Children characters in Rumi's *Masnavi*

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Abstract

In this paper we focus on the stories of *Masnavi* in which the children have the main role. The aim is to consider children's attitudes as the elements of the story. The subjects we are going to work on are as follows: To consider carefully the apparent, spiritual, mental and environmental connections, to identify the static and dynamic character, and the protagonist and antagonist of mentioned children. Rumi has selected child character in 26 stories in *Masnavi*. All children are described based on gender, name, age and social class. The characters in *Masnavi* can be divided in two groups as human (men, women, and children) and non-human (God, angels, fairies, animals and etc.) characters.

Almost all of the characters in Rumi's stories do not have a special name and they are called with words that determine their gender or age. Gender is an important feature in characters especially in babies. Of course spiritual and mental features and the environment where they have been grown are mentioned and the words are coordinated with mental and social levels. Rumi's skill is consistency between characters and environment. Babies' character has consistency with their environment. All these factors will show the mature period, and need behaviors. There descriptions help the reader for deep understanding.

Keywords: Rumi; *Masnavi*; children; elements of story; story telling; characterization.

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Introduction

Mawlana Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi, also known as Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207–1273), is a 13th century Persian poet, Islamic jurist, and theologian. 'Rumi' is a descriptive name meaning 'the Roman' since he lived most of his life in an area called Rum because it was once ruled by the Byzantine Empire. Rumi's works are written in the New Persian language. Although Rumi's works were written in Persian, his importance is considered to transcend national and ethnic borders. His original works are widely read in their original language across the Persian-speaking world. Translations of his works are very popular in South Asian, Turkic, Arab, and Western countries. His poetry has influenced Persian literature as well as the literature of the Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, and Bengali languages. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world languages and transposed into various formats. In relation with his 800th birth anniversary, he is described by a BBC journalist as the "most popular poet in America" (Haviland, 2009).

Rumi's *Masnavi* is probably the longest mystical poem ever written by a single author from any religious tradition. It consists of about 26,000 verses, divided into six books. Like many previous works of the Persian mystical *masnavi* genre, the order of presentation of the major stories of the first book sketches the progress of the mystic on the Mystic/Gnostic path. Although the content of each book of the *Masnavi* is too rich and diverse to be neatly categorized, one can none the less observe logic to the selection and order of the major stories. Rumi has long been recognized within the Mystic/Gnostic tradition as one of the most important Mystic/Gnostics in history. He not only produced the finest Mystic/Gnostic poetry in Persian, but also was the master of disciples who later, under the direction of his son and eventual successor Soltan Valad, named their order after him. Moreover, by virtue of the intense devotion he expressed towards his own master, Shams-e Tabriz, Rumi has become the archetypal Mystic/Gnostic disciple. From this perspective, the unprecedented level of interest in Rumi's poetry over the last couple of decades in North America and Europe does not come as a total surprise. Rumi's *Masnavi* holds an exalted status in the rich canon of Persian Mystic/Gnostic literature as the greatest mystical poem ever written. It is even referred to commonly as 'the Qor'an in Persian'. As already mentioned, the title which Rumi himself chose is simply the name of the form of poetry adopted for it, the *masnavi* form. The *masnavi* form satisfied the need felt by Persians poets to compose narrative and didactic poems, a template which was already a long and rich tradition before the Islamic period (Mojaddedi, 2007: x-xxv).

Masnavi, the mystic masterpiece of the 13th century, is one of the traditional literary works that can be studied from different literary aspects such as fiction structure. As it is well known, having a common structure naturally is the border line in some literary genres. The terminology and reading strategies for analyzing any literary genre can be applied to the other genres, as a methodological way. We also know that a poet can tell stories in a lot of his/her poems and vice versa. Rumi, one of the big ancient Middle Eastern poets, is the one who tells stories in form of poetry. The stories of Rumi that had written in form of poem will be analyzed as short stories.

Character, one of the main elements of the story, has a priority in didactic literature. The main roles of the character in *Masnavi* are reflecting beliefs; ideas of the poet and the message of story. It is also the main reason for reader to read the story. Human is a social creature that has interaction with his fellowmen and this relationship causes his sensibility about others' characteristics, so it is the counter-action which creates attraction (Payandeh, 2003: 128).

The character is defined as a personage in a narrative or dramatic work and a kind of prose sketch briefly describing some recognizable type of person (Baldick, 2001: 37). Character is the fictional representation of a person, which is likely to change, both as a presence in literature and as an object of critical attention, much as it changes in society. Ideas of the place of the human in the social order, of human individuality and self-determination, clearly shift historically; and this is often mimed in literature by the relation of characters to actions or webs of story. Therefore the idea of the character often attaches to the personalizing or humanizing dimension of literature; thus naturalism, which tends to create plots in which characters are not self-determining agents but in ironic relationships to larger sequences of force, seems a remarkably impersonal writing. Yet, individual identity is often partly an attribute of social interaction, of the play of the social drama; this too is mimed in the dramatic character of much literature. Neo-classical criticism tends to interpret characters as representatives of general human types and roles; romantic, to isolate and humanize them and even separate them from the surrounding fictional determinants or dramatic design as 'living' people; modern, to regard them as humanized outcroppings from some larger verbal design. Many fictional actions were in this sense portrait, aspects of the tendency of literature to personalize experience, in which the following out of the growth of a character was a primary cause of the work, the basis of its form. But as Henry James indicated there are characters and characters in fiction; we recognize some as of the centre

and others as of the circumference. Some are characters in the Aristotelian sense (i.e. detailed figures with their own motives and capacity for distinctive speech and independent action); some are enabling aspects of story, minor figures, stereotypes; there are some to whose perceptions we give credence and some we regard as a contextual society; some who partake in and are changed in the action (heroes, protagonists) and confidantes or devices. (Childs and Fowler, 2006: 23-24).

Literature is dramatic as well as personal; and the dramatic play of characters in a sequence frequently involves various levels of aesthetic impersonality. Hence there are always variables of closeness to and distance from them. The complex of impersonation, role and mask; the complex of the personality and impersonality of identity or of the dimensions of the unconscious; the complex of that spectrum running from character as separate existence to character as qualities, moral attributes: all of these have been essential areas of exploration for drama, poetry, fiction. 'Character' has perhaps been the most mimetic term in the critical vocabulary, and hence one of the most difficult to contain within the fictional environment; yet, it is an essential condition of fictional existence that a character is so contained. In this sense the representation of persons in literature is a simultaneous process of their humanization and their dehumanization (Childs and Fowler, 2006: 24). The character is in the same time the name of a literary *genre*. It is a short, and usually witty, sketch in prose of a distinctive type of person (Abrams, 1999: 32). Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it the dialogue and from what they do the action (Abrams, 1999: 33).

The grounds in the characters' temperament, desires, and moral nature for their speech and actions are called their motivation. A character may remain essentially "stable", or unchanged in outlook and disposition, from beginning to the end of a work, or may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual process of development or as the result of a crisis. Whether a character remains stable or changes, the reader of a traditional and realistic work expects "consistency"—the character should not suddenly break off and act in a way not plausibly grounded in his or her temperament as we have already come to know it (Abrams, 1999: 33).

E. M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), introduced popular new terms for an old distinction by discriminating between flat and round characters. A flat character (also

called a type, or "two-dimensional"), Forster says, is built around "a single idea or quality" and is presented without much individualizing detail, and therefore can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, is capable of surprising us (Forster, 1955: 67-78). The author may show not only external speech and actions, but also a character's inner thoughts, feelings, and responsiveness to events. In telling, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of the characters (Abrams, 1999: 33).

1. Characters in *Masnavi*

Character, in a simple description, is one who comes into the story by the authors' option and performs his/her preferred actions. Character is one of the most important elements of the story. It is the axis that "the story is dependent on it, in its entirety" (Baraheni, 1983: 242). The writer can create the character without any limitation. He/she can create a character which is not adjusted with real criteria or different from what is happened in real life (Mir Sadeghi, 1997: 83-84). The characters that seem in *Masnavi* can be divided into two groups as human (men, women, and children) and non-human (God, angels, fairies, animals and etc.) characters. Animals are also divided into two groups as mature and immature. In this article with an overall view on *Masnavi* stories, the child character is selected and different aspects of this kind of characterization are considered.

It is one of the effective methods in ancient Middle East religious tradition to transfer sacred knowledge to the society through stories. Having a powerful influence, the story itself is not goal, but is a tool. That is a way of spreading religious teachings, especially in Mystic/Gnostic tradition. It can be seen in lot of short stories in Qur'an about the life of ancient nations, anecdotes from life of prophets, knowledge about life of considerable religious persons and some administrators. This style of storytelling is modeled by Persian Mystic/Gnostic poets who have created canon, like Hakim Sanai (1080/-1131), Farid al-Din Attar (1142/-1220) and Saadi (1184 – 1283/1291?). Rumi is one of the most successful poets in this genre. In Rumi's *Masnavi*, which consists of six volumes, the main characteristic is story telling, that is a tool for giving his ethical and mystical teachings that ripen his followers. These stories have also a lyrical dimension and include metaphoric–didactic poetic elements. Rumi in such a style addresses people wisdom and hearts without injuring

their feelings. *Masnavi* also includes fables, like one of the brilliant samples of this genre *Panchatantra*, as known in eastern, or *Kalila and Dimna*, as known in western cultures. The essence of such narratives is to teach people and give them ethical lessons.

Rumi has selected child character in 26 stories in his *Masnavi*. Twelve of those stories are independently about children which four of them have non-human characters. Generally the sketch of animal characters, as a subcategory of non-human characters, is performed due to two purposes in the story:

a) Fulfillment of literary-fictional methods,

b) Fulfillment of cultural-educational methods (al-Asi, 1990: 40).

However, what is obvious is that such stories in *Masnavi* are under the effect of moral-religious and cultural affairs.

Coordination in animal-nature (al-Asi, 1990: 104) and its evidence in human nature is an art by which Rumi takes out the foulness and the beauty of human nature from animal nature performed by animal characters and in this way he develops the story according to his purposes. The other considerable point is that applying animal characters and their cubes is within the framework of their animal behaviors. The story of "Eaters of baby elephant" (Rumi, 1984a: 6-11) is adjusted with animal nature of this character and if such qualities were considered for another animal, the process of story would not be appeared normal. On the other hand, these characters are very close to human being characters, as if they are a group of people. They behave like human beings and intelligent creatures. This case causes a position in fiction studies for these characters and the nearness of immature group of animals to children characters.

1. 1. Consideration of children character relations in *Masnavi*

To find out the children characteristics in *Masnavi* stories, it is necessary to gain information about character's internal, external and environmental relations. This information can be summarized in three ways which are very important in character analysis:

a) What the narrator says,

b) What the character says,

c) What the reader finds out from the character's action in the story (Faghih Malek Marzban, 2001: 365).

According to three above criteria, in all of *Masnavi* stories, in which children have a role, Rumi is the author-narrator of the stories as an omniscient. In four stories children have

dialogues that the first introduction is progressed by Rumi and the dialogues complete the process of the story. In the other seven stories, the child is presented in the story as an independent character but he does not have a dialogue or that other characters introduce the mute child character, like the "The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe":

> A woman came to Morteza (Imam Ali) and said that: "my child has gone to the top of the drainpipe. When I called him to go down, he did not listen me! I fear that he falls down. He is not wise as us that I tell him come to me and run away from the danger. I do not give him milk anymore, and now he rejects" (Rumi, 1984a: 435).

In a story about a "Woman that her child was not alive", Rumi begins as a narrator and then dialogues of characters starts:

> Finally, that woman was passionate from the manifestation. She saw her name written everywhere. Then they said: "Those gifts are given to you thanks to your honesty. You prayed God at the time of testimonial and misfortunes and because of it God has blessed you and gave you this gift". She said: "Oh God! If it is the gift of my patience, I will tolerate the worst misfortunes". When she entered to paradise, she saw her dead children. And said: "It is true that I lost my children but my Lord! You do not forget those misfortunes in my life and brought me here (Rumi, 1984a: 94).

Rumi does not let the reader's mind deviate from the story, he says the conclusion himself.

In personification we should pay attention to details. It should be analyzed in follow.

2. Characterization relations

One of the important points in character analyzing is partial consideration which helps to reveal the character (Zeigler, 1989: 86-91) and this subject can be explained under three groups:

1) External relations and apparent relations: Type of character (human or non-human), age, gender and social class,

2) Internal relations or spiritual and mental relations: Thoughts, personality, and mental conditions like fear, braveness, warlike manner, bigotry and even mental diseases,

3) Environmental relations: Place and time in which the character is introduced or appeared.

2. 1. External relations

2. 1. 1. Gender

Paying attention to gender is one of the issues that are considerable in character's external relations. Among children independent stories, in the stories of "That two neuter brothers" (Rumi, 1984b: 493), "God grew Namrood without mother" (Rumi, 1984b: 552) and "The woman that her child was not alive" (Rumi, 1984a: 194), the children characters are boys: "Every year that woman gave birth to a baby boy, but the baby did not live more than 6 months" (Rumi, 1984a: 194). The importance of male gender for mothers in traditional beliefs represent in "woman that her child was not alive", introducing a character with a predetermined gender (Namrood), and the incidents of abusing male gender in "two neuter brothers" provide the preliminaries to determine the gender of the story characters.

However, in other nine independent stories, children characters are introduced without defining their gender. What makes Rumi not to defining character's gender, are these there factors:

1. The presence of children in a group,

2. Highlighting ethical and mental characteristics,

3. Non-human character,

In the story that "The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe" (Rumi, 1984a: 435), "An infidel woman and her talks with the Prophet Mohammad" (Rumi, 1984b: 183), Rumi points out the innate aspect of faith. In the story of "Two magician children and Holy Moosa's stick" (Rumi, 1984a: 47-56) doubt is ethical. In the story of "The child frightened of a gigantic man" (Rumi, 1984a: 424), fear is highlighted. In "The story of ducklings" (Rumi, 1984a: 459), "puppies" (Rumi, 1984b: 93), "fawns" (Rumi, 1984b: 54-58), and "the story of "Eaters of baby elephant" (Rumi, 1984a: 6-11), the gender of characters are overlooked due to their animal nature. In the story of "School children" surprise their master" (Rumi, 1984a: 86-91), children characters are presented in a group and their gender is ignored.

Hence there are some dependant stories in *Masnavi* in which children have not an important role and they are not the main axis of the incidents of story, but their gender is suggested: The stories of "Halva seller boy" (Rumi, 1984a: 268-271), "Joohi and a child who runs after his father's dead body" (Rumi1984a: 421), "Two new-bought slaves" (Rumi, 1984a: 293), "Yahya (John) who prostrates Jesus in his mother's womb" (Rumi, 1984a: 449), and "Three boys" (Rumi, 1984b: 555), are all directly pointing to male gender.

In the meantime, the female gender is not ignored. Rumi uses girl characters by relating them to a special class and of course sometimes these children are at the age of adults. Stories such as, "Ascetic dervish's daughter" (Rumi, 1984a: 470), "Master's daughter" (Rumi, 1984b: 236), "Daughter of China King" (Rumi, 1984. v3.p499) are good evidences of this kind.

2. 1. 2. Age

It is not easy to determine the age border of children characters in *Masnavi*. It can be guessed only by illustrations, words, and environment of story. Rumi somewhere in *Masnavi*'s poems says: "A child has not a position among adults. God does not place children among dignities" (Rumi, 1984b: 546). Sometimes speaks about a child who is mature and has a power of analyzing situations like an adult: "The baby says: Mother! Give a proof so that I can become calm with your milk" (Rumi, 1984a: 449). And sometimes he hints at children's age: "When a poor baby grows and begins to eat bread instead of milk, then suppose him to be died" (Rumi, 1984a: 37). In other stories considering vocabulary, verbal and environmental aspects, we can guess the age of children.

In four cases of twelve independent stories, the human characters are children and babies: In the stories "The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe", "The infidel woman and words of a suckling baby in the presence of Prophet Mohammad", "Growing Namrood and Moosa", "The woman whose child was dead" we find babies that are between 3-6 month ages. In four cases, the characters are nonhuman, but there are like babies: "Elephant", "Puppies", "Ducklings" and "Fawns". In other four cases, the children are approximately of mature age or near to mature age: "Two neuter brothers", "Magician child", "School children surprise their master" and "The child frightened of a gigantic man".

Considering the age aspect of children, Rumi harmonizes actions and reactions of the characters. For instance, in "The infidel woman and words of a suckling baby in the presence of Prophet Mohammad," it is necessary that the child character to be an infant who suddenly bursts into speech and this extraordinary event progresses the story. Presenting "Mohammad" as God's prophet by a wise and mature character is not strange in the logic of the story, but when the character does not have the mentioned mental capacities; the situation is considered as an extraordinary event. It is notable that in *Masnavi*, children are two-month babies but these characters are not such dominant ones that are capable of characterization. The two-

month baby is like the full moon and says great words like adults and the companions of the Holy Prophet Mohammad" (Rumi, 1984a: 184).

2. 1. 3. Naming

Almost all of the characters in *Masnavi* stories do not have a special name and they are called with words that determines their gender or age; like "man", "woman", "child", and etc. This matter shows the flexibility and generality of his story characters. Abdullahian believes that the character is identified with name in story, (Abdullahian, 1999: 53) but it seems that Rumi takes two sides in this subject. Sometimes he chooses a specific character and applies story elements to recreate and to describe his preferred character. In this case he highlights the name of the character, like describing "Namrood's childhood" (Rumi, 1984b: 552) and "Prostrating *Jesus* by *Yahya* in his mother's womb" (Rumi, 1984b: 449). These names describe the characters by themselves. Sometimes he tries to apply the social class, job or relative type of child character in order to present the proper result. In this case, Rumi leans on the context of the story and special names are not applicable here, like "The halva seller child", "School children", "The infidel woman's child" and "The ascetic dervish's daughter" and "School children surprise their master" because of trying and studying" (Rumi, 1984a: 86). Therefore, when children do not have names, they are called with the mentioned titles; the character is under the effect of other elements of the story. And when they have special names, the elements of the story are under the effect of character. It is notable that animal characters in *Masnavi* do not have names and they are just identified by their sort.

2. 1. 4. Social class

Children social class is one of the noticeable subjects in *Masnavi*. In children independent stories of *Masnavi,* almost all of children are ordinary ones. Rumi chooses commoners because most of his readers are in this class and can easily understand commoner characters of *Masnavi*. On the other hand, characters are the ones whom he sees around himself and they are the clear evidence of his society. The exception highlighted in this case is the birth of Moosa in a common family and his growth in a palace and also the birth and growth of Namrood in a desert under the supervision and training of a fairy and a panther (Rumi, 1984b: 551). This exception is wisely and intentionally applied by Rumi in order to create a new character through describing its growth conditions so that he can arouse the readers' amazement and fulfill his aim of communicating with readers. Female characters are

often in the rich class of society. It can be seen in the "Master's daughter" (Rumi, 1984b, 236), "Daughter of China King" (Rumi, 1984b: 499) stories. It is remarkable that non-human characters are separate from this case.

3. Internal relations of child character

Highlighting mental characteristics has an important effect on training *Masnavi*'s children characters. Rumi completes his story by highlighting and describing these characteristics. He appointed special characteristics for each character. In this case it should be considered when a character reacts to evolutions; we can evaluate the aspects of its characteristics (Payandeh, 2003: 136).

At first view we face with an unwise child in "The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe". In the story of "The infidel woman and her suckling baby", the baby represents a role that performs an extraordinary thing contrary to his mother's disbelief. In the story of "The pregnant dog", modesty and being veiled are highlighted. In" the story of ducklings", trainability and in the story of "School children surprise their master", intelligence and deceitfulness of children are emphasized.

In some occasions author can describe the thought and spiritual features directly (Solaymani, 1998: 48). In the story of "Two magician children and Holy Moosa's stick", doubt and thievery are the internal features of characters. And in stories of "Two neuter brothers" and "The child frightened of a gigantic man", fear and illness are emphasized.

Sometimes Rumi directly create those features and sometimes applies other characters to arrange them. Dialogue has an important role in commenting about internal factors of characters. In this relation, Rumi tries to use dialogues in compliance with the social class (al-Khatib, 1959: 66) of his characters. This point is an action among characters, and the character evolution is formed in conversations (Ziegler, 1989: 90). Dialogue progresses the sketch because writer's characterization is completed within it (Soleimani, 1991: 363). And it is through characters or narrator dialogues that many aspects of children internal characteristics are cleared in *Masnavi*. But among twelve independent child stories of *Masnavi*, only in four of them children have dialogues and the most descriptions and explanations are presented by the narrator which is the drawback of *Masnavi*.

4. Environmental relations of child character

Place and time are generally ambiguous and unlimited in *Masnavi*. But one of Rumi's arts is considering the harmony between child character and its environment. In this case, children are located in an environment which Rumi creates and that is believable for readers. The only special case is the story of "Holy Moosa and the childhood of Namrood". Rumi uses religious references to explain the childhood of Holy Moosa, so there is nothing to discuss. But the story of Namrood is written in a way that the environment described at the beginning of the story, and the character's position is stabilized at the end of it.

The below table shows the situation of stories and character's action places in *Masnavi*:

Table 1: Stories and Action places

Name of Stories	Action places
Eaters of baby elephant	Desert
The story of ducklings	Chicken nest
Two magician children and Holy Moosa's stick	Palm-grove
School children surprise their master	School
The child frightened of a gigantic man	In solitude
The infidel woman which came to holy prophet Mohammad with her suckling baby	A blasphemous environment
The fawn imprisoned in donkey' manger	Manger
The woman whose child was dead	World - Paradise
The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe	At the roof and dangerous place
Cries of puppies in their mothers' womb	Desert – dog's womb
The two neuter brothers	Bachelor house
Growing Namrood without his mother and growing holy Moosa	Desert - Palace

Nevertheless children characters' environment in *Masnavi* is not limited to these external environments. In many of above mentioned cases, describing the tangible environment is under the effect of intangible environment in Rumi's mind.

5. Child character classification types

The other point worth to consider is analyzing children characters classification in *Masnavi*. Before analyzing, it is needed to know the following definitions:

Dynamic character is a character which repeatedly changes within the story. Static character is a character which does not change or changes a bit. In other words, at the end of the story, static character remains as it was in the beginning of the story (Mir Sadeghi, 1997: 94) Dynamic character may evolve in its characteristics or its fate. In other classification, two characters are discussed, protagonist and secondary character. Protagonist is a character which is the axis of the incidents of the story, but secondary character is a character which appears in the story to highlight and complete the protagonist. In another classification, round and flat characters are introduced. Round character has many dimensions and must be able to arouse the reader's amazement and convince him in his wonder. But the axis of actions and reactions of flat character is under the effect of a single quality and sometimes it is an instance of typical character (Mir Sadeghi, 1997: 114).

In some parts of the stories, due to multiplicity of characters, they are very limited. Sometimes the reader just face with one character: "Cries of puppies in their mothers' womb", and sometimes two characters progress the story: "The child frightened of a gigantic man" and even a group can be considered as one character when school children surprise their master. In these cases the child character is certainly the protagonist of the story.

In *Masnavi* the border between dynamic and static children characters are close together. Some of them have significant changes and with this feature they are placed as a subcategory of dynamic characters. A lot of children of *Masnavi*'s stories are limited to a specific type of social class and they are predefined in readers' mind. The axis of actions in these characters is limited and does not arouse amazement. Regarding the above definitions, we can conclude that the child character is placed in flat character group.

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Table 2: The situation of character classification

Story	Dynamic Character	Static Character	Protagonist Character	Secondary Character	Round Character	Flat Character
The child frightened of a gigantic man		●	●			●
Two magician children and Holy Moosa's stick	●		●			●
School children surprise their master	●		●		●	
The story of ducklings		●	●			●
Cries of puppies in their mothers' womb		●	●			●
The fawn imprisoned in donkey's manger		●	●			●
The Infidel Woman Which Came to Holy Prophet Mohammad With Her Suckling Baby		●	●	●		
The woman's child went to the top of the drainpipe	●		●	●		
Eaters of baby elephant		●		●		●
Growing Namrood without His Mother	●	●		●		
The woman whose child was dead		●		●		●
The two neuter brothers		●	●			●

Conclusion

As Table 2 indicates four groups include dynamic characters and the other eight groups include static characters. In ten cases of twelve stories, children are protagonists and by ignoring them the story will be damaged. In other eight cases they are flat characters. Therefore most of children characters in *Masnavi*'s stories are protagonist and static and flat characters. The trio of external, internal and environmental relations is not ignored by Rumi, and this indicates the ability of Rumi to advance his stories' characters.

In Rumi's works, children complete the theme of the story. They are not empowered and the poet moves them forward due to his purpose. In addition, the element that makes characters static is their lack of power and option. This controlling and ruling over factor of Rumi stories appears in theme (or narrative). The narrative of his all stories is illustrated by a third person or an omniscient. What is clear is that, in these narrations, only child characters can complete the stories and the writer has used the best form of children's presence in his stories. In other words, if he applied adult characters instead of children, his stories would lose their beauty and attractiveness. Rumi has not applied children characters without intention. He has not intended to educate children or demonstrate the issues of children educating. His readers are never children, but children characters are tools of communicating with readers which are under Rumi's mental purposes and appear in his stories. It can be concluded with words of Annemarie Schimmel, a well-known scholar with her works on

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Mystic/Gnosticism: "They are like a ray of the sun on the wall which disappeared, and man learns from his growth to go back to the sun" (Schimmel, 1992: 189).

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