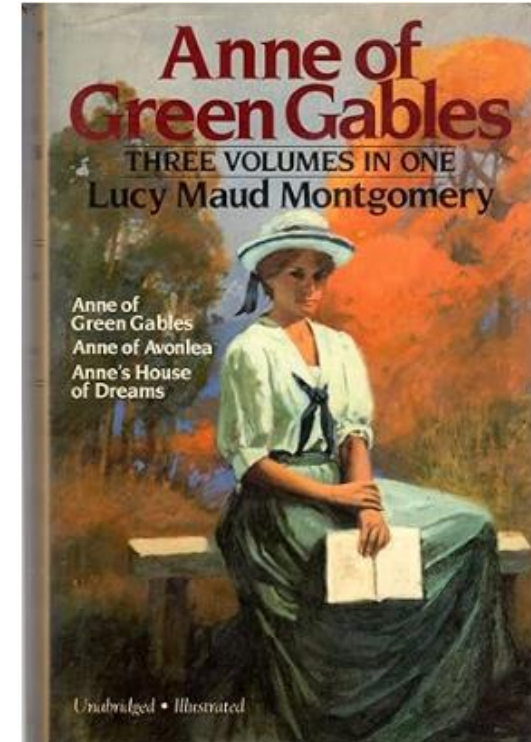


# WEMI model helps us discover individual expressions of works found in anthologies and omnibus editions



Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...

Expression manifested in this publication:



This kind of manifestation is called an aggregate.

3 volumes in 1. Gramercy, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1988. ISBN 9780517605172

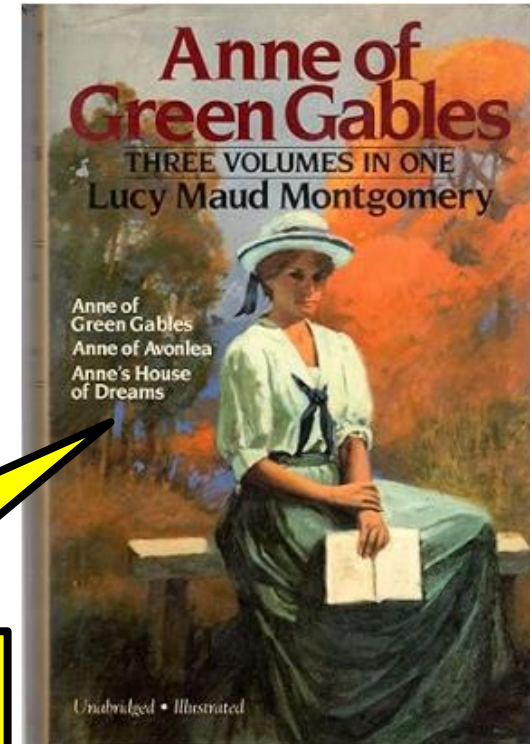
# WEMI model helps us discover individual expressions of works found in anthologies and omnibus editions



Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...

Expression manifested in this publication:

Expressions manifested:  
*Anne of Green Gables* (English text)  
*Anne of Avonlea* (English text)  
*Anne's House of Dreams* (English text)

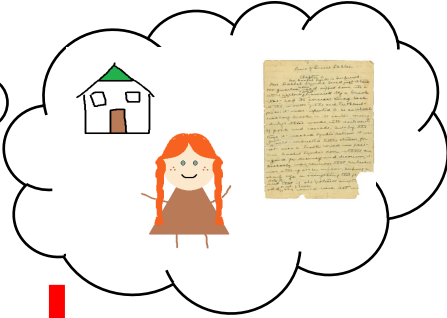


This kind of manifestation is called an aggregate.

3 volumes in 1. Gramercy, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1988. ISBN 9780517605172

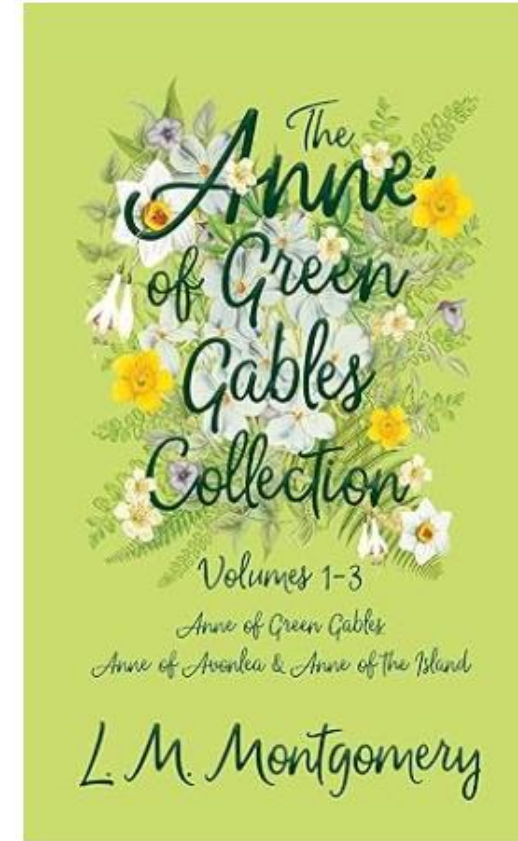


... and distinguish between different anthologies and omnibus editions



Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...

Expression manifested in this publication:

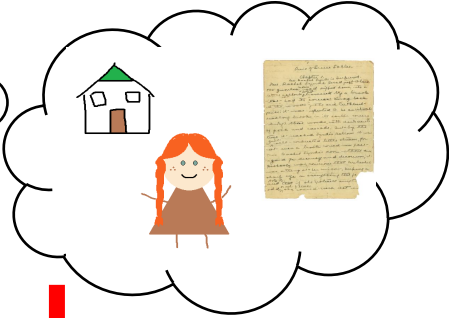


This kind of manifestation is called an aggregate.

(Different example from the last one shown.)

3 volumes in 1. Read & Co., 2021. ISBN 9781528770149

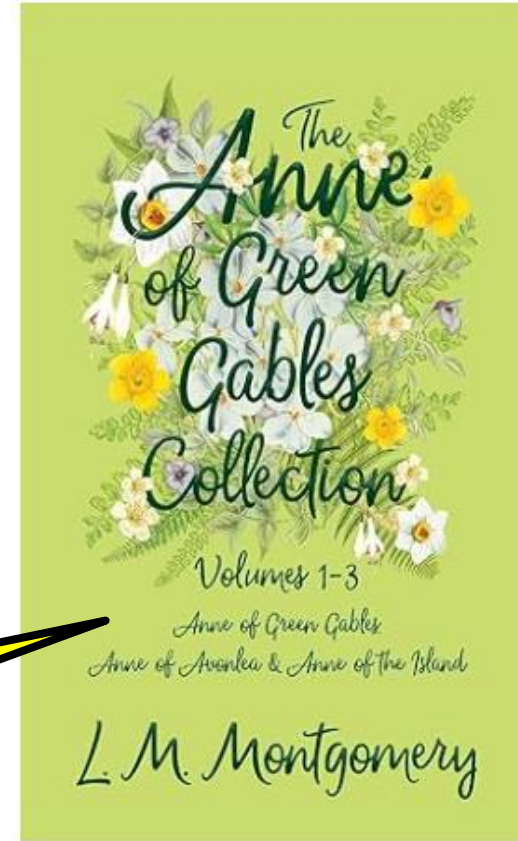
... and distinguish between different anthologies and omnibus editions



Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped...

Expression manifested in this publication:

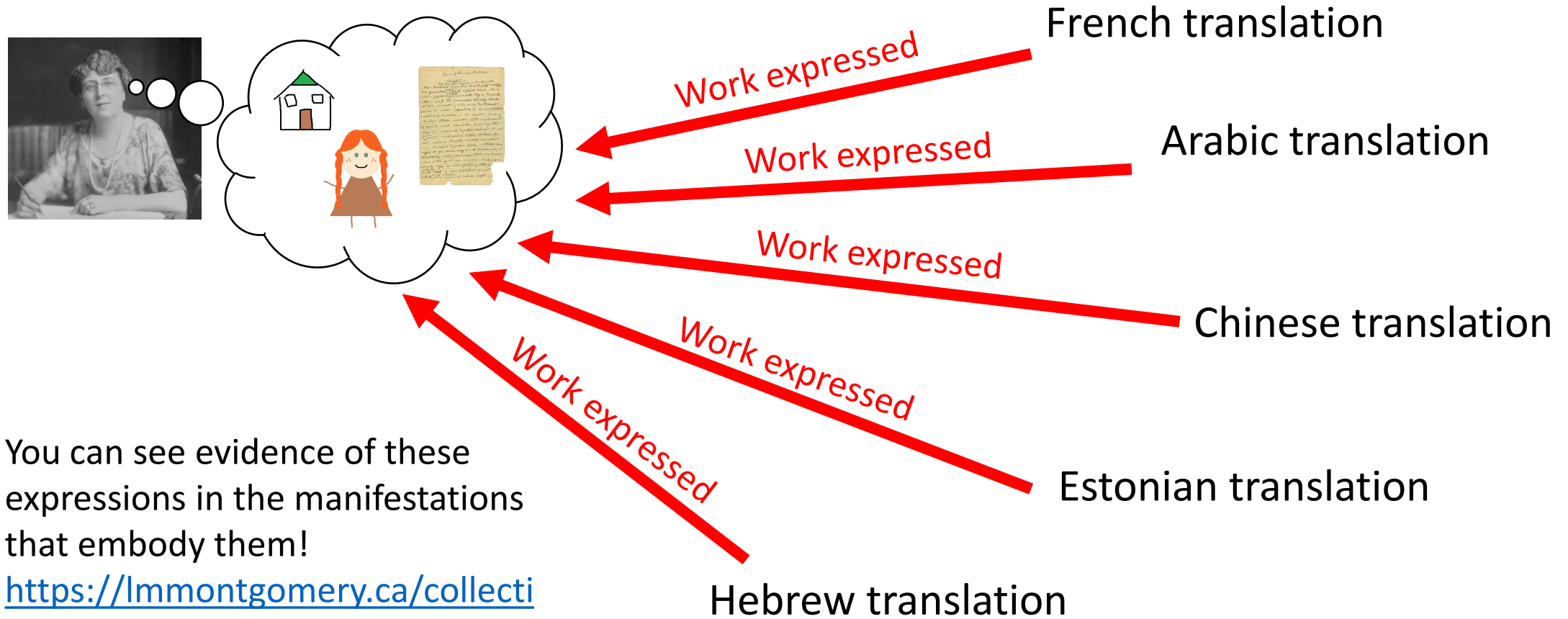
Expressions manifested:  
*Anne of Green Gables* (English text)  
*Anne of Avonlea* (English text)  
*Anne of the Island* (English text)



Different aggregate from the one published by Gramercy in 1988.

3 volumes in 1. Read & Co., 2021.  
ISBN 9781528770149

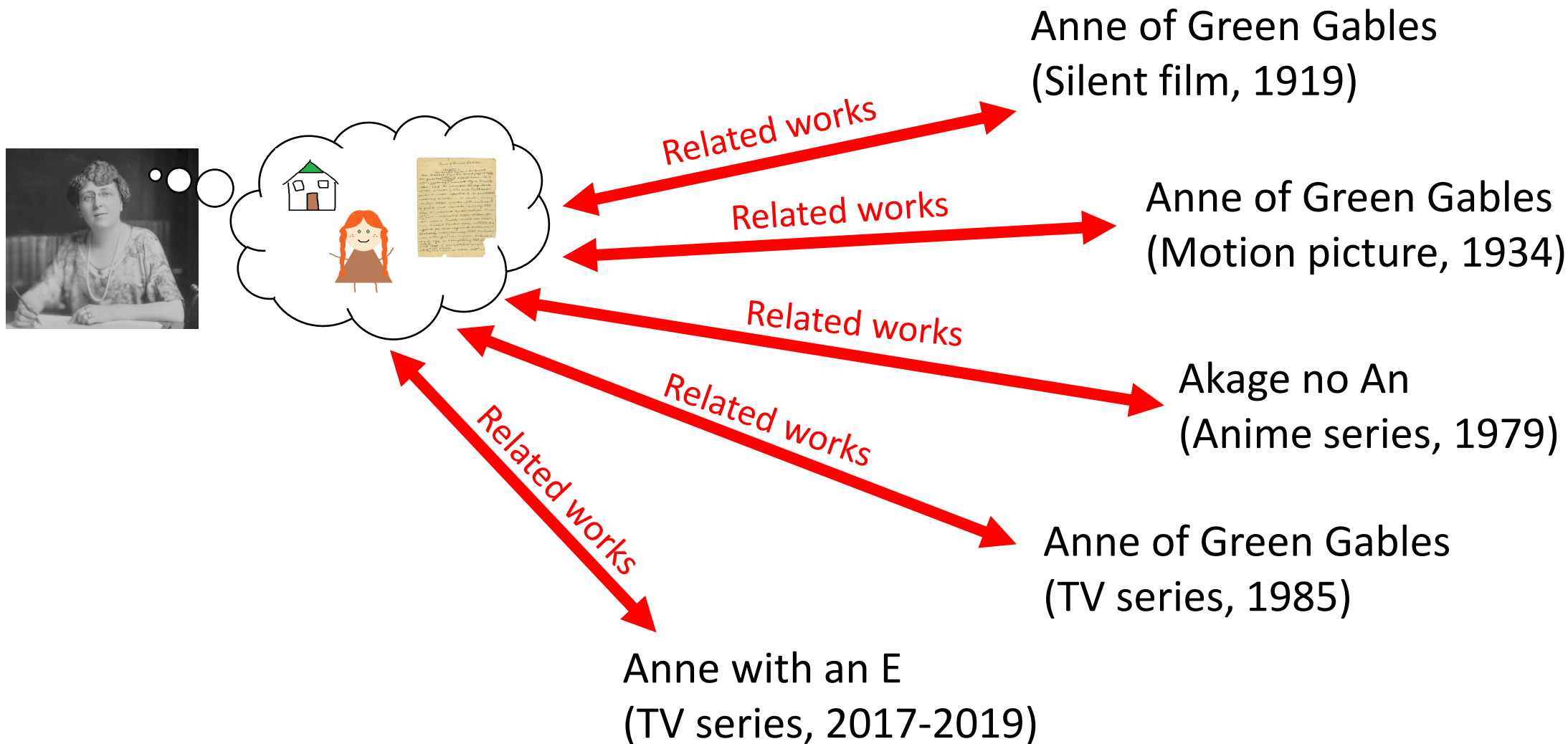
# WEMI model helps us discover different expressions



You can see evidence of these expressions in the manifestations that embody them!

<https://lmmontgomery.ca/collections/annes-world>

# WEMI model helps us describe related works



# Which WEMI entity will help to answer the question?

- “I returned *Anne of Green Gables* a moment ago, but I forgot something inside the book. Can I get it back just for a minute?”
- “Does the first edition of *Anne of Green Gables* published in 1908 still exist anywhere?”
- “Do you have *Anne of Green Gables*, the novel by L.M. Montgomery?”
- “Do you have *Anne of Green Gables* in French?”
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# How does distinguishing between WEMI help us learn to use RDA?

- Elements are specific to the entity they describe:
  - Work elements can only describe a work.
  - Expression elements can only describe an expression.
  - Manifestation elements can only describe a manifestation.
  - Item elements can only describe an item.
- The values we record for each element will help us distinguish between different resources, even if there are commonalities between them (as in the examples of related works, different expressions of works, and different manifestations shown on earlier slides).

# Tips to keep in mind

- Much of our focus is on describing **manifestations**, and the relationships that a manifestation can have with other entities.
- Describing manifestations: at a minimum, we need to **call** that manifestation by something (name/title, access point, or identifier) **and** show which expression or work it is meant to manifest.
  1. Calling a specific entity by name/title/access point/identifier = recording an **appellation**.
  2. Relating a manifestation to the work/expression it embodies ensures that relationships are clear. (For example, if a patron asks for the DVD for “Anne with an E”, don’t give them the DVD for the Sullivan production “Anne of Green Gables” from 1985, even though both are TV adaptations of the same novel!)

# Knowing which elements to choose

- In RDA Toolkit, we look up Entity pages to find out which elements can be used.
- RDA Toolkit offers many elements, and a range of options for how to record values for each element. (Some options result in more precise data, others less so.)
- Communities decide which elements and options to follow. They will create an **Application Profile** to reflect those decisions.
- Application Profiles may list a mix of WEMI elements, rather than exclusively the elements for one entity.
- *Note: Even if your library does not have a formal application profile, the cataloguing policies or practices at your library may fulfill a similar purpose!*