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*Editors' Note.* The first three articles in this issue are revised versions of papers first presented at a Conference, 'Contexts and Levels', held in March 1983 at St Antony's College, Oxford, under the chairmanship of R.H. Barnes. The theme of the Conference was the theories of Professor Louis Dumont concerning the problems of hierarchy and hierarchical opposition. All the papers from this Conference are to appear shortly as No. 4 in the *JASO Occasional Papers* series, under the title 'Contexts and Levels: Anthropological Essays on Hierarchy', edited by R.H. Barnes and Daniel de Coppet; price to be announced.