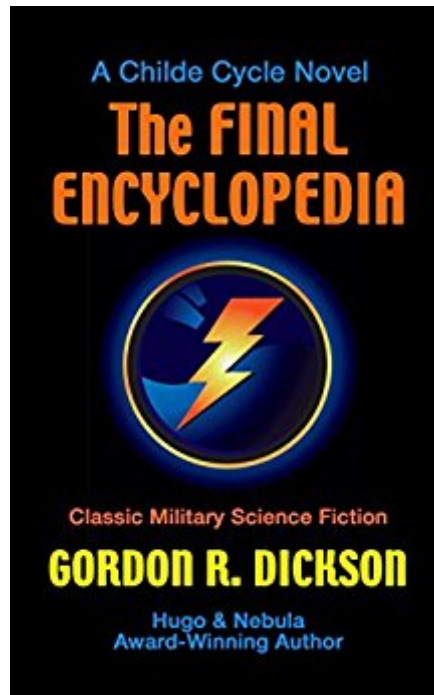


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The Final Encyclopedia (Childe Cycle Book 7)



Synopsis

The Childe Cycle, also known as the Dorsai series, is Gordon R. Dickson's future history of humankind and its ultimate destiny. Now one of its central novels return to print in a two-volume corrected edition. In *The Final Encyclopedia* the human race is split into three Splinter cultures: the Friendlies, fanatic in their faith; the truth-seeking Exotics; and the warrior Dorsai. But now humanity is threatened by the power-hungry Others, whose triumph would end all human progress. Hal Mayne is an orphan who was raised by three tutors: an Exotic, a Friendly, and a Dorsai. He is the only human capable of uniting humanity against the Others. But only if he is willing to accept his terrifying destiny...as savior of mankind. A towering landmark of future history, *The Final Encyclopedia* is a novel every SF fan needs to own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This review is for the kindle edition only!! Dickson was a great author, and the Childe Cycle was his masterpiece. *The Final Encyclopedia* was the climax of that cycle. But it didn't end where this bastardized ebook ends. Only one half of the book is included. Worse, there doesn't appear to be any kindle version of the rest of the book. This was a rather large paperback (~700 pages) when

printed. I had hoped to replace it with this ebook, but that's not possible as it stands. I should update this ebook to include the remainder of the book.

If you are familiar with Dickson's "Childe Cycle" novels, this will be a worthy addition. It also works as a stand-alone story, but not quite as well. There are numerous incursions into the protagonist's mind and mind-set, sometimes quite convoluted, which is the only reason I did not give it higher marks, because these excursions are not always germane to the story or the character(s), and are even sometimes quite tiresome. Dickson died before he could complete his series, but you can probably imagine what would have taken place in his final novel if you have read most of the other ones. It is what we used to call "hard" science fiction, so if you are looking for a fantasy story, look elsewhere. If you have read any of the other "Childe Cycle" novels, you also enjoy this one.

I really wanted to like this book. It is Gordon R. Dickson, which would normally be a good recommendation. And I did like it, for about the first two thirds of the book. Then it took a weird turn into internal introspection, philosophizing and rabbit trails of thought which don't gel together. I slogged through it in the hopes that somehow everything would come together, but it never did. I ended up feeling that the book had been written by two different people with two different skill sets and two separate visions of where the story was going. Perhaps some judicious application of an editing pen might have saved it for me, but unfortunately that didn't happen. Try as I might, I couldn't even finish reading it, giving up about two chapters from the end. I gave it two stars on the basis of the first two thirds and Dickson's name.

The story starts well enough, but in the middle there is a really long and rather tortuous wandering about to justify the hero's ability to spontaneously reincarnate, and why he and Bleys Ahrens can't kill each other, and a lot of other things. I sort of lost track, and the whole part about convincing two otherwise very prosperous cultures to sacrifice it all for some rather nebulous goal of the full spectrum folks was not believable. I originally read this in my teens, and it didn't work then either, but I thought now that I am wiser, or at least older, it might make more sense. It didn't. I am no longer motivated to read the rest of the series.

I have always enjoyed Dickson. His ideas of how mankind might develop have a strong ring of potential truth to them. There have been criticisms of his depiction of women. And they are not entirely unfounded particularly in his earlier works back in the 50's and 60's. But whatever you have

to say on the subject by this time he was writing very compelling and strong women characters. In some ways the three main female characters in this book take the story entirely away from the main character at some points. If you are going to get into Dickson this is definitely one of the books you should try.

one of his best!

Of the books in this series that I have read thus far, this one is by far the hardest to stick to. There are certainly some parts that have rousing interest and adventure, but the rest falls off in overly-wordy and metaphysical wanderings. While the end theme is to build toward a future of change, the author drags it out to the point of losing his reading audience. I will continue reading the series, but I issue a caution to other readers....It is easy to lose focus when the "wanderings" begin.

First, a word of warning. The paperback version of this book is in VERY small print. As I understand from an interview I heard with the author, this had something to do with shrinking down the hard cover version. It's going to be very challenging for those who require decent sized print. That aside, I have long considered The Final Encyclopedia the pinnacle book of Dickson's Dorsai collection. It isn't an easy, quick read, though. The earlier books were much less intellectually challenging than this one. They tend to be more about the external action, while this one has a strong internal focus. If you are a fan of the military elements of books like The Tactics of Mistake, then Encyclopedia might not be your cup of tea. If, however, you are interested in the sociological developments and evolution Dickson has developed over the previous Dorsai stories (chronologically starting with Necromancer), and enjoy books that make you think, then you'll probably enjoy Encyclopedia a great deal. To my mind, it is comparable to Frank Herbert's Dune series.

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