Cognitive anthropologists and ethnobiologists have long considered how far taxonomic relations encountered in folk zoological and botanical classifications might also occur in other domains, for example in the classification of artefacts, diseases, and spirits. The positive position was advocated some time ago in a paper by Brown et al. (1976). Counter-arguments are to be found in Van Esterik (1982), Stanlaw and Bencha (1985), Atran (1990, see especially pp. 47, 52, 54), and Forth (1998:323). Concerning the Nage, an agricultural people of central Flores in eastern Indonesia who speak a Central-Malayo-Polynesian language, the present article comprises a review of terms employed to partition the human world. Unlike scientific biologists, but like most folk biologists, Nage do not classify human beings as a kind of ‘animal’ or include ‘human’ as a component of their folk zoological taxonomy. Nevertheless, questions remain as to the extent to which a variety of named categories, all referring to what may be called types of human beings or kinds of persons, compose a classification that displays taxonomic relations. A more specific question is how far ‘human being’ in Nage can be treated as a taxon of the sort Berlin (1992) designates as a ‘unique beginner’, and thus as comparable to ‘animal’ or ‘plant’ in Nage ethnobiological classification. A supplementary possibility would then be the subsumption of ‘human being’ along with other unique beginners in an even more inclusive class of ‘living things’ or ‘biotic forms’, as Taylor (1990) argues for the Tobelo of Halmahera. Concurrently or alternatively, Nage terms for humans form part of a ‘social classification’, a rubric that has mostly been applied to egocentric kin terms. Although the terms are not kin terms, some of their uses (and especially the use of one term as a vocative) further invite consideration of how categories of this sort articulate with words and expressions employed for different types of cognatic and affinal relatives.
Most of my information pertains to Nage-speakers resident within several kilometres of Bo’a Wae, which since the beginning of the colonial period in the early twentieth century has been the principal Nage village. Throughout the Nage region, three terms convey the general sense of ‘human, human being’, or ‘people, person’. These are: ata, hoga, and kita ata.

**Ata**

Nage *ata* reflects an Austronesian protoform reconstructed by Robert Blust (1972) as *qat(R)(CtT)a*, ‘outsiders, alien people’. As Blust notes, cognates in other Austronesian languages sometimes mean ‘human being’ and sometimes ‘slave’.¹ Other evidence indicates a complementary Austronesian protoform for human being, reflexes of which never mean ‘slave’. This is *Cau*, interpreted by Blust (1972:168) as denoting human beings but having had the more specific meaning of ‘real people; us; our own kind’. Nage uses of *ata* basically support this interpretation. Noting that reflexes of *qat(R)(CtT)a* do not occur in Taiwanese languages, Adelaar (1994:16) assigns the protoform to Proto-Malayo-Polynesian – that is, a language ancestral to the large Malayo-Polynesian grouping within the more inclusive family of Austronesian languages. This revision, however, has little bearing on distinctions found in Nage and cognate languages of central Flores. Adelaar’s discussion of several Malayo-Polynesian protoforms suggests that pairs of words for ‘human being’, distinguishing other people from a group or category identified with the speaker, is common in Malayo-Polynesian languages. Accordingly, use, or misuse, of the term that denotes other people can be socially alienating and even insulting (Adelaar 1994:16-20).

Unlike eastern Sumbanese (see *tau*, ‘human being’), the Nage language appears to have no reflex of *Cau*, the term for ‘human being’ including one’s own group.² It does, however, possess a term, *hoga*, the meaning of which largely corresponds to what Blust assigns to the reconstructed protoform. At the same time, rather than a simple binary opposition of ‘outsiders’ and ‘real people’, Nage usage reveals a contextually more complex contrast of objective (or exclusive) and subjective (or inclusive) views of human alters. By the same token, it is quite possible that the semantic distinction between *hoga* and *ata* reflects a contrast hypothetically articulated at the level of

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¹ Examples include eastern Sumbanese *ata*, ‘slave’, contrasting with *tau*, ‘human, person’ (Forth 1981:215), and Tetum *ata*, ‘slave’, contrasting with *ema*, ‘man, human; person, people’ (Hull 2001).

² In the Manggarai language of western Flores, *tau*, obviously cognate with eastern Sumbanese *tau*, is employed as a numeral classifier for humans (Verheijen 1967).
Proto-Austronesian, or Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, more accurately than does Blust’s categorical distinction between ‘own’ and ‘other’ people.

Insofar as ata refers abstractly to people or humans in a generic sense, it always distances the referent from the speaker. The term is most commonly employed for human groups to which the speaker does not belong (for example Ata Du’a, referring to the neighbouring ethnolinguistic group usually referred to in the literature as ‘Ngadha’) or for human categories which normally exclude the speaker (for example ata bingu, ‘insane, deranged person’; ata mata, ‘dead person’; and ata pésa or ata ta’a io, ‘another person, other people’). As these examples illustrate, in these senses ata is regularly compounded with other terms. Instances are listed in Table 1, where they are divided into: (i) groups of people who are not Nage; (ii) categories which, although they might conceivably include the speaker, refer to impersonal classes of human beings marked by some particular or unusual quality; and (iii) categories whose membership is completely relative. A Nage would not normally speak of him- or herself as a member of any of these categories. Foreigners able to speak Nage might refer to themselves, for example, as Ata Kanada, ‘Canadians’. By contrast, where speakers identify themselves as members of the generic categories (types ii and iii), they would not usually employ the full expression incorporating ata, but only the modifying term. Thus an ata toa mali, ‘shaman’, for example, might simply describe himself as toa mali, ‘skilled in the use of mystical powers’.

Table 1. Standard compounds of ‘Ata’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(i) Terms referring to other ethnolinguistic groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ata Aku</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ata Bajo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ata Bi Lada</td>
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<td>Ata Du’a</td>
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<td>Ata Kowe</td>
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<td>Ata Ma’u</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ata Sabu ‘Ote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ata Sina (or Ata Sina Baja)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ata Sigho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ata Ta’a Lau Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ata Tana Lau</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ata Togo Ede  |  people of Tonggo (eastern Keo)
Ata Wio      |  Sumbanese, people from or associated with the island of Sumba
Ata Wolo Zili|  ‘people of the lower hills’, populations to the east and southeast of Bo’a Wae; also known as Ata Wisa Zili

(ii) Impersonal categories that do not include the speaker or which are defined by a particular or unusual quality

| ata bingu   | insane, deranged people |
| ata bani    | bold, brave, aggressive people (normally applied exclusively to men) |
| ata bohu    | braggarts, people who habitually talk nonsense |
| ata bupu    | old, elderly people |
| ata ho’o    | lower-class people, slaves |
| ata jaga léwa| tall people |
| ata kena ola| ‘people of other villages’, outsiders (also called ata kena nua) |
| ata leo     | wanderers, vagrants |
| ata mata    | dead people |
| ata naka    | thieves |
| ata nebu    | ‘people of old, of former times’ |
| ata ngongo  | mute people |
| ata pésa    | another person, an unidentified person other than the speaker |
| ata polo    | witches |
| ata ta’a ana haki | human males |
| ata ta’a fai ga’e | human females |
| ata ta’a moi dhjuju nama | ‘priests’, people who make offerings and lead in rituals |
| ata ta’a moi uma | owners of fields |
| ata ta’a pota tei | people who (characteristically) disappear and then turn up again |
| ata taso mai | immigrants, resident foreigners |
| ata toa mali | people with special powers |
| ata zale au | people of lower rank |
| ata zéta wawo | people of higher rank |

(iii) Social categories relatively defined

| ata au hape | wife-takers |
| ata moi sa’o| wife-givers (literally ‘house owners’, people belonging to houses from which female ascendants derived) |
| ata wawo hape | wife-givers |

NOTES
1. ‘Kowe’, or more completely ‘Sika Kowe’, is apparently a variant of ‘Krowe’, the name of an ethnolinguistic group in central Sikka. Further discussion of this and other proper names on Flores is found in P. Sareng Orin Bao (1969). ‘Kowe’ also occurs as a personal name, but as a reference to an ethnic group it is not widely known in Nage.
2. Ndao is a small island off Roti’s west coast, known on Flores and elsewhere in eastern Indonesia for its itinerant gold- and silversmiths. As Nage and other central Florenese designate descendants of Savunese who reputedly settled on Flores in the distant past as ‘Sawu’, ‘Sabu’ ‘Ote’ indicates a recent borrowing from Malay, in which language the island of Savu is named ‘Sabu’.

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3. Sigho is apparently related to central Manggarai ‘Siho’, recorded by Verheijen as a ‘name for people of mountainous districts’ (1967:600). At the same time, a Keo genealogy records ‘Sigho’ as a particular place in southeastern Manggarai.

4. Lau, ‘seaward, downstream’ can refer to anywhere outside of Flores, in which context it is equivalent to zili, ‘down’. In both cases the logic is evidently that, in order to reach other islands and continents, one must first travel downwards, to the coast.

The compounds in Table 1 generally denote what Nage regard as broad divisions of humanity, either demographic or categorical. Most are ‘sociocentric’ classes, groupings whose composition is the same for all speakers within a given ethnolinguistic community. Others (for example, ata wawo hape, denoting wife-givers) are comparable to kin terms, as they are applied egocentrically, which is to say that their referents vary according to the social identity of the speaker. Yet like hoga, its partial opposite, ata itself is in a sense always employed egocentrically; that is, its use formally resembles that of reciprocal kin terms like English ‘brother’ and ‘cousin’ inasmuch as people designated as ata should in principle refer to the speaker in the same way.

Another context in which ata conveys the sense of ‘strange, foreign’ is bahasa ata, a term incorporating Indonesian ‘bahasa’ (language) and denoting any language one does not understand. In accordance with this sense of ‘otherness’, in another context ata is used to refer to beings that Nage do not consider human at all, namely spirits. As the examples in Table 1 suggest, compounds of ata vary considerably in the degree of otherness they convey. Terms in sections (ii) and (iii) vary in the extent to which they could include the speaker. For obvious reasons, no one would normally identify himself as an ata mata, ‘dead person’. Although someone could specify this as their future status, normally one would speak of one’s anticipated death rather than of becoming a ‘dead man’. Ata polo, ‘witch’, and to a lesser extent ata toa mali, ‘person possessing mystical powers, shaman’, are categories usually assigned by others, and ordinarily no one publicly confesses to membership of these. Partly because it is linked with witches and witchcraft, the shaman’s profession is not one of which Nage entirely approve (Forth 1998:270-1), so in a moral sense ata toa mali do not differ greatly, for example, from ata naka, ‘thieves’, or indeed ata polo. For different reasons, the same is true of terms referring to rank (ata zéta wawo, ata zale au, ata ho’o). In the normal course of affairs Nage do not refer to their own rank, nor is rank generally a subject they speak of openly. The terms ata ta’a ana haki and ata ta’a fai ga’e, referring respectively to males and females, are of course necessarily applied to others when they are employed by persons of the opposite sex. Not being relative sex terms, they can also be used by speakers of the designated sex. But in this case the term ata is usually dropped, and one simply refers to ‘female(s)’ (fai ga’e, ta’a fai ga’e) or ‘male(s)’ (ana haki, ta’a ana haki) – whether speaking of one-
self or others. Where *ata* is retained in these cases, the reference is necessarily objective and abstract: males or females in general, or as a whole. In fact, this distinction applies to all expressions in sections (ii) and (iii) of Table 1. That *ata* often expresses an abstract quality, and frequently although not invariably denotes a category to which the speaker does not belong, is further exemplified by the regular use of *ata bingu*, ‘insane person’, to refer to individuals with whom one is thoroughly familiar and even related.

Although all terms in the first section of Table 1 straightforwardly denote people other than Nage, several are worthy of further comment. In some cases, the name combined with *ata* is a version of the group’s own name. Sina (in Ata Sina or Ata Sina Baja) is a form of Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) ‘Cina’, ‘Chinese’, while Baja, sometimes conjoined with Sina, may according to different interpretations refer either to Surabaya or Banjarmasin, places from where many eastern Indonesian Chinese derive. A similarly dual name, Ata Togo Ede, denoting the people of Tonggo, comprises Togo (=Tonggo) and a version of the name for Ende, the town on Flores’s south coast. Informing this compound is the fact that Tonggo, a coastal settlement in eastern Keo, has long been associated with Ende and the Endenese. Deriving from ‘Belanda’, the Indonesian word for Holland, Ata Bi Lada is one of several names referring to the Dutch. More generic expressions, which are often applied to Europeans in general and which must nowadays be considered archaic, are *ata kapa* (from Indonesian ‘kapal’, ‘ship, vessel’), or *ata kapa api* (api, ‘fire’, apparently referring specifically to a steamship), and *ata ngi’i bha*, ‘people with white teeth’. A variant of the last expression, recorded in the Réndu district in northeastern Nage, is *ata jawa bha ra ngi’i*. Probably referring ultimately to the island of Java, the element *jawa* occurs in numerous contexts where it specifies various things (non-indigenous trees, plants, and animals) of foreign derivation that are recognized as having been imported to Flores, often in the distant past. Goa Jawa, or Ata Goa Jawa, is a somewhat generalized term denoting Indonesians from other islands who, according to Nage oral tradition, visited or settled on Flores in precolonial times. Goa is the Makassarese settlement in southwestern Sulawesi. Wio Goa was explained as a reference to Makassarese or Buginese traders who, in the past, brought spears and cloths from Wio (that is, the island of Sumba). Recently adopted terms for Europeans, or ‘white people’, include *ata turi* (compare Indonesian ‘turis’=English ‘tourist’) and *ata bule*, an expression incorporating ‘bulai’, an

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3 The last expression alludes to the Nage practice of chewing betel and areca, which renders the teeth ‘black’. Except for older women, Nage have now largely given up the practice.

4 Examples include *muku jawa* (‘foreign banana’) for the papaya; *boa jawa*, an imported tree resembling the kapok (*boa*); and *’usa jawa*, described as a variety of long-eared goat (*’usa*) deriving from India.
Indonesian term for ‘albino’ which is sometimes employed as a derogatory reference to Westerners.

Non-Nage inhabiting other parts of Flores are denominated in a variety of ways. People of the Lio district, in eastern or east central Flores, are called Ata Aku, after their word for the first-person singular pronoun (aku, compare Nage nga’o). Lionese were regularly employed by Nage leaders as mercenaries in wars prosecuted during the nineteenth century and probably earlier. Owing to this historical association, ‘Ata Aku’ has acquired the general sense of ‘mercenary’; hence, mercenaries from the Keo region, on Flores’ south coast, are referred to as ‘Aku Ma’u’ (‘Aku from the coast’) even though Keo forms of the first-person singular are quite distinct from Lionese aku. The name Ata Du’a, designating the population that has come to be known as ‘Ngadha’ in the ethnographic literature (see for example Arndt 1954), refers to a geographical association. Meaning ‘highlands, mountainous region, interior’, du’a describes the location of their homeland in the more mountainous regions to the west of the Nage. As this may suggest, ata du’a is a relative designation. People in the southeastern Nage district of Wolo Wea call the Bo’a Wae people ata du’a. Bo’a Wae people then apply ata du’a to eastern Ngadha (who call them Ata Nage), while eastern Ngadha know the expression only as a reference to inhabitants of more westerly parts of Ngadha. Similarly, Ata Ma’u, ‘coastal people’, denotes the inhabitants of the Keo district, who live to the south of the Nage, on or closer to the south coast, but interior villagers in western Keo apply the name to inhabitants of coastal villages in eastern Keo.

Hoga

Especially as a reference to groups that do not include the speaker, ata contrasts with hoga. Implicitly, the ‘own group’ to which hoga pertains is Nage, conceived as a distinct ethnolinguistic entity; thus Nage people call themselves ‘Hoga Nage’. In the most exclusive sense, ‘Hoga Nage’ comprises inhabitants of the three Nage desa (modern administrative villages; see Forth 1998:2-5), or even just two of these: Nata Nage (the desa that includes the village of Bo’a Wae) and Nage Sapadhi, immediately to the west of Bo’a Wae. Inhabitants of

5 Arndt (1954:4) says Nage call the Ngadha (Ata Du’a) Ata Bhai, after their word for ‘no, not’. The expression is known among Nage, but appears not to be common, and I have never heard it used spontaneously. As well as in Ngadha, bha’i (to use a more accurate transcription) occurs as a negative also in the language of So’a and the western Nage dialect of Solo.

6 Variants of hoga occur with the same meaning in several central Florenese languages, including Keo (yoga or oga) and Ngadha (soga or xoga, Arndt 1961), but not, apparently, in other languages of Flores. While otherwise comparable to Nage hoga, western Keo yoga also serves as the third-person plural pronoun (compare Nage dému).
the easternmost of the three desa, Nage ‘Oga, can be distinguished by a contrasting ethnonym, Kebi (Forth 1998:4). Normally, however, Kebi folk are designated not as ‘Ata Kebi’, but as ‘Hoga Kebi’ and, in context, even as ‘Hoga Nage’. More consistently included in the ranks of ‘Hoga Nage’ (at least according to the Bo’a Wae people) are inhabitants of desa Légu-Déru, to the southwest of Bo’a Wae. Distinguishable as hoga zèle wawo, ‘people above’, a reference to the higher elevation of their territory in relation to Bo’a Wae, the Légu-Déru people are closely linked with Bo’a Wae by virtue of the common clanship of their respective leaders, all members of the clan Deu (dialectal Dérú).7

In the development of the desa system of local administration, the Rawe district, located over 10 kilometres to the north of Bo’a Wae, was given the name desa ‘Nage Rawe’. In part, this nominal association with Nage reflects a choice made by Rawe people themselves. In ethnolinguistic terms, however, the Nage of Bo’a Wae consider the designation unfounded. Accordingly, Bo’a Wae people can equally refer to the Rawe folk as Ata Rawe and Hoga Rawe, and most of the time they call their administrative division simply ‘Desa Rawe’. A somewhat more telling case is Hoga Lau, ‘Seaward People’, referring to the populations of Dhawe and Mbai in the far northeastern part of the colonial region of Nage. As informants explained, Mbai people can be designated either as Ata Bai or as Hoga Bai, ‘according to whether or not one is referring to particular Bai people with whom one is familiar’. In contrast, people from the districts of Poma, Ramba, and Riung, far to the northwest of Bo’a Wae, are designated by a largely synonymous term ‘people faraway seaward’ (ata ta’a lau na). An alternative usage is ata ulu lau, ‘people with their heads seaward’, a term further employed as a deprecation for Nage people who are ignorant of custom or whose speech is ill-informed. The essential difference here is that Dhawe and Mbai formed part of colonial Nage while a prominent group in Mbai is related affinally to the Bo’a Wae leadership. The ‘people far away seaward’, on the other hand, were not only included in a different colonial district but also provided a major source of slaves taken in regular warfare prosecuted by Nage of Bo’a Wae during the nineteenth century.8

7 A similar case is provided by inhabitants of regions to the immediate east of Kebi, commonly designated as ‘Ata Wolo Zili’, ‘People of the Lower Hills’, but sometimes included in the category Hoga Nage (Nage people). Possibly relevant here is the fact that the clan of the colonial rulers of Bo’a Wae have, in several instances, taken wives from prominent groups resident in the ‘Lower Hills’.

8 For Nage, the expression ulu lau, ‘to have the head facing or pointed seaward’, implies a negative inversion associated with witches (Forth 1998:57), since moral persons should always sleep and be buried with their heads pointing in the opposite direction, or landwards (or, while sleeping, any direction other than seaward). It is an interesting coincidence, therefore, that, in the past, people from Poma, Ramba, and Riung, and especially slaves obtained from these regions, were commonly identified as witches.
As the foregoing should suggest, even outsiders who are definitely not Nage can be identified with *hoga*, particularly when, individually, they are related to Nage in the same way as are other Nage. Among ethnic others, Nage hold in low esteem none more than their western neighbours, the Ata Du’a or ‘Ngadha’, whom they depict as coarse, dirty, unsophisticated, ill-mannered, and given to drink. Nevertheless, one regularly hears Ngadha folk referred to as ‘Hoga Du’a’, especially when they are related to Nage through marriage or some other positive social connection. Conversely, while discussing the difference between *hoga* and *ata*, a Bo’a Wae leader stated he might even speak of fellow villagers as ‘Ata Bo’a Wae’ if, on suspicion of some wrongdoing for example, he wished to vilify them. By contrast to *ata*, the term *hoga* obviously conveys an inclusive sense, and the distinction is clearly as much social, ideological, and affective as it is logical. As might be expected, in recent times new usages incorporating *hoga* have developed in response to increased communication among ethnolinguistically distinct peoples and new political realities. Thus nowadays one hears, for example, ‘Hoga Kupang’ for people from Kupang, the provincial capital on the island of Timor, and even ‘Hoga Indonesia’. These two examples are especially instructive; for while they include most of the people classed as *ata* in the first section of Table 1, they do so in a context not of cultural contrast and geographical separation but of national unity.

Although the distinction is often not explicitly marked in Nage, both *ata* and *hoga* can denote the singular or plural. At the same time, *ata* is more usually encountered in a plural, collective sense, referring to whole groups or categories of people. Accordingly, Nage more frequently employ *hoga* to specify individuals, including individual members of a collectivity, as when one says ‘imu hoga X’, ‘he is a man (or ‘member’) of X’. Consistent with this, *hoga* is used to specify membership of Nage clans (*woe*). Thus members of clan Deu, for example, are called Hoga Deu. Generally, one can say that people who are sufficiently familiar that their clanship is known and relevant are necessarily classed as *hoga*. By the same token, one never hears Nage say ‘Ata Deu’, nor of course ‘Ata Nage’. What is more, non-Nage – for example, people of Keo and Ngadha – can be referred to as *hoga* when specified as members of particular (non-Nage) clans, especially when they participate with Nage in some common undertaking (for example, a marriage or collective sacrifice). Noteworthy in this connection is a usage whereby non-Nage, when invited to slaughter buffalo in Nage villages, as they quite regularly are, announce themselves in formal speeches preceding the sacrifices as ‘Hoga X’ (where X is the name of their clan or village). In the same orations, non-Nage guests – and indeed people of Nage clans invited to slaughter in the village (or, more to the point, at the sacrificial post) of another Nage clan – may simultaneously specify themselves as ‘Hoga Y’, where Y is the name of the Nage host.
clan. Once more, then, usage attests to the socially inclusive connotation of the term. On the other hand, also in the context of collective buffalo sacrificing, Nage can articulate a distinction between *hoga* and *woe*. For example, a man of clan X who is regularly called to slaughter at the sacrificial post of clan Y can specify his status as *hoga X, woe Y*, that is as ‘a man of clan X but an associate or adjunct of clan Y’. Accordingly, as a reference to a set of clans that regularly sacrifice together (Forth 1998:311-3), *woe* can denote a grouping more inclusive than ‘clan’ (as anthropologists have usually understood this term). Albeit in a somewhat different vein, *hoga woe*, meaning ‘friend, comrade, fellow’, similarly includes the term for clan (*woe*) but has a broader sense than ‘clan mate’.9

In common usage, *hoga* occurs as the general term for ‘male person’. A more specific meaning, and one that is apparently the term’s focal sense, is ‘young man’. To say that someone is ‘already hoga’ (*ne hoga*) means he has attained adulthood and, according to local estimates, is somewhere between 20 and 40 years of age. As a reference to young, or younger, males, *hoga* is mostly compounded with other terms. *Suko hoga* denotes young men from the age of perhaps 16 to about 30 or more, while *hoga laki* refers to somewhat older men, up to the age of about 40. These numerical ages are, however, very approximate, and the terms are applied more on the basis of social maturity, including marital status. According to one local interpretation, the main difference between *hoga laki* and *suko hoga* is the more ‘respectful’ quality of the first term. Another expression, *hoga suko*, is mostly synonymous with both terms, while *ana suko* (*ana* is ‘child, young person’) refers to boys from about five or six years to the mid-teens. (*Ana hoga*, on the other hand, denotes a male friend, or ‘boyfriend’, of a young woman.) *Mata suko* refers to the death of a male before he has attained adulthood or married. *Suko* otherwise denotes a bamboo tube used as a palm-wine container, but this has no definite connection with *suko* as a reference to young males. In the expression *hoga laki, laki* (not to be confused with Indonesian ‘laki’, ‘man, male’) means ‘true, genuine, legitimate’.

Like other terms for age classes, *hoga* is further employed as a vocative for males, either by itself or in the compound forms just noted. At the same time, *hoga* can denote humans in general, and can accordingly encompass both genders (see Figure 1). In public speaking, the expression *hoga zeta, hoga lau* (‘people from the landward and seaward ends’) is used to address all the inhabitants of a village, or any group or collectivity that includes both sexes,

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9 Nage has several other terms translatable as ‘friend’ or ‘companion’ which have even less reference to clan or village association. These include *moko*, *kapo* (also a polite usage for followers and servants), *lami* (referring to particularly close male friends), and *ane* (Forth 1993a). As a discussion of such expressions would take us far beyond the bounds of this paper, suffice it to say that all refer to relationships between people identifiable as *hoga* rather than *ata*.
or whose sexual composition is unknown or irrelevant. *Hoga* is also employed when calling out to a person of either sex, to get his or her attention; and in this context it may further be combined with kin vocatives (Forth 1993a:121-3), as in *hoga ine* (*ine*, mother, used for women generally) and *hoga azi* (*azi*, younger sibling). It almost goes without saying that *ata* can never be so employed. *Hoga* is not a kin term, yet its application bears some resemblance to kin terms, and such resemblance is obviously possible only by virtue of its application to groups and categories of people in which the speaker in some sense includes himself. Bisexual usage of *hoga* invites comparison with *mosa laki*, the term denoting people of high social standing. Incorporating *mosa*, which specifies the males of most mammals (Forth 2004a), *mosa laki* actually means ‘real, genuine male’, but when applied to people of high rank in general, it includes females as well as males. By the same token, *hoga* of course resembles English ‘man’ and French ‘homme’, similarly interpretable either as ‘male human’ or as ‘human being in general’.

![Figure 1. Senses of HOGA](image)

Although *hoga* can subsume both male and female members of kin and territorial groups, females can be specified with *bu’e*, as in ‘*bu’e* Nage’ (Nage woman) or ‘*bu’e* Tegu’ (woman of the clan Tegu). *Bu’e* corresponds to *hoga* insofar as it also possesses the more specific sense of ‘young woman’ or, more specifically still, ‘young unmarried woman’. ‘*Bu’e* Tegu’, for example, can be employed to refer to a woman, regardless of age, whose natal clan was Tegu.
but who is now married into another group. In this context, the subsumption of *bu’e* by *hoga* is consonant with (although not determined by) Nage marriage practice, where virilocality and incorporation of a bride into the husband’s group are strongly preferred.

In contexts where *hoga* alone is used to address or call out to someone, it complements several kin terms and titles employed as vocatives (Forth 1993a). More particularly, it does so when distinctions of cognatic or affinal status, age, and even sex are irrelevant or indefinite. *Hoga* can therefore be considered the most general form of address in Nage. Yet it still retains as its focal reference young adult males. To employ the language of prototype theory (Lakoff 1987), the extension of the term could suggest that, for Nage, the ‘best example’ of a human being is a younger adult male, and possibly one who is married and has children.

**Kita ata**

Whereas *ata* has an objectifying sense, separating the referent in some respect from the speaker, the compound *kita ata* includes both the speaker (and social categories to which the speaker belongs) and ‘other people’, those various categories designated by *ata* and usually compounded with a modifying term or phrase. *Kita* is the inclusive first-person plural pronoun – the ‘we’ that includes both speaker and interlocutor – and which in Nage, as in other Malayo-Polynesian languages, contrasts with the exclusive first-person plural, the ‘we’ that includes the speaker and one or more third parties but not the person spoken to. However, contrary to what this might suggest, *kita ata* does not mean ‘we humans’. Understood as an instance of a common form of compounding in central Florenese languages (Forth 1996), the term conveys the sense of ‘we and others’. Accordingly, Nage employ it in a completely objective way, for example when stating that ‘people are present’ (*ne’e kita ata*) inside a building. A more striking instance is the appearance of the term in the expression *pa wai kita ata*, referring to (notional) human sacrifice. In addition, the (anatomical) head of a human being is *ulu kita ata*, and not – contrary to what one might expect – ‘*ulu ata*’.

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10 Generally corresponding to age terms for males that mark distinctions from *hoga* in the more general sense are several terms that partly contrast with *bu’e*. These include *bu’e ho’o fai*, denoting a young, prepubescent girl; *keba* or *keba bu’e*, referring to a pubescent but unmarried virgin; and *ana bu’e*, an expression denoting a young, unmarried woman but also the unmarried mistress of a married or unmarried man (Forth 2004c). In context, both *bu’e* and *ana bu’e* can specify a young woman who, although unmarried, has had her teeth shortened, or ‘cut’, and is therefore available for marriage.
Austronesianists may recognize *kita ata* as the semantic equivalent of Indonesian ‘*manusia*’ (‘human being’); according to context, both *ata* and *hoga*, on the other hand, are more comparable to Indonesian ‘*orang*’ (‘people, person’). Further parallels are found in other languages of Flores. For Lionese, which like Nage includes *ata* in the sense of ‘human, person, people’ (German ‘*Mensch*’, ‘*Leute*’), Arndt (1933:12, 176) records *kita ata* with the gloss ‘human being’ (‘*Mensch*’), and furthermore as a component of expressions he translates as ‘his people’, ‘people of his clan’. This last usage may be significant in connection with the apparent absence of a cognate of *hoga* in Lio. The analogous term in the Manggarai language of western Flores is *ité ata*, which Verheijen (1967:19) glosses with Indonesian ‘*kita manusia*’. For Manggarai, Verheijen records *ata* alone as ‘human, human being; male, masculine’, ‘person, people’, ‘resident, inhabitant, (the) public, nation, ethnic group’, and ‘other people, foreigner’. Whether the Manggarai term always separates the referent from the speaker as does its Nage counterpart is not clear from these listings. Nevertheless, by all indications *ité ata* conveys a global sense of ‘human being’ in much the same way as does Nage *kita ata*. Somewhat surprisingly, an equivalent of *kita ata* is not found in Arndt’s Ngadha dictionary, either under *kita* or *cata*, which Arndt glosses as ‘human, human figure, enemy’, and ‘one, people’ (German ‘*Man*’), someone, anyone (German ‘*jemand*’). In all probability, however, the omission reflects an oversight rather than a significant difference from Nage usage. In any case, it is apparent that most cognates of *ata* in these other Flores languages, like the Nage term, refer in several contexts exclusively to other people.

**Questions of taxonomy**

As the only Nage expression unequivocally denoting all of humanity, *kita ata* contrasts with *ana wa*, ‘animal’ (Forth 2004b), a term which for Nage, like most folk zoologists, does not include human beings. The fundamental distinction between ‘human’ and ‘animal’ in Nage thought is revealed in other ways, including their system of sex differentiable terms and numeral classifiers (Forth 2004a, 2004b). Although Nage consider people to be as much alive (*muzi*) as they do non-human animals, to treat ‘human being’ (*kita ata*) and ‘animal’ (*ana wa*) as coordinate sub-classes of a more inclusive Nage taxonomy of ‘living things’ outruns the evidence.\(^\text{11}\) Still, the question remains of whether

\(^\text{11}\) For the Tobelo of Halmahera, Taylor (1990) posits a taxonomy of ‘biotic forms’ which comprises ‘sexual’ and ‘non-sexual’ biotic forms. The category of sexual biotic forms then subsumes ‘breathers’ and ‘non-breathers’ and the former includes ‘faunal forms’ and ‘floral forms’. Finally, the unnamed taxon of ‘faunal forms’ includes both ‘animals’ (*o aewani*) and ‘human beings’ (*o nyawa*; Taylor 1990:48, 51). No such comprehensive scheme is discernible in the Nage evidence.
the relationship between ‘human being’, considered as a ‘unique beginner’ (Berlin 1992:15), and Nage categories denoting particular ‘kinds’ of humans can properly be called taxonomic.

A taxonomy comprises three minimal features: inclusion (sub-classes are unambiguously included in larger classes), transitivity (where X is an instance of Y and Y an instance of Z, then X is necessarily an instance of Z as well), and discreteness. The second and third criteria are dependent upon the first, but no feature is sufficient in itself to define a classification as a taxonomy. The first principle is apparently met by the inclusion of ‘Hoga Nage’ and ‘Ata Du’a’ in hoga and ata respectively. In turn, both of these terms are equally instances of kita ata (human being), as are the more exclusive categories, thus attesting to the principle of transitivity. Difficulties arise, however, with the third principle. As noted, in different social contexts members of the same human groups can be identified as either ata or hoga; hence the two categories are not discrete. And since these categories compose the entirety of a hypothetical classificatory level intermediate between kita ata and terminal categories like Hoga Nage, transitivity also disappears. All one is left with, then, is the inclusion of Hoga Nage and the various other compounds of ata and hoga as instances of kita ata (human being).

Categorical discreteness is further compromised by the disparate contrasts denoted by the ata compounds themselves. As shown in Table 1, some of these label notionally distinct cultural and linguistic groups. Others denote social categories, both sociocentric and egocentric, which cross-cut the cultural groups. Thus a Ngadha person (Ata Du’a), for example, can be simultaneously a man (ata ta’a ana haki), a madman (ata bingu), a thief (ata naka), a tall person (ata jaga léwa), and even a wife-giver (ata wawo hape). Conversely, ‘thief’ (ata naka) can apply equally to any member of the several ethnic categories listed in the first part of Table 1.

Despite what obtains for the classification as a whole, it might be thought that taxonomic relations are preserved at least among the various ethnolinguistic categories labelled ata that are listed in the first section of Table 1. After all, even though Ngadha people can sometimes be identified as ‘Hoga Du’a’, Ata Du’a and other kinds of ata and hoga are nevertheless equally ‘kinds of’ humans (kita ata). Yet in this case as well, categorical discreteness is challenged by populations that Nage consider indeterminate, or intermediate.

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12 This means that classes, or taxa, must be clearly bounded and not overlap; for example, a particular animal cannot be simultaneously a ‘bird’ and a ‘reptile’; see Atran 1990, especially Ch. 3; Berlin 1992.

13 In one respect, hoga might appear to fare somewhat better in this assessment, since the term does not figure in compounds denoting social categories in the same way as does ata (see Table 1, sections ii and iii). Nevertheless, the class of ‘Hoga Nage’ (Nage people) overlaps as much with all of these categories as does ‘Ata Du’a’.
in relation to the named ethnolinguistic groupings. For example, the people of So’a (sometimes called So’a Du’a) and a number of local groups resident in the far eastern part of the Ngadha region are described as being neither fully Ata Du’a (Ngadha) nor Nage, although in some cultural respects they are recognized as more similar to Nage (or, as one might also say, to ‘Hoga Nage’). As I later discuss, further challenging transitivity, and specifically the classification of all instances of *ata* as human (*kita ata*), is a use of *ata* as a reference to a class of spirits.

Another question is raised by the fact that ethnolinguistic categories are further divisible into village populations which in turn typically comprise two or more clans. It might therefore be suggested that a category like Ata Ma’u (Coastal People) includes several sub-classes of people resident in particular coastal villages and belonging to particular clans. There are several difficulties with construing this pattern as taxonomic. To begin with, groups distinguishable by village residence or clan affiliation are not ‘kinds’ of coastal people. For Nage, they are all parts of a pre-existing social and demographic whole, and therefore compose a classification more closely resembling a partonomy (Brown et al. 1976:81; Brown 1976) than a taxonomy. Coastal clans are not always confined to single villages. Hence members of a clan can hardly be considered a ‘species’ of a given ‘genus’ of villagers; nor by the same token are villages categorically distinguished by their clan composition. This applies to an even greater degree to Nage clans and villages, so ‘Hoga Nage’ (Nage People) cannot be represented as a class comprising sub-classes and sub-sub-classes any more than can ‘Ata Ma’u’. As noted earlier, when Nage are sufficiently familiar with non-Nage populations like ‘Coastal People’ to identify them as members of specific clans or villages, they are likely to conceive of and hence name them as *hoga* rather than as *ata*. Situationally, therefore, some Ata Ma’u will be identified as Hoga X (where X names a coastal village or clan) while others will not.

**Applications of *ata* and *hoga* to non-humans**

It should be sufficiently clear that instances of *ata* and *hoga*, while all denoting types of human beings, are related taxonomically no more than are different categories of furniture or other artefacts (see Atran 1990:56) or, retaining

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14 Exemplified by the categorization of parts of a human body or parts of a building (Brown et al. 1976), a partonomy distinguishes analytically, but in a sense also constitutes, components of a larger physical or material entity. Whether a human population is such a whole is perhaps moot. However, in the Nage view, clans or villages forming parts of a greater ethnolinguistic group are more comparable to the sections of a house than they are, for example, to differently named kinds of birds.
our focus on Nage classification, different named types of spiritual beings (Forth 1998:323-6). Indeed, Nage spirit classification may appear to overlap with their classification of humans. One indication is ata zèle lobo, ‘people on the mountain’, a phrase applied to a variety, or better said a ‘community’, of nefarious spirits. Otherwise classified as bapu, nitu bapu, polo bapu, ga’e bapu, or ga’e lobo, these beings are thought to reside near the top of the volcano Ebu Lobo (Forth 1998:149-53). Nage, by contrast, reside on the lower slopes, on the northern and western sides of the volcano. Another application of terms for humans to spirits is the Nage use of hoga nitu and bu’e nitu in reference respectively to male (hoga) and female (bu’e) instances of nitu, a spirit category partly distinguished from the ‘people on the mountain’.15 On the other hand, one never hears ‘ata nitu’, a phrase that could hypothetically be glossed as ‘spirit people’, or ‘people who are spirits’.

To comprehend these usages it must first be understood that Nage in fact regard no variety of spirits as human beings. Ata zèle lobo are therefore not members of the category kita ata, except when the former term is employed in quite another sense, namely, as a synonym of ata majo, men who are impotent, or unable to engage in heterosexual intercourse.16 Already, then, the metaphoric quality of the expression is apparent, and the fact that Nage possess special terms for the mountain spirits, indeed a considerable variety of alternative terms, suggests a euphemism.17 ‘People on the mountain’ is used as part of a standard formula warning people to take shelter in their homes in order to avoid detection by such a spirit in the form of a predatory bird, a Brahminy kite (Haliastur indus) circling overhead in search of human victims. Although they are not humans, these beings, and in fact spirits of any kind, can also assume human form (bali kita ata); and there is the further idea that, within their own domain – which humans normally cannot perceive – spirits appear, act, and organize their lives like humans. In relation to human beings (or specifically the Nage), especially the spirits identified as the ‘people on the mountain’ participate in what I have elsewhere called a ‘reciprocal inversion’. That is, both spirits and Nage are humans within their respective domains, and they simultaneously exist as spiritual beings in the opposite domain (Forth 1998, see especially pp. 29, 342-3). Nevertheless, Nage recognize a clear ontological difference between humans and spiritual beings. Spirits can also

15 While nitu refers to a particular kind of spirit, Nage tend to use it as a cover term for all free spirits (that is, spirits other than human ancestors or spirits of the dead), in which respect it can subsume bapu and other contrasting spirit categories (Forth 1998).
16 Why such men should be thus designated I have been unable to clarify fully. However, lobo, ‘tip’, could in this context refer to the tip of a flaccid penis which, pointing downward, a man (ata) as it were stands above (zèle).
17 Verheijen (1967:19) lists ‘spirit’ as one gloss of Manggarai ata but, judging from the example he provides, this usage would appear equally euphemistic.
Human beings and other people

assume the form of various animals. But they are no more reckoned to be of a kind with animals than they are with humans. In fact, all evidence suggests that, for Nage, spirits differ more from humans and animals than animals or humans do from one another. At the same time, it is mostly in the form of animals that humans and spirits encounter one another, a notion that finds a particular expression in a belief that the ‘people on the mountain’ sacrifice humans in the form of (spirit) buffalo, and conversely that buffalo sacrificing by Nage results in the destruction of maleficent spirits (Forth 1998).

The foregoing, it cannot be overstressed, refers to a special symbolic knowledge quite distinct from everyday empirically informed knowledge of animals. Only in ritual contexts do Nage identify water buffalo with harmful spirits, and only in special circumstances do they regard themselves as possible buffalo victims of these spirits. Similarly, animals like snakes and predatory birds, the forms most often assumed by spiritual beings in Nage everyday experience, are most of the time treated simply as ordinary animals. To a degree, experience of animals informs the representation of spirits, among Nage as more generally (for example see Forth 2004d:74-9). Yet their crucial basis is surely knowledge of fellow humans, with whom spirits, as depicted both in myth and in everyday discourse, share a host of intellectual, emotional, and moral qualities. At the same time, radically informing their representation as supernatural beings are counter-intuitive attributions of superhuman – and therefore non-human – powers, such as invisibility, shape-shifting, and defiance of natural law (see Boyer 1994:113-4, 118-9).

Consistent with ways spirits and humans are similar yet different from one another, the metaphorical use of human terms for spirits is reciprocated in a figurative description of humans as spirits. Specifically, the phrases hoga nitu and bu’e nitu, otherwise denoting male and female spirits, are further employed as a reference to good-looking humans (and in the nature of things, especially younger adults). Since the usage is generally hyperbolic, it reflects a common representation of spirits classified as nitu as beings that manifest a standard of human physical attractiveness which few if any humans can attain (Forth 1998:67-8). It may have been noted that, in this context, Nage refer to spirits not only with terms normally reserved for humans, but terms (hoga and bu’e) that appear to specify them as insiders, or members of one’s own group. It might therefore be asked why Nage do not speak of ‘ata nitu’, an expression which, as noted above, is not attested. There are two possible answers to this. First, hoga nitu and bu’e nitu are indeed metaphorical

18 The Nage language does not possess a special numeral classifier (a word used when counting or enumerating objects of a particular kind) for spirits. When speaking of spirits, Nage employ the classifier for humans (ga’e) except when spirits are represented in animal guise, in which case the classifier for animals (éko) is used.
expressions, and therefore need not conform to rules of non-figurative usage. Second, as references to spirits (*nitu*), the expressions are typically encountered in narratives and other discourse where individual spirits are represented as interacting directly with human beings in the same way as might other humans. For example, *bu’e nitu* is a standard expression for the ‘spirit wives’ supposedly possessed by some prominent men (Forth 1998:76). And as this usage might suggest, in such contexts *hoga* and *bu’e* are to be understood in the specific senses of ‘young man’ and ‘young woman’, rather than as references to ‘humans’ in a general sense coordinate with *ata*.

Concluding remarks: Humanity, relativity, morality, and ontology

It is more than clear that Nage terms for human beings (*ata*, *hoga*, *kita ata*) and compounds formed from these terms do not participate in a taxonomic order comparable to what is typically encountered in folk biological classification. Part of the reason is the relativity of *ata* and *hoga*, the fact that the same empirical individuals and groups can be identified by either of these terms according to the context in which the term is employed. The contrast between these two terms basically conforms to the opposition Blust (1972) discerns between reflexes of proto-Austronesian *qa(R)(CtT)a* (‘outsiders, alien people’) and *Cau,* (‘real people; us; our own kind’). Yet as shown with reference to specific ways in which Nage employ the two terms and the social considerations that affect their use, the relation between *ata* and *hoga* is more complex than a simple opposition of outsiders and insiders, or aliens and real people, would imply.

There is an obvious moral dimension to this. The relativity of the distinction between *hoga* and *ata*, and the inclusion of human categories designated by both terms in the category ‘human being’ (*kita ata*), indicate that there are no humans whom Nage cannot consider, at least potentially, as comparative insiders – as ‘us’ rather than ‘them’. A similar point can be made with regard to the Nage category *ka’e azi*, and its Keo variant *ka’e ari*. Although in the first instance designating same-sex siblings, the term is applicable to anybody with whom one enters into a positive social relationship or – insofar as the binary expression (which conjoins the terms for elder and younger siblings) refers to a relation of kinship – to anyone who, regardless of descent or filiation, is treated as or treats one like kin. In this sense, *ka’e azi* can even include affines, who are otherwise contrasted to *ka’e azi* (Forth 1998:312-3, 2001:99-104).

By the same token, there is no human group or category that Nage classify absolutely as non-human, or as kinds of ‘animals’. Conversely, there is no context in which Nage classify animals (*ana wa*) as humans. Especially in myth, Nage speak of animals assuming human form and behaving like humans within a domain not normally accessible to humans (see Forth
Human beings and other people

1998:38-45). However, contrary to what apparently obtains in some parts of the world, and perhaps particularly in South America (Viveiros de Castro 1998), for Nage, animals do so only insofar as they are essentially identified as spirits (*nitu*), which can alternatively assume animal guise in the phenomenal world of humans. Accordingly, there is no context in which Nage designate animals (by contrast to spirits) as instances of *ata*.

Three cases may appear to qualify this categorical distinction between humans and animals. First, particularly when disobedient or beyond adult constraint, small children are sometimes referred to as *ana wa* (‘animals’). Yet Nage are fully aware of the figurative character of this usage, and certainly no one would consider it contradictory to their general denial that humans are kinds of animals. The second seeming exception concerns the ‘wildmen’ called *ebu gogo*, hairy hominoids said to have inhabited a desolate location in Nage territory before the ancestors of an immigrant group rendered them extinct about 200 years ago (Forth 2005, 2008). However, not only are these *ebu gogo* probably imaginary (at least with regard to several features of their local representation), but Nage consider their humanity, their inclusion in the category *kita ata*, to be doubtful or ambiguous. They are equally ambivalent about their inclusion in the category *ana wa* (‘animals’). At the same time, Nage deny that the *ebu gogo* were spiritual beings. By contrast even to some spirits, the extinct creatures are never spoken of as *ata* or *hoga*. While they are usually enumerated with *ga’e*, the classifier for humans, this is explained by their generally human form and bipedal locomotion.

The last apparent exception concerns witches (*polo*). As human beings, indeed often close kin or consociates of people who regard them as witches, individuals designated as *polo* or *ata polo* are persons who are considered either to have entered into an illicit relationship with malevolent spirits (and thus with non-humans) or by some other means to have acquired a negative spiritual quality (*wa*), harmful to others, which as it were replaces their souls (*mae*; Forth 1998). In the sense of ‘witch spirit’, *wa* is possibly the same word as the second component of *ana wa*, ‘animal’ (Forth 1989). Indeed, in several ways, witches are distinctively associated with animals; nevertheless, neither as individuals nor as a category are they classified as an instance of non-human animals. In several respects, witches are identified with human outsiders, and on this ground can be deemed an instance of *ata* (rather than *hoga*). But more than anything, it is their negative spiritual associations which, in the Nage view, render witches non-human, or virtually so. As ordinary individuals (albeit ones suspected of being *ata polo*) witches are normally spoken of as *hoga* – that is, as Hoga Nage, members of clans, and so on. But as witches qua witches, they can never be designated as ‘*hoga polo*’. To that extent, *hoga* and *polo* are contradictory. Individuals associated with both categories are, one might say, both human and non-human at the same time. Witches are
therefore not humans whom Nage classify as animals or spirits. Rather, by virtue of their association with spirits, an association mostly represented as resulting from their own actions, witches obscure an essential conceptual boundary which renders them at least partly non-human.\(^\text{19}\)

If individual human beings can thus be simultaneously human and non-human, we are provided with another indication that, unlike taxa, Nage categories designating humans are not discrete and, moreover, that ‘human’ does not participate in their ethnobiological taxonomy. One might think the same applies when a snake, for example, is determined to be a spirit, or indeed a witch. In this case, however, Nage deny simultaneous membership of two categories, representing the snake only as a form that spirits or witches (or the spirit of a witch) can temporarily assume. By contrast, a very different relationship is involved when a person is identified as a witch. For in this case, it is an unseen, inner essence that is considered non-human (or partly so), while the outer form remains that of a human being.

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\(^{19}\) A person can become a witch either through involvement with malevolent free spirits or from contagion, that is, association with people who are already witches. Someone can also be transformed into a witch by breaching taboos on cannibalism or talking to animals (Forth 1989; 1993b:110-3; 1998:58). For this reason, Nage mostly represent *polo* as a quality of individuals rather than whole groups, and people can therefore accuse a close relative, even a sibling, of being a witch without necessarily implicating themselves.
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