pressed through their recorded statements to clerks, or by their actions in seeking relief to which they felt they were entitled in particular locations and contexts? McHugh’s text is admittedly not intended as a social history of paupers: this is a study of the administrators of hospitals, their intellectual and cultural influences, and their religious and social allegiances. Yet one feels that further study of paupers within the extant bureau and hospital archives may add to a rounded picture of the intellectual and cultural meanings, expectations, and expressions of charity in seventeenth-century communities.

While it is hoped that further studies of the seventeenth century will continue to elucidate the relationships between participants in charity, in addition to expanding the environments analysed, McHugh’s detailed study of sources from the local community level provides a cautionary tale against assuming the authority and efficacy of royal edicts. Hospital reforms, he argues, were largely driven by local initiatives. Transitions towards central control occurred slowly in a more haphazard, less intentional manner than the dominant narrative might suggest. Ultimately, what is distinctive about the seventeenth-century innovations, argues McHugh, is not so much control of charitable care, but rather the forms of moral and physical care provided.


Adapted from the author’s doctoral thesis, this is an exhaustive, seminal work on the once popular, but now little-known genre called the “ana.” Wild clearly sets forth her goals in her introduction: she will first establish a definition based on the original form of the ana and will then trace its subsequent diversification following both a diachronic and synchronic approach. A study of the word “ana” will complete this description of the genre. In her concluding chapter, Wild will raise some questions about the ana’s relationship to society, politics and literature. A primarily chronological study, this book is not thesis-driven. It does, nonetheless, lay the groundwork for further studies of the genre by providing invaluable information as well as
suggesting paths of inquiry to follow.

According to Wild, the genre’s name was derived from the Latin suffix “-anus” which was used in Antiquity to designate geographical, historical or romanesque works. In the seventeenth century, “ana” instead came to refer to a collection of words spoken by a male member of the intellectual elite and transcribed by a self-effacing compiler. This substantive form first appeared in Jean Bernier’s *Reflexions, pensées et bons mots de Pépincourt* (1696) which Wild categorizes as an ana despite its title. (344) The first work of the genre was published in 1666 and entitled “Scaligerana.” Three others—the *Second Scaligerana*, the *Perroniana* and the *Thuana*—followed shortly thereafter, and it is these four originators of the genre that form the basis for Wild’s definition. Wild traces the history of each of these works and their reception in chapter one.

The second chapter is devoted to a study of the few ana published between 1668 and 1693 and an explanation for the almost twenty-year gap in the genre’s publication history. Chapter three focuses on the influential *Menagiana* which uniquely mixes intellectual with worldly content, thereby establishing new parameters for the genre as a whole. The longest ana from an oral source, the *Menagiana* was also the first to be compiled as homage to a recently deceased person. This ana enjoyed (and continues to enjoy) the widest success. Ménage’s circle of intimates produced the ana that are discussed in chapter four. With some more literary in their origins than others, they illustrate the instability of the genre after the *Menagiana*’s publication. A study of the ana published between 1694 and 1696 comprises chapter five. These works are light-hearted, and contain no serious sign of an oral source or of erudition.

Wild devotes chapters six through eight to a discussion of two types of ana that developed in the late seventeenth century: the *ana savants* and the *ana galants*. By this time, France’s newspapers rivaled the public as judges of good taste and literary merit. While the *ana savants* were universally well received, the *ana galants*, although entertaining reading for the worldly, found less success among journalists. Wild attributes this to the sources of each type of ana. The *ana savants* drew their content primarily from written sources and were therefore less fragmented than the conversational *ana galants*. The former’s tone
remained more consistent throughout and they therefore seemed more polished and valuable.

Chapter nine focuses on the ana that had circulated for considerable time in manuscript form prior to their publication. Wild suggests that their compilers never intended them to appear in print form either due to their libertine content (the *Naudeana* and the *Patiniana*) or due to their very short length (the aptly named *Pitheana*). The penultimate chapter looks at the *Santeuilliana* and the *Vasoniana*, the last two ana published during Louis XIV’s reign. In both, the compiler’s hand is very present. Three appendices follow. The first contains information about ana that had been intended for publication while the last two contain the prefaces to the *Scaligerana* and the *Casauboniana*.

Wild addresses inevitable and essential questions raised by the genre’s evolution in chapter eleven. Through an overall assessment of the ana’s reception in newspapers, works of literary criticism and bibliographies, and the ana themselves, the author suggests reasons for an ana’s success or failure. These reasons loosely break down into three categories: authenticity and (mis)attribution, orality and usefulness, and content. While she argues that the inauthenticity of an ana did not entail a negative reception in and of itself, it was the lack of idealization of the author or misattribution of his words that did. The question of orality is related. Wild suggests that transcribing words spoken in a private setting could amount to a breach of intimacy and could result in their misinterpretation. At the same time, readers looked to the ana for their instructional value. Individual works were often criticized as being impoverished partly because they contained traces of orality. Finally, controversial subject matter such as libertinage, Protestantism and Jansenism was a determining factor in a work’s success. While these questions are essential, they do not exhaust the possible paths of inquiry. Wild’s work would benefit in particular from a discussion of women’s particular place in relationship to the ana and how it was affected by the rise in popularity of the ana galants. Similarly, some engagement with twentieth-century scholarship on conversation as well as the fragment or anecdote would strengthen this study.

Throughout this book, Wild’s voice resonates clearly, and she leads her reader through her discussion carefully. Well-written and
clear, this book is a useful resource for those who are familiar with the intellectuals honored by individual ana but who would like to know more about the works that carry their name. It would also appeal to scholars of literary history intrigued by questions of authorship, orality, the anecdote, and biography.