

# A Comparative Analysis of Farah Mendlesohn's Fantasy Genre Theory in Solo Leveling Manhwa and Tensei-shitara Slime Datta Ken Manga

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# INTRODUCTION

- This research examines Solo Leveling (SL) and Tensei-shitara Slime Datta Ken (Tensura) through the lens of Farah Mendlesohn's (2008) fantasy theory.
- As noted by Paul Price (2021), Mendlesohn's framework offers a viable approach for analyzing the isekai (異世界) genre, a subgenre of fantasy fiction centered on parallel or alternate worlds.
- The two works were selected for comparison due to their shared prominence in contemporary fantasy, despite their divergent genre classifications: while Tensura is firmly categorized as isekai, SL adheres to conventional fantasy tropes DESPITE the the narratives are also related to isekai.
- Notably, both protagonists ascend to positions of supreme power within their respective worlds, yet critical distinctions emerge upon closer analysis.



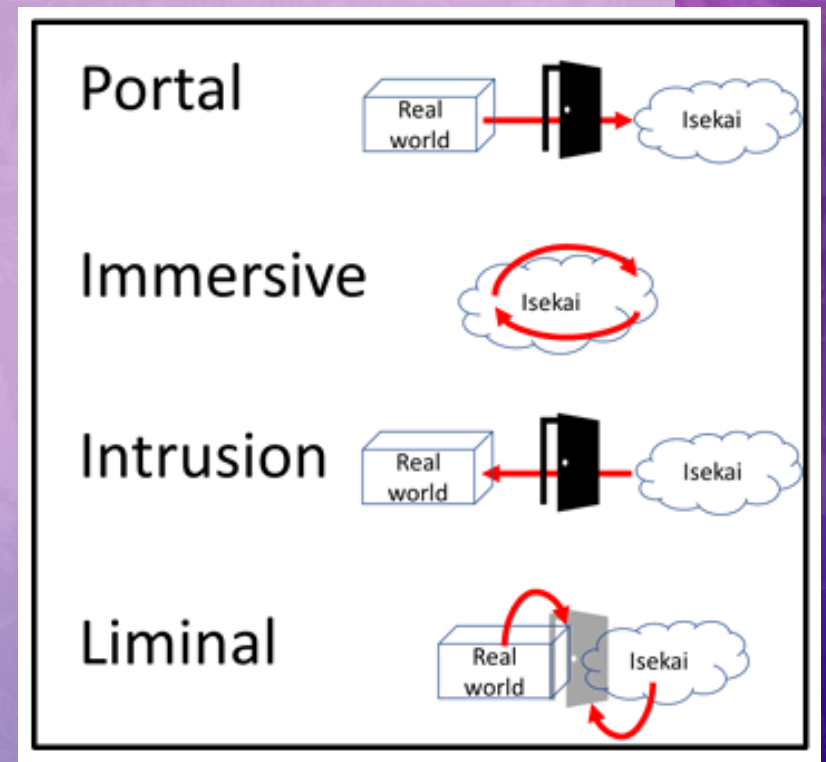
# LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Murray (2010). Comics Theory. In *The Encyclopedia of Literary and Cultural Theory*. Ed. Ryan, M. Wiley & Sons.
2. Price (2021). A Survey of the Story Elements of Isekai Manga. *Journal of Anime and Manga Studies*. Vol. 2. 57-91.
3. Mendlesohn, F. (2008). *Rhetorics of Fantasy*. Wesleyan University Press.
4. Iskandar, Priyawan, & Suswanto (2024). Crossing Worlds: Portal Fantasy in Novel *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Korean Novel *Solo Leveling*, And Comic Manga *That Time I Got Reincarnated As a Slime*. *Saksama: Jurnal Sastra*. Vol. 3 No. 2. 69-88.

# METHOD

- Four types of fantasy based on Mendlesohn's *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (2008) and Price (2021):

Types	Main Feature	Examples (based on Price (2021))
Portal-Quest Fantasy	Protagonist leave their familiar surrounding via portal to a new, "different" place	Spirited Away (2001)
Immersive Fantasy	Set in a world built so that it functions on all levels as a complete world	Kiki's Delivery Service (1989)
Intrusion Fantasy	The world is ruptured by intrusion, got disrupted and has to be negotiated with or defeated, sent back, or controlled	The Tale of Princess Kaguya (2013)
Liminal Fantasy	A form of fantasy which estranges the reader from the fantastic as seen and described by the protagonist	My Neighbor Totoro (1988)

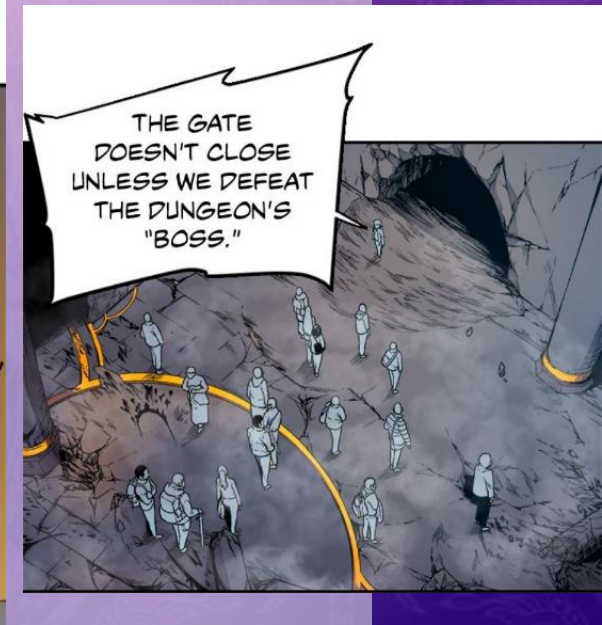
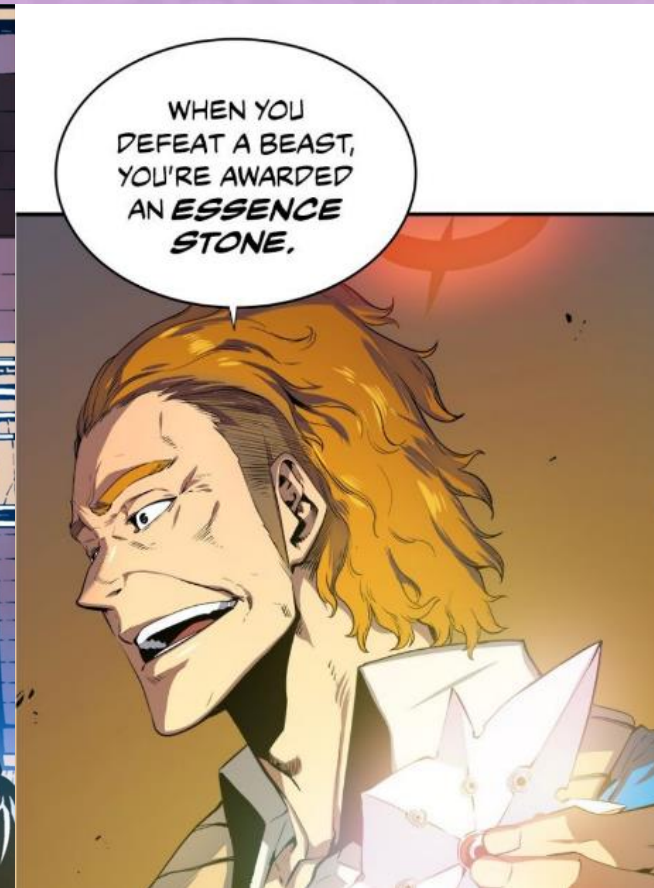




# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Manhwa SL incorporated all of Mendlesohn's types of fantasy but not categorized as isekai by many anime/manga aggregator websites.

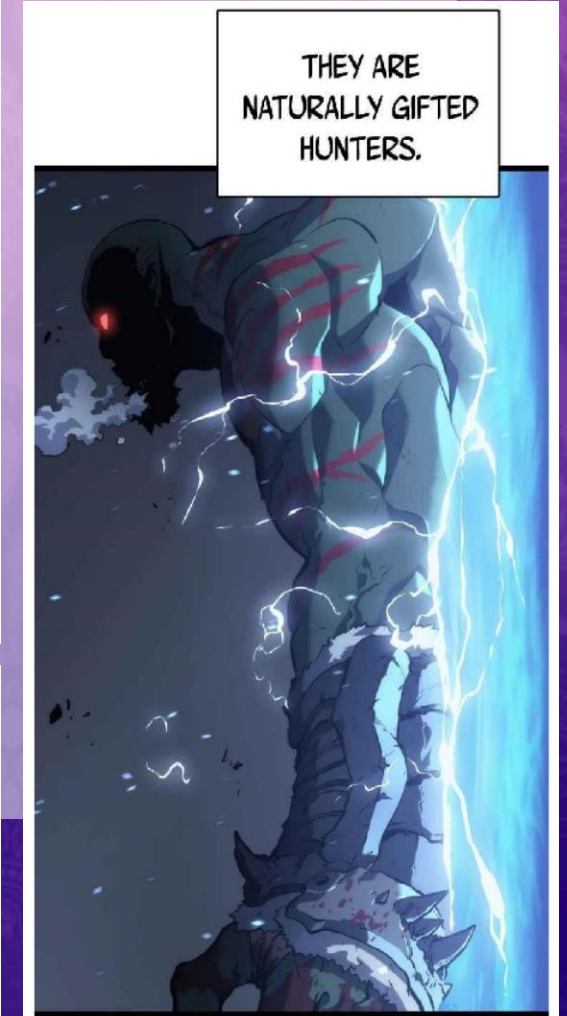
- Portal-Quest Fantasy





# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

- Immersive and Intrusion Fantasy





# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

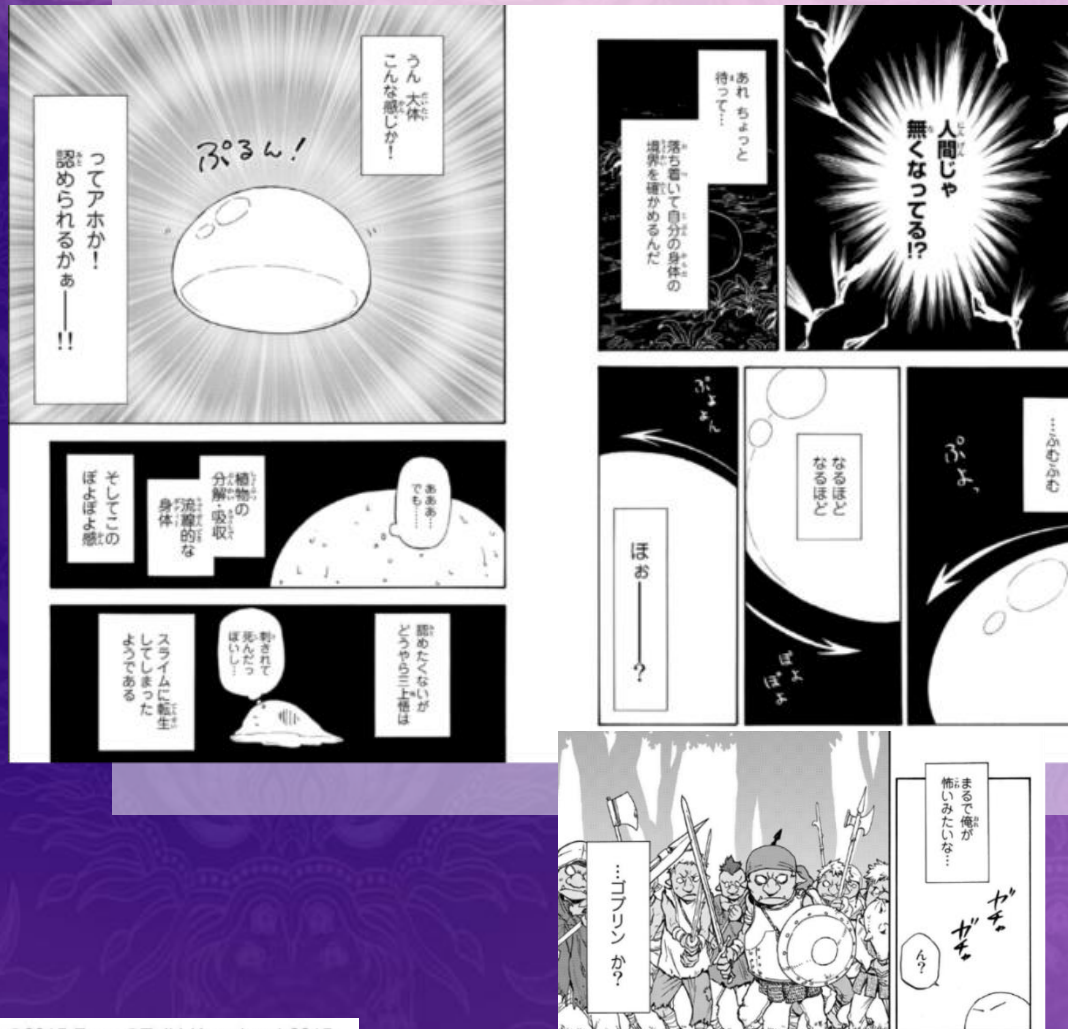
- Liminal Fantasy





# FINDING AND DISCUSSION

While at the same time, manga Tensura has only incorporated one of Mendlesohn's types of fantasy (portal-quest), but have more "elements" that made it more isekai than SL.





# CONCLUSION

Aspects	Solo Leveling	Tensura
Types of fantasy (Mendlesohn)	All	Portal-Quest
Protagonist's Transformation	Leveling (gamic/gamification) that makes only Jin-woo stronger	Reincarnated in the new world, Rimuru evolves socially
Fantasy system	Gates, dungeons, gamification, job-change	Skill, race, magic, contracts
Emotional themes	Family, power, sacrifice	Community, identity, diplomacy
Narrative structures	Real immersive fantasy world that disrupted then evolving before everything's gone	New, alternate world that is built from scratch/different from the world where protagonist live before



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2. FUSE, Kawakami, T. (2015). 転生したらスライムだった件1. Kindle Version.
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