appointing. In contrast to his thorough analysis of the Christian tradition and its roots in Plato, St. Paul, and Augustine, Moore says of the troubadours "the troublesome term courtly love and the scholarly debates about it are best avoided." The intriguing question of why this radical new view of love should have appeared at this time (or any time) is avoided completely, with only a one-sentence list given of answers scholars have proposed, and a single reference for each in the Notes. Classic studies such as de Rougemont's Love in the Western World, a psychological analysis of the influence of folklore and the Christian heresies, are not even mentioned. The lack of willingness to deal with causes is partially atoned for, however, by an analysis of function in the final interpretive chapter that relates the poets' discovery of interpersonal, idealized erotic love to Roger Caillois' four principles of play, helping to explain why romance as a game has kept its appeal for eight centuries.

Folklore influences are mentioned, though rather superficially from a folklorist's point of view: Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, Tristan, fabliaux and morality plays. The value of the book for folklorists is not in its folklore scholarship, but in its pertinence as background for so many issues. The analysis is carefully done, the Notes are thorough, and the Bibliographical Note is valuable for its pre-selection of the most helpful and accessible studies and most readable translations.

As Moore says in his Preface, "Outside of our own areas of specialization, many of us become 'general readers' seeking easy access to complicated bodies of knowledge." That is an apt characterization of the typical folklore student and Love in Twelfth-Century France.

Ephemeral Folk Figures: Scarecrows, Harvest Figures, and Snowmen, by Neal Avon.

Reviewed by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

American folk arts and crafts, although inadequately studied, have been exuberantly photographed and published by non-folklorists in giant picture books. Hundreds of shiny plates tend to be accompanied by a text which romanticizes the naiveté of folk creations but fails in such simple tasks as documenting photographs or providing footnotes and bibliography. Because an art historian is so often the author, the aesthetic predispositions of the period in which these books are published determine which folk objects are photographed and for what reasons they are valued by the author.

True to this tradition, Ephemeral Folk Figures: Scarecrows, Harvest Figures and Snowmen is a big, beautiful, shiny picture book by a husband and wife team whose training is in fine art and graphic design respectively. They became interested in folk figures while photographing and taking rubbings of New England gravestones.

The photographs are excellent, capturing in black and white, and sometimes in color, the changes worked by the elements on scarecrows, harvest fig-
ures and snowmen, which usually last no longer than the season for which they were constructed. The comments accompanying the photographs fail to indicate where and when the photographs were taken but do identify the materials used in constructing the figures and do burst into lyricism: "There is something positively Machiavellian about this black-shrouded form as it stands like a medieval monk blessing a field of poppies..." (p. 74).

The text is well written, rich in poetic imagery and contains descriptions of how the figures were constructed and what materials were used. The section on scarecrows is the most detailed and provides fascinating descriptions of the many ingenious devices designed to keep pests away from crops. Some historical background is given but the sources for this information are not indicated. References to scarecrows, harvest figures and snowmen in literature are mentioned. There is neither a bibliography nor footnotes.

It is no accident that these ephemeral figures, these makeshift things of shreds and patches, should have been 'discovered' in the second half of the twentieth century. Although the comment on the dust jacket is inaccurate, it does anticipate the 'art' perspective of the authors: "The book is highly relevant to the total concept of today's art for it epitomizes the glorification of the 'found object'." The 'found object' is not the total concept of today's art. And technically speaking, these folk figures are not 'found objects'; they are assemblages. But the general point is well taken: scarecrows, harvest figures and snowmen are viewed and discussed by the authors as 'art' and as being in turn with current trends in the contemporary art scene.

The resulting bias is clearly expressed firstly in the uncritical, romantic use of the terms 'folklore,' 'myth,' and 'magic,' a practice guaranteed to make folklorists bristle; and secondly, in an ethnocentric emphasis upon folk figures as evocative images resulting from artistic impulses, art being conceived of here in Bascomian terms as 'decoration [elaboration] beyond utility.' The scholar involved in the objective study of material culture will no doubt be irked by the ethnocentrism of such undocumented statements as: "The practical man who sets about contriving his own version of a scarecrow probably never turns his hand toward making another 'creative' object. This one endeavor is more than likely his only venture into what might be considered 'the world of art'" (p. 57). Let us not forget that we are talking here about snowmen and scarecrows, about sticks and rags hastily improvised in the middle of a field to resemble a human form. To the sophisticated gallery goer who has cut his teeth on Picasso, Duchamps, Rauschenberg, et al., scarecrows may be naive but avant garde artistic statements. But to the farmer who prizes the perfectly straight furrow, well-constructed furniture and architecture, neatly stitched quilts, what do snowmen and scarecrows mean? This question requires empirical investigation and not fanciful hypotheses.

A well designed format, lyrical prose and excellent photographs of folk sculptures in their natural environment make this book a source of inspiration for contemporary artists and of nostalgia and whimsy for the general reader. Although marred by the lack of documentation, the photographs are valuable to the folklorist as a collection from New England of an ongoing tradition of American folk sculpture which has received very little if any attention.