

## Notes for Billy Yellow

**Navajo** – 130,000 largest tribe in US living in arid valleys Southwest – **adaptive people**, originally nomadic hunter-gatherers, but upon contact with Pueblo peoples, became agricultural farmers and exquisite blanket weavers, and with Spanish, incorporated sheep herding and fine silver jewelry making – yet held fast to core **traditional beliefs**

follow **Billy Yellow**, medicine man, at his “**hogan**,” where he chants the world into being

“Listen: Unless you think, there is no world. Unless you speak, there is no world. Unless you move, there is no life. . . Speak to the holy people every day. They are everywhere, in everything.”

And his grandson has a rash believed to be the direct result of the accidental death of a snake at the hands of the boy’s father. To bring the cosmos back into balance – hozho – and thereby cure the boy, performs sacred “**dry painting**” ritual and boy sits in middle. Painting symbolizes Gods and creates their world and channels their healing power into painting. Boy is infused with hozho, driving out hocho – disharmony.

And destroys painting, saying – “The many colored sands back to sand, the many colored winds back to wind.”

**Questions** – How and why does the healing work? – what is the mechanism and principle upon which it is based? What is cured?