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2006; Sayer 2005). Feelings of dignity, like the most mundane of social

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kutukkam tt ñka).¹³

for being counted—or standing out—in smaller reference groups within the middle class.¹⁴ Interestingly, discourses around such practice often highlight the connection between consumption and *existence*.

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despised as the poor—which is precisely the way that poor respondents described themselves.

All these accounts produce a portrait of people self-consciously consuming in ways that they hope will produce recognition of them not simply as proper social beings, but more fundamentally, as beings who are fully human. If you do not consume in proper ways, you are not seen, perceived, or known (*avañkalukku eñkai teriy tu* glosses in English simultaneously as ‘they do not see us’, ‘we are not visible to them/per

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certain circumstances, wish to draw attention to themselves in this way, as Dean and Nakassis argue in this issue. To a great extent, the desire to be seen is the desire to be recognised by a larger public, both known and unknown. Here, it is worth remembering the generalised references to 'they', 'you' and 'we' invoked by Murugan and Anjali, all connoting a rather diffuse social body (cf. Nakassis's discussion in this issue of youth apprehensions of 'society'). On the other hand, the attempt to rise in the eyes of a known group of peers.

VII ***Conclusions***

I have examined two of the most consistent themes in Madurai resident's life: (On gaining

participants are at once actor and audience, object and subject, suggests

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In *Humiliation, Degradation, Dehumanization*, edited by Paulus Kaufmann, Hannes

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