

**NOEL MOSTERT: FRONTIERS.** The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People. PIMLICO, LONDON, 1992. 1355 pages. £15.

This massive narrative of the slow migration of Xhosa ancestors out of Central Africa towards the Cape and the shifting frontiers of the Eastern Cape is hailed by the publishers as a "Gibbonesque sweep" of the creation and tragedy of the Xhosa people.

It is of great value as the first modern comprehensive study of the history of the Xhosa people. But as a work of historical analysis and synthesis it is rather

disappointing. It reminds one too much of the James Michener approach: putting a story together for the sake of a story and not for enlightened scholarship.

For the school teacher and pupil the book has little practical use. It is simply too vast and too general to serve a didactical purpose.

C.P.G.