

SYDNEY SIGNING SESSION

Language, they say, is the badge of nationality, and above all else it is the language of Sydney that binds this fissile society into a unity. It is many years since the writer Monica Dickens, at a Sydney signing session, inscribed a volume to Emma Chissett,¹ misunderstanding a lady who wanted to know the price of the book, but fundamentally the vernacular has not changed.

‘Emma Chissett?’ I make a point of asking now, when I want to buy something, and the shop assistants never give me a second glance, taking me to be a genuine Australian,² and frequently confiding in me their grievances about the train service from Parramatta.

(from *Among the Cities* by Jan Morris, 1985)

¹ What the Australian woman actually said was, ‘How much is it?’ There are many versions of this (probably apocryphal) story with many authors in the central role.

² A suburb of Sydney.

Transcribe your text here:

This is the key:

'læŋgwɪdʒ | ðeɪ 'seɪ | ɪz ðə 'bædʒ əv næʃə'næləti | ən ə'bʌv ɔ:l 'els | ɪts ðə 'læŋgwɪdʒ əv 'sɪdni |
 ðət 'bændʒ ðɪs 'fɪsəl sə'saɪəti 'ɪntu ə 'ju:nəti || ɪts 'meni 'jɪəz¹ sɪns ðə 'raɪtə 'mɒnɪkə 'dɪkɪnz |
 ət ə 'sɪdni 'sɑ:mɪ seʃn | m'skraɪbd ə 'vɒljʊ:m tu 'emə 'ʃɪzɪt | mɪsʌndə'stændɪŋ ə 'leɪdi hu 'wɒntɪd
 tə 'nəʊ ðə 'praɪs əv ðə 'bʊk | bət fʌndə'mentəli | ðə və'nækjələ 'hæzɪt 'tʃeɪndʒd || 'emə 'ʃɪzɪt | aɪ
 'meɪk ə 'pɔɪnt əv 'ɑ:skɪŋ nəʊ | wen aɪ 'wɒntə 'baɪ 'sʌmθɪŋ | ən ðə 'ʃɒp əsɪstənts 'nevə 'gɪv mi ə
 'sekənd 'glɑ:ns | 'teɪkɪŋ mi tə bi ə 'dʒenʒum v'streɪlɪən | ən 'frɪ:kwəntli kən'faɪdɪŋ m mi | ðɛ: