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

“No, 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?