

The Indo-European Origins And Suppletive Structure Of The German Verb Sein

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Abstract: The German verb sein (“to be”) presents one of the most ancient and complex examples of suppletion within the Indo-European languages. Its forms derive from several distinct Proto-Indo-European (PIE) roots h_1es- (“to be”), b^huH- (“to become”), and h_2wes- (“to dwell”) which merged over millennia into a single verbal paradigm. This paper examines the historical development of sein and its cognates across the Germanic languages, focusing on the role of b^huH- and h_2wes- in shaping the present and past tense structures. By comparing cognate evidence from Sanskrit, Greek, Tocharian, and other Indo-European branches, the study highlights the unique Germanic innovation of using h_2wes- to form past-tense morphology, in contrast to the typical use of b^huH- elsewhere in the Indo-European family. This analysis demonstrates that the verb “to be” preserves traces of ancient semantic distinctions between being, becoming, and dwelling—and that these distinctions illuminate the deep conceptual history of existence and identity in Indo-European thought.

Keywords: Proto-Indo-European; suppletion; verb sein; h_1es- (“to be”); b^huH- (“to become”); h_2wes- (“to dwell”); semantic shift; linguistic reconstruction; grammatical irregularity; diachronic linguistics; etymology; conceptual history of being.

Introduction: Among the fundamental verbs of human language, none holds a more central position than the verb “to be.” It encodes notions of existence, identity, and continuity—concepts that form the foundation of both linguistic and philosophical systems. Baldi, P. said that in the Germanic languages, this verb appears in an especially intricate and historically layered form. The Modern German sein and its cognates (be, was, were) are suppletive: their different grammatical forms originate from multiple, etymologically unrelated Proto-Indo-European roots. This suppletion provides an exceptional window into prehistoric linguistic evolution. The Germanic “to be” paradigm merges three separate PIE roots: h_1es- (“to be, to exist”), b^huH- (“to become, to grow”), and h_2wes- (“to dwell, to spend the night”). While h_1es- supplied the basic present-tense forms (cf. *ist, sind*), b^huH- contributed the infinitive and participial stems (sein, *bin*), and h_2wes- furnished the past forms (*war, waren*, English *was, were*). This paper investigates how these roots interacted within the Germanic branch, with special attention to the historical semantics of b^huH- and h_2wes- . The analysis situates these roots within the

broader Indo-European framework, drawing on comparative evidence from Sanskrit *vas-*, Greek *ἵστω*, and Tocharian *wäs-*, among others. By tracing how a verb originally meaning “to dwell overnight” came to express “to be” in the past tense, the study illustrates the dynamic processes of semantic reanalysis and morphological suppletion that shape linguistic history [Baldi, P. 2002: 54].

METHODOLOGY

The Verb “Sein” and Its Indo-European Origins: A Historical-Linguistic Overview

According to Watkins, C., the German verb “sein” (“to be”) holds a central place in the grammatical and semantic system of the Germanic languages. It expresses existence, identity, and state of being — concepts that are fundamental not only to language, but to human thought itself. Because of its essential role in expressing presence, becoming, and reality, “sein” is one of the most ancient and irregular verbs in the entire Indo-European language family. Linguists trace the origin of “sein” back to Proto-Indo-European (PIE), the hypothetical ancestor of most European and

many Asian languages. In PIE, several distinct roots contributed to what later became the verb “sein” in German and “to be” in English. These are:

1. h₁es- meaning “to be, to exist.” Found in forms such as German ist (“is”) and sind (“are”), Latin est, and English is, am, are.
2. b^huH- / *bheu- meaning “to become, to grow.” Reflected in English be, been, Sanskrit bhavati.
3. wes- meaning “to dwell, to stay,” later used for past forms. Seen in the German past tense war / waren (“was / were”) and English was / were.

Over centuries, these originally separate roots fused into one verbal system. As a result, “sein” became suppletive meaning its different grammatical forms originate from completely different historical roots. For example, bin and bist come from the b^hu- root, while war and waren come from wes- [Watkins, C. 2000: 38].

In early Germanic languages, the situation was even more complex. Old High German, Old Saxon, and Old English all used multiple verbs to express “to be.” In Old English, for instance:

- beon was used for general present tense forms (be, am, are),
- wasan was used for past forms (was, were).

Likewise, in Old High German, sīn and wasan coexisted, fulfilling complementary functions. Over time, these verbs merged into one paradigm, giving rise to the Modern German sein. Today’s forms bin, bist, ist, sind, seid, war, waren, gewesen clearly reflect this ancient suppletive system. This development illustrates how the most fundamental verbs tend to resist regularization. Because “being” is among the most frequently expressed concepts in human communication, irregular patterns survive and evolve rather than disappear. The verb “sein” is an exemplary case of suppletion, where one paradigm is built from multiple unrelated roots. Suppletion is relatively rare, but it almost always occurs in the most basic and frequently used verbs such as sein (“to be”), haben (“to have”), and gehen (“to go”). For linguists, suppletive verbs are a window into the historical morphology of languages. They show that linguistic change does not always follow predictable phonological or morphological rules. Instead, frequency, analogy, and communicative necessity play decisive roles in preserving irregularities. The complex paradigm of sein reveals traces of the Proto-Indo-European verbal system that have survived for thousands of years, embedded within modern German. Beyond morphology, “sein” also plays a central role in semantics and philosophy. It expresses both existence (“Ich bin müde” – I am tired) and identity (“Er ist

Lehrer” – He is a teacher). This duality mirrors the two PIE roots: h₁es- (“to be”) and b^huH- (“to become”). Thus, sein encapsulates the fundamental human distinction between being and becoming, making it not only a linguistic form but a reflection of human perception of reality. The verb “sein” is far more than a simple grammatical unit; it is a linguistic monument to the deep history of the Indo-European languages. Its suppletive nature and multiple ancestral roots (h₁es-, b^hu-, wes-) demonstrate how human languages preserve traces of their prehistoric past. Through sein, we can observe how different linguistic systems merged, adapted, and survived over millennia. Therefore, the study of sein provides crucial insight into the evolution of morphology, semantics, and even philosophical thought within the Indo-European family [Beekes, Robert S.P 2004:251].

The Proto-Indo-European (PIE) language, the hypothetical ancestor of most European and many Asian languages, contained one of the most fundamental verbal categories in human speech: the verb “to be.” It expressed existence, continuity, and the emergence of being notions that are central not only to linguistic structure but to human cognition itself. Linguistic evidence shows that in Proto-Indo-European, the meaning “to be” was not derived from a single verbal root but from **two distinct roots**, namely ***es-** and **b^huH-**. According to Długosz-Kurczabowa and Dubisz, these two roots differed semantically: es- expressed continuity or a static state of existence, while b^huH- conveyed the idea of coming into being or becoming. Over time, these roots merged within one verbal system, creating a **suppletive paradigm** a phenomenon where different morphological forms of a single verb come from historically unrelated roots:

The Root es- and Its Semantic Function

The root es- originally meant “to be, to exist, to remain in a state.” It conveyed the idea of **continuity** and **permanence** being as a stable and ongoing condition. This root has survived in many Indo-European languages as the present tense form of the verb “to be.” For instance, Latin est (“is”), English is, and German ist all trace their origin back to es-. In Proto-Indo-European, es- typically functioned in **stative** contexts, where existence or identity was expressed without reference to change or movement. Because of this, the root was mainly associated with the **present tense**, representing a state of being that simply “is.” Over time, the descendants of es- became the main carriers of present tense morphology in later Indo-European languages, indicating that the idea of continuity was deeply embedded in the grammatical structure of the proto-language [Długosz-Kurczabowa, K., & Dubisz, S. 2001 402].

2. The Root bhuH- and Its Dynamic Meaning

The second major root, bhuH-, expressed a more dynamic meaning “to become, to grow, to come into being.” As Długosz-Kurczabowa and Dubisz note, this root reflected **completed action** or **a process leading to existence**. It represented not a static state but the **emergence of being**, a transition from non-existence to existence. The reflexes of bhuH can be found widely across Indo-European languages. In Sanskrit, bhavati means “he becomes” or “he is”; in English, the same root appears in be, been, and become; in German, it survives in bin, bist, and sein. These examples demonstrate the original dynamic aspect of bhuH-, denoting change, development, and the creation of being. In contrast to es-, which expresses what is, bhuH- expresses what becomes.

3. The Suppletive Relationship Between es- and bhuH-

The coexistence of es- and bhuH- in the PIE verbal system represents one of the earliest and most significant examples of **suppletion** in linguistic history. Suppletion occurs when a single grammatical paradigm combines forms from different etymological roots. In PIE, es- and bhuH- were functionally related but semantically distinct: the former conveyed stative existence, the latter dynamic becoming. As Proto-Indo-European evolved, these two roots gradually specialized for different grammatical functions. Es- became dominant in present-tense forms, while bhuH- came to mark perfective or past-tense forms — actions that denote the completion or realization of being. This distribution created a **suppletive system**, where the same verb employed different roots depending on tense and aspect. This suppletive pattern was inherited and further developed in the Germanic branch of Indo-European languages. The Modern German verb sein (“to be”) illustrates this perfectly:

- ist, sind (is, are) derive from es-;
- bin, bist, sein (am, are, to be) come from bhuH-;
- war, waren (was, were) stem from a third PIE root, wes- (“to dwell, to stay”).

The existence of these multiple roots within one verbal paradigm demonstrates the ancient and complex nature of the Indo-European verbal system.

4. Historical and Typological Significance

The suppletive merger of es- and bhuH- provides valuable insight into the historical development of Indo-European morphology. It reveals how early speakers of Proto-Indo-European conceptualized being not as a single state but as a dual process the static fact of existing (es-) and the dynamic act of becoming (bhuH-). Many modern Indo-European languages preserve this dual structure. In English, for instance, we

find the same irregular pattern: am – is – are – was – were – be. These paradigms reflect the persistence of suppletion as a structural response to the high frequency and semantic centrality of the verb “to be.” Because “being” is among the most universal and frequently used concepts, its verbal expression tends to resist regularization. Instead of simplifying, languages preserve its irregular and ancient morphology. Thus, the verb “to be” serves as a linguistic fossil, preserving the historical layers of Proto-Indo-European verbal formation [Mallory, J. P., and Adams, D. 2006 : 452].

From a broader linguistic perspective, the suppletive nature of “to be” illustrates how **frequency, analogy, and semantic necessity** shape the evolution of irregular forms. The case of es- and bhuH- shows that grammatical irregularities are not random, but rather the result of deep historical layering and functional specialization within a language. The Proto-Indo-European roots es- and bhuH- represent two complementary aspects of the concept of being: **existence** and **becoming**. Their eventual fusion into a single, suppletive paradigm marks a crucial stage in the morphological evolution of the Indo-European languages. This process illustrates how ancient speakers expressed the dual nature of existence, what is and what comes to be. Through the study of these roots, linguists can reconstruct not only the structure of the PIE verb system but also the conceptual worldview of its speakers. The coexistence and interaction of es- and bhuH- within one paradigm demonstrate how language encodes the fundamental philosophical idea that being is both **static** and **dynamic**, both **present** and **emergent**. Thus, the PIE verb “to be” is more than a grammatical phenomenon; it is a linguistic reflection of one of humanity’s oldest and most profound insights the nature of existence itself [Długosz-Kurczabowa, K., & Dubisz, S.].

RESULTS

The Proto-Indo-European Root *bh₂ewh₁- and the Historical Development of the Verb “Sein” in the Germanic Languages

Kortlandt, F. stated that the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root bh₂ewh₁- originally conveyed the meaning “to grow, to become,” and it served as one of the primary sources for verbs of being and existence in almost all Indo-European languages. In the subsequent stage known as Post-Proto-Indo-European (PPIE), this root evolved into the form bʰuH-, preserving its original semantic field of “to be, to become, to exist.” This transformation marks an important step in the development of existential and stative verbs across Indo-European linguistic branches. During the

transition from PPIE to the later stages of PIE, derivative forms such as *bh₂we-g-s* were created, which later developed into PIE *h₂weg-s-* meaning “to grow.” These derivations demonstrate that the concepts of growth, becoming, and being were semantically intertwined in the earliest Indo-European linguistic stages. Within the Germanic branch, the PIE root *bh₂ewh₁-* manifested in several distinct yet related forms, each contributing to the complex suppletive system of the verb “sein” (“to be”) found in Modern German. Among these are:

- *wahsijana-* meaning “to grow” (cf. English *wax* in archaic sense “to grow, increase”),
- **bh₂we-s -wesana-* meaning “to be, to exist,”
- *was* meaning “was” (past tense of *sein*).

Linguistic reconstruction indicates that the Germanic forms **wesana**, **was**, **wēzīn** (meaning “was, were”) all ultimately derive from the PIE root *h₂wes-*, which originally had the meaning “to spend the night” or “to dwell overnight.” Over time, this meaning expanded semantically to include the notion of being, remaining, existing a remarkable example of semantic shift within historical linguistics [Kortlandt, F. 2010: 22].

The same PIE root *h₂wes-* has clear cognates in several other Indo-European languages, preserving its earlier meanings related to dwelling or staying:

- Tocharian B: *wäs-* — “to live, to dwell.”
- Sanskrit: *vas-* — “to live, to dwell, to remain, to stay.”
- Ancient Greek: *ἄω (áo)* — “to sleep,” with aorist *ἄεσα (áesa)* and *ιαύω (iaúō)* meaning “to sleep, to spend the night.”
- Armenian: *aganim* — “to spend the night.”
- Celtic (reconstructed): *woseti* — “to spend the night.”

These examples illustrate how the original PIE root developed diverse, yet conceptually related meanings in the daughter languages, ranging from dwelling and remaining to sleeping and being. The semantic link between “spending the night” and “being somewhere” likely reflects an early metaphorical association between staying overnight and existing in a place or state. The semantic development of *h₂wes-* in the Germanic languages, however, presents a unique case. While the original PIE meaning was “to dwell, to stay overnight,” in Proto-Germanic the meaning shifted to express existence and past state, as seen in forms like *was* and *wēzīn* (“was, were”). Thus, in Germanic, the root underwent a semantic broadening — from the concrete sense of “spending the night” to the abstract notion of “being” in the past tense. This change

demonstrates how suppletive structures and semantic extensions often arise through the merging of verbs with overlapping but distinct meanings. In the case of *sein*, the verb’s paradigm combines multiple roots:

bin / bist derive from *b^huH-* (“to become”),
ist / sind trace back to *h₁es-* (“to be, to exist”),
war / waren come from *h₂wes-* (“to dwell, to stay overnight”).

This complex blending of etymological sources explains why *sein* has such an irregular, suppletive structure in Modern German. It also shows that the notion of being in Indo-European thought was not expressed by a single lexical item but rather by a network of semantically related verbs that eventually merged into one system. The evolution of *h₂wes-* from “to spend the night” to “to be” is a striking example of semantic reanalysis — a process in which an old form acquires a new meaning based on contextual reinterpretation. This transition may have been facilitated by metaphorical extensions: dwelling somewhere overnight implies presence, and repeated presence implies existence. Over time, this metaphorical link allowed the Germanic descendants of *h₂wes-* to develop into core forms of the existential verb “to be” [Lehmann, W. P. 1993: 99].

Furthermore, the coexistence and later fusion of *b^huH-*, *h₁es-*, and *h₂wes-* roots within the same paradigmatic structure illustrates the suppletive nature of the verb *sein*. Suppletion in this context is not accidental but reflects the extreme antiquity and high functional frequency of existential verbs — elements so fundamental to communication that they resist regular phonological or morphological leveling. the Proto-Indo-European root *bh₂ewh₁-* and its derivatives such as *b^huH-* and *h₂wes-* form the historical foundation of the Germanic verb *sein* (“to be”). These roots collectively chart a path from the concrete notion of growing or spending the night to the abstract grammatical concept of being. The Germanic evidence — particularly forms like *wesana*, *was*, and *wēzīn* — demonstrates how semantic expansion and morphological suppletion shaped the verb’s evolution. Ultimately, the study of *bh₂ewh₁-* and *h₂wes-* offers valuable insight not only into linguistic reconstruction but also into how early speakers of Proto-Indo-European conceptualized existence, presence, and continuity. Through this one verb, we can trace both the history of Indo-European morphology and the development of one of humanity’s most fundamental ideas — the idea of being itself [Mallory, James P., and Douglas Q. Adams 2006: 342]

DISCUSSION

Proto-Indo-European (PIE) roots **b^huH-* and **h₂wes-*,

their reflexes in various Indo-European languages, and the suppletive nature of the verb “to be” in the Germanic branch. Below is a two-page, academically styled English version of your text. It is written for a linguistics or philology context, with clear explanations, expanded details, and smooth transitions preserving all your original ideas but developing them further into a full-length academic narrative.

In most Indo-European languages, the first-person past indicative forms of the verb “to be” (such as “I was”) derive from the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root b^huH- , which originally meant “to become” or “to come into being.” This root is one of the most important verbal bases in the Indo-European family, as it expresses the idea of emergence, growth, and existence. For example, in Latin, the same root appears in the form *fui* (the perfect or aorist of *esse*, “to be”); in Lithuanian, it surfaces as *buvo*; and in the Slavic languages, it is found as *byl* (“was”). These parallels show that in most branches of Indo-European, the verb of being developed its past tense from b^huH- . Therefore, the fact that Germanic languages use a completely different root (h_2wes-) for their past forms (was, were) is highly exceptional. This deviation marks one of the most distinctive and linguistically intriguing features of the Germanic verbal system. In Germanic, the past forms *was* and *wēzīn* (Proto-Germanic *was*, *wēzun*) are generally traced back to the PIE root h_2wes- . In early Indo-European, this root meant “to stay, to dwell, to spend the night.” Cognates across other Indo-European

languages confirm this meaning:

Sanskrit *vas-* means “to dwell, to stay, to live”;

Tocharian B *wäs-* means “to reside”;

Ancient Greek *ιαύω* (*iaúō*) and *ἄεσα* (*áesa*) mean “to sleep, to spend the night”;

Armenian *aganim* means “to pass the night”; and

Celtic *woseti* (reconstructed) means “to spend the night.”

These correspondences suggest that h_2wes- originally referred to temporary dwelling or staying overnight, which later broadened in meaning to “being in a place” or “existing.”

However, in the Germanic branch, this semantic shift went further: h_2wes- came to serve as the past tense stem of the existential verb — “was, were.” This is a major semantic reanalysis: what once meant “to stay overnight” came to signify “to be (in the past).” This kind of semantic and grammatical shift demonstrates how linguistic systems adapt old roots to new grammatical functions. In this case, h_2wes- evolved from denoting a physical state of presence to expressing temporal existence in the past [Beekes, Robert S.P. 2004: 257].

The combination of b^huH- and h_2wes- within a single verbal paradigm makes the Germanic verb “to be” a suppletive verb, where different grammatical forms come from distinct etymological roots. In Proto-Germanic, the situation can be reconstructed as follows:

Function	Proto-Germanic Form	PIE Root	Meaning
Present indicative	<i>im, is, sind</i> (Modern German <i>bin, bist, ist, sind</i>)	h_1es-	to be, to exist
Infinitive and general present	<i>wesana</i>	h_2wes-	to dwell, to be
Past indicative	<i>was, wēzīn</i>	h_2wes-	was, were
Other forms (subjunctive, participles)	<i>beon, bēon</i> (Old English), <i>sein</i> (German)	b^huH-	to become, to be

This complex system shows how at least three Proto-Indo-European roots — h_1es- , b^huH- , and h_2wes- — merged to form one single, irregular verb paradigm. This phenomenon is almost unique to Germanic languages; other Indo-European branches, such as Latin, Greek, or Sanskrit, generally maintain past forms derived from b^huH- rather than h_2wes- .

From a phonological and morphological perspective, the Germanic forms *was* and *wesana* appear to derive from a single Post-Proto-Indo-European (PPIE) root, showing regular vowel correspondences and expected sound shifts under Grimm’s and Verner’s laws.

However, in these Germanic forms, laryngeal traces such as vowel lengthening or glottal constriction are no longer evident — a result of the typical loss of laryngeals in Germanic phonological evolution. The alternation between b^huH- (“to become”) and h_2wes- (“to dwell, to be”) mirrors similar alternations found in other PIE root pairs, such as d^hewh_2- and d^hewes- , both meaning “to breathe.” This type of root variation suggests that Indo-European verbs could form semantic and morphological pairs where one expressed dynamic action (to grow, to become, to breathe) and the other expressed a stative

or resultant meaning (to be, to exist, to rest). [Clackson, J. 2007: 116].

Thus, the Germanic system preserves not only an ancient suppletive structure but also evidence of PIE root alternation —an important key to understanding the morphological flexibility of the proto-language. The suppletive nature of the verb *sein* / to be in Germanic has far-reaching implications for historical linguistics. It shows how languages can repurpose semantically related verbs to cover different grammatical functions, particularly for verbs of extremely high frequency and importance. Because the concept of “being” is so central to communication, the language tolerates and even preserves extreme irregularity in this paradigm.

Moreover, the Germanic pattern demonstrates the transition from a single-root system (as in early PIE, where *b^huH-* was dominant) to a multi-root suppletive system, where various stems filled specialized grammatical niches (present, past, participle, etc.). This development provides insight into how morphological complexity arises not through regular inflection, but through historical layering and semantic overlap. The coexistence of *b^huH-* and *h₂wes-* in the Germanic “to be” paradigm represents a remarkable linguistic innovation within the Indo-European family. Whereas most Indo-European languages retained *b^huH-* for past forms, Germanic languages replaced it with *h₂wes-*, originally meaning “to stay” or “to dwell.” This replacement resulted in the suppletive structure still visible today *bin* / *bist* / *ist* (from *h₁es-*), *war* / *waren* (from *h₂wes-*), and *sein* (from *b^huH-*). This phenomenon not only underscores the historical complexity of Germanic verb morphology but also provides a valuable window into how ancient speakers conceptualized existence, temporality, and change. The study of these roots and their evolution thus remains a crucial area of inquiry in Indo-European linguistics, offering profound insights into both the semantic development and the structural transformation of one of humanity’s oldest and most universal verbs — “to be” [Dziebel, G. V. 2004: 10].

CONCLUSION

The historical development of the Germanic verb *sein* (“to be”) stands as one of the most illuminating examples of how linguistic systems evolve through the convergence and fusion of distinct yet semantically related elements. Far from being a mere collection of irregular forms, the suppletive paradigm of *sein* embodies a deep record of conceptual and cognitive structures that reach back to the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) era. The verb *sein* derives from at least three ancient PIE roots: *h₁es-* (“to be, to exist”), *b^huH-* (“to become, to grow”), and *h₂wes-* (“to dwell, to remain”).

Each of these roots contributed a particular nuance to the semantic field of “being.” The first, *h₁es-*, denotes a state of existence—static, immediate, and ontological. It corresponds to simple presence or identity, the idea of “being as such.” The second, *b^huH-*, expresses the notion of becoming or coming into existence; it captures the dynamic, processual side of being, emphasizing growth, change, and transformation. The third, *h₂wes-*, introduces a spatial and temporal dimension “dwelling,” “remaining,” or “staying” linking existence not only to essence or process, but to duration and continuity within a specific place or time [Fortson, B. W. 2010: 209].

In Proto-Germanic, these roots underwent a profound restructuring. The language innovatively employed *h₂wes-* forms to express the **past tense** of the verb “to be,” replacing the more typical Indo-European use of *b^huH-* forms for that function. This development demonstrates how high-frequency verbs, central to human cognition and communication, can undergo radical semantic reorganization. The result is a **suppletive** system, where different roots coexist within a single paradigm: *ich bin* (from *b^huH-*) and *ich war* (from *h₂wes-*), both ultimately referring to forms of “being,” yet historically and semantically distinct. This fusion reflects not random irregularity but a profound linguistic and philosophical synthesis. The interplay between *h₁es-*, *b^huH-*, and *h₂wes-* mirrors a tripartite conception of existence in the Indo-European worldview. “Being” (*h₁es-*) was not identical with “becoming” (*b^huH-*), and both were distinct from “dwelling” (*h₂wes-*). Together, they represent different cognitive perspectives on reality: being as state, being as process, and being as endurance. Through their merger, Germanic languages encoded within a single verb the entire spectrum of existential experience from the emergence of being to its persistence across time and space. In this light, the verb *sein* is more than a grammatical tool; it is a living fossil of ancient thought. Every utterance of *sein* unconsciously recalls this deep history a linguistic monument to the Indo-European conception of existence. The persistence of its suppletive structure in Modern German, despite centuries of phonological erosion and grammatical simplification, attests to the cognitive centrality of “being” in human language. Thus, *sein* does not merely record how Germanic speakers expressed existence; it reveals how they **understood** it. Through the interplay of static being, dynamic becoming, and enduring dwelling, we catch a glimpse of a prehistoric philosophy of existence, one that continues to resonate, quietly but powerfully, in the very grammar of modern speech.

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