



Destiny Deacon, *Last Laughs* (1995/2004)

Imogen Mathew

Reader Responses to Indigenous Australian Chick Lit

This paper reports on a survey of reader responses to Anita Heiss' latest novel *Tiddas*, drawing chiefly on book reviews posted on personal blogs. My primary interest in conducting this research is to understand how readers interpret Heiss' fiction. In her memoir *Am I Black Enough for You*, Heiss highlights the "non-Indigenous female market" as her "key audience" (214), explaining that her books are designed to get readers "engag[ing] more fully with more Indigenous literature" as well as "help[ing] them to learn about a range of Aboriginal experiences" (224). Accordingly, I ask who is reading Heiss' fiction, whether her readers grasp the political content of her novels, and how receptive they are to her political message. This paper contributes to an emerging body of work on online reader responses, as well as shedding light on how Australian readers talk about issues relating to Aboriginal politics and identity.

Imogen Mathew is a doctoral candidate in the School of Languages, Literature and Linguistics at the Australian National University. Her research investigates Anita Heiss' role in the Australian literary, cultural and political landscape.
